

History of the SUNY Training Center

Brief:

The SUNY Training Center was initially established to centralize technical training and support for different campuses, areas, and departments. The SUNY TC has since expanded to other areas; it has supported the SUNY Community through programs such as New Dimensions, CIT, ITEC, LAIP, OCLC, SLN, and CMS.

Full History:

The SUNY Training Center is one of four special purpose organizations established by SUNY to support multi-campus, technology-related group activities targeted at improving the quality, quantity, and cost-effectiveness of campus-based and University-wide technology services. Other U-wide technology support organizations include:

- o Information Technology Exchange Center (ITEC) located in Buffalo, NY
- o Student Information (SICAS) located in Oneonta, NY
- o Library Automation & Implementation Program (LAIP) located in Albany, NY

Membership in each of these u-wide technology support centers is voluntary and open to all campuses.

In 1989, seventeen of SUNY's state-operated campuses began working together to move to a new large-system computing environment. This group converted from a Unisys to DEC VAX hardware platform, adopted Oracle as an Enterprise software package, and began relying heavily on SUNYNet for communication and networking. Substantial funding for this conversion effort was provided through the Comprehensive Computing Upgrade Program (CCUP).

The SUNY Training Center was established in May 1989 to provide technical training and education programs for Information Technology staff at CCUP campuses. SUNY's Business Officers Association decided to locate the Training Center in Syracuse. It was thought that this central location within New York State would make travel time to training events reasonable for a majority of member campuses. Funding for the Training Center has always been a combination of membership fees, tuition, and money from the technology office at SUNY System Administration.

During the first three years of the CCUP conversion, the SUNY Training Center program saved member campuses over \$1 million in direct training costs and associated travel expenses. The high-quality technical training delivered during this time supported staff productivity and conversion success. As a side benefit, information technology professionals who participated in group activities at the SUNY Training Center enjoyed a strengthened sense of community and sharing with colleagues from other campuses.

It was originally envisioned that the SUNY Training Center would have a 39-month lifetime, remaining in place just long enough to support the campuses during this computing transition/conversion. The SUNY Training Center continued past that time; however, because its members recognized the strong link between staff education and successful technology adoption.

The 1990, the SUNY Training Center teamed up with SUNY FACT (Faculty Access to Computing Technology) to create technology training and development opportunities for SUNY's academic community. By the next year, the two organization had:

- 1) created a partnership with the Cornell National Supercomputing Facility so that any faculty member within SUNY who needed access could get it
- 2) delivered SUNY's first Conference on Instructional Technologies, an annual event that has grown to be one of SUNY's largest and most popular technology conferences
- 3) established a fund to support Conferences on Computing in the Disciplines
- 4) and developed a Technology Resource Library

When the Educational Technology Initiative was introduced in 1994, the Training Center was asked to create and deliver a program for faculty and instructional support staff focusing on educational technologies. The SUNY Training Center responded with SUNY's New Dimensions in Teaching and Learning program, which was a series of seminars and workshops delivered regionally.

In 1996, the Training Center's mission was expanded to align with the recommendations made by the Strategic Planning Committee on Development and Training in its 1995 report. The Training Center's charge to serve the needs of all SUNY communities (Executive, Administrative, Technical, and Academic) was made official. At the same time, the organization changed its name (briefly) to the Center for Professional

Development in Technology (CPDT). Although the new name did a good job of describing the organization's function, it was hard to remember (and the associated acronym impossible!). As a result, the organization reverted back to its original name, SUNY Training Center (SUNY TC).

In spite of major organizational and staff changes during the past two years the SUNY Training Center continues to progress. The system-wide Needs Assessment completed during the past year assisted the Center in setting a future direction for programs and services. One of this year's most exciting programs introduced by the SUNY TC this year is Self-Paced Learning Initiative. Part of that initiative is the computer-based training program. The SUNY TC will be pursuing other training and development activities using delivery methods that are time and place independent. Our facilities and services continue to be available to member campuses and university-wide technology initiatives such as: Library Automation Implementation Program (LAIP), SUNYCard, and the SUNY Learning Network (SLN), and SUNY OCLC.