GeorgiaVIEW Receives Customer Service Recognition Awards

This year GeorgiaVIEW was recognized for its exemplary service to the students, faculty and staff across the University System of Georgia (USG). The multi-institutional and cross-departmental GeorgiaVIEW team received a Bronze Chancellor’s Customer Service Recognition Award and a Governor’s Commendation for Excellence in Customer Service for their development of a scalable and sustainable support solution for the 33 campuses using the Blackboard Learning System (BbLS) Vista. Winning nominations demonstrated outstanding team service to the USG’s customers over the last year. Their actions reflect all five of the state’s customer service attributes: courteous, helpful, accessible, responsive, and knowledgeable.

The USG Customer Service recognition program coordinates with Georgia Governor Sonny Purdue’s Customer Service Improvement Initiative where all state agencies have united in an effort to make Georgia the best managed state in the country.

GeorgiaVIEW’s Mission

GeorgiaVIEW, Georgia’s Virtual Classroom, provides USG institutions with an integrated set of academic enterprise services. It supports both on-campus and off-campus learning experiences through a framework offering communication, resource access, testing, and management that serves the learning and communication needs of faculty, students, and administration. These services include the management of the GeorgiaVIEW Vista license; the setup and maintenance of regional GeorgiaVIEW host centers; oversight of the Online Support Center; and project management, planning, and training.

GeorgiaVIEW develops resources to support campus adoption and use, including training and support materials for students, faculty, and administrators. GeorgiaVIEW seeks to achieve a higher standard for minimum hosting and application capabilities, and to achieve the economies of scale associated with developing a critical user mass by leveraging expertise across the University System.

Look for this symbol for podcasts with additional details at http://alt.usg.edu/gaview/podcast/
As we reflect upon the stellar progress our GeorgiaVIEW campuses made during 2007, we see faculty, administrators, and IT professionals building strategic partnerships, promoting a diverse sense of application, and inspiring ingenuity. Among the ten USG institutions included in our annual assessment – Augusta State University, Gainesville State College, Georgia College & State University, North Georgia College & State University, and Waycross College – are all featured for the first time.

This year our document features a K-12 outreach initiative piloted by Savannah State University and Sol C. Johnson High School. This partnership not only offers early empowerment to a new generation of marketers, it also provides high school students with a solid grounding in distance learning. Similarly, Dr. June Alberto’s program at Georgia Southern University connects her nursing students with outside academics, patients, and other healthcare industry professionals.

North Georgia College & State University uses GeorgiaVIEW Vista for Foundations of Leadership 1.0, a course required for its new students, and deploys it as a mechanism to further specific military training goals for its Corps of Cadets. We witness comparable applications at Valdosta State University where forward-thinking use of BbLS Vista helps maintain its student-run helpdesk. Waycross College ensures that older students in the rural parts of our state stay in touch with technology. All of these projects, and many others highlighted in this publication, emphasize GeorgiaVIEW Vista’s elasticity as it encourages quality online education and allows campuses to continue transforming, serving, partnering, teaching, and training.

We are very proud of GeorgiaVIEW Vista’s increase in numbers from previous years: 33,000 hosted course sections, nearly 450,000 active users, and over 400 million individual actions of the past twelve months. In addition, it is very inspiring that GeorgiaVIEW can add the Chancellor’s 2007 Customer Service Excellence Award to its growing list of accolades.

More amazing developments will be implemented in 2008; all are intended to ensure an even more robust and flexible course delivery environment for online learners in Georgia.
Shifting nearly 1,000 students from an elective face-to-face class to a required online course is no easy task. But through an intense collaboration with her North Georgia College & State University (NGSCU) leadership students Dr. Michele Hill, Assistant Professor of Leadership and Psychology, did just that.

“Their group project was literally to help me build that course,” Dr. Hill says. “That meant selecting textbooks and all kinds of things. How do we make a test for online students? They also helped to build the Leadership website for North Georgia.”

