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# 2007 Sloan-C Awards

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Edited by Janet C. Moore

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**THE SLOAN CONSORTIUM**  
A Consortium of Institutions and Organizations  
Committed to Quality Online Education

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***2007 Sloan-C Awards***  
**Presented at the 13th Sloan-C Annual International  
Conference on Asynchronous Learning Networks:  
The Power of Online Learning: Making a Difference**  
**Wednesday, November 7th, 2007: 7:00pm – 8:30pm**  
**Grand Sierra D & E**

The Sloan Consortium annual awards recognize excellence and effectiveness. This document introduces the 2007 Sloan-C awards for significant contributions to knowledge about asynchronous learning networks.

***2007 Sloan-C Excellence in Online Teaching and Learning Award  
Winners***

**Excellence in Online Teaching**

Michelle Pacansky-Brock, Sierra College

**Most Outstanding Achievement in Online Learning by an Individual**

Meg Benke SUNY Empire State College

**Excellence in Faculty Development for Online Teaching**

The Quality Matters Program, Maryland Online

**Excellence in Institution-Wide Online Teaching & Learning Programming**

University of Illinois at Springfield

**Most Outstanding Online Teaching & Learning Program**

St. Petersburg College, AS Veterinary Technology Distance Program

AND

Stevens Institute of Technology, the Stevens China Program

***2007 Sloan-C Effective Practice Awards***

**Miami University**

Using Quality Matters to Guide Online Course Development

**West Virginia University, University of North Carolina Charlotte,  
Virginia Tech**

Asynchronous Audio Feedback to Enhance Teaching Presence and Students' Sense of  
Community

# About Sloan-C

**T**he purpose of the Sloan Consortium is to make education a part of everyday life, accessible and affordable for anyone, anywhere, at any time, in a wide variety of disciplines, by helping learning organizations continually improve quality, scale, and breadth of their online programs, according to their own distinctive missions. Created with funding from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, Sloan-C is a consortium of more than 1200 organizations and accredited higher education institutions that provide infrastructure, equipment, tools, and online programs. Sloan-C encourages networks among people as channels for sharing knowledge and effective practices in learning effectiveness, access, affordability, student satisfaction and faculty satisfaction.

Sloan-C maintains a catalog of degree and certificate programs offered by a wide range of member institutions, consortia, and industry partners. These programs are led by instructors, emphasize high levels of asynchronous interaction, and create online quality that is commensurate with face-to-face programs. Sloan-C consultants assist institutions in learning about online methodologies; Sloan-C conferences and workshops help implement and improve online programs; Sloan-C publications—*The Sloan-C View*, the *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks* (JALN), and annual volumes in the quality series—inform and advise academic, government and private sector audiences. Applications for membership are welcome at <http://www.sloanconsortium.org>.



**“Too often we fail to recognize  
and pay tribute to the  
creative spirit.”**

—Alfred P. Sloan, Jr.

# Sloan-C Awards

Statement by Frank Mayadas, Sloan-C President



The Sloan-C awards program, which recognizes outstanding achievements in Asynchronous Learning Networks (ALN), celebrates the creative spirit that improves the quality of online learning and program development.

The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation began supporting ALN implementations and research in 1992. Much has changed in the past decade, thanks to the efforts of ALN pioneers. Our understanding of how to teach effectively using new technologies has matured, and several communications channels document this understanding—the Journal

**A. Frank Mayadas**

of Asynchronous Learning Networks, the ALN Research Web Center, annual volumes in the Sloan-C series on quality, and the Sloan-C knowledge center for sharing research and effective practices.

Today, ALN is part of the mainstream of higher education, supplementing face-to-face learning and rapidly becoming the predominant delivery mode for distance education courses and programs in the United States. These annual Sloan-C awards pay tribute to trailblazers whose contributions are significant for the evolution of ALN.

