No Boundaries

Teaching Solutions Through Technology

Meet The New Face of Blackboard

Juan M. Valadez, Jr. to Manage Blackboard

By Jeff Schomburg

Blackboard is in good hands. After Bhavik Jhaveri's years of service to the St. Mary's community, ATS has a new Blackboard and Unix system administrator – Juan Manuel Valadez, Jr.

Juan arrived at St. Mary's in 1998 after graduating from McCallen High School. Although he was accepted to several large Texas universities, St. Mary's just felt like home. Now for Juan, it still is.

As a graduate of St. Mary's electrical engineering program, Juan is no stranger to technology. Of the program Juan says, "They taught me to learn, not just memorize." He continues saying, "In electrical engineering, you can't just learn the equation, you've got to learn the process. Everything is accumulative." Praising the faculty he suggests it is their "commitment and attention to detail" that makes them second to none. Juan, who is diagnosed with dyslexia, says the faculty look at each individual and help them learn through their mistakes."

Dr. Bahman Rezaie of Electrical Engineering, says of Juan, "I truly believe Blackboard is in good hands and the campus community will be pleased by Juan's work ethics and pleasant personality. More importantly, Juan's experience and background on both software and hardware will be of extreme value to ATS."

His interest in Unix, Blackboard's core operating system, began back in 1999 with the free release of a Unix operating system called BeOS. However, it wasn't until Sun Microsystems released its free X86 Solaris 8 operating system that Juan's interest in Unix-server administrati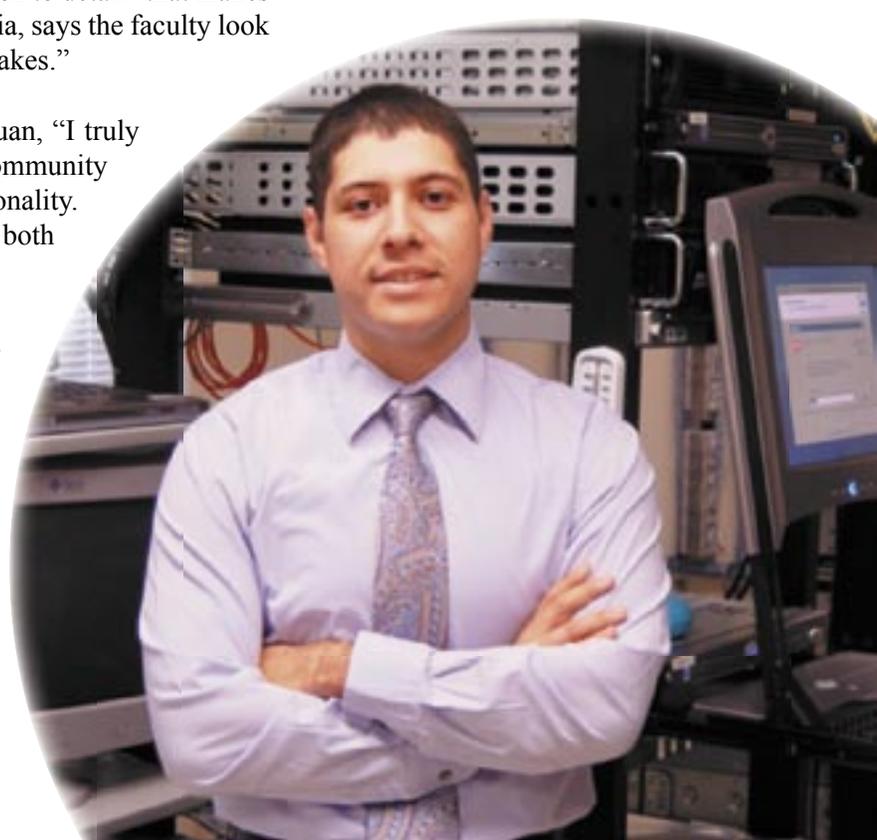on became an obsession. Within six months, he had networked seven computers all running Sun Solaris 8. After that, he was sold on the power of Unix.

> **"I truly believe Blackboard is in good hands....**
> — Dr. Bahman Rezaie

Juan M. Valadez, Jr. (cont.)

So what is the Unix difference? According to Juan Unix's stability, control, and customization make it the ideal choice. That's why ATS runs both Blackboard and faculty Web sites from Unix servers. "In the Unix environment, you can control every process," says Juan.

"The Unix source code is customizable to fit your needs," he continues. "This means only what you need is running on the Unix system, something that's next to impossible on other systems. Besides, when's the last time their was a Unix or Mac virus." If Unix is the power behind Blackboard, what does he think about Blackboard itself?

According to Juan, Blackboard's strength is that it combines the course management services into a centralized package you can use from anywhere. "Blackboard allows professors to focus on teaching without needing assistance," says Juan. Blackoard's ease of use provides faculty with a lot of potential.

Juan believes his mission at ATS is to help faculty understand what else they can do on Blackboard. He says most faculty aren't pushing the limits of what Blackboard can do. He says that by learning how Blackboard is being used today by faculty and students, he can better teach how to use it in the future.

