

Teaching, learning, and technology roundtable

By Irene M. Hoffman

A report on AAHE's meeting to launch local campus roundtables

Librarians, faculty, administrators, and campus computing experts from more than 89 higher learning institutions convened in Washington, D.C., to discuss ways to better serve teaching and learning through information technology. The Teaching, Learning and Technology (TLT) Roundtable meeting was a "conference within a conference" that took place within the American Association of Higher Education (AAHE) National Conference, March 19–22, 1995.

AAHE's TLT Roundtable is a national program designed to assist individual campuses in developing their own campuswide planning and support systems—that is, their own local roundtables. The specific aim is to help support better, more appropriate selections and use of the widening range of instructional choices (prints, digital media, face-to-face meetings, telecommunications, etc.) to serve the learning needs and preferences of a growing range of students, and the teaching capabilities and choices of a diverse group of faculty.

The purpose of the TLT Roundtable program is to improve the quality and accessibility of higher education through the selective use of information technology and information resources in teaching and learning, while controlling costs. AAHE's national TLT Roundtable program encourages, guides, and assists individual campuses in establishing their own local roundtable group.

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The members of each group work cooperatively to develop campuswide planning, assessment, and support systems and to undertake related projects with other roundtable institutions.

The criteria for qualifying for the conference involved sending a team of three to five people that reflected the composition of a local roundtable. These teams included a chief academic officer, someone responsible for improving teaching and faculty development; someone from computing; a faculty member (who may or may not be using information technology in his/her own teaching); and a librarian.

Through this meeting and others being planned, the TLT Roundtable provides structured activities to help institutions organize, plan, and form a TLT Roundtable. This meeting, the first of its kind, gave institutions a forum to work with peer institutions and to share initial finds with new teams from institutions ready to begin.

During the TLT Roundtable agenda, over 275 team members assembled for over 21 hours of expert updates, information exchanges, strategic planning, evaluation, and collaboration. Ben Shneiderman, head of the Human-Computer Interaction Lab, University of Maryland, stated that technology today needs to "go beyond user friendly." Today's teachers need to go from being the "sage on the stage, to the guide on the side." Through technology, the instructor can not only find ways to guide learners through the education process, but stimulate and infuse learning with power and energy.

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initiative will be necessary in the coming weeks for it to replace the Exon-Gorton proposal.

Rescissions

TIAP Grants: Two major rescission packages, one in the House and one in the Senate, threatened the TIAP (Telecommunications Information Infrastructure Assistance Program) grants in the Department of Commerce. The TIAP grants are administered by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration. Several were received by libraries or had libraries as partners in community and education coalitions that received awards last fall.

In FY94, \$24.4 million in grants was awarded. The original FY95 budget appropriated \$63 million. A conference committee on H.R. 889, the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations and Rescission Act of 1995, approved rescission of \$15 million instead of the \$34 million that the Senate had proposed. An additional \$30 million was proposed to be rescinded from the TIAP grants in H.R. 1158. It is yet to be determined what the final cuts will be to the TIAP program in these rescissions.

Library programs: Before recessing, the Senate recommended a total of \$418.9 million in all education rescissions for the FY95 budget. Previously the House had recommended a \$1.7 billion rescission education package.

In library programs, the House supported rescission of all of the \$6.5 million in research and demonstration projects and all of the \$4.9 million for library education and training fellowships for library science students. The Senate, by comparison, supported only a \$2.9 million cut in the library education and training program. The Senate did not vote any rescissions for library construction and the research/demonstration program.

Upon return from Congressional recess the first week in May, the House-Senate conferees will meet to negotiate their differences in their respective rescissions. It is anticipated that while the budget cutters did not completely zero out library programs, they will be far more diligent as the FY1996 budget evolves. Library and education supporters will have to watch closely and be ready to advocate strongly as the 104th Congress proceeds in its new agenda. ■

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Institutional teams met for over 21 hours to exchange information with representatives from industry, discuss the impact of information technology on teaching and learning, develop more effective strategies for supporting faculty efforts to integrate information resources and technologies into teaching and learning, and meet with peer institutions to share ideas and develop partnerships.

Representatives from all types of organizations and industries shared their thoughts and visions for enhancing teaching and learning through technology. ACRL was represented by its executive director, Althea Jenkins, who spoke on the role of ACRL, ALA, and libraries in this arena. We also heard from representatives from IBM, Follett Corporation, the National Association of College Stores, the Professional and Organizational Development Network, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., and many others. A keynote luncheon address was given by Reed Hundt, chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, who encouraged the group to let technology become "cutting edge versus cutting wedge." He stressed that as educators our planning needs to be inclusive, and as citizens

we need to lobby and voice our needs and concerns for improving our infrastructures.

The meeting was coordinated by project director Steven W. Gilbert. In the March/April 1995 issue of *Change* magazine, Gilbert's article, "Teaching Learning and Technology: The Need for Campuswide Planning and Faculty Support Services," speaks to the imperative for forming and implementing local roundtables.

AAHE will sponsor a summer institute in July 1995 to provide intensive training and networking opportunities for institutions wishing to participate in a TLT Roundtable. There is also a listserv that provides a forum for roundtable teams and others to discuss how changing patterns of teaching and learning might be influenced by new applications of information technology and vice versa.

To join the AAHESGIT listserv, send an e-mail message to: LISTPROC@LIST.CREN.NET that says: SUBSCRIBE AAHESGIT YOUR FIRSTNAME YOURLASTNAME. To find out more about the summer institute contact Ellen Shorthill, Project Assistant, AAHE Technology Projects: SHORTHILL@CLARK.NET. ■