

## Serving Students Online

***“If change is a key word for education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, then...nowhere is change more evident than in the way we use technology to assist students.”***

Anita Crawley, [“Online Student Services Benefit All Students.”](#)

*Student Affairs On-line*, Winter 2004

This issue marks BEEP’s third look at the state of online student services, whether for traditional or e-students. Since most colleges and universities now offer all their basic student services online, interest has shifted to ways of serving prospective students. For that reason, BEEP will present some of the best recommendations and examples of what’s available for both student groups.

### Online Services for Existing Students Background

- [Center for Transforming Student Services](#). Partnership of several organizations that expands on extensive research by the Western Cooperative for Educational Telecommunications (WCET) several years ago. It provides tools for development of services online and includes links to best practice models in online student services, plus a library of sources, an audit service for benchmarking and planning services, news announcements, workshops and consulting services.
- [iJournal: Insight into Student Services](#). E-journal produced by a collaboration of California community colleges.
- [Online Academic and Student Support Services, with an Update on Student Portals](#). *Best Educational E-Practices* (BEEP) 42, 1/1/05. BEEP’s most recent look at student services, with many still-valuable links on the subject.
- [“Online Student Services Benefit All Students.”](#) Article by Anita Crawley in *Student Affairs On-line* (5:1), Winter 2004, that defines the stages in the development of full online student services, with links to institutions that exemplify best practices in the services they offer.
- [“Serving the Online Learner.”](#) Article by Judith V. Boettcher in *CampusTechnology.com*, 4/1/07, about some cutting-edge services being offered at several schools, including free online courses, live support, virtual advising and more.
- [Student Affairs On-line](#). Quarterly e-journal devoted to the use of technology in student affairs.

### Examples

- [AskAU!](#) Unique FAQ system developed at Athabasca University (Canada) that provides answers to students’ common questions, within one business day, using natural language searches.
- [“The Embedded Librarian Program.”](#) Article by Victoria Matthew and Ann Schroeder in *Educause Quarterly* (29:4), 2006, about a program at the Community College of Vermont that assigns a librarian to every online course to answer questions and provide ongoing help.
- [E-Student Services: Ten-Minute Tutorial for Engaging, Educating & Empowering Students](#). Product of Minnesota Online, a collaboration of colleges and universities, with strategies for improving various e-student services, including a [list of schools](#) offering unique best practices.
- [“From Bricks to Bytes: Building an Online Activities Environment.”](#) Article by Jody Conway and Barry Hubbard, in *Student Affairs On-line* (4:3), Summer 2003, about the interface, Involvement through Redefined Online Activities and Resources (iRoar), at St. Leo University (FL) that provides services beyond the essentials (e.g., lounges, games room, and sports center).
- [“GoWMU.”](#) Article by Linda L. Briggs in *Campus Technology*, 2/28/07, about Western Michigan University’s student portal, where components blend seamlessly to make diverse applications, like those from Sungard, PeopleSoft, and others, easily available to users from one entry point.
- [Penn State Online. Current Students](#). Introductory webpage for current Penn State students from a school whose World Campus has been a model in the delivery of online student services.

## Online Services for Prospective Students Background

- [Collegewebeditor.com](#). Blog about the Web, marketing and public relations in higher education.
- [“License to Recruit?”](#) Article by Karine Joly in *UniversityBusiness.com*, 8/06, that examines student blogs sponsored by college admissions offices all over the country. See also [the author’s interview](#), 8/16/06, on the subject with the creator of one at Columbia University (NY).
- [“Prospective College Students Receptive to Electronic Social Networking Recruiting Methods, Survey Finds.”](#) Article by Ronald Roach in *Diverseeducation.com*, 12/28/06, on a study revealing that 43% of college-bound juniors have already created a profile, similar to those on [Facebook](#) and [MySpace](#), on a college or university website, and more would like to.
- [“Top 15 Features to Recruit Prospective Students with Your College Website.”](#) Article by Karine Joly in *Collegewebeditor.com*, 10/26/06, that lists the most-requested features by college-bound high school seniors. (The top two are for forms estimating financial aid and tuition costs.)

### Examples

- [Guess Who’s Looking at Your Web Page...](#) Article by Alan Finder in *New York Times Upfront*, 9/18/06, on the evaluation of prospective students by college admissions officers who examine sites like [Facebook](#) and [MySpace](#).
- [“How Does the University of Phoenix Recruit Online?”](#) Article by Karine Joly in *Collegewebeditor.com*, 2/24/05, offering tips for effective webpage development based on an analysis of examples from a top e-learning player.
- [“It’s Electric.”](#) Article by Ann McClure in *UniversityBusiness.com*, 3/07, about the work of several colleges in promoting electronic admissions to eliminate the use of paper applications.
- [SUNY Learning Network Distance Learning Calculator](#). One institution’s answer to the FAQ on how much money, if any, a student will saving by taking college courses online.

### BEEP’s Best Bets

#### Free Information Sources

- [After Flap over Phony Academic Credentials, Wikipedia to Ask Some Writers to Share Real Names.](#) Associated Press release, 3/7/07, highlighting the case of a Wikipedia author who had none of the credentials he claimed. See also a [January 2007 article](#) about a decision by Middlebury College (VT) to forbid using the Wikipedia as a source for papers and projects.
- [Northern Light](#). Recent reappearance of a venerable search engine (1997-2002), now largely devoted to business research, that provides access to both free and fee-based online sources.

#### Innovative Technologies

- [“An Alternative to the Computer Mouse.”](#) Article by Kate Greene in *Technology Review*, 3/2/07 describing a user interface developed at Stanford University that tracks eye movement.
- [“Connecting Your Brain to the Game.”](#) Article by Kate Green in *Technology Review*, 3/7/07, about the development of an EEG cap by Emotive Systems that allows video game users to control play with electrical signals from their brains.
- [Part I: A Smarter Web](#). Article by John Borland in *Technology Review*, 3/19/07, about the Semantic Web concept, that will make online searching more intelligent by giving computers the ability to understand Web content. See also [Part II](#), 3/20/07, on the same subject.

#### Instructional Resources

- [MIT to Offer Its Courses Free Online by Year’s End](#). Reuters release announcing that 1800 Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s courses will soon be free to all on a non-credit basis.
- [“Panel Studies High Cost of College Texts.”](#) Article by Stuart Silverstein, *Los Angeles Times*, 3/7/07, on panel recommendations that instructors use articles, lecture notes, study guides and other materials available free online and provide students with texts they can rent, not buy.

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