If you'd like to learn more about Blackboard, please call Juan at 431-5074 or e-mail him at bb-support@stmarytx.edu.

Product Spotlight: Document Camera
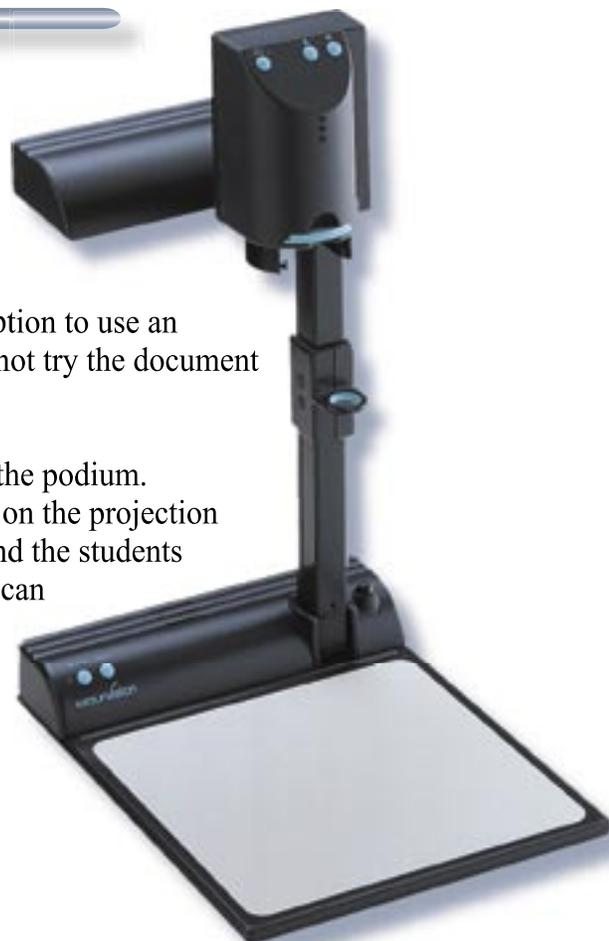
Overhead Projectors Replaced by Today's Document Camera

By Helene Webb

Remember teaching class using the overhead projector and writing notes on transparencies? If you are using one of the technology classrooms, there are no longer any overhead projectors. Maybe you would like to not only use PowerPoint to teach your class, but wish you could still have the option to use an overhead projector. If you like the use of transparencies, then why not try the document camera?

All the technology classrooms have a document camera located in the podium. Anything you lay beneath the camera can be shown to the students on the projection screen. Unlike transparencies, you can use regular paper and pen and the students can see exactly what you are writing. Then after you are done, you can save these papers as notes and use them again without having to rewrite the information.

If you are interested in learning more about using the document camera in a technology classroom, please call extension 1054.

Technology in the Classroom

Questions and Answers about Smart Classrooms

By Richard Krause

Although Dr. Eileen Wall is new to St. Mary's, she isn't new to having technology in the classroom. While at Texas A&M University, she had the opportunity to lecture in classrooms well equipped with technology. Now at St. Mary's, that's still the way she likes it.

So we sat down for a Q&A session with one of our newest professors to find out what she thinks of St. Mary's technology-enhanced, Smart classrooms.

Q: What do you like about the Smart classroom?

A: It's flexible, convenient, and ready to go. I don't have to worry about what technology is in the room because it's all there. For example, being a marketing professor, I use the document camera to display various articles and advertisements.

Dr. Eileen Wall

Q: What do you use the room for?

A: I use it primarily for PowerPoint, but I also use it for video with VCR and the document camera.

> **"The Smart classroom is more flexible to meet the needs of all learning styles...."**

Q: What projects have you done in the Smart classroom?

A: I haven't done much yet, but I would if all my classes were in a Smart classroom. Right now, I just have one class in a Smart classroom. Next year I plan to do more as I have more classes using Smart classrooms.

Q: How do you feel the students have been impacted by the technology in the room?

A: Everything is integrated, which helps things run smoothly. Since everything is already in the room, I don't waste class time setting things up. At the same time, students have this technology at their fingertips when they're doing presentations.

Q: How has the technology in the classroom enhanced your teaching?

A: It sparks more interest for students and makes the class more interactive. Students learn differently. The smart classroom is more flexible to meet the needs of all learning styles, which means that the learning is more likely to stick.

Technology Services' Alphabet Soup

Behind the Acronyms of St. Mary's Technology Departments

By Jeff Schomburg

Acronyms are a way of life in many organizations. Their main purpose is to abbreviate the name in question so it is easily remembered. However, when we overuse the acronym without identifying its full name, our audiences can become more confused than ever.

We at St. Mary's technology service departments are often guilty of spreading confusion by overusing the acronyms of our department names. This article clarifies what department name each acronym refers to and what role each department plays on campus. So let's try to make sense of Technology Services' alphabet soup.

Our mission at ATS is to help transform education through technology. However, we are not alone in this community-wide endeavor. Technology Services is a collection of four major technology departments located on the 1st floor of the Charles Francis Building. Although each department serves a unique function, as a team we strive to provide the community with the best customer service possible.

