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Section 2/Page 8

Colleges take on-line study to nth degree

By Patrice M. Jones

TRIBUNE HIGHER EDUCATION WRITER

CHAMPAIGN-URBANA—Sporting her 16-year-old daughter's navy backpack and a pair of worn blue jeans, Cynthia Colletti was full of stories about eating popcorn and watching mindless television shows with her new roommate.

The 46-year-old mother of two

was feeling the flush of excitement most students feel when they head off to college—going to parties with cheese pizza instead of cocktails, becoming fast friends with her new classmates and studying until the wee hours.

The only difference was that, after two weeks late last month, Colletti packed her bags and headed home. That's because,

after a brief on-campus orientation, she began earning her master's degree—and communicating with her professors and new friends—via her home computer.

Her unusual college experience is part of an evolution in higher education: Colletti and 25 other students at the University of Illinois' Champaign-Urbana campus are among the first stu-

dents in the state system to enter a program that allows them to obtain an entire graduate degree on-line.

While students have been able to take a class or two on-line for some time, the notion of getting a complete cyberdegree is among the latest trends in higher education. And it's happening at some of the most

SEE DEGREES, PAGE 10

Degrees

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

selective institutions, from Johns Hopkins to Stanford Universities.

But the new-fangled degree programs are not without skeptics.

Both the substantial cost of on-line degrees—usually the same as a degree earned on campus—and the taint, historically, of "correspondence" degree scams have made some in academia slow to join the technological revolution.

Moreover, some academics believe that too little independent research has been done on the effectiveness of on-line programs and say accreditation agencies are falling short in evaluating the new ventures.

"My question is about the hype in distance education, which I think is very high," said Mary Burgan, executive director of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). "We hear that all of the problems will be solved on-line, but students may be losing not only individual contact with teachers but the community of a classroom where they learn as much from other students as a teacher."

The degree programs also raise questions that undoubtedly will be debated and, in some cases, litigated for years: Who owns the new technology when on-line courses are developed, and who determines the course content at a time of such rapid change? And will college degrees be devalued when employers can't determine exactly how students earned them?

These concerns, while taken into account by university officials, have not stopped the exponential growth that has at least a third of higher education institutions offer-

ing such courses and more expected to join the pack.

Proponents say on-line programs are as rigorous as those on campus. In fact, they have made the degrees of on-line students officially indistinguishable from those received by students who actually sit in a classroom—a move that also has met opposition in some quarters.

Still, Colletti, like many of her classmates, has only good things to say about Urbana's program, and several industry experts also say they welcome the new degree option. It had been more than 20 years since Colletti graduated from Bradley University in Peoria when she heard about Urbana's program. She was in a good job as a grant administrator for the state library system in Springfield but had long had the urge to return to school for a graduate degree.

The University of Illinois Graduate School of Library and Information Science launched its on-line master's degree program, the first such degree program in the state university system, in 1996. So far, the on-line program has had 22 graduates, and 100 students are expected to be enrolled this academic year.

Stanford University is launching an on-line master's degree program in electrical engineering this fall. In the Chicago area, National-Louis University also is beginning an on-line master's degree in adult education, and Roosevelt University has been in the forefront of on-line courses at its Schaumburg campus.

Still, skeptics also fear class sizes might swell into the hundreds at institutions intent on slashing costs. Just last month, Louisiana's attorney general filed a lawsuit seeking to shut down

Columbia State University, an alleged distance-learning institution that many educators have called a sham.

And in maybe the first action of its kind, professors at York University in Toronto last year walked the picket line in part to stop a push for more technology in the classroom. Their contract, once ratified, had the unusual provision that professors will not be forced to use technology in their classrooms or to deliver courses over the Internet.

In a recent report from the Washington-based Council for Higher Education Accreditation, officials warned that "reliable and valid performance measures" must be established for distance education.

James Richardson, president of the AAUP and a professor at the University of Nevada at Reno, says that even accreditation may not be enough. "I have been generally disappointed by response of accreditation agencies so far," Richardson said. "I don't think they are dealing with this issue systemically. They have to do their job or we will be unable to tell what a degree is worth."

Officials who coordinate the U. of I.'s library school on-line program—which has received accreditation—say they are confident that they are providing students with an education that is as challenging as the one provided on campus. Unlike many programs, Urbana's has not helped the graduate school realize any cost savings.

On the contrary, the university has invested \$600,000 to start the program and \$300,000 more in salaries and benefits for a separate university office set up specifically to promote the courses system-

wide. Additionally, the cost of tech-support staff and counseling for students overwhelmed by the responsibilities of families, jobs and college work has offset any prospects for a financial windfall.

Patsy Young, a classmate of Colletti's who plans to complete her master's degree at the U. of I. in a year, lives in Sitka, Alaska, and already has earned an on-line bachelor's degree from a New York college and a master's degree from a California school. She has kept her job as a librarian and enjoyed her life in Alaska's wide open spaces.

She says the only downside of Urbana's program is the substantial cost—\$15,717 for the first year for out-of-state students. In-state students pay \$6,120.

Another added cost comes when she must travel to on-site campus sessions a few times each year.