Foundations of Leadership (PSYC 1001) was migrated to GeorgiaVIEW Vista with the help of Dr. Irene Kokkala in the NGCSU Center of Teaching and Learning Excellence. In fall of 2007, 48 student instructors began to shepherd some 970 new students. Now fully online, PSYC 1001 student instructors teach leadership fundamentals, culminating in a service project, such as Shantytown, which helps build awareness of substandard housing conditions in the United States. Jessica Brown, GeorgiaVIEW Vista student instructor explains, “We are an institution of leadership and we’re forging a legacy of leadership. A first semester freshman has the opportunity to lead that lasts throughout the rest of his or her college career.”

After the PSYC 1001 course was in motion, student instructors took the initiative to build upon the online nature of the course and used popular social networking tools to stay in touch with their students. “I created a Facebook group for my students,” says Brown. “I’ll do whatever it takes to help them out. Because being incoming freshman, they’re not really used to not being around Mom and Dad and having to manage their time on their own and juggle all these different things on their own.”

Dr. Hill is enthusiastic about the success of the course. She is eager to use the flexibility of the online environment to meet changing needs of incoming NGCSU students.

“As we move forward rolling out the class, the assignments have been updated to reflect current affairs. Now we can talk about the presidential candidates, which wasn’t an issue last year. These things get them involved in what’s really going on in the world.”

Dr. Michele Hill
Assistant Professor of Leadership and Psychology

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Acknowledgements:
Michele Barton, Jessica Brown, Bill Capps, Michele Hill, Chris Hilton, Irene Kokkala, Judy McHan, Glenn Mitchell, Amy Moore, Kaitlin Webster

Jessica Brown
Student Instructor
Paperless Protocols

Chris Hilton, the Corps of Cadets Communications Administrator at NGCSU, uses the GeorgiaVIEW Vista platform to centralize communications and provide a document repository for the Corps. Cadets log in regularly to check on crucial aspects of Corps life such as memos of intent, duty assignments, training schedules, and even protocols on how a cadet needs to fold and stow his or her socks.

“Redundancy is a big thing in the Corps,” Hilton says bringing up a picture of a neat and orderly organized drawer. “To me this is astounding, because when I was a freshman or sophomore you’d have to recreate all of this every year and there were really no standards.”

The use of GeorgiaVIEW Vista is an ongoing project that Hilton and his successors can maintain as a vibrant clearinghouse for future cadets to help ease their transition from civilian to military life.

Seamless Experiences

At Georgia College & State University (GCSU), Web Enabled Resources (WER), a unit of the Library and Instructional Technology Center, strives to eliminate barriers in the educational environment. In 2006, GCSU migrated from a campus-supported LMS to GeorgiaVIEW Vista thus freeing the WER’s support and technology professionals to focus on a seamless experience for students and faculty members. Projects launched after the transition include single authentication and greater utilization of iTunes U, a Web 2.0 technology dedicated to educational content.

Single authentication allows a student to use his or her GeorgiaVIEW Vista username and password to gain access to any number of third-party services and applications. Faculty simply complete a request form and choose which Web 2.0 technologies they would like to have their courses authenticate to. “Single authentication negates any impact on the stability of GeorgiaVIEW Vista because everything happens outside of it and for the user it’s transparent,” adds Jay Lancaster, who together with Mazhar Malik (pictured below), designed and implemented this integration.

Campus usage of iTunes U has increased with ease of authentication. “The students love it because they can carry the iPod® around and use lecture notes. The faculty love it because they can put this material together and put it up for the students to download,” Lancaster recounts. The WER staff, who often collaborate with the Georgia Digital Innovation Group, anticipate piloting podcasting-on-demand that will enable a faculty member to “Instant Podcast” and post a lecture to the server before class.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:
Mazhar Malik, Jay Lancaster, Frank Lowney, Barbara Szyjko
The steady ring of telephone calls coming into the Valdosta State University (VSU) Helpdesk is generally the only sound heard in the otherwise hushed rooms of the Odum Library. Student worker Jamie D. Seman stands at his helpdesk position, quietly walking through a set of online steps designed to assist him with a software sale he is currently negotiating for a faculty member. Seman receives this support, as well as all of the training necessary to fill his post, through BbLS Vista at VSU.