ATS Academic Technology Services (ATS) assists faculty to integrate technology into the teaching and learning environment. The functions of ATS include support for classrooms with technology (equipment), faculty training and development, online learning support and development, and project development. You can reach ATS at extension 1054.

USS User Support Services (USS) provides computing assistance to members of the St. Mary's University community. USS provides help through our Help Desk and on-site assistance technicians. They also maintain desktops, notebooks and Macintosh computers, and perform software installation/upgrades. Printer repair services are available through an on-site vendor. You can reach USS at extension 4357.

ATIS Administrative Technology and Information Services (ATIS) serves the information management needs of the business operations of the University, supporting various departments across the entire institution. You can reach ATIS at extension 4254.

NTS Network Technology Services (NTS) provides service and support for our LAN, our WAN (Internet Connectivity), our directory services and network security, our university cabling and wiring and e-mail services. You can reach NTS at extension 4384.

Technology Training – Take Your Pick
ATS Training Opens Up to Faculty and Staff in Fall 2004

Register

Intermediate Workshops

Intermediate workshops are held in Charles Francis room 19 from 2-3:30 pm. There is a 20 seat limit. Bring laptop. Call extension 1054 for more info.

Blackboard Series (Group I)
- ❑ Sept. 07 — Developing Content
- ❑ Sept. 09 — Communication Tools
- ❑ Sept. 14 — Assessments and Quizzes
- ❑ Sept. 16 — User Management/Gradebook

Blackboard Series (Group II)
- ❑ Sept. 21 — Developing Content
- ❑ Sept. 23 — Communication Tools
- ❑ Sept. 28 — Assessments and Quizzes
- ❑ Sept. 30 — User Management/Gradebook

Microsoft Word
- ❑ Oct. 05 — Page Layout Tools in Word
- ❑ Oct. 07 — Special Features
- ❑ Oct. 12 — Document Management Tools

PowerPoint
- ❑ Oct. 14 — Before and After Q&A Session
- ❑ Oct. 19 — Custom Designs
- ❑ Oct. 26 — Slide Animations/Transitions
- ❑ Oct. 28 — Adding Audio and Video
- ❑ Nov. 02 — Action Buttons
- ❑ Nov. 04 — Before and After Q&A Session

Outlook
- ❑ Nov. 09 — New to Outlook?
- ❑ Nov. 11 — Creating Filters/Rules
- ❑ Nov. 16 — Scheduling and Calendar

Excel
- ❑ Nov. 18 — Functions and Formulas
- ❑ Nov. 23 — Using Charts
- ❑ Nov. 30 — Data Analysis

Advanced Workshops

Advanced workshops are held in Charles Francis room 102 from 2-3:30 pm. There is a 15 seat limit. Call extension 1054 for more info.

Video Production
- ❑ Sept. 08 — Video design 1
- ❑ Sept. 13 — Video design 2
- ❑ Sept. 15 — Video design 3

PowerPoint Advanced
- ❑ Sept. 20 — PowerPoint interaction
- ❑ Sept. 22 — Audio in PowerPoint

Graphic Design
- ❑ Sept. 27 — Graphic design introduction
- ❑ Sept. 29 — Graphic design web buttons
- ❑ Oct. 04 — Graphic design web banner

Graphic Design
- ❑ Oct. 06 — Acrobat Overview
- ❑ Oct. 11 — Building Fill-in Forms
- ❑ Oct. 13 — Collaboration Features

Web Design Basics
- ❑ Oct. 18 — HTML basics
- ❑ Oct. 20 — Dreamweaver Intro
- ❑ Oct. 25 — Creating Your Site
- ❑ Oct. 27 —Design and Layout
- ❑ Nov. 01 — Learning about Hyperlinks

Web Design Advanced Topics
- ❑ Nov. 03 — Save Time with Templates and Style Sheets
- ❑ Nov. 08 — Flash Objects and Simple Rollovers
- ❑ Nov. 10 — Advanced Navigation and Rollover Techniques
- ❑ Nov. 15 — Web Animation/Image Maps
- ❑ Nov. 17 — Building Tests/Quizzes
- ❑ Nov. 22 — Web Forms

Contact Us

We Are Here To Help

Phone Support

FIT Lab 1054
Classroom Hotline 8088
Charles Garrison, ATS Director 3287
Michael Chen, IT Manager 5009
Jeff Schomburg, Instructional Designer..............................5073
Juan M. Valadez, Jr., Blackboard Administrator..................5074

Web/E-Mail

ATS ....http://ats.stmarytx.edu
Blackboard .... http://bb.stmarytx.edu
Blackboard E-Mail..............................bb-support@stmarytx.edu
Classroom Hotline ....http://ats.stmarytx.edu/roomstatus.htm
Workshops & Seminars..........http://ats.stmarytx.edu/seminar.htm

Or come by and visit

**Charles Francis Building
1st Floor, Room 102**

**Mon. – Thurs., 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Fri., 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.**