

# ITS works to avoid Internet problems

By Noah Lieberman

It's no secret that this school needs the Internet and its various resources to function. However, not many students know that there is a team who works every day to keep it running smoothly.

That team is Network Security, headed by Paul Menchini, and is part of the Information Technology Services Department (ITS). Network Security is responsible for the upkeep of the school's network and all of the school-run online resources, such as Moodle and Focus. This includes duties such as updating websites and performing maintenance on access points across the school.

Network Security and the rest of ITS caught a lot of criticism last year for performance problems and Internet shutdowns, which were linked to an upgrade of the system.

Menchini says that, in this case, ITS "is not the enemy." The funds needed to perform the update were unavailable until last year, when a grant gave the department the money

it needed to perform a "vital" update to the system.

Menchini says that he recognizes the consequences of the network revamp were unacceptably large. Luckily, there is no major update to the network planned for this year, so chances of further



Paul Menchini Courtesy of NCSSM

slowdowns are minimal.

Menchini says there are several student-caused problems that could be leading to reduced speed. Wireless

printers and other tethers are often the main culprits, taking up channels even while they are inactive.

Menchini says the best way to deal with this problem is to turn off devices that work wirelessly while they're not in use, or disable the wireless features all together.

The school runs a 100Mbps connection divided among 650 students, which is only 0.15Mbps per student. When wireless printers and other devices get in the way, that number can drop even lower.

Menchini estimated that even if you are connecting via DSL, you probably have twice as much speed at home than at school.

ITS is working hard to insure that students can continue to use the Internet without any major hiccups. However, Menchini says the most important thing is if something is wrong, you don't "suffer in silence." If you have any problems or concerns contact ITS at help@ncssm.edu.

# Students deal with homesickness

By Caroline DeSaussure

Students have gotten a taste of home after three weeks at NCSSM. For some, the feeling is strong enough to make them reconsider their decision to attend NCSSM, but it is important to know that students suffering from homesickness are not alone.

Counselor Lori Hackney has been working at NCSSM for seven years and says she has counseled students with varying degrees of homesickness. She says, "A student's feelings are individualized to his or her own personal experience."

Many students find homesickness a small bump in their routine while it plagues other students day after day. An anonymous student shares, "My parents were able to console me temporarily, but I found that having very strong friendships here at NCSSM helped me get over homesickness."

Typical signs of homesickness include general anxiety, loss of attention or motivation, and feelings of isolation or loneliness. Although these feelings are difficult to suppress, there are techniques to avoid the detrimental effects they may cause.

Hackney says, "It's okay to call, skype, or visit family and friends back home if that makes you feel better. Just make sure you do not let this disrupt daily activities or performance."

It's important to maintain good relationships with friends and family back home, but don't neglect your new friendships at NCSSM. Since these people are with you the most, they can help you the most with what you're feeling.

Senior Paulina Kriska says, "It was very tough in the beginning, especially when you don't know anyone. But once you have a strong friend circle, you are able to stop

relying so much on people at home."

For students who aren't feeling the homesickness blues, it's highly likely that someone around you is.

Hackney suggests, "You may not understand what your friends are feeling, but try to come from a place of empathy and compassion when talking with them. Each person has to adjust to NCSSM in his or her own way."

Implore peers who are dealing with homesickness to talk to someone at NCSSM about their feelings. SLIs, RLAs, and counselors are trained to guide students when it comes to their personal problems.

"I wasn't homesick...at all, but I knew some people that were. I encouraged them to hang out with friends as much possible and get involved with school events," says senior Jeremiah Collins.

The Student Activities Board designs events to help students feel involved in their community at NCSSM. Plus, having some fun will help you stop dwelling on the negative feelings of homesickness.

Just because you left something great at home does not mean you cannot recreate another positive environment here in Durham.

Molly Bruce states, "Developing a strong community of friends at school helped me not miss my home community as much."

Homesickness is a normal feeling and is extremely common. You would be surprised at how many of your surrounding peers are feeling the same way you are.

"Although you may be struggling to decide if this is the right place for them, it is important to give yourself some time to adjust," Hackney shares.

# NCSSM Alumni give back

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2011. The first grants will be awarded by Oct. 31, 2011. The deadline for applications for the second round of grants that will be awarded this school year is Feb. 15, 2012.

A panel made up of Bowman, Brockman, NCSSM biology instructor Ashton Powell, and others will make the decision to decide who deserves the grant.

Students and faculty alike are thrilled with the idea of the Bowman and Brockman endowment. It encourages students to dive head-first into

their research and develop their own innovations, instead of tagging along with someone else just for the sake of research.

"We've been extraordinarily lucky, and it all started because of the school," said Bowman, NCSSM class of 1999. "We've talked for a long time about how we could

give back." Students interested in applying for funding from the Bowman-Brockman Entrepreneurship and Advanced Research Endowment, should e-mail Taylor Brockman '99 at taylor.brockman@gmail.com with your resume, personal back-

**"We've been extraordinarily lucky, and it all started because of the school."**

ground, and two paragraphs describing your idea.

# Newsweek ranking

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courses, but do not prepare for offered AP tests.

The 6.0 classes at NCSSM are focused on individual topics rather than the generalized AP exams, which means that while most students are receiving college level instruction, they aren't taking the AP tests offered in that category.

For example, a student may take Evolution with Advanced Topics and get an A, but won't be able to take the AP Biology exam that includes a broader range of subject matter.

In fact, many NCSSM students are taking classes considered more advanced

than the AP level, such as Multiple Integrals and Vector Fields.

This is also not included in the assessment of college level courses offered.

"If these classes had been counted, and AP tests were disregarded, we would have to be a least top 30. It seems a little unfair," says senior Mary Ann Jin.

Many students believe that Science and Math belongs higher on the list.

However, if the current scoring system continues, NCSSM will not be progressing to a higher spot.

# Chancellor Roberts

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members of the NCSSM community have been convening for the general purpose of establishing goals and strategies for the next five years.

Roberts continues, "[We] gathered a lot of great information from administration, faculty, staff, and students. I implore students to get involved in the Strategic Planning action groups so they can help shape the future of the school for those who will follow them."

The NCSSM Board of Trustees and Roberts work together to allot the school's budget that is not associated with state funding. They also develop policies on campus that align with the board of

governors.

In fact, the Board of Trustees picked Dr. Roberts as the chancellor over a year ago. "Our board is 27 members, and we voted unanimously to hire Dr. Roberts as Chancellor," says board Chairperson Shirley Frye.

Despite all of the administrative work, Roberts still makes time for his favorite part his job: interacting with students. "I was lucky enough to get an hour to eat in the PFM with students last week," he says.

Roberts continues, "I attended some of the dances last year and was interested to see what happened there. I am also amazed at how the

students put together such amazing cultural fests and still balance all of their other activities."

Because the students make the school, Roberts hopes that in the next ten years, NCSSM will have "more flexibility and ability to serve more students across the state." The class of 2013 only represents 1/3 of the students who wanted to attend.

By becoming less reliant on state funding, Roberts sees a bright future and hopes that NCSSM will be able to reach more students in North Carolina.

"[By] being innovative ourselves, we can help prepare other students to be innovative too."