“We needed to provide quality training for student workers so they could provide quality service,” explains Beatriz Potter, Instructional Technology Support Specialist in Distance Learning.

Ad-hoc, one-on-one instruction at VSU has now been replaced, thanks to the collaborative efforts of the Distance Learning and Information Technology departments. Standards documents, discussion tools, assessments, and full motion Adobe Captivate® presentations comprise the tutorial elements within the new online training modules. Benjamin Li, the Helpdesk manager, remarks on how well suited the BbLS Vista environment is to training:

“It is similar to the way it is used in academics. We use the content tools to distribute information to our student workers. Likewise, we have different sections and different modules and at the end we have various learning activities and tests.”

Jonathan Sizemore of the VSU Distance Learning Department emphasizes that the helpdesk’s training program prepares student workers for wherever they may go within IT.

“It’s not just a training program,” says Sizemore. “The students who work at the helpdesk and receive the basic training may be reassigned to other areas of IT to support other functions. They remain enrolled in the course, and the course becomes a knowledge base that those students can refer to at any time if they need to check on a procedure or policy.”

Joe Newton, Director of Information Technology at VSU, agrees. “This training program is a flexible, resilient, and transmittable vehicle to promote the ongoing support of users of IT at VSU.”

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:
Brandy Bolduc, Allen DeVane, Eric Jackson, Benjamin Li, Joe Newton, Beatriz Potter, Jamie D. Seman, Jonathan Sizemore
At Waycross College, where online connectivity in the surrounding community might not be as pervasive as in other parts of Georgia, Dr. Chris Wozny and Professor Roberta Lacefield’s Integrating Science, Math, and Technology course (SMTE 1501) serves as an exciting forum for students with limited exposure to emerging technologies. Within the course, students from different generations share their experiences and knowledge.

“We have a lot of students who have a lot of knowledge and don’t get an opportunity to share it,” explains Lacefield, “But online you get the opportunity to say ‘I can help you with that.’”

Students in SMTE 1501 create their own web pages, do internet research, discuss current issues in science and technology, and sometimes even build small programmable robots. Tracey Davis, a student in SMTE, was unsure about the course’s end result at first. “I did think . . . what is the point?!” she says, laughing. “But in the end you start noticing the connection between math, science, and technology and see how they are interwoven.”

Wozny quickly emphasizes the unique blend of the three disciplines remind rural students about the ubiquitous nature of technology and its everyday application.

“Hopefully by thinking about technology, by interacting with technology, and by seeing how it affects your life, it will make students more comfortable with GeorgiaVIEW Vista and think about it as more than just the place that I click on just to get my grades or the place where the professor posts something.”

Lacefield and Wozny jointly designed SMTE 1501 with portability in mind. She prefers to teach entirely online, and he teaches the course as a hybrid, blending it with a face-to-face component. Both agree that students, like professors, prefer different learning modalities. Lacefield states, “The best model is that you have choices. Sometimes it’s a blend.”

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:
Susan Brantley, Tracey Davis, Barbara McFarland, Kristy O’Neal, Roberta Lacefield, Craig Roberts, Chris Wozny
Down one of the five halls of Sol C. Johnson High School’s star-shaped structure, Sharon Stallings (pictured center, left) furthers an educational legacy that began six years ago. The students in her advanced marketing class busily work through an eLearning course that she designed with the help of her former instructor from Savannah State University (SSU), Dr. Emily Crawford, Associate Dean of Graduate Studies (pictured center, middle). In 2006, Dr. Crawford shared some of her research about online education with Stallings and assured her that: “You can do this too. It’s just a matter of getting all these ideas in motion.”

With the help of Danny Martin (pictured center, right), SSU’s GeorgiaVIEW Vista Administrator, the team designed a course that became the basis for a K-12 outreach program unifying the two institutions. Ms. Stallings’s marketing students not only learn the principles of global research, distribution, and competition, but the course also provides them with their first exposure to an online learning environment.

