



Best Educational E-Practices (BEEP)

Prepared and disseminated by [Project Eagle, St. Petersburg College](#)

Number 13

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October 1, 2001

Benchmarking St. Petersburg College: A Report to Leadership Project Eagle Evaluation Question #3 www.spjc.edu/eagle/PEEQ3.htm

How Can the eCampus Be Organized and Run to Address Traditional Faculty Concerns, But Maintain an Innovative Approach to Providing Educational Access?

Executive Summary

www.spjc.edu/eagle/BEEP/BEEP13.htm

“If the current growth in on-line education continues, teaching on-line will become part of routine faculty workload...”
(Gregory Hislop and Michael Atwood, [Drexel University](#))

Introduction

In 1999, [St. Petersburg College](#) (SPC) received a multi-year federal grant ([Project Eagle](#)) to build a national model for increasing access to four-year degrees and workforce training for students attending community colleges. Access would be enhanced by increasingly flexible educational opportunities – with courses, programs and support services delivered at a time and place, in a way and at a pace, best suited to the needs of the individual learner.

Part of Project Eagle is an evaluation of e-learning practices at the college, using a series of six critical questions formulated by the Project Eagle Action Committee (previously known as the Project Eagle Working Group) and shaped into a [plan](#) by the project’s external evaluator. The evaluation for the third question began with an examination of the best e-learning practices related to that question, both nationwide and worldwide, using the Web as the primary source of information. The results were published in [Best Educational E-Practices \(BEEP\), Issue 8, May 1, 2001, Faculty Issues in an E-Learning Environment.](#)

Then a list of all practices related to the question currently in use at SPJC was compiled and compared to those included in [BEEP #8](#). A [report](#) was prepared benchmarking SPJC, and the results submitted to the college leadership. This is a summary of the findings and recommendations of that report.

Background

The third question to be evaluated was related to faculty issues in an e-learning environment. In April 2001, research was completed to compile a list of such issues as identified by institutions nationwide and worldwide. The issues, identified in [BEEP #8](#), included instructional, compensatory, intellectual property, and training issues.

From June to the middle of September 2001, steps were taken to determine how SPC has addressed the faculty issues identified nationwide, as well as any that were found to be unique to the college. These steps included examination of existing formal college policies related to faculty issues; interviews with selected eCampus faculty, staff and administrators; and an informal survey via email of all SPC online faculty.*

*To get input from the faculty, who were not working in late July and early to mid-August, the originally scheduled completion date for Project Eagle Evaluation Question #3 was postponed from August 31 to September 30.

Results

There were four areas of faculty concern identified nationally. Those areas are identified below and followed by a summary of SPC's efforts in dealing with each.

A. Instructional Issues. Based on surveys at [Illinois State University \(ISU\)](#), [University of Nebraska \(UN\)](#) and the [State University of West Georgia \(SUWG\)](#).

1. Instructional technology support. Of those recommended by ISU, SPC provides WebCT software, offering faculty a spectrum of possibilities from syllabus only to full online courses; solutions to faculty course development needs by Instructional Technology (IT) staff who work one-on-one with faculty members; an online discussion area for e-learning faculty to share ideas; and full technology support by instructional technologists, technology design specialists, a trained and staffed help desk, and both network and computer support specialists.

2. Instructional support for course development. Support in areas identified by UN include opportunities for interaction with students via an [online survey of student instruction](#); a bulletin board on the [CyberAdvisor's Web site](#); the inclusion of eCampus staff contact information on all literature distributed to e-students; materials to support course content and technology via a WebCT tutorial for potential e-students; and extensive preparatory information for students on the [eCampus Web site](#). Also available are an extensive marketing campaign, print and Web-based; online delivery strategies like the newly developed E-Learning Journey faculty training series; enhancement of faculty's general knowledge of distance education by a mentorship program between experienced and new e-structors; and the recent creation of a full-time CyberAdvisor position as a needed local student contact point.

3. Other instructional needs and concerns. Other nationwide concerns, as defined by SUWG, and addressed at SPC are the college's incentives addressed immediately below in Compensatory Issues, as well as a pilot program for using online student assistants; prompt help solving WebCT problems by a good support staff; detailed instructional materials in the form of the E-Learning Journey training series; and absence of pressure on faculty to teach online courses.

B. Compensatory Issues. Based on a survey at [Temple University](#).

1. To assist faculty in developing or teaching an e-course, SPC provides an office computer for all full-time faculty, a discounted rate for ISP service at home, and permission from Microsoft to use any of its college-owned software at home. Enrollment for online courses is capped at 30, and Project Eagle funds support conference and meeting attendance/presentations for e-structors.

2. For developing e-courses, SPC faculty receive supplemental pay and the support of instructional technologists and technical design specialists.

3. For teaching e-courses, faculty may be paid as either a supplement or part of their base workload. This is an issue of concern to faculty and presently under examination by several committees to develop a consistent, collegewide policy. Ongoing support for e-structors is provided in the form of campus-specific computer and network support specialists, as well as a collegewide help desk. A special initiative is underway to provide laptop computers to e-structors, so they may work from any location.

C. Intellectual Property Issues. Compared with alternatives developed at a [Pew Learning and Technology Program-funded symposium](#) in Miami, February 2000.

SPC has developed an [Addendum to the Supplemental/Adjunct Contract](#) (also known as the "right to teach" contract) that states its policies on intellectual property. It has chosen to be the sole owner of any coursework developed and any related copyright. If the coursework is sold, faculty receive 50% of the proceeds. E-structors also have the non-exclusive right to teach a course using coursework they developed for the next three semesters that the course is offered.

D. Training Issues. Based on work done by [Melanie Clay](#), State University of West Georgia.

1. SPC provides its e-structors group training sessions at the campus level; one-on-one lab sessions with technologists; Web-based and printed materials; an online discussion area; a mentoring system; and notification from the IT department of new online developments relevant to them.

2. The college provides all beginning e-faculty training in its E-Learning Journey to be able to utilize WebCT as a student and facilitator; understand the basic strategies of creating and delivering an online course with WebCT; and create a course template using the [Project Eagle Faculty Checklist](#).

Review and Recommendations

Judging from the number of services SPC offers its e-structors and the generally very favorable responses of the online faculty themselves in an emailed survey, the eCampus has so far succeeded in both addressing traditional concerns and maintaining an innovative approach to providing educational access. There were a few negatives, and, not surprisingly, the issue of compensation was one that drew the most suggestions for change. However, some of the compensatory issues raised are already under examination by the college.