

TECHNOLOGY TODAY

New Initiatives Supporting Academia

- UPGRADES AND ADDITIONS IN ACADEMIC SOFTWARE
- KEY NETWORK ENHANCEMENTS
- COLLABORATE VIDEO-CONFERENCING TOOL SELECTED
- ENHANCING SECURITY FOR CUNY USERS
- UPCOMING PROJECTS

We welcome your
comments and ideas for
new initiatives at
cisfeedback@cityu.edu

CUNY CIS continues to undertake numerous projects to support the University's faculty and students. The following provides updates on new, significant technology initiatives supporting academia.

Upgrades and Additions in Academic Software

Blackboard Upgrading to Version 9.1



The Committee on Academic Technology's (CAT's) Blackboard subcommittee, campus Blackboard administrators, and CIS worked together to upgrade the Blackboard learning management system to version 9.1. The upgrade went smoothly

and was successfully completed at the end of May for all courses and organizations since Spring 2011, with the exception of Spring 2012. Spring 2012 courses and organizations remained live in version 8.0 until June 15th to allow for continued access by faculty and students and are being converted to version 9.1 through June and July.

Summer courses are now available in version 9.1. Version 9.1 includes many new features, such as an expanded capability for creating Group Settings; a Notifications Dashboard to help users keep track of course deadlines, alerts, and new content; improved grading and assessment modules; and a Multi-Media Mashups feature that will make it easier to bring in content from MS Word, Excel, YouTube, Flickr and SlideShare.

Further information on the Blackboard 9.1 upgrade, including a schedule of training workshops for faculty and User Guides for new features, can be found at www.cuny.edu/blackboard

DegreeWorks Upgrade

An upgrade of DegreeWorks, the web-based academic advisement and graduation audit system used by most CUNY colleges, is being rolled out. The system currently enables students and advisors to evaluate the academic requirements for a student's enrolled degree program and to assess the impact on course requirements for a change in major or degree. It also serves as the data source for determining a student's eligibility for New York State financial aid. Once the course catalogs in DegreeWorks are coded to reflect the Pathways Initiative, which begins in Fall 2013, DegreeWorks will also help students and advisors see how their course requirements would change if they opt into Pathways.

New version 4.09 allows for calculations using double major or minor requirements and also provides a search tool to make it easier to find a student's audit, among other new features. The new version is integrated into CUNYfirst so campuses automati-

cally transition to DegreeWorks version 4.09 when they go live with CUNYfirst. Those colleges that self-host DegreeWorks have also transitioned to the new version. CUNY CIS will be working with those campuses scheduled for a later migration to CUNYfirst to ensure their conversion to version 4.09 this year.

New Enterprise Agreements

CIS negotiates enterprise agreements on behalf of CUNY campuses for IT licenses and services, providing significant discounts for all colleges. In the past, CIS successfully negotiated a volume licensing agreement for all server-based products, such as SharePoint and Exchange, saving campuses more than 40%. Faculty and staff attain these products through the campus site license administrator and can use them both in the office and at home. More recently, CIS entered into an enterprise agreement with Adobe, giving all faculty and students access to the Creative Suite CS6 (Master Collection, Web Premium and Design Premium). These software packages offer graphic design, video editing, and web development applications for professional print, web design, and web development.

CIS also recently contracted with IBM for the latest Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Campus Edition software and related support services, at a savings of \$7 million over 5 years for CUNY campuses. SPSS is widely used to support instruction in math and statistics and for academic research involving statistical analysis. This software can be used for teaching and non-commercial academic research on CUNY-owned or funded computers.

