

No Boundaries

Teaching Solutions Through Technology

Fighting Fires Before They Start

New ATS Director emphasizes proactive approach

Dr. Michael Chen arrived at St. Mary's University on January 1st, 2000. At that time, Academic Technology Services consisted of five people and focused primarily on training. In six short years, ATS has nearly tripled its staff and exponentially increased its scope.

"When I first came, our scope of support was really training. This department really started on funds from the Title V grant, and that started us on training and room renovations for the first five years," said Chen. "Today we have online services like Blackboard, we have the FIT Lab established, and now we are getting into distance learning. But while we are growing into these areas, I don't see us changing our general direction."

Faculty support, classroom integration, online learning, and training remain a priority for Dr. Chen. While the reach of ATS has certainly expanded, the four areas of support and the quality of service expected remain the same.

"We have worked very hard to establish our reputation on campus. We see ATS as a place where people come for service, and we try our best to provide the best service we can. We have titles, but very often we work beyond our defined responsibilities and take care of what we need to."

While the goals of ATS remain the same, Dr. Chen sees the department taking a different approach under his leadership.

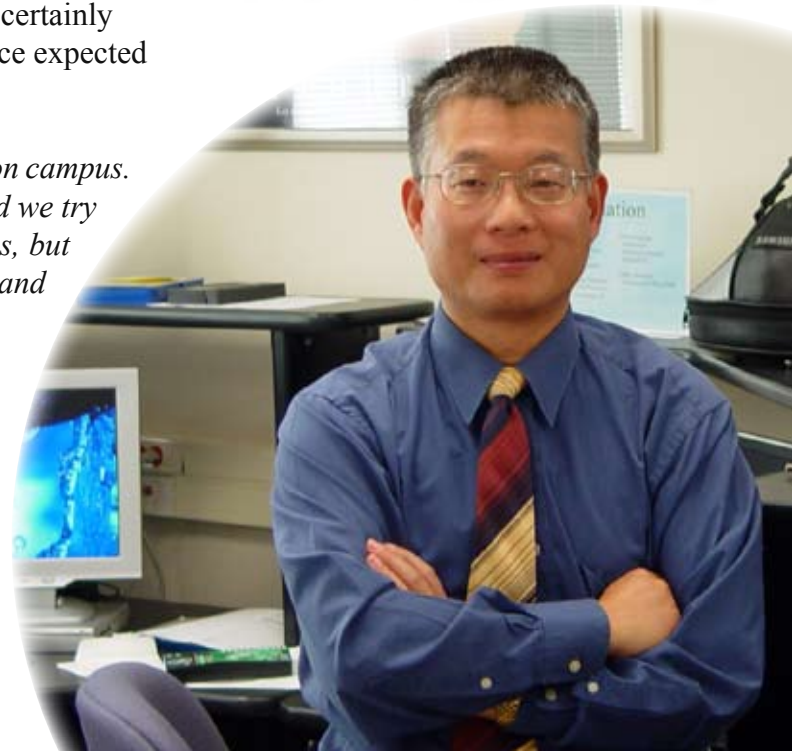
"We hire the best people available and we have a dedicated staff..."

— Dr. Michael Chen

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Articles by Tim Hennessey and Jeff Schomburg



Fighting Fires Before They Start (cont.)

New ATS Director emphasizes proactive approach

“We are going to be doing a lot of outreach efforts. [We will] talk with department heads, talk with deans, talk with faculty, even talk with students about what their needs are, what their concerns are when it comes to instructional technology.”

Whereas in the past faculty would come to ATS when they had issues, Dr. Chen wants ATS to prevent fires, not merely put them out.

“We are going to be more visible, more available and not just waiting for people to come to us, because when people come to you, they already have a problem.”

Taking a proactive shift is only possible if you have the right people, and according to Dr. Chen, that is not an issue.

...We have titles, but very often we work beyond our defined responsibilities...

— Dr. Michael Chen

“We have worked very hard throughout the years on establishing procedures for hiring, for identifying problems, and for planning. We hire the best people available and we have a dedicated staff. We all chip in when there is something else to take care of.”

With a vision-driven director and an excellent staff, Academic Technology Services is in position to continue to serve the growing needs of the St. Mary’s community for years to come.

Pilot Anti-Plagiarism Solution This Spring

MyDropBox anti-plagiarism solution pilot program now available

MyDropBox is an online anti-plagiarism service that St. Mary’s is piloting this Spring. The results of this pilot will help us determine the needs to acquire such a service.

Much like Blackboard, MyDropBox allows instructors to create courses and assignments, enroll students, and have them submit their assignments online. These assignments are then automatically checked for plagiarism against online sources and academic library databases. A report displays a meter showing the percentage of matches found and the identified sources.



