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Meredith Herald
at
Meredith College
3800 Hillsborough St.
Raleigh, NC 27607
(919) 760-2824
FAX (919) 760-2869
maxwell@meredith.edu

Fifty-one freshmen get connected

Students test a plan for laptop requirements.

LESLIE MAXWELL
Editor in chief

Last spring, Meredith College connected with the twenty-first century as it decided to implement the laptop initiative.

Fifty-one Honors and Teaching Fellows freshmen received their laptops last Friday, Aug. 25.

This pilot program will last for two years, and the students involved will attend monthly workshops, take technology courses and test a wireless networking system on the first two floors of the freshmen dorms.

Dr. Rosalind Reichard, dean of Academic Affairs noted the importance of the students' input during the testing period.

Reichard added that the pilot program will help Meredith "to set the type of learning environment we want."

As sophomores, each student will assist a faculty member with a technology project.

On Friday, Reichard and Ruth Ann Balla, manager of technology services, discussed the expectations and the purposes of the program.

Because Meredith College, in its "Initiative 2000" strategic plan, pledged a focus on technology, a steering committee was developed to create the laptop pilot project.

After Reichard and Balla spoke, the freshmen received their computers.

Saturday, they gathered again for a training session and a question-and-answer session led by Balla and a session on the future, led by Reichard.

Each of the 51 freshmen received an IBM ThinkPad with an Intel Pentium III processor, a six-gigabyte hard drive and an internal modem.

In addition, each student received an ink jet printer and a carrying case for her laptop.

Members of the laptop pilot project steering committee were Hartford, Balla; Dr. Jo Guglielmi, professor of mathematics; Jean Jackson, vice president for Student Development; Reichard; LaRose Spooner, vice president for marketing; and Bill Wade, interim vice president for business and finance.

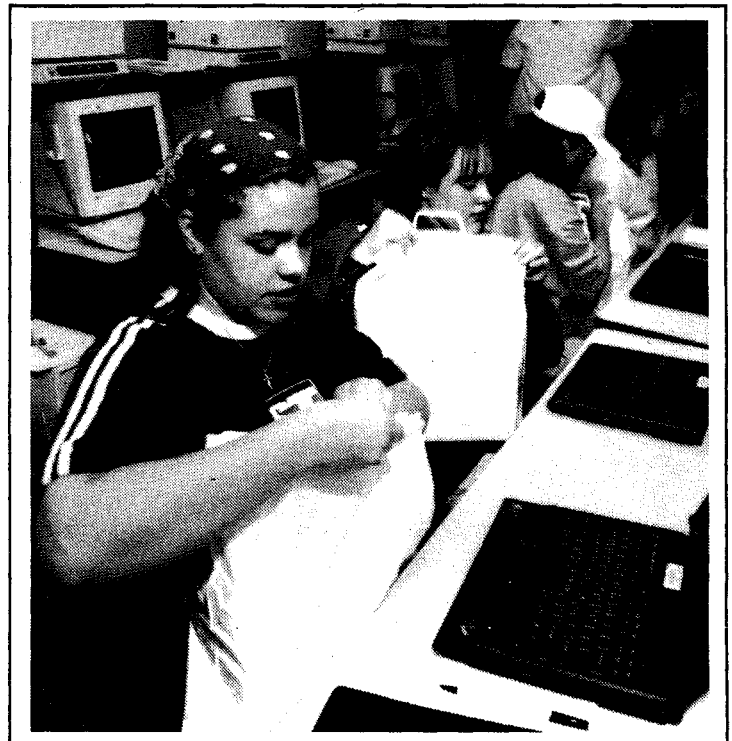
At their training sessions, students also met Simone Tiu, the chair of the laptop assessment committee, who was hired as a support for the laptop

initiative.

Joining schools like Wake Forest University and UNC-Chapel Hill that already have computer requirements for entering freshmen, Meredith's laptop pilot program, according to Reichard, will "help us do a better job teaching.

"I've been excited about it from the beginning," she said.

The Office of Marketing and Communications contributed to this article.



These freshmen eagerly examine their new IBM ThinkPads, which 51 Honors and Teaching Fellow freshmen received as a part of a pilot program.

PHOTO BY STEVE WILSON

Meredith makes faculty, staff changes

New faces and positions on campus this fall.

CHRISTINA HOLDER
Associate Editor

First we got a new president. Then the Dean relocated to the religion department, and the new VP took over his office. And that was just last semester. Fall 2000 brings such a slew of new hires and position changes it will make you wish you had a Palm Pilot to keep them all straight.

Garry Walton, professor of English, stepped into his position as director of the Honors Program in August. Formerly head of the English department

and director of the Honors Program from 1994-95, Walton is looking forward to working with the honors students and with the debut of the Laptop Pilot Project. This year, entering honors freshmen and teaching fellows received IBM ThinkPad laptops and inkjet printers as part of a two-year study to integrate more technology into the curriculum.

"The ongoing benefit is that those students will serve as a test population for the campus as a whole," said Walton. He hopes that eventually every Meredith student will receive a computer when she enters her freshmen year.

Dance professor Alyson Col-

well-Waber won't stray too far from her studio. She's still teaching a modern dance class this semester as she assumes the position of Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Colwell-Waber will be leading the college in a review of general education requirements by "looking at trends across the nation." She said that she is looking forward to "looking at the vision for the college for the next few years."

Heidi LeCount is the new director of Residence Life. The former Residence Life Coordinator at East Carolina University, LeCount will be supervising six full-time Residence Directors and act as a resource

for residents with conflicts and issues related to campus life.

Nikki Bissell, who previously worked as a career counselor at UNC-CH, has joined Dena Price as one of the assistant directors for Student Activities and Leadership Development. As assistant director she will be coordinating student involvement on campus in the forms of class officer training and the student activities fair.

But those aren't the only new faces. Almost 50 new faculty and staff have joined the Meredith community for the fall semester, enough to catch yourself in a double take everywhere from the guard gate to the biology lab.