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We are pleased to report that the 2004 CATS Conference, held March 24-26 at the Cal Poly San Luis Obispo campus, was extremely successful. Conference evaluations are currently being analyzed by CUDA (CSU Long Beach). However, participants verbally praised the program, which many felt surpassed previous conferences. As always, participants were grateful for the opportunity to network with their peers at other campuses and share expertise, resources, and solutions to common problems.

An interesting outcome of CATS 2004 took place during the last General Session and an open discussion session that immediately followed. The General Session was devoted to a presentation about SWAT II (Craig Schultz) and a panel discussion about current LMS systems and a forward look at options, including Open Source formats. Donna Raleigh, a MERLOT participant (University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire) spoke about her system's migration from both WebCT and Blackboard to Desire2Learn, which provided very useful insights and lessons-learned that the CSU and its campuses can apply to similar migration(s), should this be undertaken in the future. It is interesting to note that this last session was very well attended.

The follow-up 1.5-hour session was scheduled into the program to allow give-and-take about LMS and other issues, including ways that the CATS community could be enhanced; several participants volunteered to lend their expertise and services towards specific goals. For example, Jason Cole (SFSU) offered to create a CATS Moodle (Open Source LMS) so that community members can collaborate with one another and share documents and materials. This site will be put up soon and one "course" that will be activated right away will be for further LMS discussion. Lastly, it was clear from these discussions that CATS members are ready to form an Executive Committee to serve as an advisory body regarding issues such as community growth.

This year we instituted new conference programs. One was a mentoring program where those new to CATS could be paired with "old timers" who volunteered to work with them. Another was the CATS Awards program, which honored those who have been of special service to the CATS community, the awardee's campus/department, and/or the system. Plans for next year include inviting the participation of the Directors of Academic Technology and CIO's to identify and select appropriate award winners.

In another new program, we handed out postcards on which a participant could write the "Three CATS I want to contact, ideas I want to share, or things I want to try in the month after CATS." 40% of the cards were returned to CDL staff for follow-up. LMS interest was just one of the items that repeatedly appeared on the cards. Other items included requests for addition to CATS listservs; SWAT II and ITAC comments (which will be provided to Lou Zweier for dissemination); and indication of many contacts to be made within the community. In addition, a TIGERS grant project was suggested focusing on TurnItIn student use, and suggestions for future CATS meetings. These cards will be returned to the writers as a reminder of their conference experience, with the hope that the card will spur them to future action.

Below are statistical data that may be of interest:

- Registration. This year's registration (176) and attendance (166) was virtually the same as the 2003 conference, this despite budget cuts that necessitated a reduction of CDL sponsorships from 4 to 2 per campus. (As an incentive to host the conference, a total of 20 were sponsored from Cal Poly.) Conference Planning Team members were also sponsored in recognition of their efforts. Another 12 participants came from the CSU Center for Distributed Learning and from institutions outside of the CSU.
- Despite their own budget concerns, CSU campuses acknowledged the benefits of attending CATS by registering over 50 additional participants.
- A total of \$8,210 was received in non-sponsored participant fees.
- \$17,000 was contributed by 23 vendor sponsors, which allowed us to provide a third sponsorship for each campus.

When complete, an analysis of written conference evaluations will be made available to DAT and ITAC. In addition, videotaped interviews with a cross-section of participants about their conference experiences are being compiled, and will also be made available. If you have any questions or comments, please contact Abbe Altman, CATS Program Manager, at 707.664.4341 or abbe@cdl.edu