

PRESIDENT TO PRESIDENT

IEWS ON TECHNOLOGY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Foreword

SunGard Higher Education
Council of Independent Colleges

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By Richard Ekman and William Graves

In recent years, the uses of technology in higher education have increased in ways that were not anticipated even a few years earlier. For presidents of smaller, independent institutions, the challenges have been several: 1) to learn about possibilities for new uses of technology on campus; 2) to obtain disinterested advice about which of many options to pursue, especially insofar as most purchases of technology are significant expenditures; and 3) to stay informed about even newer possibilities for using technology to improve academic and administrative outcomes while decisions made just a few years earlier are still being implemented.

The Council of Independent Colleges recognizes that most presidents cannot immerse themselves in the changing roles, capabilities, and cost structures of the latest technologies. CIC accordingly tries to help presidents understand enough about technology-related matters to act prudently on technology purchasing and deployment decisions in the short timeframes associated with technology advances. CIC has arranged for sessions on specific technology-related topics at the annual CIC Presidents Institutes, the participation of many technology experts in the Institute, and the publication in 2005 of two publications for presidents (*Information Technology Benchmarks: A Practical Guide for College and University Presidents* and *President to President: Views on Technology in Higher Education*). Among the many technology companies that serve independent colleges and universities, SunGard Higher Education, the largest devoted exclusively to higher education, deserves our thanks for supporting the latter 2005 publication and conceiving of the current collection of essays as a way to help CIC presidents address rapidly evolving technology issues and opportunities.

With the encouragement and continuing gratitude of CIC and SunGard Higher Education, CIC's Senior Counsel Marylouise Fennell and two college presidents, Jacqueline Doud of Mount St. Mary's College (CA) and Scott Miller of Bethany College (WV), have shepherded and edited a fresh set of essays on how technology is being used to help independent institutions operate more effectively, all written by presidents from the perspective of their direct experiences. Several of the essays focus on functional areas of the campus that correspond more or less to units of the typical campus organization—board relations, advancement, and enrollment, for example. Several others focus on subjects that are often sources of major time-consuming problems for presidents including cost efficiencies, retention, and making the institution more distinctive. And still other essays introduce presidents to aspects of technology that are likely to be of greater importance in the coming years—portals, social networks, cloud computing, collecting and analyzing data, and the emerging role of technology in “institutional productivity.”

What drives most of this inquiry is, indeed, a growing concern about the productivity of smaller colleges and universities. With pressure from families and public officials to control prices, most colleges are reexamining their cost structures and looking to utilize technology not only in back office functions, but also in highly visible aspects of a college's operations that include enrollment, instruction, and assessment of learning outcomes. The rhetoric of international competition and American workforce development has given immediacy to these discussions in recent years.

Technology and academic culture may sometimes collide, especially within the rhetoric of "productivity." In the sense of McLuhan's "medium-is-the-message" insight, however, technology is changing the larger environment in which students learn. The dilemma for smaller independent institutions is that small scale, plentiful student-faculty and student-student live interaction, and substantial co-curricular activity have been the hallmarks of these institutions for many years. There is good evidence that a college education that utilizes these (admittedly, expensive) features is very effective—indeed, often more effective than other formats of education. The challenge today, therefore, is to utilize more cost-effective means, while preserving what has been so successful in the past by adapting it to the evolving cognitive modalities of this and subsequent generations. Happily—within these essays—there are examples of innovative uses of technology that honor traditional philosophies of education, while also improving efficiency and increasing learning and institutional effectiveness. (An additional "thought piece" is available from SunGard Higher Education for those who want to dig deeper into the broad policy context for today's "learning productivity" challenge in education.¹)

CIC and SunGard Higher Education are grateful to presidents Richard Artman of Viterbo University, Esther Barazzone of Chatham University, Christopher Blake of Mount Mercy College, Larry Goodwin of the College of St. Scholastica, Arthur Kirk of Saint Leo University, Ruth Knox of Wesleyan College, Theodore Long of Elizabethtown College, Kevin Manning of Stevenson University, Kevin Ross of Lynn University, and Michael Victor of Lake Erie College for contributing essays to this effort to advance our collective understanding of the role of technology in the independent institution. We encourage you to read their timely and insightful essays, which we believe will stimulate fresh thinking among all college and university presidents about better ways to conduct and assure both the efficiency and the quality of the "business" of learning—even at the most intimate scale of intellectual interaction.

¹ Waste Not the Learning Productivity Crisis, William H. Graves, first version posted to the Web in June, 2009.
http://institutionalperformance.typepad.com/WHG/Waste_Not_the_Learning_Productivity_Crisis.pdf

About the Authors



Richard Ekman
President, Council of Independent Colleges

Richard Ekman has been president of the Council of Independent Colleges since 2000. He previously served as vice president for programs of Atlantic Philanthropies and, from 1991 to 1999, as secretary of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. From 1982 until 1991, he was a member of the staff of the National Endowment for the Humanities, first as director of the Division of Education Programs, and subsequently as director of the Division of Research Programs. He currently serves as a member of many boards, including those of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, the National Humanities Alliance, Project Pericles, LSU Press, the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, and the Overseers' Committee to Visit the Harvard University Library. Additionally, at Harvard he has been a member of the Villa I Tatti Council and the Graduate School Alumni Council.

His previous experience includes service as vice president and dean of Hiram College, where he was also a tenured member of the history faculty. Earlier, he served as assistant to the provost at the University of Massachusetts at Boston, and as associate director of the Department of Expository Writing at Harvard University. Ekman holds a Ph.D. from Harvard in the history of American civilization, the institution from which he also received his A.M. and A.B. (*magna cum laude*) degrees. He is co-author, with Richard E. Quandt, of *Technology and Scholarly Communication* (University of California Press, 1999).

Ekman has previously been active as a member of a variety of advisory and governing boards, serving the American Association for Higher Education, the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, the Council of American Overseas Research Centers, the Rackham Advancement Council of the University of Michigan, the Society for Values in Higher Education, the Washington Higher Education Secretariat, Georgetown Day School (Washington, DC) and Collegiate School (New York), and the Ohio Board of Regents.



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Bill Graves, senior vice president, academic strategy, provides guidance for SunGard Higher Education's ongoing initiatives to support teaching and learning. Working closely with other members of the executive team, Graves's unique perspective and experience help position SunGard Higher Education as an education partner able to contribute to the realization of institutional goals and initiatives.

Graves is a professor emeritus of mathematics at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC). He writes a periodic academic technology column for *Campus Technology* and publishes papers in the *EDUCAUSE Review* and other periodicals. He serves as a co-founding board member on the boards of both the National Center for Academic Transformation and the Alliance for Higher Education Competitiveness. He also has served on the boards of a number of other higher education associations.

Graves earned a mathematics Ph.D. from Indiana University before joining the faculty at UNC, where he also served as dean for general education, interim vice chancellor for academic affairs, senior information technology officer under various titles, and founder and director of the Institute for Academic Technology (a UNC/IBM alliance). At SunGard Higher Education, he continues to advocate for the transformative role of technology in systemically and measurably improving and accounting for institutional performance in higher education. You can learn more about his ideas at Graves's blog <http://institutionalperformance.typepad.com/>.