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NEWS RELEASE

UD AND SINCLAIR 'LINK UP' TO START INSTITUTE FOR TECHNOLOGY-ENHANCED LEARNING

DAYTON, Ohio — By most estimates the University of Dayton and Sinclair Community College have invested more than \$50 million in technology during the past three years.

Through the creation of a new Institute for Technology-Enhanced Learning, a three-year project that will operate on a "virtual campus," the two institutions will now share their technological resources and research the effects of technology on learning.

"Sinclair has made this substantial investment in the Center for Interactive Learning and UD has made a similar investment in fully wiring the entire campus," said James Rowley, executive director of the Institute for Technology-Enhanced Learning and associate professor of teacher education at UD. "The goal of this institute is to support faculty on both of our campuses in enhancing the classroom technology process — not only with computers but all forms of instructional technology."

According to Rowley, all schools, primary through post-secondary, are feeling pressure to demonstrate that new technologies have a "measured impact on student learning." In addition to securing outside funding for technology-related projects and identifying the best teaching practices using new technology, ITEL will also research the effects of technology on learning.

Rowley said the institute will support teachers from local primary and secondary schools as well as faculty at Sinclair and UD.

The institute has already begun a project with Think TV and the Miami Valley Interactive Distance Learning Consortium to support distance learning opportunities between local elementary and secondary schools and experts at the Cincinnati Zoo, the Wright-Patterson Air Force Museum and the Dayton Museum of Discovery. This summer about 50 local teachers attended workshops to teach their students how to go on virtual field trips and perform research using the Web.

"Our goal is to make the learning environment as authentic, as student-centered as possible," Rowley said.

For the first time this fall, first-year students at UD were required to own a computer —

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giving them access to online discussions with off-campus experts, midnight e-mail to faculty and 24-hour access to the library. With the networking of 350 UD-owned houses in the student neighborhoods — the most ambitious project of its type on any residential campus in the country — UD is now fully wired.

In January 2000, UD will open the Ryan C. Harris Learning-Teaching Center, designed to foster innovation in teaching and learning, in the ground floor of the Roesch Library. The new \$2.9 million, 7,000-square foot center will house an adaptive-learning computer lab, a seminar room, an experimental classroom, offices for service-learning staff and Web mentor students, as well as a cafe and espresso bar in an informal, “family-room” setting with fireplaces and movable furniture.

“Technology is very much a part of society today, and the University is committed to creating a connected campus community where students have universal and equal access to the tools and learning resources of the information age, both for education and career preparation,” said Thomas Skill, assistant provost for academic technology.

With 54 Web-based classes offered at Sinclair during the fall quarter and about 10 percent of Sinclair students registered in a distance-learning class each year, the college is also committed to providing technology-enhanced learning to its students.

“We want our students to be able to sign on to, continue and complete their degrees on campus, at home or from their hotel room as they travel,” said Dan Brazelton, dean of corporate and community services at Sinclair. “While we’re aggressively looking to expand our use of technology, at the same time we’re looking at its effectiveness,” Brazelton said, citing the college’s internal challenge grants that encourage faculty to develop new uses of technology and evaluate how technology works in their classes.

“How does it (technology) work? What does it do? Is this technology better than that one? Those questions are nationally based questions. Currently we don’t have the resources to answer those questions,” Brazelton said.

Peggy Falkenstein, dean of distance learning at Sinclair, said the new partnership provides an opportunity to transform the teaching-learning process. “We’re going away from the ‘sage on the stage’ approach to teaching and want our students to take an active role in their own learning — to be more active and collaborative,” she said.

“Everybody talks about using technology. But how can technology improve learning? How does technology actually help students to learn better?” Those are the questions that ITEL hopes to answer, Falkenstein said. “Teachers in all capacities need to learn how to use technology effectively.”

“Both of our organizations (UD and Sinclair) have been in the lead in the development of technology in the classroom,” Brazelton said. “Together we’ve done a lot already in offering alternative forms of education. Hopefully this is just the beginning.” Falkenstein said.