Students assume the virtual identities of well-known corporations and research those firms to improve their understanding of the role marketing plays in company success. Students use online flash cards to build vocabulary, browse through study guides, and communicate via an online chat tool.

Dr. Emily Crawford
Associate Dean of Graduate Studies
“We were trying to ensure that Ms. Stallings was able to use all the mechanisms of eLearning,” says Dr. Crawford, “especially the discussion piece; that’s the interactive part. That, and getting her students used to submitting assignments online.”

For Ralph Lloyd, a student and currently a member of Johnson’s student marketing organization, the online course reinforces his sense of time management. “You can stay after school or go login at the library, but I’d rather do my work here at school.”

Ralph hopes to someday attend either Morehouse College or Georgia Southern University. Although Ralph and the rest of his classmates may aspire to attend colleges and universities throughout the country, it is encouraging to think that at some point they may return to Chatham County and further the legacy of their mentors.

Ms. Stallings’ Marketing via Internet course is part of a larger K-12 outreach project supported by SSU entitled eHSOP (eLearning High School Outreach Project). In a guided and supervised classroom setting, seniors enroll in Ms. Stallings course as a capstone to their Marketing Management Pathway curriculum. Students experience online course work, projects, and assignments that introduce them to eLearning and prepare them for the discipline needed to succeed in higher education courses. Currently, students receive high school elective credits for this course. ■

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:
Emily Crawford, Danny Martin, Sharon Stallings, JHS Marketing Via Internet class

Georgia State University
Creating a Gateway for Pre-K Educators

When Georgia State University (GSU) launched its Georgia Pre-K Program Quality Assessment (PQA) project, it opened a GeorgiaVIEW Vista gateway to thousands of new educators.

“There are currently 7,700 teachers; I think GeorgiaVIEW Vista is very new to them,” says Sherry Howard (pictured below), the project director within the GSU Department of Early Childhood Education, who commissioned this effort. “It’s used as a resource tool.”

The PQA, and the companion Pre-K Child Assessment Program, guides instructors through different content areas that clarify Georgia’s Pre-K standards and define procedures through the use of video content, program administration, and information about transition and family environment.

In the future Howard, in conjunction with Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, plans to expand both programs and exploit GeorgiaVIEW Vista as a collaborative medium.

“This was a big roll out for our staff. We’re designing a new course for this fall and that will actually have a discussion component where we ask teachers to submit different things.” ■

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:
Sherry Howard, Zoë Salloom, Suzanne Turner, Cassie Wilcox
Chatting With the Experts

Chat sessions are almost a commonplace aspect of today’s online experience, but Georgia Southern University (GASOU) students in Dr. June Alberto’s Complementary Therapeutic Modalities course (NURS 4132) use chat sessions to communicate directly with outside authorities on the course’s topics.

“When the course was being developed, I thought it would be helpful to have students chat with these experts, just as if it had been in another course where we had content experts come in and talk to students face-to-face.”

Dr. Alberto invited other GASOU faculty, as well as off-campus authorities from Emory University, Minnesota State University, and the local community to participate in her course.

Since online chats can be archived, Dr. Alberto now has a library of learning tools that she can share with her colleagues. Likewise, she now allows students who have scheduling conflicts convenient access to her materials. Students felt that the online sessions brought insights that could not have been gained otherwise.

“The reason the chats continue to attract students when asynchronous work is so desirable due to its flexibility is that students have the opportunity to interact with persons who are directly engaged in different therapies, which they would otherwise only read about.”

When Dr. Alberto surveyed her students about their most enjoyable aspects of NURS 4132, much of her feedback was related to the chats. One student recalled a compelling session:

“The most meaningful part of the course was the chat with the fibromyalgia patient. I’d heard of the diagnosis, however, I had never spoken with someone who actually had it. It was very rewarding to hear her describe how she deals with her pain and doesn’t let it interfere with her everyday lifestyle.”