If you are interested in volunteering to use MyDropBox with one or more of your classes this semester, please contact Jeff Schomburg at 431-5073 or via e-mail at jschomburg@stmarytx.edu.

The Online Disconnect

St. Mary's professors share tips for overcoming the challenges of online teaching

Dr. Camille Langston is familiar with the challenges of online teaching, chief among these is the increased lesson planning and the lack of community that students experience online.

How do you engage these students? How does lesson preparation differ, if at all? Dr. Langston knows that thorough planning and an emphasis on set meeting times can make all the difference in the world.

Unlike traditional classes, when teaching moves online every situation needs to be accounted for ahead of time.

“The preparation is certainly different, in that with the online classes you have to be prepared for everything before it starts, and then you add in extra preparation as you go through. You have to have it all in writing, as opposed to just doing it orally, or in lecture. Considerably more planning time is needed.”

Once the semester is planned out, the next challenge, and some would say the biggest challenge, is focusing the freedom offered by online courses into a structure that is beneficial to learning. Web conferencing services, such as Macromedia Breeze, were powerful tools that Dr. Langston took advantage of to overcome this challenge.

“With Breeze, I used to use it like office hour times. I would just be in there and it would say ‘if you have any questions, log into Breeze.’ This semester I tried setting up class time and would use a lot of the different functions that are offered...”

Macromedia Breeze, which is available through ATS, includes functions such as screen sharing, white boarding, chatting, and video/audio conferencing. Dr. Langston took advantage of some of the more advanced features, such as on-demand presentations for group projects.



Dr. Camille Langston

“...for the last part of the class, I would have a student do an individual PowerPoint presentation. We would go to this other Breeze screen where the student had the presenter ability and would take over the class. If the student had a microphone, then they could talk and do a voice over as they did the presentation.”

According to Dr. Langston, these group projects are essential to successful online classes.

“It gave the students an opportunity to show their personality and made them a part of the class. It also gave them an opportunity to ask a question that maybe their peers were wondering but were afraid to ask it. The fact that it was live [helped].”

Dr. Langston has learned that when students feel connected to the class and are given a sense of responsibility to their classmates, online classes work much better. Programs such as Macromedia Breeze can be the key to bridging this online disconnect.

To learn more about Macromedia Breeze and request a training session, feel free to contact Jeff Schomburg or Dr. Michael Chen at extension 1054.

The Online Disconnect Continued...

St. Mary's professors share tips for overcoming the challenges of online teaching



Dr. Zwahr-Castro

For Dr. Zwahr-Castro, how you teach online is just as important as what you teach. She knows it is much easier to draw in students face-to-face in a traditional classroom setting, but these methods don't work online. Teachers need to alter their pedagogy to fit the medium.

"In the classroom, you can manipulate things more easily to make the students be active workers. You can ask questions and you just wait until someone gets bored and answers the question. You can take the student who wants to sit there passively and bring them into the learning experience. This is harder to do online."

Dr. Zwahr-Castro sees community involvement as the key to a successful online learning experience. With names being the primary source of identification, not faces, online courses by their nature make interaction a challenge.

"Of the students I've had, only about 20 percent I've met face-to-face. So, the question is how do you reach out and make a connection with someone you've

never seen? That's when it becomes really important to use the discussion board, Breeze, and chat rooms, where you can interact with the students."

While students may now have the means to interact, it is paramount, more so online than off, according to Dr. Zwahr-Castro, to be organized.

"I think the same things that make a good instructor in the classroom, make a good instructor online, but one thing I think that you can be good in the classroom with but lacking, is organization. When you transfer your teaching to the online medium, it becomes imperative that you be organized. The students are going to gain a lot of the benefits of the online course, such as being able to work at their own pace."

The challenge of active participation online, as Dr. Zwahr-Castro found out, can be lessened with mandatory community activities, either by using Black Board or other programs.

Whatever a student's schedule may be, classroom interaction can still be maintained.

"It's mandatory that they use the discussion board for whatever they do. After a while you start having this dialogue, and this dialogue works so well because your student who did this assignment at three in the morning, and the one that did it at one in the afternoon, can come in a multiple times throughout the conversation. You'll have these total circles, in these discussion threads, that make it like an interactive discussion in a classroom."

With the challenges inherent to online teaching, group interaction is vital. In order to draw students in, it helps to keep them accountable to others. As Dr. Zwahr-Castro has learned, community is key.

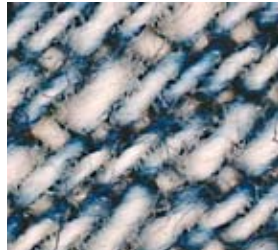
Product Spotlight: USB 50X ProScope

Portable microscope combines impressive feature set and ease of use

Stop by ATS and check out our new favorite gadget!

With the Scalar M2 ProScope, the power of a 50X microscope is combined with the ease of USB plug-and-play device. All you need is a laptop computer hooked up to the classroom projector and you are in business.

The ProScope software installs in minutes and allows you to take pictures or capture video, all with the push of a button. Add this to the



Denim under 50X magnification

built-in image control panel which allows adjustments to such things as white-level and color saturation, and it is clear that the ProScope is a robust teaching aide.

The adjustable focusing guide allows for both touch and view and non-contact positions, while the 50X magnification captures detail as small as skin pores or fabric texture.



Scalar M2 ProScope

An optional 5V light source and the ability to mount the scope round out an impressive feature set.

Contact ATS at extension 1054 for a product demonstration.

Product Spotlight: Tablet PC

Size and features make Tablet PC's an attractive alternative to traditional laptops

With their unique form factor and space saving design, Tablet PCs are a great way to get work done on the go.

Tablet PCs come in two flavors, slate and convertible. Slates save space by omitting the keyboard and rely solely on integrated digitizers, or touch screens, for all interaction.

Convertibles include a keyboard for traditional functions but allow you to swivel the screen into a tablet position when called for.

Both types use advanced integrated digitizers which allow you to write directly onto the screen surface with a stylus. Special software on the tablet

recognizes your handwriting and digitizes it.

Tablets are not only great for note taking but for artistic endeavors as well. Close to impossible with a simple mouse, drawing and sketching is more natural and much more fluid using a stylus.

This writing style also allows for better interaction in meetings and classes. Being able to lay the tablet on your arm as you write is much easier than peering over the top of a screen as you type.

With these benefits come some noticeable disadvantages, mainly screen size and price.

What you see is what you get. The Tablet PC is small and compact to save you space, and therefore the screen is probably smaller than you are used to. In addition to this, Tablet PCs currently run about \$300 more than traditional PCs.

Feel free to stop by ATS for a product demonstration.



Product Spotlight: Portable Projectors

Portable projectors make presentations possible anytime, anywhere

Looking to display a PowerPoint presentation in a traditional classroom? If you happen to be teach in a classroom that lacks a ceiling-mounted projector, ATS has you covered.

We currently have seven portable

units available for check out. Averaging around 1400 lumens, our HPs, Toshiba, Acer, and Sanyo projectors are best suited for small-sized classrooms.

Stop by Academic Technology Services or call us at extension

1054 to reserve a unit for delivery.



Product Spotlight: Macromedia Breeze

Comprehensive web communication suite enhances online classes



A powerful, flash-based communication tool, Adobe's Macromedia Breeze makes meeting, presenting, and training online, well, a Breeze.

With the wealth of communication options available in Breeze, online and distance learning can take on a new level of interaction.

Real-time presentations, virtual class meetings, file-sharing, and voice over IP are just a few of the powerful features that you can employ through Breeze.

With all these new features come

an appreciable learning curve, and that's where we come in.

With multiple training sessions throughout the year, ATS can get you up to speed and unlocking the power of Breeze in no time. For training session dates and times, visit our training page on the ATS website a <http://ats.stmarytx.edu/workshop>.

Did You Know?...

The new era of running Winows and Macintosh together begins

With the recent release of Intel Processor based Macs, it is now possible to run Microsoft Windows on your Macintosh hardware using programs such as Apple's Boot Camp and Parallels.

Apple's Boot Camp allows you to run each operating system at full speed and gives you access to the best of both operating systems, provided your computer meets the

minimum requirements.

The downside of Boot Camp is that you can not switch between operating systems quickly since you have to boot into the operating system you wish to use.

To learn more, go to <http://www.apple.com/macosx/bootcamp>.

Parallels Desktop for Mac (\$79) allows you to launch other operating systems from the desktop and

back-up your virtual hard drive, all with the click of a button.

While slightly slower than Boot Camp, this seamless interface gives you instant access to the creative software available to every operating system.

To learn more about Parallels, visit <http://www.parallels.com>.



Secure Internet Browsing

Take control of your privacy. Keep your browser clean



Everyone browses the Internet, but how many of you clean out your browser after you've cruised the Web? If this question is foreign to you, then it's time for my top five ways to keep your browser clean.

First, update your browser. Older versions of Netscape and Internet Explorer may lack the newest safeguards.

My recommendation is to try Firefox, a new browser found at www.mozilla.com. Firefox is fast, safe and customizable. This multi-platform browser has received editor's choice awards from CNET and PC Magazine in 2005.

Second, never store passwords in your browser.