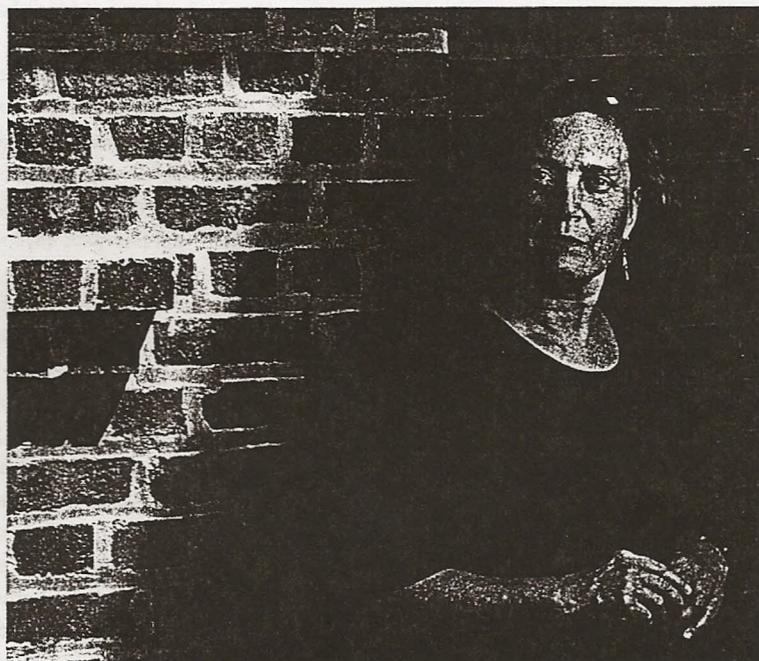
Students who take on-line courses also traditionally have had problems getting federal financial aid. But rules are quickly evolving to meet the needs of the rapidly growing on-line student base, federal officials say.

And despite the substantial financial burden, some of the alumni of the U. of I.'s library school say they have received an unexpected perk from their unusual degree program: They are now considered the high-tech gurus in their offices and have gotten pay hikes and more responsibility because of enhanced skills.

"They are getting great benefits from having a graduate degree," said Linda Smith, the library school associate dean. "Their diploma doesn't say they learned at a distance. Their degree looks just like any other student's."

Distance Learning Takes A *LEEP3* Forward

BY MARY GALLIGAN



DEAN LEIGH ESTABROOK, GRADUATE SCHOOL OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

"SEND A URL," SAYS VINCE PATONE, MS '97 LIS. IT'S THE FOURTH DAY OF "BOOT CAMP" IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE, AND STUDENTS IN THE MORNING TECHNOLOGY WORKSHOP ARE LEARNING FIRST-HAND WHAT A LIVE CLASS SESSION IS REALLY LIKE.

PATONE, TECHNICAL COORDINATOR FOR THE SCHOOL'S LEEP3 DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAM, DOESN'T RESEMBLE A DRILL INSTRUCTOR. EVEN SO, THE 27 STUDENTS WHO BEGAN THEIR MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM WITH A TWO-WEEK INTENSIVE STAY IN URBANA-CHAMPAIGN AT THE END OF JULY ARE NERVOUS ABOUT WHAT THEY'VE GOTTEN THEMSELVES INTO.

As they interact in a Web-based chat room with graduates and continuing students, their worries come through loud and clear. One new student

half-jokingly asks a second-year student, "Deborah, did all of you live through this, or was the place littered with cold, stiff bodies by the end?"

Learning what a URL (uniform resource locator) is, dealing with live images, Real Audio and other terms form part of LEEP3 (Library Education Experimental Program) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. So do learning from a distance and working on group projects with fellow students, who are also at a distance from campus.

During the chat, new students are warned that the class participation takes more than they are used to in "live" classes. Hal Bloom, MS '98 LIS, who graduated in May, says that one new skill is "how you learn to speak through your fingers." Bloom, coordinator of integrated library systems for the Harvard Business School, also joined in the live chat demonstration.

This unique option for pursuing an accredited master's degree in library and information science offers students the opportunity to take all but their initial "boot camp" required course through the distance learning classes collectively called LEEP3.

PHOTOS BY STUDIO ONE PHOTOGRAPHY



Students complete their coursework at home or office, using advanced Web-based technologies.

Students enrolled in the program come from as far away as Alaska, Oregon, California and Massachusetts. This year, the program went international. Out of the 50 students enrolled for the first time this summer, three are Americans living abroad in Japan, Thailand and Colombia.



"There is an enormous demand for library and information science programs now," says Leigh Estabrook, dean of Illinois' highly ranked graduate school. The demand comes from academic libraries, public libraries and other organizations that need to retrieve and organize information. After implementing other avenues of making master's programs more available to students around the state, such as a Fridays-only program, the school undertook the LEEP3 experiment in 1995, offering courses to its first group of students in the summer of 1996.

Knowing that library and information science (LIS) professionals were quick to understand and embrace technology in the field spurred Estabrook's vision for supplying education on-line.

"LIS professionals—including our faculty—already were shaping ways for using technology, and this seemed like such a natural growth to me," she says. "Granted, it has taken considerable effort to find and apply the best technologies, but we are fortunate to have truly gifted and dedicated people working on our LEEP3 option. That's why we have a distance education program with a difference: We've discovered how to integrate the human and technological factors, and we keep refining."

Both students and faculty are enthusiastic about the program.

"No student has left the program saying, 'This doesn't work,'" Estabrook relates. "Only life events and personal issues have kept students from completing their degree via LEEP3. Again and again, our students tell us this program opens doors and gives them the

degree they desired but could not have earned without our option.

"Our faculty also express satisfaction in their interactions with students at a distance, saying they really do get to know these students. Despite some initial trepidation, faculty also report that they enjoy using the technology and finding new ways to share the content of their classes."

Instructors have learned to design courses that allow them to get to know their students without the physicality of the classroom.