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:
Robby Ambler, June Alberto, David Lloyd, NURS 4132 content experts
What does a faculty member do when faced with the challenge of chairing a committee whose members are too busy to meet in person? Answer: Organize a virtual committee! Anne Duke, Assistant Professor of Accounting at Gainesville State College (GSC), matched an immediate need with a practical solution and created an online course dedicated to providing a democratic space and a virtual place to meet anytime, anywhere.

The committee, comprised of faculty and administrators, was tasked to design a survey to assess hybrid course instruction. For many, the virtual committee, chaired and run entirely in GeorgiaVIEW Vista, was their first experience with eLearning. Committee members collaborated with one another through the use of discussion boards, organizer pages, assessments, and web links. Duke recalls committee members swarmed to the most interactive area: “They definitely liked the discussion boards where they could debate ideas.”

According to Duke, perhaps the most useful feature of GeorgiaVIEW Vista is the archive capabilities. “Good and valuable ideas of students, faculty, and administrators are not lost but are captured to benefit others in the future!” She adds, “The beauty of eLearning is that it captures ideas and inputs of people now for review by others in the future.”

The success of the virtual committee launched Professor Duke into her second entrée of eLearning and her first time communicating with advisees online. Previously, students on the college’s Oconee campus were not assigned specific advisors and scheduling was based on availability. Fall semester marked the first time GSC required that an advisor be assigned to each student. Once Duke had her own pool of 50 business majors, she created an online advising classroom and added her advisees to the class. Pairing students with advisors online helped to avoid scheduling conflicts.

Ever responsive to advisees’ needs, Duke hopes to pick up some good ideas from students during the next advising period. Duke uses the discussion board to gather frequently asked questions for future students. In a “Success Stories” area, students mentor one another and can anonymously tell other students what worked for them academically and how they succeeded.

Ultimately Duke wants to empower and inform her students. “I hope through eLearning my students and advisees will feel that they belong to a group with shared academic goals.”

The beauty of eLearning is that it captures ideas and inputs of people now for review by others in the future.

Anne Duke
Assistant Professor of Accounting

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:
Anne Duke, Melody Little
Cultivating New Distance Educators

When Dr. Jason Huett developed his “Introduction to Distance Education” course at the University of West Georgia (UWG), it not only provided exposure to an eLearning environment, it also gave participants a broader appreciation for their future roles in the distance learning process. This course satisfies a requirement in the school’s Instructional Technology and School Library Media tracks of the Master’s and Education Specialist of Media online degree programs.

“I designed the course to advance several distance education perspectives,” Huett says. “Participants in the course not only assumed the traditional role of student but also the role of instructional designer, teacher, and evaluator.”

Students registered for Dr. Huett’s class were asked to design their own online learning modules in GeorgiaVIEW Vista, teach them fully online to their peers, and to evaluate each other’s lessons using instruments currently employed by various K-12 distance education schools across the country. The course was also unique in that it marked the first time students were given access to their own sections of GeorgiaVIEW Vista.

“Generally, admins might not allow this because of the extra support issues it might cause,” said Janet Gubbins, UWG’s GeorgiaVIEW Vista Administrator, who helped with the back-end mechanics required to make this part of the course possible. “But we gave all the students design instructor rights so that they could each design their own learning modules.”

Dr. Huett firmly believes that the class will be a factor in creating new K-12 educators who are ready to tackle online education and technology challenges. “Distance learning is the single most important change in how we will engage learners since we began gathering students on campuses.”

Dr. Jason Huett
Assistant Professor, Media and Instructional Technology

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:
Janet Gubbins, Jason Huett
Throughout her career, Augusta State University’s (ASU) Dr. Christine Terry has used GeorgiaVIEW Vista in a number of instructional scenarios. Since Fall 2007, her involvement with Georgia’s Virtual Classroom has increased as she and colleagues brought together a library of resources to help faculty write syllabi and learning objectives. ASU’s new Virtual Teaching and Assessment Center (VTAC) was launched after they attended a year-long series of workshops designed to link new Georgia Performance Standards with teaching pedagogy used in USG institutions.

