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CNI and Dartmouth Launch Collaborative Facilities Web Site

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The Coalition for Networked Information (CNI) and Dartmouth College recently announced the availability of a new Web site, "Collaborative Facilities," designed to collect, organize, and disseminate information about model "collaborative facilities" on college and university campuses. The project is sponsored by CNI and hosted by Dartmouth in an effort to assist institutions in planning, implementing, and evaluating these facilities.

One element of CNI's mission is to promote collaboration between information technologists, librarians, and other groups since so many aspects of the use of technology in higher education benefit from the contributions of the skills and perspectives of a variety of professionals. Collaborations take place in many ways, and this project highlights successful collaborations that are rooted in new or renovated space, which helps to integrate services for users and provides an updated physical environment for technology-related services.

What is a Collaborative Facility?

Collaborative facilities integrate the services of information technologists, librarians, instructional technologists, multimedia producers, and many others to serve a wide range of faculty and student needs. The organization and functions of these facilities vary widely, but all include a distinct physical space, participation by at least two separate campus units, and staff members dedicated to collaborative work. Collaborative facilities include "information commons," which provide information and reference services and networked information resources to students and faculty. Some campus centers for teaching and learning that assist faculty in integrating new technologies into the curriculum are operated as collaborative facilities. Multimedia production and service facilities are another type of facility that some universities are developing as a joint project of more than one campus unit.

The Web Site

The Web site allows information professionals, administrators, faculty, and other interested visitors to browse a range of collaborative facilities online and to analyze documents related to their planning, design, administration, staffing, services, and funding. The site also provides contact information for each participating institution. The site is intended to serve the interests

of those institutions that are planning renovations or new buildings and want to consider some element of collaboration related to technology resources and services. Bringing together the materials from a variety of institutions into one Web site should facilitate the information-gathering part of the facility planning process.

A wide range of materials are solicited from each institution, including planning documents, designs of physical space, reports of technology design and costs, descriptions of services, administration and staffing documents such as organizational charts and job descriptions, financial information, and marketing plans and materials.

Early Participants

At the launch of the site, information from the facilities of three universities was available in order to provide models for other submissions. They include Dartmouth College, Baker-Berry Library; Oregon State University Information Commons; and University of Tennessee, Knoxville, "The Studio" and Digital Media Service.

CNI has hosted presentations on collaborative facilities at its Task Force Meetings for the past two years. Dartmouth College presented information on the joint service areas in its renovated Baker-Berry Library, Oregon State University described its Information Commons, Northwestern University featured its hybrid center called 2East, University of Tennessee explained the rationale and services of its Studio and its Digital Media Service, University of Arizona presented its Integrated Learning Center, and Vassar College reported on its Media Cloisters. Additional presentations from collaborative facilities are planned for upcoming CNI Task Force Meetings.

Submissions

The site opened with materials from some representative examples of collaborative facilities, and now CNI and Dartmouth are seeking wide input of projects. All higher education institutions are invited to submit materials on their collaborative facilities for inclusion in the Web site. The materials will be reviewed to determine that they meet the primary criteria of the Collaborative Facilities project:

- Facilities must be physical spaces.
- Facilities must involve more than one unit of the institution, e.g., computing center, library, teaching faculty, instructional technology group, etc.
- Facilities must involve the use of information technology.

An advisory group including Malcolm Brown of Dartmouth College, Barbara Dewey of University of Tennessee, Chuck Henry of Rice University, Michael Neuman of Georgetown University, Catherine Murray-Rust of Oregon State University, and Joan Lippincott of CNI, developed the plan for the Web site. Susan Simon of Dartmouth provided the site design.

The Web site, which includes a submissions form, is available at <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~collab/>.

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