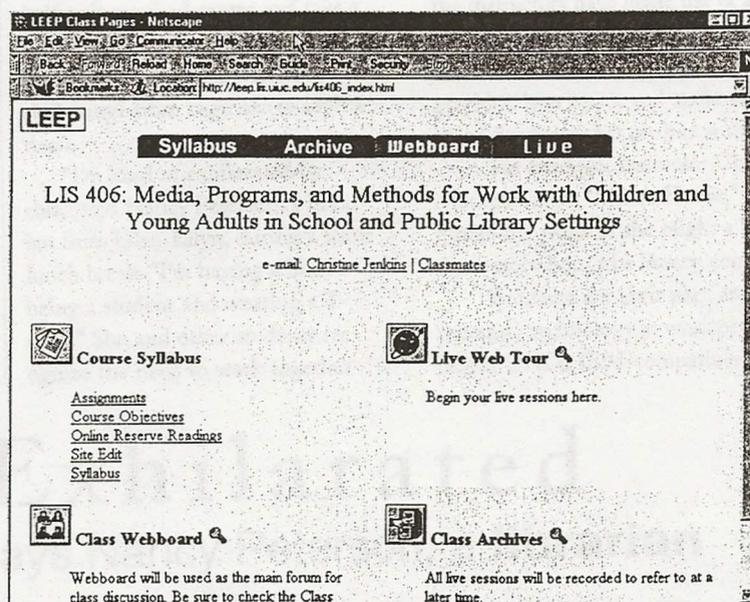
"In the classroom, the instructor picks up a lot of information from the students' facial expressions, body language and the tone of voice in which they make comments and ask questions. I can read these signals and respond to them immediately," says Cheryl

Malone, an assistant professor who is team-teaching the first course for the incoming LEEP3 students. "With asynchronous learning over the Web, students have to express their need for more information or clearer explanations in different ways, and the instructor has to plan and prepare on-line material that presents the information in a variety of ways before students ask."

"We are experimenting with a whole new form of education," says Michael Twidale, via e-mail from the United Kingdom. He joined

the U. of I. in 1997 after teaching in the U.K. for a few years. "Therefore, it is not surprising that initially it is more time-consuming than the traditional, familiar face-to-face teaching.

"The advantages of distance education include time to reflect on the work, both for the student and instructor," he adds. "A student can think before asking or replying to a question, helping those who are not as good at instantaneous response, which is the usual form in class. Likewise, the instructor need not respond instantly to a question as in a regular class but can compose a more considered reply, checking on references and providing useful supplementary material."



Students consider themselves pioneers, he says, and take pride in their work. "For an instructor, the general level of enthusiasm is exhilarating." The fact that the students have jobs in libraries and can offer comparisons of different organizations make for a rich body of practical experience, he adds.

The school also was blessed with \$600,000 over three years from the University to get the program started. "It's extraordinarily labor intensive," says Estabrook. Because of the computer technology, there are no time boundaries. Some students work late at night or early in the morning. "You can't say that office hours are one to five," she says. "Faculty have to be on-line at least once a day."

Students begin the program with a 12-day on-campus summer stay during which they complete a half-unit required course and take a number of noncredit technology workshops, since their computer skills range from beginner to sophisticate.

"I'm kind of exhilarated by this," says Nancy Peterson, a librarian from Glen Ellyn, during a short lunch break. "I'm having a blast being a student and wearing a T-shirt." She and other students recognize the need to work together



MARCIE COHEN

stay on-line and chat after class or e-mail someone your thoughts afterward. There's even a way to whisper in class."

The individual attention from the program's advisers and instructors impresses both current students and the newest recruits. "When I talked to my adviser about how to achieve my goals in the context of the program, he was really interested in my success," says Richard Pearce-Moses, who began the program this summer. Pearce-Moses, who serves as documentary collections archivist and automation coordinator at the Heard Museum in Phoenix, Ariz., adds that the faculty is "incredibly flexible."

That flexibility may come with the distance learning and technology. Some of the instructors are off-campus, too, residing in Madison, Wis.; Chicago; Bryn Mawr, Pa.; Buffalo, N.Y.; Chapel Hill, N.C.; and Bloomington, Ind.

"The courses that have really succeeded are those in which the instructors have made use of a variety of technologies," says Patone. These may include live, Web-based instruction in which students hear faculty speak. They may see slides and other graphics, hear music and audio clips, as the professor discusses them. Students chat on-line with the professor and each other.

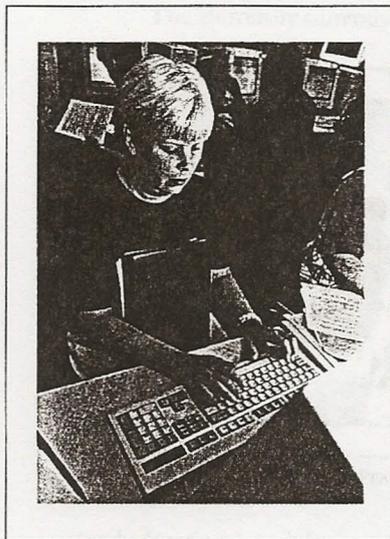
For example, instructor Christine Jenkins put pages of a children's book, "Mike's House," on the Web last year, and she turned the pages as she might a book. She created a virtual children's story hour in a library, complete with background music.

Students, for their part, are required to have access to the necessary technology at work or at home, including hardware (either UNIX, IBM-compatible or Macintosh personal computers with sound capability), software and network connectivity. Students pay full tuition charges at the in-state or out-of-state rates, depending on where they reside.

The flexibility of the program attracts many students such as Nancy Crow, MS '98

LIS, who graduated from the LEEP3 program in August. "LEEP3 fit really well into my needs," she said. Crow is the director of the Four-Star Public Library in Mendon, a small rural library near Quincy. She is married to a farmer, has four children and says she did her coursework throughout the day. "I would turn on my computer when I got home from work and check my e-mail," she says. "I'm not a night person, but I'd get up early in the morning to do my work."

As part of the LEEP3 program's first class, Crow says she and fellow students at first worried



NANCY PETERSON

"I'm kind of Exhilarated by this," says Nancy Peterson, a **librarian** from Glen Ellyn.

on projects. "When we go back, we will be solitary," she says. "If we work together, we can support each other."

That support begins in the summer "boot camp," says Wendy Schumacher of Chicago, who works for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Schumacher began the program last year.

