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PANEL 8

WIRING THE ACADEMY: WHAT’S WORKING, WHAT’S NOT, WHAT’S NEXT, AND WHY

Chair: Bradley C. Wheeler, Indiana University

Panelists: Lynda Applegate, Harvard University
David Brown, Wake Forest University
Peggy Phillips, University of Maryland at College Park

The network era of computing is and will profoundly change the conduct of management education. It offers opportunities for building new types of learning relationships among faculty, departments, colleges, students, and the corporations who employ business graduates. The challenges of funding and leading organizational change at the academy to seize these opportunities, however, are quite daunting. While successes with particular courses, student groups, or executive education programs abound, few business schools have succeeded with large scale IT implementation and the cultural changes necessary to thrive and lead in the network era of computing. This set of changes is referred to as wiring the academy.

At this time, many universities and corporate education centers are contemplating new investments in technology-supported learning infrastructure. The purpose of this panel is to convey and analyze specific lessons learned from pioneers who are wiring their academies. The diverse group of panelists will draw on their current experiences to help others plan for success. The panelists represent both public and private universities; roles including junior and senior faculty, staff, and university administration; and change driven through both bottom-up and top-down approaches.

PANELISTS AND THEIR ROLES

Brad Wheeler, Assistant Professor of IS, Indiana University, and moderator, has initiated bottom-up change at two universities to push for a greater use of collaborative learning technologies. As a bottom-up initiative, the key strategy has been to build small successes with students and faculty in other departments and then to leverage these successes into a broader adoption. Experiences show how on-line discussion forums have succeeded in a number of classes while failing in others. Use of groupware to reduce coordination costs for integrated teaching was a big success and key leverage point.

David G. Brown, Provost and Professor of Economics, Wake Forest University, is a key leader of Wake Forest’s Plan for the Class of 2000. This detailed plan of 37 recommendations, each linked to desired learning outcomes, is the blueprint for the university’s campus-wide wiring of classrooms and push for technology-supported learning. The entire entering freshman class of 1996 began the year with identical notebook computers and an extensive campus intranet connected to the classrooms. Provost Brown will report on what has been learned two years into implementation.

Lynda Applegate, Professor of Business Administration, Harvard University, will report on early teaching and learning experiences with the Harvard Business School’s multi-million dollar investment in a new intranet. The system is designed to be the lifeblood of collaboration and coordination for HBS students. It features an extensive repository
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of on-line cases including video clips and background information on companies and case actors. Professor Applegate will share successes and on-going challenges of levering value from this investment.

**Peggy Phillips**, Chief Technology Officer, College of Business and Management, University of Maryland at College Park, is charged with creating and supporting a quality IT infrastructure at the University of Maryland. She also actively works to engage faculty in greater use of technology-supported learning in the classroom and was the director of the project that created the college’s IBM-TQ Teaching Theater. She will report on the very real fiscal and personal challenges of supporting business school faculty and students as they engage the network era of computing.

**CONDUCT OF THE PANEL**

Each panelist will briefly address what his or her institution has done, how it was initiated, and how it was funded. He or she will describe what initiatives are working, what is not working, and why, with a focus on surprising or controversial insights. Each panelist will allow time for audience questions to explore situations described by the panelists. The panel chair will solicit these questions both verbally and on cards to effectively manage the 90 minute session. After individual comments, the collective panel will then engage in a dialogue with the audience regarding what is next for wiring the academy.

A key issue is expected to be the degree of urgency regarding IT and cultural change initiatives at the academy and when or if these initiatives will become a competitive necessity for management education.