

Campus News



The Center for Communications' Julie Sellers (left) works with Chowan College's Phyllis Dewar during a network training session at MCNC in Research Triangle Park. (PHOTO BY Jay Mangum Photography.)

Connection Opens Electronic Pathway to the World at Chowan College

RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK— You could call it "an electronic pathway to the world." That is one way to describe a recently installed computer network connection that now links Chowan College with global communications networks called "superhighways of information."

Using their new link to these networks, students and teachers at Chowan will use computers to look for vast amounts of information that is available only electronically. Linked to these networks, they can work with their colleagues at other universities across the state and around the world without ever leaving Murfreesboro.

Chowan's Phyllis Dewar, a chemistry teacher, says a co-worker has already begun exchanging electronic mail with a colleague in Norway. She adds, "We're really happy to be on (the network) We're so isolated geographically, this is tremendous for us." A teacher from Elon college says, "It opens the students' eyes to a world beyond a textbook."

The network connection was established at Chowan and eight other North Carolina Universities by the Center for Communications, (a division of MCNC in Research Triangle Park) under a \$134,793 grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF). Second year funding for the project could add another \$43,000 for a total grant of \$177,793, according to Alan Blatecky, vice president for communications at MCNC.

The CONCERT data network, which now includes Chowan, provides data connections for thousands of computers at colleges and universities across the state. Business computers are connected at cost through a CONCERT-connect program. The CONCERT interactive audio/video network currently links eight universities and four medical schools with a microwave television network that enables faculty and students to exchange information during teleclasses and videoconferences as if they were working in the same room together.

Blatecky says, "We are pleased to be adding these nine additional colleges to our CONCERT data network. The new connections will permit faculty and students at each institution immediate access to information that is available only through national and global computer networks."

The Center for Communications' Joe Ragland, who helped connect the nine campuses, says, academic institutions in the 1990s must have computer connections to global networks. "Any college without that," he says, "is isolated."

In addition to hardware and software required for data connections, the Center for Communications staff is providing on-site training and technical workshops to help each campus get the most out of its link with the world of computer networks.

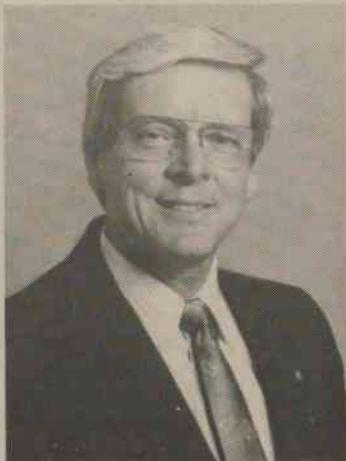
Along with Chowan and Elon, the NSF grant funded connections at the following campuses: Campbell University, Catawba College, Lees-McRae College, Meredith College, Mt. Olive College, Queens College and Shaw University.

Teacher Certification Program Attracts An Older, More Serious Student

This semester Chowan began offering teacher certification programs in seven areas. These include elementary education (K-6); art, music, and physical education (K-12); and math, English, and science (9-12).

According to Dr. Charles Bentley, chairman of the Department of Education, this type of program is very much needed in this part of the state. "With its return to four-year status and the implementation of a teacher education program, Chowan will fill a void that has existed in northeastern North Carolina for over 50 years," he says. "Since there is no teacher training institution within a 60-mile radius of Chowan, students who have wanted to become teachers have had to travel considerable distances in order to receive their training.

The response to the teacher education program has been very positive. Twenty-six juniors are already enrolled in the program



Bentley

and many incoming freshmen have indicated a desire to become teachers. "Several of this year's junior class are older students who already have four-year degrees, but are now seeking teacher certification," Bentley says.

Because of changes by the State Board of Education, it is more difficult to be admitted to the teacher education program than it was a decade ago. Students now must have a 2.5 grade point average in their college work before they can be admitted to the teacher education program, and they must have passed the first of two parts of the National Teacher Exam.

Bentley is seeing older and more serious students enrolling in the program. "The teacher education program will be an alternative to people in the surrounding areas. So far we are very pleased with the numbers this year," he says. "Out of the group, there are 12 commuting students and 10 older students. Those who want to be teachers are more mature students and more serious. Some are mothers and have children of their own. They plan to get a lot out of their education. They are not the traditional dormitory student. They have to juggle their outside life with getting an education."

Some of the students are returning students as juniors. "We have a nice group of folks to work with," says Bentley. "Three of them are from the same family and they are all juniors. One lady is a nurse with the Red Cross in Ahoskie."

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