"It's a tremendous bonding experience," she says. "We're all part of a unique experience. We have classmates in Alaska, Japan, Taiwan and the Virgin Islands. Normally, you might have coffee after class. Now it seems normal to



ROSE ALLEN

that getting a degree through LEEP3 wouldn't be as good as earning it the traditional way on campus. "But once we got into it, we realized we were getting skills that were very important. In the end, we didn't feel cheated at all."

In the two years since she began her master's program, Crow's library now offers public Internet access, and the library has its own Web site.

In the near future, more courses at the U. of I. will be taught on-line. The UI-OnLine initiative was launched by vice president for academic affairs Sylvia Manning about a year and a half ago. UI-OnLine is an umbrella organization that provides coordination and support for University courses, degree programs and outreach and public service programs that are delivered largely or wholly over the Internet.

The University currently offers more than 41 courses



RICHARD PEARCE-MOSES

and educational modules in an on-line format, originating from all three of its campuses in Chicago, Springfield and Urbana-Champaign.

"It's an ideal design for professional education," Estabrook says about on-line courses. The College of Education at Urbana-Champaign, for example, has just started offering on-line courses this fall. Altogether, eight courses will be offered over four semesters.

The University of Illinois at Springfield has a proposal for a virtual bachelor's degree program. Other programs up and running include a calculus program for high school students that the mathematics department at Urbana-Champaign administers. In February, the UI Department of Computer Science began offering its professional master of computer science degree to students outside of the United States by means of the Internet.

Also available are several on-line noncredit courses in computer science, such as learning how to use the Internet, Web publishing and JavaScript (a programming language).

And, in what may indicate the growth of on-line courses and offerings, the University announced in July that it is accepting applications and nominations for the position of

Web Tour - Netscape
Back Forward Reload Home Search Guide Print Security Stop

Small group questions Wed 09/24/1997 17:03:57:35

LISTEN to the song, read the lyrics, and consider its use in a library activity for young children

How might you use this song with 1-2 year olds? [sensorimotor]

How might you use this song with 3-5 year olds? [preoperational]

REMEMBER: Play is children's work.

Send URL Exit

Discussion Room A

<rodger> What sounds do you think the song offers that can be worked with?

<Chris> that's true Beth. The puppet idea is a good one. Maybe a picture could even help.

<Robin> What's nice about using puppets is that they can be touched, which is crucial for the sensorimotor children.

<rodger> I don't have any experience here. Could kids be given a chance to use the puppets themselves?

<Beth> I think the 1-2s would have trouble with them.

<Chris> I don't understand the third question. in what way could we relate this song to that book?

Courtesy of Christine Jenkins

EXAMPLES OF ON-LINE CLASS DISCUSSIONS

Web Tour - Netscape
Back Forward Reload Home Search Guide Print Security Stop

406: Library Media for Children and Young Adults

<Christine> We're listening to a tape titled "Head First and Belly Down" that we'll be hearing more of this evening so enjoy...

*> Jane has joined channel #406

*< Signoff: JonMark (JonMark)

*> evenin has joined channel #406

<evenin> Hello, everyone.

<Christine> Hello everyone. We'll be beginning in about 5 minutes.

*> jbolthou (jbolthou@alexia.lis.uiuc.edu) has joined channel #406

N evenin is now known as Kathryn

N jbolthou is now known as JonMark

N beginn is now known as Katie

Send URL Exit

Courtesy of Christine Jenkins

Artwork by Don Feeman from "Mike's House" by Julia L. Sauer. Viking Press, 1954. Courtesy of Penguin Putnam Inc.

director of the Illinois Virtual Campus. The virtual campus is a new initiative funded by the Illinois Board of Higher Education. Its purpose is to tie together all of the technology-mediated courses that are offered by accredited colleges and universities in the state into a single Internet-based catalog.

The goal is to extend access to the state's higher education system to people who are unable to take advantage of traditional on-campus instruction. It may also make Illinois a leader in on-line and other forms of distance education.