“On our campus, we don’t have a teaching and learning center like some of the other campuses do, so we thought GeorgiaVIEW Vista would be a good way to have campus-wide discussions for faculty who have varied teaching schedules.”

In the coming semesters, Dr. Terry and her colleagues plan to invite speakers to discuss pedagogical issues: “Using the GeorgiaVIEW Vista discussion board feature we’ll be able to give people a location online to continue to have these dialogues. Rather than sending e-mails to everyone on campus, there’s a record that you can continue to come back and add to as time goes by.”

Dr. Terry hopes that support for the project will grow as her colleagues become more energized with respect to the study of instructional principals and techniques.

“We’re just trying to get people interested in the scholarship of teaching and learning and seeing that as a valid source of scholarship and of professional development.”

“...Georgiaview vista would be a good way to have campus-wide discussions for faculty who have varied teaching schedules.”

**Dr. Christine Terry**
Assistant Professor of Biology

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:**
Maureen Akins, Christine Terry
GeorgiaVIEW Significant Accomplishments 2007

GeorgiaVIEW Institutional Administrator Certification

In December 2006, 35 participants representing 26 USG institutions completed the GeorgiaVIEW Institutional Administrator Certification Workshop. In May 2007, 25 participants representing 21 USG institutions completed the workshop.

Blackboard (GeorgiaVIEW) Certified Trainer Program

In June 2007, 14 participants representing 12 USG institutions and organizations completed the Certified Trainer Program, bringing the total number of USG Certified Trainers to 41.

Creation of the VISN-L “VISNaries” Listserv

Listserv was created for the promotion of pedagogical and best practices discussions pertaining to online learning.

GeorgiaVIEW Townhall Meetings

GeorgiaVIEW team planned and conducted onsite meetings at six USG institutions during 2007 for local faculty and students to comment on ongoing GeorgiaVIEW endeavors and to provide updates on forthcoming developments. Each session also offered webconference participation for other USG institutional representatives.

System-wide GeorgiaVIEW Vista Growth

During Fall 2007, 33 USG institutions were active in GeorgiaVIEW Vista. There were 14,537 active sections – representing a 49% increase from Fall 2006 of the total sections offered by the hosted institutions. There were 186,290 unique users active – 60% of the total population of the hosted institutions.

September was the most active month of the year – with August 27th as the most active day of the year.

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Collaboration, innovation, instruction, and foundation are just a few of the key concepts integral to the expansive growth of the GeorgiaVIEW project over calendar year 2007. As illustrated by the great variety of articles in this year’s publication, the GeorgiaVIEW project is a foundational aspect of the USG’s core mission of teaching and learning.

Once again, this year GeorgiaVIEW Vista provides hosting services for 32 USG institutions, while also supporting Valdosta State University’s Vista instance and the contract support for Georgia Institute of Technology and the University of Georgia’s Campus Edition instances.

What we see through this array of participation are USG faculty using the collaborative communication framework and key academic tools of the GeorgiaVIEW service to promote innovative quality instruction and informed learning.

From using communication tools to advance academic advising, to supporting institutional helpdesks, or promoting outreach with local high schools; the GeorgiaVIEW community continues to collaborate and organically redefine how the service is utilized.

We began early in 2007 by responding to challenges to improve communication channels with all stakeholders, streamlining existing as well as new business processes, and strengthening the partnerships with key vendors such as Blackboard. Initial key changes in the infrastructure and the application were also completed to support the continued and future growth, stability, and robustness of the GeorgiaVIEW service.

Moving forward into 2008, we will continue to focus on ensuring that the platform will grow to meet the demands of users. This is of the highest priority for all of us who are part of this mission-critical service. This includes exploring and implementing changes to support a stable yet flexible infrastructure. We will also look at the next steps regarding migration to Blackboard Vista 4.x and continued support and expansion of integration with other enhancements to the teaching and learning experience. We are equally committed to strengthening our successful communication model with GeorgiaVIEW institutional administrators to build a GeorgiaVIEW service that meets the collective needs of the University System.

Doug Hyche

Associate Director, GeorgiaVIEW
Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia