



Online Academic and Student Support Services, With an Update on Student Portals

This BEEP takes yet another look at online support services, a topic it has periodically studied since the first issue in October 2000. Here's the latest on the wide variety now provided electronically, with an update on the concept of the all-inclusive student portal, first closely examined in [BEEP #29](#), 2/1/03.

General Academic and Student Support Services

"...students expect more than static web pages – they are looking for personalized and integrated information and services that will support their higher education experience."

(Source: [Beyond the Administrative Core: Creating Web-based Student Services for Online Learners](#), FIPSE LAAP project, 2003)

Background and Theory

- [Beyond the Administrative Core: Creating Web-based Student Services for Online Learners](#). The impressive results of a FIPSE-funded project, 2000-2003, undertaken by the [Western Cooperative for Educational Telecommunications \(WCET\)](#). Not only does the report offer extensive [guidelines](#) for creating effective services, but also contains many examples of those offered at selected institutions nationwide. Specific service areas include [Academic Advising](#), [Career Planning](#), [Financial Aid](#), [Library Services](#), [Orientation](#), [Personal Counseling](#), [Tutoring](#), and [related topics](#) like [call centers](#) and [services for students with disabilities](#). (See also the earlier [Guide to Developing Online Student Services](#) below.)
- ["Extending Virtual Access: Promoting Engagement and Retention Through Integrated Support Systems."](#) Article by Holly McCracken, University of Illinois, in *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration* (7:1), Spring 2004, that focuses on expanding the scope of online instructional delivery to include critical academic support systems. Includes benefits, barriers, specific approaches and strategies to implementation of services.
- [Guide to Developing Online Student Services](#). An earlier [WCET](#) FIPSE-funded project, 1997-2000, that remains a foundation document for the design of effective online student services. (See also [Beyond the Administrative Core...](#) above.)
- [Online Academic Support: Development & Facilitation](#). Website maintained by Central Queensland University in Australia with links to online resources on the subject from 1996-2003.
- ["Quality Framework for Online Education: Access."](#) American Distance Education Consortium. Part of a set of general instructions on improving online programs, the section on access offers a list of the many types of support services needed.
- ["The Role of Student Affairs in Distance Education: Cyber-Services or Virtual Communities."](#) Article by Mark Kretovics, Kent State University (OH), in *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration* (6:3), Fall 2003, that discusses the differences "between providing cyber-services and creating virtual communities" for students.
- ["Six Factors to Consider When Planning Online Distance Learning Programs in Higher Education."](#) Article by Suzanne Levy, Allan Hancock College (CA), in *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration* (6:1), Spring 2003, that devotes several pages to the two factors of student services and student training and support.
- ["Supporting the Online Learner."](#) Chapter 15 by Judith A. Hughes in [Theory and Practice of Online Learning](#), Athabasca University, Canada, 2004, examines and offers advice on three problem areas in the support of the online learner: very large populations (e.g., universities with 100,000+ students); sparse populations widely spread out (e.g., the University of the Arctic); and students who wish to structure their learning environment according to their personal preferences.
- [University of Illinois Online](#). Overview of how a large e-learning department coordinates and facilitates the online efforts of three major campuses.

Examples

- [**Beyond the Administrative Core: Creating Web-based Student Services for Online Learners.**](#) This [WETC](#) study, already mentioned, has links to many examples of student services.
- [**Eastern Oregon State University.**](#) Website by a true [e-pioneer](#) in online student services.
- [**Northcentral University \(AZ\).**](#) Electronic Learning Resources Center offering library and other support: a dissertation center, tutorials, video conferencing, Web guides and course-related links.
- [**St. Petersburg College eCampus \(FL\).**](#) Highlighted in [**Best Educational Practices**](#), Issue 41, 11/1/04, are links to many of the online student services offered by this award-winning eCampus.

Student Portals

“Campuses with significant web access to student information and e-Business systems will find that a [student] portal helps to bring all these services together in one coordinated point of access.”

(Source: [Weber State University](#), Utah)

Background and Theory

- [**“Assessing Portalness.”**](#) Article by Bert DeSimone, University of Georgia, in *Campus Technology*, 12/15/04, on evaluating the vertical and horizontal attributes of academic portals.
- [**“Portals and Portfolios: Customizable Tools for Improving E-Learning.”**](#) *Best Educational E-Practices*, Issue 29, 2/1/2003. BEEP’s initial look at the portal concept, with some still-useful links.
- [**Provosts on Portals.**](#) American Association of State Colleges and Universities. Project designed to educate senior university officials on the design and use of portals via 20 online lessons.
- [**uPortal.**](#) Named one of the [**top 5 IT innovators by InfoWorld magazine**](#) in 2003, this is a creation of the Java Architectures Special Interest Group (Ja-Sig) and a few software companies that developed an open-source portal framework. Includes links to academic uPortals worldwide.

Examples

- [**CalTech Portals.**](#) [**Undergraduate**](#) and [**graduate**](#) portals that, although not personalized, provide a tremendous amount of information for students at the California Institute of Technology.
- [**CampusProgram.com.**](#) Non-personalized and free Website designed as a portal for prospective students worldwide – a starting point for educational and career information of all kinds.
- [**High Priority Connection Network \(HPCNet\).**](#) Commercial portal-hosting service that provides forms and instruction for the creation of a school or business portal, with supplementary services.
- [**MyStanford.edu.**](#) Well-designed student portal at Stanford University (CA) that allows guest users access for a demo of most of its features without the need for an ID or password.
- [**Portals: Examples of Best Practice.**](#) Website created by James Currall, University of Glasgow, July 2003, that reviews the construction of four academic portals: the University of Delaware, LSE for You (UK), UCLA, and the University of Washington.

BEEP’s Best Bets

Free Information Sources

- [**The Innovate Gateway.**](#) New peer-reviewed e-journal on research in information technology.

Instructional Resources

- [**”More Professors Teach by Using Other Colleges’ Online Courses.”**](#) Article by Dan Carnevale in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 10/15/04, on the trend toward purchasing ready-made online courses from other institutions.
- [**“When Good Technology Means Bad Teaching.”**](#) Article by Jeffrey R. Young in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 11/12/04, on the misuse of classroom technology by unskilled instructors.

Laws and Legislation

- [**“One Internet, Many Copyright Laws.”**](#) Reprint of an article by Victoria Shannon written for the *New York Times*, 11/8/04, on problems resulting from differences in international copyright laws.

www.spcollege.edu/eagle/research/BEEP/BEEP42.htm

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