

Nomination for Glendale Community College Innovation of the Year

Title of Innovation:

Online Elections

Team Members Who Created the Innovation:

Connie Greenwell

Administrative Secretary III
Office of Student Life
Glendale Community College
(623) 845-3567
c.greenwell@gmail.maricopa.edu

Bobby Sample

Web/Database Applications Developer
Innovation Center
Glendale Community College
(623) 845-3390
bobby.sample@gmail.maricopa.edu

Description of Innovation:

With the leadership of the Office of Student Life, the Innovation Center of Glendale Community College developed a system for running the Associated Student Government elections for Fall 2005 entirely on the Internet. By way of description, this is how the system meets criteria for consideration as Innovation of the Year:

Quality (Value Education): It is evident that the innovation increases quality of the program because it allowed more students to participate in the elections than ever before, with access to more information about the candidates, and with features and benefits that were previously impossible through traditional voting systems.

Efficiency and Cost Effectiveness (Value Responsibility): The system was set up using the existing infrastructure of GCC's servers, the internal networks, and the World Wide Web. The Instructional Palette system provided a means of verifying each GCC student via password-protected sign-in, and ensured voting eligibility for each of them. But with this paper-free process, *all* GCC students had access to photos and information about each candidate for ASG from *any* computer connected to the Internet, and could securely vote through this system from the "ballot station" in the Student Union, any computer lab on campus, or even from home! To provide a "ballot station" adjacent to their office where students could receive assistance as needed, Student Life utilized the existing wireless network on campus and the Laptop Farm administered by the Innovation Center. Although results were checked for any possible technical errors, this system made the process of managing the election, voting, and counting the results more streamlined for everyone involved.

Replication (Value Excellence): The innovation can be (and has been!) replicated and/or imitated with little difficulty. It uses the common supports of ColdFusion programming and an Access database. Methods of authenticating voters may vary. For example, this innovation has already been replicated to successfully run elections for MCCCDC AACHE officers district-wide with online "ballot boxes" replacing the paper versions on all campuses. For the AACHE iteration of the system, MEMO authentication was used in place of the student logins.

Creativity (Value Excellence): This combination of online voting and database-driven election information and results is a first for student elections and for most other approaches to organizational elections within Maricopa.

Timeliness (Value Excellence): The innovation was implemented just last year, successfully improved the ASG election process, and was already replicated for another election process since that time.

Learning (Value Education): The results of the innovation have been shared with others for the benefit of students throughout Maricopa through various means, including campus news and PR (such as the Gaucho Gazette at <http://www.gc.maricopa.edu/gaucho/index.cfm?id=7903>). One of the most interesting aspects of this innovation is that results were shared in real time over the Internet with an automated running total provided at <https://www.gc.maricopa.edu/studentlife/asg/results2005.cfm> throughout the duration of the voting period, where final results were also posted. The election web site, including the ballot itself, remained published online as an example -- see <http://www.gc.maricopa.edu/studentlife/asg>.

Collaboration (Value Excellence): This project is another example of how collaboration, teamwork and cooperation between different departments on campus (and with direct input from students before and after) results in a continuous process improvement to benefit our students.

Executive Summary of the Innovation:

The Online Elections system invented for GCC's Associated Student Government maximizes participation by students not only by providing a means of voting online, but in managing and disseminating information before, during and after elections. The programming and setup of the innovation have proven to benefit other Maricopa organizations as well.

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