PATTERNS

WILL AM•FM•TV

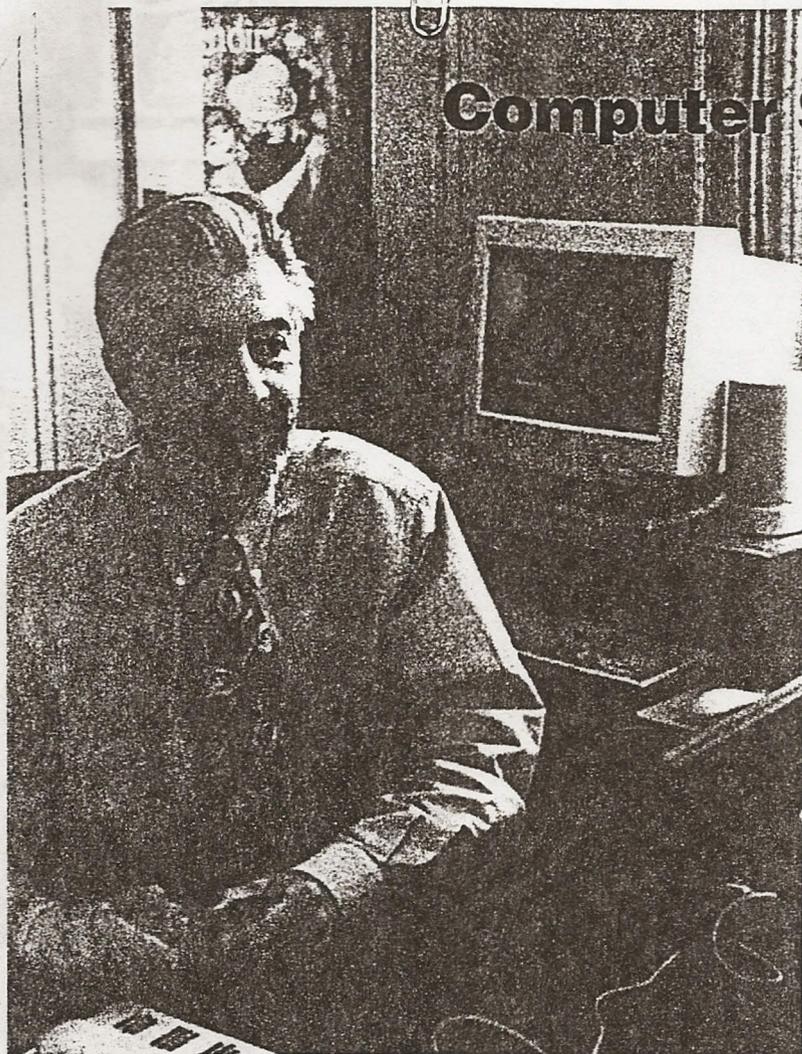
FRIENDS OF WILL MEMBERSHIP MAGAZINE

OCTOBER 1998

WILL-TV Presents

EXTRA•ORDINARY CHOICES

New Seasons of Your Favorite Series Begin This month. See article page 2.



Computer Screen School

After 15 years of selling stereos, Scott Kiefer, 41, is getting his master's degree in library and information science online from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. To enroll in an on-campus degree, Scott would have had to quit his job and move, but he didn't want to leave Alaska, where he's lived for 25 years.

New technology is bringing education to people anytime, anywhere, creating online communities of students. The opportunity to earn college degrees by computers and the Internet is creating shockwaves in the world of higher education, while the world of business sees an opportunity for "just-in-time" training for employees. **net.LEARNING** moves from the nation's "most wired" college campus, Dartmouth, where a few courses are taught with the aid of a Website, to the University of Illinois, which created the nation's first online master's degree in library and information science to attract students as far away as Alaska.

UI professor Burks Oakley II and the School of Library and Information Science Dean Leigh Estabrook are featured.

▲ Burks Oakley II is leading the effort to put the University of Illinois online.
Photo: Howard Weinberg

net.LEARNING

◆ 8 pm Monday, October 12

- 9:00 Ballykissangel
 - 10:00 Are You Being Served?
 - 10:30 Silver Screen
The Seven Samurai. (See page 24.)
- Overnight Service Continues Saturday Morning

10 Saturday

- Overnight Service Continues from Friday Night AM
- 2:00 Scientific American Frontiers (CC) (TV-G)
Science in Paradise. See 7 pm Wed Oct 7.
 - 3:00 Picasso Paints Picasso (CC) (TV-PG)
See 8:30 pm Wed Oct 7.
 - 4:00 Mystery! (CC) (TV-14, L)
Touching Evil. Part 2 of 5. See 9 pm Thurs Oct 8.
 - 5:00 NOVA (CC) (TV-G)
Lost at Sea: The Search for Longitude. See 7 pm Tues Oct 6.

See Daytime Grid, page 5, for 6 am-5:30 pm schedule

PM

- 5:30 The Golden Age of Television
George Burns and Gracie Allen Show.

- 6:00 The Lawrence Welk Show
Around the World.
- 7:00 Antiques Roadshow (CC)
San Antonio, Texas.
- 8:00 As Time Goes By
- 8:30 Keeping Up Appearances
- 9:00 Thin Blue Line
- 9:30 Red Dwarf
- 10:00 Monty Python's Flying Circus (CC)
- 10:30 Breaking News
- 11:00 Sessions at West 54th
The Pat Metheny Group with special guest Charlie Haden and Angelique Kidjo.
- 12:00 The New Red Green Show
- 12:30 Sign Off

11 Sunday

- 6:00 Austin City Limits
B.B. King.
- 7:00 Nature (CC) (DVS) (TV-PG)
Great White Bear. This episode explores the world of the charismatic polar bear and features unprecedented film footage of life inside a den where a mother polar bear tends to her newborn cubs.

- 8:00 Mobil Masterpiece Theatre (CC)
(TV-PG, V)
King Lear. Ian Holm stars as the aging monarch who foolishly divides his kingdom between two ruthless daughters while banishing his youngest and most loving child. Paul Rhys, Barbara Flynn and Amanda Redman also star. *Repeated 1 am Sat Oct 17.*
- 10:30 Reflections on Vatican II
Archival and original film, along with behind-the-scenes accounts from Catholic clergy, Protestant and Jewish theologians, lay observers and journalists present the minds and spirit of the Council participants.
- 12:30 Sign Off

12 Monday

- 6:00 The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer (CC)
- 7:00 Legendary Lighthouses (CC) (TV-G)
Lighthouses of Maine. Part 2 of 6. See photo page 7. West Quoddy Lighthouse, the easternmost lighthouse in the United States, marks the point where the sun first rises each day in this country. Cape Neddick Lighthouse, better known as

NEWSLINE

Library School's Distance Learning Program Featured in PBS Documentary

The Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign has announced that its distance scheduling option, LEEP3, is among the online education programs featured in a documentary airing on PBS stations. The show, *net.Learning*, covers a variety of online options and opinions, acknowledging LEEP3 as the nation's first online master's program in library and information science. Ninety students currently are enrolled via LEEP3, including students from as far away as St. Croix and Kobe, Japan. Students meet on campus once each semester, and this group learning continues online in small-group discussions and in collaborative group projects aided by special software. Twenty-one of the 31 original students who enrolled in the summer of 1996 have already graduated. More information about the show can be found at <http://www.pbs.org/netlearning>.

Source: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Champaign, IL, 217/244-4643; <http://www.lis.uiuc.edu>.

NICEM Implements Two New Database Applications to Boost Quality of Records

The National Information Center for Educational Media (NICEM) has announced that it has implemented two new database applications that will result in higher quality new records in the NICEM database. First, the NICEM database has been converted from a simple relational database management system to an XML-based intranet system. The bibliographic records are stored as XML documents, which are metadata descriptions of the educational audiovisual materials. Stored in this fashion, the data are usable by any system that meets standardized criteria.

The second enhancement, a machine-aided indexing (MAI) application, has been implemented in the new system. The MAI program, utilizing the NICEM thesaurus, uses natural language processing to read the bibliographic record and then to suggest subject terms to the editor. MAI provides for faster indexing, and promotes consistency in indexing from editor to editor.

Source: National Information Center for Educational Media, Albuquerque, NM, 800/926-8328, 505/265-3591; <http://www.nicem.com>.

INFORMATION INDUSTRY NEWS

ISI Announces Reorganization and New Corporate Strategy, New Product

The Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) has announced that a new division has been created to produce a portfolio of value-added products for the corporate market. Designed for the pharmaceutical, biotechnology, and health-care market sectors, these new products will be customized in order to provide information with a great deal of specificity for clinical and product development, market research, medical and regulatory affairs, and competitive intelligence professionals. According to the announcement, this reorganization offers ISI the opportunity to concentrate on extracting, indexing, and filtering data from the clinical literature. The first of these new

products is MetaMaps, the first in a series of evaluated clinical data sets designed to provide the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries with decision-shaping tools. MetaMaps are relational databases of extracted clinical data arranged in hierarchical tables

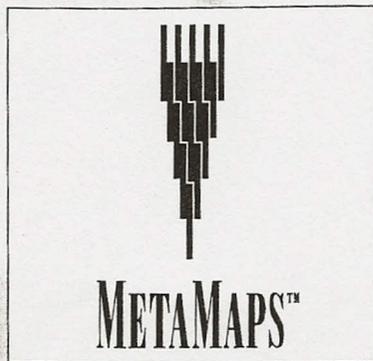
created from the systematic review of key literature relating to a particular disease setting or therapeutic area. The first release in this product line is Alzheimer's Dementia MetaMap, which will be delivered in CD-ROM format.

Source: Institute for Scientific Information, Philadelphia, 800/336-4474, 215/386-0100; Fax: 215/386-2911; <http://www.isinet.com>.

TBI Creates the Thomson Science and Technology Group with Derwent and ISI

Thomson Business Information (TBI) has announced the creation of Thomson Science and Technology (TST), a new group that will include two current TBI companies: Derwent Information (London) and the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI; Philadelphia). In describing the new organization, the announcement said that TST is composed of the two leading companies in their sectors, and that the new group will focus on being the scientific researcher's and scholar's preferred gateway to scientific literature, patent information, and Web content. TBI says that it does not intend to merge the companies, but to align the two organizations under a common management structure.

Source: The Thomson Corp., Stamford, CT, 203/328-9400; Fax: 203/328-9408; <http://www.thomcorp.com>. ▲



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Fall 1998

ILLINOIS LIBRARIES



Illinois State Library
Annual Report FY98

Digitizing Legacy
Documents

Researching
African-Americans

and Other Articles

Distance Learning Takes A Leap3 Forward

Mary Galligan

"Send a URL," says Vince Patone, MS '97 LIS. It's the fourth day of "boot camp" in the Graduate School of Library and Information Science, and students in the morning technology workshop are learning first-hand what a live class session is really like.

Patone, technical coordinator for the school's LEEP3 Distance Education Program, doesn't resemble a drill instructor. Even so, the 27 students who began their master's degree program with a two-week intensive stay in Urbana-Champaign at the end of July are nervous about what they've gotten themselves into.

As they interact in a Web-based chat room with graduates and continuing students, their worries come through loud and clear. One new student half-jokingly asks a second-year student, "Deborah, did all of you live through this, or was the place littered with cold, stiff bodies by the end?"

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"There is an enormous demand for library and information science programs now," says Leigh Estabrook, dean of Illinois' highly ranked graduate school. The demand comes from academic libraries, public libraries and other organizations that need to retrieve and organize information. After implementing other avenues of making master's programs more available to students around the state, such as a Fridays-only program, the school undertook the LEEP3 experiment in 1995, offering courses to its first group of students in the summer of 1996.

Knowing that library and information science (LIS) professionals were quick to understand and embrace technology in the field spurred Estabrook's vision for supplying education on-line.

"LIS professionals—including our faculty—already were shaping ways for using technology, and this seemed like such a natural growth to me," she says. "Granted, it has taken considerable effort to find and apply the best technologies, but we are fortunate to have truly gifted and dedicated people working on our LEEP3 option. That's why we have a distance education program with a difference: We've discovered how to integrate the human and technological factors, and we keep refining."

Both students and faculty are enthusiastic about the program.

* *Mary Galligan*, writer for the University of Illinois Alumni Association magazine. The article was originally published in *Illinois Alumni*, Volume 11, Issue 2, September/October 1998. Reprinted with permission of the University of Illinois Alumni Association, Urbana.

"No student has left the program saying, 'This doesn't work,'" Estabrook related. "Only life events and personal issues have kept students from completing their degree via LEEP3. Again and again, our students tell us this program opens doors and gives them the degree they desired but could not have earned without our option.

"Our faculty also express satisfaction in their interactions with students at a distance, saying they really do get to know these students. Despite some initial trepidation, faculty also report that they enjoy using the technology and finding new ways to share the content of their classes."

Instructors have learned to design courses that allow them to get to know their students without the physicality of the classroom.

"In the classroom, the instructor picks up a lot of information from the students' facial expressions, body language and the tone of voice in which they make comments and ask questions. I can read these signals and respond to them immediately," says Cheryl Malone, an assistant professor who is team-teaching the first course for the incoming LEEP3 students. "With asynchronous learning over the Web, students have to express their need for more information or clearer explanations in different ways, and the instructor has to plan and prepare on-line material that presents the information in a variety of ways before students ask."

"We are experimenting with a whole new form of education," say Michael Twidale, via e-mail from the United Kingdom. He joined the U. of I. in 1997 after teaching in the U.K. for a few years. "Therefore, it is not surprising that initially it is more time-consuming than the traditional, familiar face-to-face teaching.