The password storage vault inside the browser is not nearly as safe as using separate password applications. More importantly, the moment you step away from your computer, someone could swoop

in and access all your password-protected sites. It's just too much of a risk. Take a second or two and type passwords in manually.

Third, clear your history.

Your browser's history asks you how many days you want to remember the sites you visited. I suggest zero days. When you close your browser, the next person on your computer won't know where you've been. Keep your browsing history secret.

Fourth, remove your cookies.

Ever browse an online bookstore like Amazon.com? Ever wonder how they remember your recently viewed items? It's all done through cookies. Web cookies are stored pieces of information to remember personal data, choices and login information. Sound scary? Well, not all cookies are bad. Some help to personalize your Web experience. However, I strongly suggest you clear your cookies often, especially after every time you make a financial transaction.

Fifth, clear your cache.

Your browser caches, or temporarily stores, the images and content on most of the Web pages you visit.

Every Web site picture you view is actually downloaded to your computer. This is done to help load the pages faster

the next time you visit them. The problem is the files can begin to add up and slow down your computer. Clear your cache often to free up hard drive space and improve performance.

Most of these settings are found in the preferences or options of your browser.

If you use Firefox you can clear all of these privacy settings in one click. If you are unsure of where to find your browser's privacy settings, call the Help Desk at (210) 431-4357.

Browser Quick Tips

- ✓ Switch your Web browser to Firefox.
- ✓ Never store passwords in your browser!
- ✓ Clear your browser's history.
- ✓ Clear cookies often.
- ✓ Clear your cache.
- ✓ Run a spyware cleaning product once a week

Top 5 Blackboard Tips

Course Requests, Archives, Imports, and more

This Spring, we'd like to provide you with five techniques to successfully prepare, manage, and save your Blackboard course content from one semester to the next.

- 1 Archive your course:** At the end of every semester, once your final grades have been posted on Blackboard, it is critical that you archive your course. This ensures all content of that semester, including student information, is saved. Archives should be saved in multiple locations. Finally, do not double-click the “zipped” archive as it may corrupt the files. [Watch a “how to” QuickTime video](#) ◀
- 2 Recycle your course:** After your course is archived, it's time to recycle it. Recycling removes unwanted elements from your course such as announcements or student users. These elements should be removed so they don't populate your course if you are using it again next semester. [Watch a “how to” QuickTime video](#) ◀
- 3 Request/Renew your course:** About one week before the semester starts, you must log on to http://ats.stmarytx.edu/pages/online/bb_course_request/login.php and request the course(s) you are scheduled to teach so the course(s) become available on Blackboard. Even if you have taught the same course on Blackboard the previous semester, you must renew the course you are scheduled to teach. The request/renewal process tells Blackboard to load the new students for the upcoming semester into the course. [Watch a “how to” QuickTime video](#) ◀
- 4 Import your course archive:** Once you've requested/renewed your course on Blackboard, you're now ready to upload course content. If you have an archive from a previous semester, you can “import” the archive into your new/renewed course. When you import your archived course file (the zipped file from step one), you will be asked what areas of the previous course you want to upload. This feature allows you to import everything from the previous course or only certain areas. [Watch a “how to” QuickTime video](#) ◀
- 5 Make your course available:** Once you're ready to teach from your new Blackboard course, don't forget to make your course available. All Blackboard courses created are by default unavailable to students until you make them available. This feature is a handy tool allowing faculty to develop a course without the students having access while the course is under construction. [Watch a “how to” QuickTime video](#) ◀



Technology Workshops

Now you can write your own ticket for technology workshops

Training Workshops

ATS has introduced a new way to sign up for technology workshops this semester. At the beginning of each semester we schedule the most requested workshops on the calendar. However, many people are unable to attend these scheduled workshops or would like to request other workshops that are not already on the calendar. No problem, simply request it from our site.

When you arrive at our workshop Web site you'll notice we show you all the workshop categories and the workshop calendar below. To request something new, simply select from the categories and request it. You'll be asked to provide your information and preferred times for the workshop.

If you don't see the workshop you'd like to request, simply click on the "checkbox icon" that says "Don't see the workshop you want? Request it." Fill in the information and we'll put it in the lineup. Once we've received at least three people who are interested in the workshop, we'll offer it on the calendar with your preferred times in mind.



Request Your Favorite Workshop Today!

<http://ats.stmarytx.edu/workshop>

Call 431-8088 or visit our Web site at

<http://atsintranet.stmarytx.edu/faculty>

Classroom Status



Contact Us

We Are Here To Help

Phone Support

FIT Lab	1054
Classroom Hotline	8088
Michael Chen, ATS Director.....	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://atsintranet.stmarytx.edu/faculty
Workshops & Seminars.....	http://ats.stmarytx.edu/workshop



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.**

