

February 8, 2006

City College of San Francisco Convenes Advisory Panel for NSF Network & Information Technology ICONS Grant

City College of San Francisco (CCSF) hosted the first Advisory Panel meeting for its new Institute for Convergence of Optical and Network Systems (ICONS) on January 20th, 2006. ICONS is funded in part by a 3 year, \$750,000 grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF), establishing as a national priority goals for advancing training of 21st century networking and information technology specialists. The ICONS award was announced in a press release by San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom on November 10th, 2005.

CCSF Chancellor Philip R. Day opened the meeting with a warm welcome and expressions of appreciation. He spoke of great advances made in CCSF facilities and communications infrastructure; thanks to community support via Proposition A bond funds which now enable the school to advance its instructional and community service missions with initiatives like ICONS.

Tim Ryan, City College Network Manager and Co-Principal Investigator of ICONS, provided background on City College, which is one of the largest colleges in the world, serving more than 106,000 very diverse students this year, with more than 4,700 courses in 50 academic programs & over 100 academic disciplines, by a faculty and staff of more than 2,000.

Modernized CCSF communications infrastructure includes new campus wiring systems, extensive high-speed LANs, a modern VoIP telephone environment with more than 2,000 handsets and WiFi wireless network access points at major campuses. CCSF has also completed, in partnership with the City and County of San Francisco, a fiber optic intercampus network, tying CCSF campuses together and to a major data center with Gigabit speeds today, virtually unlimited bandwidth in the future, a 100Mbps public Internet connection (>1500 times faster than a dialup connection) and 900Mbps to other California educational institutions via Corporation for Educational Network Initiatives in California (CENIC) optical backbones.

Carmen Lamha, Computer Networking and Information Technology (CNIT) Department Chair and ICONS Co-Principal investigator, provided background on the CNIT department, which currently provides 1775 students 56 course offerings, 10 academic certificates, and 10 industry certificates with a staff of 23 at an incredible value, \$26 per unit for credit and free for non-credit training. The CNIT is a Cisco Regional Networking Academy.

Pierre Thiry, ICONS Principal Investigator and CNIT Instructor, described how the NSF, through its Advanced Technology Education (ATE) program has awarded CCSF \$750,000 over 3 years to advance training of next generation IT and networking technicians. CCSF's Bio-Link ATE Center is a widely admired program at CCSF to develop, disseminate and promote advanced biotechnology technical training, which has played a key role in biotechnology industry successes in the Bay Area and in attracting the California Stem Cell research project to locate in San Francisco. Similarly, ICONS hopes to stimulate the economy by cost-effectively developing, disseminating and promoting advanced training for the next generation of IT and Networking technicians. Pierre described each of ICONS major goals:

- Modernizing the CNIT Department
- Developing New Courses & Certificates
- Developing a new AS Degree
- Expanding Articulation and Transfer Opportunities
- Recruiting Under-Represented Students
- Developing and Utilizing Technology Infrastructure
- Expanding Internship and Job Placement Opportunities
- Providing Staff Development, Seminars and Workshops

James Jones of Photisis Consulting then facilitated introductions of Advisory Panel attendees, which include:

- 1) 15 CCSF faculty, staff and administrative members,
- 2) Other educational institutions, represented by:
 - The Corporation for Educational Networking Initiatives in California (CENIC)
 - The Institute for Telecommunications Technologies (IT²) at Cuyamaca College
 - The National Center for Telecommunications Technology (NCTT) at the Springfield Community College NSF ATE Center in Massachusetts
 - Cabrillo College
 - California State University - Monterey Bay, School of IT and Communications Design
 - The San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD)
- 3) Communications equipment manufacturers, including:
 - Cisco Systems
 - Juniper Networks
 - Alcatel
 - Hewlett Packard
- 4) Communications Technology Service Providers, including:
 - SBC/at&t
 - Comcast
 - IPNetworks
 - Sprint/Nextel
 - Broadwing
 - The Dandin Group
 - Photisis Consulting
- 5) Communications Standards Bodies, including:
 - The Metro Ethernet Forum (MEF)
 - Institute of Electrical & Electronics Engineers (IEEE)

6) Government and Non-profits, including:

- The City and County of San Francisco Department of Telecommunications and Information Services (DTIS)
- The National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors (NATOA)
- The California Employment Development Department (EDD)
- The Information Technology Consortium (ITC)
- SeaKay
- The Institute for Women in Trades, Technology & Science
- The Saflund Institute

It is a national priority to provide quality training for advanced network and IT technicians, so all organizations who increasingly rely on those technologies benefit from the best and best managed network and IT systems possible. The Advisory Panel contributes to the success of that mission by contributing ideas, experiences, resources, information and efforts.

[Insert Quotes?]

For more information, contact Dr. Pierre Thiry (Tel: 415-239-3594; email: pthiry@ccsf.edu)