

Name: John Chapin – Northland Pioneer College

Conference Title: WebCT Impact 2005

Conference Location: San Francisco, CA

Position: NPC Web

Conference Date: July 18-22, 2005

Please describe the purpose of attending this conference and list the Title III goals objectives that are supported by attending the conference.

Objectives 3A 3D and 3E are supported form 851-A3, page 11 of 16. Both the current and incoming NPC directors of activity were unable to attend therefore myself and one NPC faculty member went in their stead.

Please write a one page summary of information gained at the conference that relates to the stated goals and objectives and how this information will be applied to completing these goals and objectives.

As a matter of historical reality there has been no real expertise in WebCT design, setup, or administration on the NPC campus. Our classes have resided on a server in Texas, and our involvement has been limited to lower-level connectivity to that machine, and to faculty functioning in a limited capacity as their own designers.

The grant has already proven useful in terms of clarifying the issues for us in terms of long-term sustainable distance education for NPC. Attending the conference was another step forward in the evolution of this process. For me the personally, the highlight of the week was a session regarding the interoperability of open source technologies with the proprietary WebCT solution. The key concept of “Total cost of ownership” (TCO) was discussed at length. It remains to be seen whether NPC has reached the point of critical mass in distance education where our investment in WebCT justifies the TCO. Based on the conference session I would support micro-level pilot projects in non-proprietary methods of distance course delivery.

I also attended, wherever possible, sessions which addressed methods of content delivery which are available either within or outside of a WebCT/Vista shell. These included RSS (Really Simple Syndication) and a quasi-proprietary interface for the delivery of technical articles called safari-u for O'Reilly (The Publishing House).

In summary, I returned with a good deal of new knowledge about and enthusiasm for a variety of emergent distance education technologies.