"The advantages of distance education include time to reflect on the work, both for the student and instructor," he adds. "A student can think before asking or replying to a question, helping those who are not as good at instantaneous response, which is the usual form in class. Likewise, the instructor need not respond instantly to a question as in a regular class but can compose a more considered reply, checking on references and providing useful supplementary material."

Students consider themselves pioneers, he says, and take pride in their work. "For an instructor, the general level of enthusiasm is exhilarating." The fact that the students have jobs in libraries and can offer compar-

isons of different organizations make for a rich body of practical experience, he adds.

The school also was blessed with \$600,000 over three years from the University to get the program started. "It's extraordinarily labor intensive," says Estabrook. Because of the computer technology, there are no time boundaries. Some students work late at night or early in the morning. "You can't say that office hours are one to five," she says. "Faculty have to be on-line at least once a day."

Students begin the program with a 12-day on-campus summer stay during which they complete a half-unit required course and take a number of noncredit technology workshops, since their computer skills range from beginner to sophisticate.

"I'm kind of exhilarated by this," says Nancy Peterson, a librarian from Glen Ellyn, during a short lunch break. "I'm having a blast being a student and wearing a T-shirt." She and other students recognize the need to work together on projects. "When we go back, we will be solitary," she says. "If we work together, we can support each other."

That support begins in the summer "boot camp," says Wendy Schumacher of Chicago, who works for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Schumacher began the program last year.

"It's a tremendous bonding experience," she says. "We're all part of a unique experience. We have classmates in Alaska, Japan, Taiwan and the Virgin Islands. Normally, you might have coffee after class. Now it seems normal to stay on-line and chat after class or e-mail someone your thoughts afterward. There's even a way to whisper in class."

The individual attention from the program's advisers and instructors impresses both current students and the newest recruits. "When I talked to my adviser about how to achieve my goals in the context of the program, he was really interested in my success," says Richard Pearce-Moses, who began the program this summer. Pearce-Moses, who serves as documentary collections archivist and automation coordinator at the Heard Museum in Phoenix, Ariz., adds that the faculty is "incredibly flexible."

That flexibility may come with the distance learning and technology. Some of the instructors are off-campus, too, residing in Madison, Wis.; Chicago; Bryn Mawr, Pa.; Buffalo, N.Y.; Chapel Hill, N.C.; and Bloomington, Ind.

"The courses that have really succeeded are those in which the instructors have made use of a variety of technologies," says Patone. These may include live, Web-based instruction in which students hear faculty speak. They may see slides and other graphics, hear music and audio clips, as the professor discusses them. Students chat on-line with the professor and each other.

For example, instructor Christine Jenkins put pages of a children's book, "Mike's House," on the Web last year, and she turned the pages as she might a book. She created a virtual children's story hour in a library, complete with background music.

Students, for their part, are required to have access to the necessary technology at work or at home, including hardware (either UNIX, IBM-compatible or Macintosh personal computers with sound capability), software and network connectivity. Students pay full tuition charges at the in-state or out-of-state rates, depending on where they reside.

The flexibility of the program attracts many students such as Nancy Crow, MS '98 LIS, who graduated from the LEEP3 program in August. "LEEP3 fit really well into my needs," she said. Crow is the director of the Four-Star Public Library in Mendon, a small rural library near Quincy. She is married to a farmer, has four children and says she did her coursework throughout the day. "I would turn on my computer when I got home from work and check my e-mail," she says. "I'm not a night person, but I'd get up early in the morning to do my work."

As part of the LEEP3 program's first class, Crow says she and fellow students at first worried that getting a degree through LEEP3 wouldn't be as good as earning it the traditional way on campus. "But once we got into it, we realized we were getting skills that were very important. In the end, we didn't feel cheated at all."

In the two years since she began her master's program, Crow's library now offers public Internet access, and the library has its own Web site.

In the near future, more courses at the U. of I. will be taught on-line. The UI-OnLine initiative was

launched by vice president for academic affairs Sylvia Manning about a year and a half ago. UI-OnLine is an umbrella organization that provides coordination and support for University courses, degree programs and outreach and public service programs that are delivered largely or wholly over the Internet.

The University currently offers more than 41 courses and educational modules in an on-line format, originating from all three of its campuses in Chicago, Springfield and Urbana-Champaign.

"It's an ideal design for professional education," Estabrook says about on-line courses. The College of Education at Urbana-Champaign, for example, has just started offering on-line courses this fall. Altogether, eight courses will be offered over four semesters.

The University of Illinois at Springfield has a proposal for a virtual bachelor's degree program. Other programs up and running include a calculus program for high school students that the mathematics department at Urbana-Champaign administers. In February, the UI Department of Computer Science began offering its professional master of computer science degree to students outside of the United States by means of the Internet.

Also available are several on-line noncredit courses in computer science, such as learning how to use the Internet, Web publishing and JavaScript (a programming language).

And, in what may indicate the growth of on-line courses and offerings, the University announced in July that it is accepting applications and nominations for the position of director of the Illinois Virtual Campus. The virtual campus is a new initiative funded by the Illinois Board of Higher Education. Its purpose is to tie together all of the technology-mediated courses that are offered by accredited colleges and universities in the state into a signal Internet-based catalog.

The goal is to extend access to the state's higher education system to people who are unable to take advantage of traditional on-campus instruction. It may also make Illinois a leader in on-line and other forms of distance education.

Manica -
For your files
Linda

Rochester NY

WXXI-TV late night / November 1998

Instructional Television Late Night
(Monday-Friday, 1:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m.)