Microsoft, Adobe and SPSS are available through the campus site license administrator. For a full list of software and contact information for site license administrators, see: <http://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/CIS/tech-services/site-licenses.html>

Finally, CUNY CIS just renewed for another year its contract with Gartner, Inc. to provide CUNY faculty, students and staff access to Gartner's technology-related research and advice online. Gartner's resources – including white papers on industry trends, best practices, and other analyses -- are available to the CUNY community for free by logging into the Citizen CUNY portal at https://cunyportal.cuny.edu/cpr/authenticate/portal_login.jsp

Key Network Enhancements

Several network upgrades are under way that will support higher speeds and allow for greater data transfer. The CUNY fiber rings, which provide network connectivity to CUNY campuses in Manhattan and the Bronx, are being upgraded and expanded to include the following additional sites: Hostos Community College, Bronx Community College, the new Fiterman Hall at the Borough of Manhattan Community College, and the Hunter College/ Graduate Center shared facility. Additionally, those campuses currently on the fiber network in Manhattan and the Bronx will see a 10 to 20-fold increase in the network's capacity. Service to CUNY's High Performance Computing Center (HPCC) was also upgraded in 2011 through an additional 1 Gpbs line. This will allow the HPCC, located on the College of Staten Island's campus, to handle more research activities and data transfer from CUNY's campuses.

Faculty and students continue to have access to Internet2, a leading high-bandwidth research network for member universities and other research institutions. CIS is scheduled to provide a ten-fold increase in capacity for access to Internet2. Questions regarding Internet2 should be directed to the campus IT departments.

Collaborate Video-Conferencing Tool Selected

To improve virtual learning and video-conferencing capabilities, the Committee on Academic Technology (CAT) convened a committee to select a new video-conferencing tool. After extensive evaluation, the new Blackboard Collaborate tool was selected, and CIS negotiated with Blackboard, Inc. to include Collaborate as part of a broader 5-year contract with Blackboard, Inc. Collaborate combines the features of Wimba and Elluminate, enabling virtual classrooms and meetings. The product is licensed for academic use only. Training materials and administrative support will be available to interested faculty members, and campus IT departments can provide more information on how to access these services.

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Enhancing Security for CUNY Users

Since its creation in 2005, CIS's IT Security Office has worked to strengthen encryption services and other security offerings to the CUNY community. Free McAfee anti-virus software is available to faculty, students and staff on the CUNY eMall, by logging on through the Citizen CUNY Portal at https://cunyportal.cuny.edu/cpr/authenticate/portal_login.jsp (Any questions on downloading and installing this anti-virus software should be directed to the campus IT Help Desk.)

All campus IT staff have important security technology, such as secure file transferring, encryption and vulnerability assessment tools, to proactively and continually manage IT security risks. Later in 2012, CUNY will be upgrading its encryption technology to also include host data loss prevention (i.e., the inadvertent disclosure of personal information such as social security numbers). This upgraded service from McAfee will be available to all faculty and staff through their campus IT departments.


Visit the IT Security Awareness tutorial at security.cuny.edu for more information on online protections. This tutorial covers important topics such as protecting yourself against phishing and spam attacks, file and email security, and backing up your data and properly disposing of computer equipment.

Upcoming Projects

ePortfolio Protections Explored

A new committee is exploring issues relating to the use of ePortfolios (the digital files of materials currently maintained by many faculty and students). Committee members include faculty currently or considering using ePortfolios, along with CUNY technology and legal experts. The committee will look at ownership of content, copyright privileges, and privacy interests in the material maintained online, among other issues. Understanding the diverse needs and solutions of CUNY faculty and students will help this Committee make recommendations on an ePortfolio strategy.

eMall Expansion

 The CUNY eMall is a virtual shopping plaza where students, faculty and staff can obtain goods and services at a discount or even for free. To access the savings you must be registered and logged on to the Citizen CUNY portal as an enrolled CUNY student, faculty or staff member by signing on: https://cunyportal.cuny.edu/cpr/authenticate/portal_login.jsp

Current offerings include software (such as free McAfee anti-virus protection and free Microsoft Office for faculty and staff), clothing and entertainment discounts, discounts off Dell computers, and discounts off T-Mobile and Sprint wireless service. The eMall will be expanding these offerings to provide the CUNY community a broader array of discounted goods and services.