*A. Frank Mayadas*  
*President, Sloan-C*  
November 8, 2002

## Excellence in Online Teaching

Michelle Pacansky-Brock, Sierra College



Michelle Pacansky-Brock, full-time Professor of Art History, teaches two online classes for Sierra College. She is in her fifth year of teaching Art 10: Art Appreciation, which is an introductory course providing a basic understanding of art. Course topics include interpretation, developing a visual vocabulary, and an exploration of various media and techniques. Michelle is beginning her second semester teaching Art 1E: The History of Women in which is a critical survey of the historical roles women have played in the arts in western culture including their influence as artists and patrons as well as representations of women from Antiquity to the present. In addition to teaching online, Michelle is actively involved with the Sierra College Distance Education Committee, regularly participates in state-wide conferences related to distance education and instructional

technology and is currently serving as the college's first Instructional Technology Coordinator. In the past year she has led efforts to develop the iTech Lab at Sierra College, a dedicated technology training resource for faculty and staff. She has secured grant funding in the amount of \$10,500 to purchase equipment for the lab and will lead the first series of training sessions for faculty and staff in 2008.

Too often instructors theorize online teaching as a different method for "delivering content." This approach often results in a linear delivery of text-based content. In contrast, Michelle believes online teaching is unique from other forms of instruction and should employ emerging forms of technology that allow students to contribute their personal stories and thoughts through writing, the spoken word and images. Web 2.0 technologies are at the heart of today's younger students' experiences and Michelle weaves these tools into her classes in an effort to increase student engagement and encourage self-expression through learning.

Community is established in the class through creative instructional strategies. Incoming students read comments left by previous students on the "Wisdom Wall," experienced online students act as mentors to new online students, students may nominate each other for "masterpiece" bonus points, students have options for their final project (including working in a small group to create video or writing an independent research paper) and all projects are shared with the class and critiqued by another student. Michelle's teaching incorporates weekly audio announcements and enhanced podcasts and voicethreads which allow students to leave asynchronous voice recorded comments for the rest of the class.

Michelle's success and retention rates are exceptionally high; her online results meet or exceed that of her on-ground classes. Students describe Michelle's class as "a very exciting learning environment;" students find her feedback "extremely valuable;" students appreciate Michelle's ability to creatively combine online content with "real world experiences to increase understanding of course concepts;" and her class has been described as "the perfect example of what an online class should be."

Visit <http://www.sierracollege.edu/>.

**Most Outstanding Achievement in Online Learning by an Individual**  
Meg Benke SUNY Empire State College



Serving for over a decade as Dean of the Center for Distance Learning (CDL) at Empire State College, Dr. Benke transformed an established distance learning program from print to fully online delivery. This made it possible for Empire State College students to complete their degrees entirely online, in any of the college's undergraduate areas of study or majors (from the arts and interdisciplinary studies, to community and human services and business). Dr. Benke further led development of a deeper and broader curriculum in each area of study and in all the general education areas newly mandated by the Board of Trustees for SUNY institutions in the late 90s. During this period, she also co-led the institutional self-study that resulted in the NYS Education Department authorizing Empire State College to offer all of its degrees (including graduate degrees) in a fully online format, without individual program approval. In part because of her broad knowledge of higher education developments externally, she chairs a college-wide task force,

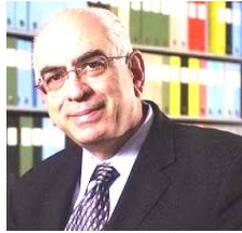
which is charged to conduct broad research and analysis and make recommendations about the next generation of faculty at Empire State College.

Dr. Benke and her colleagues have not confined themselves to developing credit-bearing learning experiences. Rather they have played a key role in the college's development of online learning supports available to all students, and indeed, available to students and faculty elsewhere and to the public. These supports include an extraordinary online library, and writing, math and other skills development resources and services. CDL faculty and instructional designers now work closely with the college's librarians to embed progressive online research assignments and supports up front in the course design. The approach developed in CDL is now serving as a model for other online learning experiences at the college.

During the past decade, Dr. Benke has presided over tremendous growth in the enrollments, faculty, staff and resources of the Center for Distance Learning. The college itself currently serves nearly 18,000 students, the vast majority of whom are adults who enroll part-time. The college's students generate well over 200,000 credits annually, and nearly 40% are now provided through CDL, with the rest generated through regional learning centers and other programs located across New York and at international sites.

Visit <http://www.esc.edu/esconline/online2.nsf/ESChome.html>.

**Excellence in Faculty Development for Online Teaching**  
The Quality Matters Program, Maryland Online



Ron Legon  
Executive Director



Deb Adair  
Director of Administration

The Quality Matters Program began in 2003 as a joint project of the nineteen community colleges and senior institutions that comprise the MarylandOnline consortium. The initial goal of the project, which was awarded a \$500K grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), was to establish standards for online course design. The result was a 40 standard rubric covering the following 8 course design issues:

- |  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| 1. Course Overview and Introduction      | 5. Learner Engagement |
| 2. Learning Objectives<br>(Competencies) | 6. Course Technology  |
| 3. Assessment and Measurement            | 7. Learner Support    |
| 4. Resources and Materials               | 8. Accessibility      |

Since its inception, however, Quality Matters has evolved into a highly effective and widely adopted faculty development program. More than 3,000 faculty members have participated in Quality Matters training over the past three years. More than 85 institutions have subscribed to the QM Program, and many more have adopted earlier versions of the QM Rubric that were freely available under the terms of the FIPSE grant.

The QM Program has trained more than 2,200 faculty members to be peer reviewers from nearly 200 different institutions across the U.S., and hundreds more have been trained by the growing number of qualified institutional trainers at schools that subscribe to the QM Program. Faculty members whose courses have been reviewed using the QM Rubric report almost unanimously that they made improvements in their courses based on their exposure to the rubric and the feedback provided by faculty peer reviewers. Instructors of more than 150 courses have thus far benefited from a formal QM review, and many times this number have had a similar experience through informal reviews conducted by schools around the country. The QM Program now offers workshop online and face-to-face at institutions around the country. The QM Rubric has also been re-engineered as a set of standards for online/hybrid course development. Many institutions have built these standards into their faculty development programs for online instruction. Thus, the Quality Matters approach has evolved into a widely adopted component of faculty development for online/hybrid instruction across the U.S.

Learn more about Quality Matters at <http://qualitymatters.org>.

**Excellence in Institution-Wide Online Teaching & Learning Programming**  
University of Illinois at Springfield



From the left: Avinash Anneboina, GA; Shari McCurdy, Associate Director; Emily Welch, Instructional Designer; Deborah Antonie, Instructional Designer; Carrie Levin, Assistant Director; Ray Schroeder, Professor Emeritus/Director; BACK ROW: Bill Bloemer, Dean Emeritus/Research Associate; Burks Oakley, Professor Emeritus/Visiting Research Professor; Jennifer Dick Thomas, Associate Developer

The University of Illinois at Springfield (UIS) campus was established in 1970 as Sangamon State University, a “capstone” university with junior, senior, and master’s level classes. While largely a commuter campus, it became part of the University of Illinois system in 1995, and a doctoral program and lower division classes were added. Online classes were first offered at UIS in 1998, and in every semester since then, online enrollments have risen. Please see: <http://people.uis.edu/rschr1/onlinegrowth.jpg>.

In the 2006–2007 academic year, a total of 6,037 different students took classes at UIS. Of those, 3,540 (59%) took at least one online class, and an impressive 1,680 (28%) of the students took only online classes. Out of approximately 98,000 credit hours generated at the university this past year, nearly 32,000 credit hours, or very nearly one-third (more than 32%), were from online classes. More than 200 online classes will be offered during the Fall 2007 term. A full listing is at: <http://online.uis.edu>. The College of Business and Management at UIS recently received AACSB accreditation. In the final report, the AACSB peer review team commended the college for “developing and delivering high quality, on-line degree programs.” Further, the report stated “the institution has invested in infrastructure, including facilities and the latest technological equipment and support staff to deliver online programs.”

**Most Outstanding Online Teaching & Learning Program**  
AS Veterinary Technology Distance Program, St Petersburg College



L-R: David Tollon, DVM; Irene McDade, Staff Assistant; Janet Modrakovic, CVT; Laurie Rankin, CVT; Cal Kerkela, Staff Assistant; Vivian Tiffany, CVT BAS; Tricia Gorham, CVT BS; Shashikant Goswami, DVM; Richard Flora, DVM MSBA, Dean. Not Pictured: Elaine Anthony, CVT MA; Lucy Bartlett, DVM ABVP-Avian Practice; Amy Benedict, CVT; Kristen Brauer, DVM; Annaliese Brennan-Kupper, CVT BAS; Michael Cornwell, DVM; Brett Drysdale, LVT LATG, MSED; Cynthia Grey, DM; Heather Joyce, CVT RLATg; Barbara King, CVT; Tom Krall, DVM; Robert Marrazzo, DVM; Katherine Meyer, DVM; Yuko Okazato, CVT; Tara O'Neachtain, CVT; Ginny Price, CVT MS; Debbie Raines, CVT; Wendy Rib, DVM; Ginny White, Staff Assistant.

The AS Veterinary Technology Distance Program at St. Petersburg College was the first online veterinary technology program fully accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association's Committee on Veterinary Technician Education and Activities. The courses offered are exactly the same as those offered in the on campus program. As a fully online program, it has provided students who would not otherwise have the opportunity to become graduate veterinary technicians. Students are not required to travel to St. Petersburg at any time during their enrollment in the program. Our students live all over the United States and Canada.

Online student pass rates on the Veterinary Technician National Examination have been above the national average for the past 3 1/2 years. Graduating student surveys indicate 76.7% felt exceptionally or very well prepared and 20.9% felt adequately prepared for their jobs after graduation, for an overall positive satisfaction rating of 97.6%. The overall employer satisfaction rating for recent program graduates was 6.2 on a 7-point scale, with 7 being the highest rating and zero the lowest. The program's Relative Profitability Index, an internal SPC profitability measure, was 0.61, one of the highest overall in the college.

The Veterinary Technology Distance Program has an established track record and reputation in the Veterinary Technology profession. It was the first fully AVMA accredited distance Veterinary Technology program, and was the first online program at St. Petersburg College. Visit: <http://www.spcollege.edu/hec/vt/>.

**Most Outstanding Online Teaching & Learning Program**  
The Stevens China Program, Stevens Institute of Technology



Stevens Institute of Technology, in collaboration with notable Chinese schools of higher education, initiated a number of significant masters programs in China. One-third of the courses are delivered online by Stevens' faculty via WebCampus, winner of the 2003 Sloan-C award for Institution-wide Online Teaching and Learning Programming. Another third is taught in conventional classrooms in China also by Stevens' faculty, and a final third is taught face-to-face in China by faculty from partner institutions. All courses are delivered in English. Degrees earned by students in China are exactly the same as those awarded by Stevens to students in the U.S. Current programs have been approved and accredited by the Chinese Ministry of Education and the Middle States Commission on Higher Education in the US.

Stevens offers one of the most highly acclaimed programs of any international graduate school in China. More than 160 students are now enrolled or have earned their masters degrees from three programs in Beijing at Beijing Institute of Technology and Central University of Finance and Economics. These institutions are among the most prestigious in China, among the top 20 schools in the country.

Because Stevens faculty travels to China for one-third of the programs and offer instruction for an intensive 3–5 weeks, rather than the standard 13 weeks, delivery is highly cost effective. Stevens faculty teach another one-third online, a method that allows faculty to stay in the U.S., rather than travel to China. The final one-third is delivered by highly qualified local Chinese faculty. Stevens provides Chinese students in the program with a scholarship, allowing Chinese families to pay rates comparable to those charged by private schools in China.

Agreements have also been arranged with two other top-ranked schools, Shanghai Jiao Tong University and Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications. Nearly all students in Stevens China programs have graduated successfully, achieving master's degrees in Project Management, Telecommunications Management, and Photonics and Optoelectronics. Visit <http://www.stevens.edu/gradadmissions/china.html>.

## Effective Practice Award Miami University

Using Quality Matters to Guide Online Course Development



Front Row: Brenda Boyd, Instructional Design and Technology Specialist & Certified Quality Matters Peer Trainer; Janet Hurn, Center of Online Learning Director & Senior Instructor Physics. Back Row: Andrea Han, Center of Online Learning Coordinator & Educational Technology Coordinator for Middletown Campus; Dr. Amy Fisher, Associate Professor Mathematics & founding member of Center of Online Learning.

Miami University adapted Quality Matters (QM) to guide its course creation process. Rather than developing courses and reviewing quality after the fact, the Quality Matters standards are used from the start of course development. The focus is on providing a quality learning experience for students and teaching experience for faculty. Because faculty are not only subject matter experts, but experts on the students they teach, faculty are highly involved in the course creation process.

Faculty use a course planning grid (<http://www.users.muohio.edu/hanan/grid.pdf>). The planning grid helps reinforce key QM ideas such as unit level objectives, alignment and learner interaction. The planning grid also helps faculty identify “busy work” or activities not directly related to objectives and to eliminate or revise them so they do align with objectives. Faculty work with an instructional designer to create the course modules. Faculty are expected to generate and post most of their own materials, allowing designers to work with several faculty at once and guaranteeing that faculty can revise their course as needed. Faculty can import and customize a course template (<http://www.users.muohio.edu/hanan/statements.pdf>) which offers writing suggestions from experienced online faculty, and faculty may also use a course checklist (<http://www.users.muohio.edu/hanan/checklist.pdf>). Anecdotal evidence indicates that faculty are very satisfied with the course development and self-assessment processes.

More information about this effective practice is [here](#).

Visit <http://www.miami.muohio.edu/>.

**Effective Practice Award**  
**West Virginia University, University of North Carolina Charlotte, Virginia Tech**  
Asynchronous Audio Feedback to Enhance Teaching Presence and  
Students' Sense of Community



Phil Ice



Reagan Curtis



Perry Phillips



John Wells

From spring 2004 through summer 2005, instructors at West Virginia University taught seven asynchronous online sections of Advanced Teaching Strategies, a course in the program of Curriculum and Instruction. With a colleague at Virginia Tech, they devised a study to determine if richer nuance could be conveyed by using audio feedback in an asynchronous learning network. In addition to text-based feedback, the instructors incorporated audio commenting. When posting audio comments to the discussion board, in emails to the entire class, or to small groups, the instructors produced wav files and added to the discussion board or email as attachments.

Several kinds of evidence—unsolicited feedback, end of course survey data, post course semi-structured individual interviews, and final project document analysis—showed gains in students' ability to understand nuance, to feel increased involvement, to retain content, perceive instructor caring and apply course content at higher cognitive levels. Subsequent data collection from 17 courses supports the findings of the original study and discounts a novelty effect.

In addition to gains in learning effectiveness and student satisfaction that accompany access to greater nuance through audio feedback, faculty found that giving audio feedback took less time, thus enhancing cost effectiveness. [The mean feedback volume for text feedback was 129.75 words (SD=57.43) and 331.39 (SD=89.31) for audio. The mean time required for the instructor to provide feedback, was 13.43 minutes (SD=4.53) for text-based feedback and 3.81 minutes (SD=0.76) for audio].

1. Audio feedback was perceived to be more effective than text-based feedback for conveying nuance; 2. Audio feedback was associated with feelings of increased involvement and enhanced learning community interactions; 3. Audio feedback was associated with increased retention of content; and 4. Audio feedback was associated with the perception that the instructor cared more about the student. Document analysis revealed that students were three times more likely to apply content for which audio commenting was provided in class projects than was the case for content for which text based commenting was provided. Audio commenting was also found to significantly increase the level at which students applied such content.

For more information, see *Using Asynchronous Audio Feedback to Enhance Teaching Presence and Students' Sense of Community*, Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks 11(2): July 2007. [http://www.sloan-c.org/publications/jaln/v11n2/v11n2\\_ice\\_member.asp](http://www.sloan-c.org/publications/jaln/v11n2/v11n2_ice_member.asp)

## 2007 Selection Committee

- **Judith S. Eaton**, President, Council for Higher Education Accreditation
- **Starr Roxanne Hiltz**, Distinguished Professor, New Jersey Institute of Technology (2004 Sloan-C Award for Most Outstanding Achievement in Online Learning by an Individual)
- **Charles Dziuban**, Professor – Educational Foundations, University of Central Florida (2005 Sloan-C Award for Most Outstanding Achievement in Online Teaching Learning by an Individual)
- **Carmen Gonzales**, Vice Provost, New Mexico State University
- **John V. Lombardi**, President, Louisiana State University System
- **Stella Perez**, Vice-President of Operations and Technology Programs, The League for Innovation in the Community College
- **Karen Swan**, Research Professor in the Research Center for Educational Technology, Kent State University (2006 Sloan-C Award for Most Outstanding Achievement in Online Teaching Learning by an Individual)
- **Eric E. Fredericksen**, Associate Vice Provost, University of Rochester, non-voting Chair

Effective practice awards were selected by a committee unaffiliated with candidate institutions, including Karen Swan and Dan Robinson of Kent State University, John Sener of Sener Learning Services, and John Bourne and Janet Moore of Sloan-C; see details of effective practices at <http://www.sloan-c-wiki.org>.

Details about the awards are available at <http://www.sloan-c.org/aboutus/awards.asp>.