Monday

1:00 Discovering Psychology (T)
2:00 World of Chemistry (T)
3:00 Dealing with Diversity (T)
4:00 The Earth Revealed (T)
5:00 GED on TV
6:00 3-2-1 Contact: Classroom Connection

Tuesday

1:00 Time to Grow (T)
2:00 Sociological Imagination (T)
2:30 Science is Elementary (10 15-minute episodes)
5:30 Learn to Read
6:00 3-2-1 Contact: Classroom Connection

Wednesday

1:00 American Adventure (T)
2:00 Government By Consent (T)
3:00 Tracks: Impressions of America (2 15-minute episodes)
3:30 Exploring the Internet (5 15-minute episodes)
4:45 Teacher Requests
5:30 Another Page
6:00 3-2-1 Contact: Classroom Connection

Thursday

1:00 Strictly Business (T)
2:00 Economics USA (T)
3:00 Teen Issues (3 15-minute episodes)
3:45 Inquiring Minds (10 15-minute episodes)
5:05 Smoke Detectives
5:30 Crossroads Cafe
6:00 Assignment: The World ♦

Friday

1:00 American Cinema (T)
2:00 Ethics in America (T)
3:00 Geography in U.S. History (7 20-minute episodes)
5:30 Math Basics
6:00 Assignment: The World ♦

Monday

1:00 Discovering Psychology (T)
2:00 World of Chemistry (T)
3:00 Dealing with Diversity (T)
4:00 The Earth Revealed (T)
5:00 GED on TV
6:00 3-2-1 Contact: Classroom Connection

Tuesday

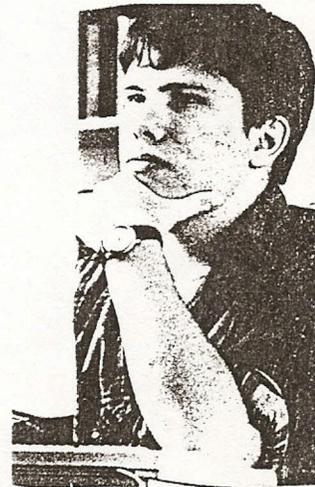
1:00 Time to Grow (T)
2:00 Sociological Imagination (T)
3:00 First Look at Series (8 15-minute episodes)
5:00 Earthquake
5:30 Learn to Read
6:00 3-2-1 Contact: Classroom Connection

**CYBERSPACE
ANYTIME
ANYWHERE**

A revolution is occurring in higher education. Some compare it to Gutenberg's invention of movable type in the 15th century. The Internet and World Wide Web are delivering online courses to students of all ages. This phenomenon of higher education in the digital age is documented in *net.LEARNING*.

Take a tour of the nation's "most wired" college campus, Dartmouth, where a few courses are taught with the aid of a web site, to the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, which created the nation's first online master's degree in library and information science to attract students as far as Alaska. This form of asynchronous communication is essential to the new online education. Early in the morning, late at night, on the weekend or anytime anywhere, students join classroom discussions, collaborate with their peers and communicate with their professors - all via computers connected to the Internet.

**net.LEARNING
Tuesday,
November 24
3:00-5:00 a.m.**



Nice job,
Monica
Leigh: FVE
Mw

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TO: Stacy Case, Channel 15 anchor/reporter
fax (217) 351-6134

FROM: Monica Walk, director of publications and communications
Phone: (217) 244-4643

DATE: July 28, 1998

RE: Thanks for your interest

My thanks to you and Scott for spending time at the Graduate School of Library and Information Science yesterday afternoon. We were delighted to share news about our LEEP3 distance education option with you and the Channel 15 viewing audience.

I have a call in to News Director Grant Uitte to inquire about permission to digitize the clip and show it to the rest of our LEEP3 students via our Web site. They'd love it—the on-campus reaction has been positive, and we know the "distributed" students would enjoy sharing in the news.

Please keep us in mind when you're looking for sources with expertise on information topics. Because of the ever-increasing use of technology in libraries and the information science field overall, our faculty has a large collective knowledge of technology and information topics, including information use in the research process, information storage and retrieval, and the impact of new technologies on reference and information services. Plus, the faculty are connected to a wide variety of other social concerns, such as the ways in which small businesses use information, assessment of the public library in the political process, and the impact of story on children's psychological adjustment and reading motivation. We also could provide additional commentary on distance education, if this proves to be a topic you revisit in the future.

Best regards,

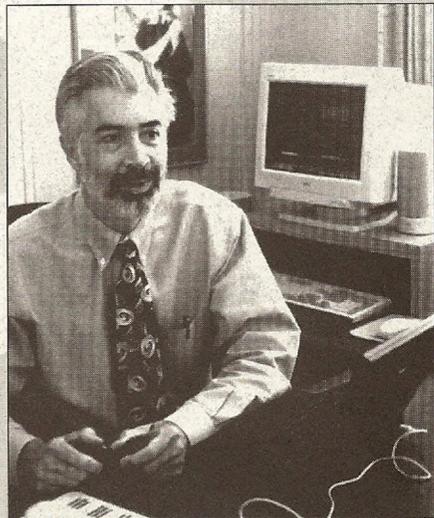
p.s. If video from your On-Line Education segment is used again in the future, could you emend Linda Smith's title to Associate Dean? While Linda was the right person for you to speak with about LEEP3—she's in charge of the program's operations—our distance learning program is the brainchild of Dean Leigh Estabrook, who was unfortunately out of town yesterday. I hope we can make an opportunity for you to meet her—she's a real visionary.



net.LEARNING

▶▶ 8pm-10pm, Monday,
October 12, on WILL-TV

The future of higher education is on the Internet and the U of I is wired. **net.LEARNING**, a two-hour special from PBS airing on WILL-TV, features the U of I's innovative online master's degree in library and information science. Hear from campus leaders, Professor Burks Oakley II and Dean Leigh Estabrook, whose efforts are bringing the U of I onto the Internet.



Be sure to tune-in, Monday, October 12, at 8pm on WILL-TV for **net.LEARNING!**

Visit the PBS **net.LEARNING** website:
<http://www.pbs.org/netlearning>

Broadcast of **net.LEARNING** is underwritten in part by a grant from Wolfram Research, Inc.

WILL_{TV}12