

Northwest-Shoals Community College Site Visit
Somerset Community College Title III Team – Linda Bourne,
Joelyn Prather and Brenda Saunders
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The team left Somerset, Kentucky at 1:30 p.m. for Muscles Shoals, Alabama for to visit Northwest-Shoals Community College to learn about their implementation of a Title III grant. The emphasis of their grant is using technology to enhance teaching and provide online services to the students. John McIntosh, Title III Project Director gave us a review of the day and introduced the team members.

Our first tour was the Faculty Resource Center where faculty are trained to use the technology and software for web enhanced courses, internet courses, and discussion boards. They use Maple TA for web classes because it is easy to incorporate math functions, symbols, and equations. It is also easy to use. They also assist the faculty with course production. Each department had a discussion board where students can ask the professors questions and receive answers.

The second tour was the Television Studio. We met the producer and the file editor (full-time staff) who explained the process of producing television shows as well as producing faculty project DVD/videos for telecourses, internet courses, classroom supplements and student tutorials. They have set up this studio over a three year period with limited funds and lots of extended work hours. They air their own telecourses and have a mobile video conferencing lab. The studio was simple but met the limited equipment to produce the DVD/video. Much of the technical equipment was out of the realm our understanding.

Steve Qasque then demonstrated the Online Student Resources. Students can register online after meeting with an advisor who gives them an access code. The student can also do program audits to review their transcripts and courses needed to complete his degree. They can also do a “what if “evaluation to determine the courses that will fulfill the requirements for another degree and what they will need to take to complete the degree. This is a wonderful advising tool to help students decide if they want to change majors. The faculty posts the grades online and the software program distributes the grades to

the student's transcript. There is an online bookstore where student can order books.

The fourth tour was the developmental studies area. We talked with the Student Support Services Director who told us about their program and showed us the English writing classroom. These classes are taught in computer labs because computer literacy is incorporated into the English classes objectives.

The fifth and last tour was the Smart Classroom. This classroom is equipped with a television, electronic screen, LCD projector and a cabinet that housed the DVD/VCR, Elmo Document Camera, controls for the electronic screen, Computer, Router, and the Amplifier. The faculty has at his finger tips all the control to operate the Smart Classroom equipment. After a demonstration of the equipment, two professors showed us their projects and how they got involved with the faculty course redesigns. The projects we reviewed were psychology, safety in the carpentry lab and auto body lab, early childhood education, and music. Each project demonstrated a different use of the technology and how it can be used to supplement teaching and learning. It was exciting to see and hear the faculty share their experiences developing and using the dvds/videos for in-class, telecourses, and/or internet courses.

The team's overview of their Title III Grant is the personnel responsible for implementing the grant. They have a full-time instructional specialist, instructional designer, film producer, film editor, and numerous part-time persons to assist with meeting the goals of the grant. They meet weekly to discuss the progress and what need to done to accomplish the task. They have a "can-do" attitude translating into doing what ever needs to be done to get the job done. They have a spirit of cooperation. The faculty selected to do projects said the personnel were encouraging, helpful, and found the resources to help them finish the end product.

What did we learn that will help us? They gave us motivational tips to get faculty involved including the stipend, trips, and the used of a Smart Classroom. When faculty got discouraged, the personal was there to cheer the faculty member to continue. The cohesion of the group produced an effective team. They were excited and proud of the

projects and the faculty completing the projects. Their “can-do” attitude was catching. We were given equipment lists with specs and prices so we are higher on the learning curve. The cds with course redesign examples will be used to help our faculty consultants make decisions about their projects. We have the layout design for a Smart Classroom. We now understand what its take to set up a television studio.

Respectively submitted,
Brenda M. Saunders