

# the QUEST

Increasing student learning through improved engagement!

Quality Enhancement Plan Newsletter  
Volume 1, Issue 2

JULY 2009

## QEP GOAL

Increase student learning through improved engagement:

- \* Transform curriculum and instruction.
- \* Participate in professional development opportunities.
- \* Create a technology rich environment.

## DID YOU KNOW?

The name of the Vernon College QEP is VConnected.

CRIQUETT LEHMAN  
Director of QEP



## Creating a Technology Rich Environment



### Social Networking

Let's start with the basics: what is social networking exactly? It is the term that refers to web sites that promote online communities by allowing individuals to post their own content and share it with others. Three of the most popular methods of social networking are Twitter, Facebook, and Blogging.

Twitter uses brief text based messages of not more than 140 characters in length to communicate with others in real time. These posts known as "tweets" are then displayed on the users profile page and are delivered to other users who have subscribed or who "follow" them.

*"It's not just about information. It's about linking people in ways that we have never been linked before, and in ways we cannot predict."*

— Michael Wesch, Professor of Cultural Anthropology, Kansas State University

Read the entire text in the article "[Whither Twitter](#)" on page 6 of the May 18, 2009 issue of Community College Week.

Facebook connects people with friends and others who work, study, and live around them. It allows people to keep in touch with friends, post photos, share links and exchange other information. Like Twitter, content posted by the user is displayed on their profile page and delivered to other users who have subscribed or are "friends" with the user.

*"Administrators shouldn't push college coursework or administrative news through a college's Facebook page...As soon as we start acting like mom and dad, we've destroyed that [social networking] spirit."*

— Diane C. McDonald, Associate Director of Marketing, Texas A&M University

Read the entire text in the article "[Facebook a key to college marketing](#)" on page 27 of the July 2009 issue of eCampus News.

Blogging is another tool that can be used to communicate to your colleagues and/or students. Blogs are web pages that serve as a personal journal. Although publicly accessible, visitors cannot change the original posted content. They can, however, post comments on the original posted content. For example, an instructor could set up a blog for their class that allows students to post project reflections. Other classmates can view these reflections and post comments but cannot change the text of the original reflection. The difference in blogging and twitter/facebook is the fact that a user must visit the actual blog web page to view posted materials. Whereas twitter and facebook deliver the posted materials to other users accounts.

Educators have begun researching social networking to determine how this tool can help engage their students and increase student learning. A common question is whether a person's financial resources act as a barrier to using social networking. The article "[What is Twitter](#)", located on page 7 in the May 18, 2009 issue of Community College Week, includes a chart that illustrates the demographics of those who have a profile on a social networking site. The chart indicates that of those surveyed who had an annual household income of less than \$30,000, 45% were active in the social networking community. This is the highest percentage of users when compared to annual household income levels above \$30,000 which range from 30-38%.

**Interested? Thoroughly confused? Cannot wait to get started?** We will be providing training on social networking and include examples of how others in higher education are using this tool (both instruction and student support services). A schedule of these sessions will be made available at staff development in August. In the mean time, I encourage you to do your own research and bring your thoughts and ideas to our session.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Click on the following links to view examples of how other colleges/colleagues have used twitter, facebook, and blogs.

Twitter:

[South Plains College](#)  
[Ozarka College](#)  
[Midland College](#)  
[Texas A&M University](#)

Facebook:

[South Plains College](#)  
[Ozarka College](#)  
[Texas A&M University](#)

Blog:

[TCCTA](#)  
[Mike McCoy—Director of Distance Learning](#)



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## Transforming Curriculum and Instruction



### Engagement Survey Updates

#### CCSSE

Vernon College should receive the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) results by July 31, 2009. Information will be presented in staff development which will include how to access the data.

#### SENSE

The Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE) will be administered at Vernon College for the first time this fall. If your class was chosen as a participant, you will receive an email on August 13 from Criquet Lehman. The survey administrator for your campus will then contact you to schedule the survey.

SENSE will serve as an additional student engagement assessment tool for the Quality Enhancement Plan by:

- \* Identifying the areas in which entering students thrive and those in which they consistently struggle;
- \* Planning and examining the impact of interventions aimed at improving students' earliest collegiate experiences;
- \* Documenting and improving institutional effectiveness over time; and
- \* Demonstrating institutional results and progress in supporting entering students.

The SENSE and CCSSE surveys will be administered on alternating years so there will be one engagement survey each academic year.

### KNOW THIS.

Quality Enhancement at Vernon College is more than a method of reporting to SACS. Quality Enhancement is not just for pilot projects. Quality Enhancement is striving to do what we do *better* at Vernon College.

#### MIKE KNOWS

Director of Distance Learning, Mike McCoy, uses [blogging](#) as a method of communicating education/distance learning resources to colleagues.

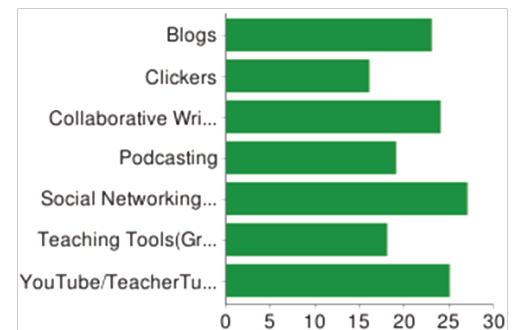
#### MARIAN KNOWS

Marian Grona, Director of Library Services, has utilized video editing software to post [video tutorials](#) on the library homepage. The tutorials help students learn what database resources are available and how to access them.

### Roxie's Connection

Greetings Vernon College Community, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself and my services. My name is Roxie Hill; I have been with VC since November 2003, serving as the Health Information Technology Program Coordinator at the Century City Center. I recently accepted the position of Instructional Designer and officially began my duties on July 1.

The first item of business was to hear from you. I recently put out a survey and asked you what you were interested in learning about, you said...



So, beginning in the fall semester, I will provide training sessions "Lunch & Learns" to the VC community. The sessions will be at varied times and held on multiple campuses throughout the academic year. The Lunch & Learn calendar will be available during faculty/staff development week. I will also be available to assist you one-on-one, for the "just in time" training. You are welcome to stop in the VConnected Café (Faculty Innovation Center, FIC) on either campus.

Join me in the VConnected Café!

### CONTINUING EDUCATION KNOWS, THE LIBRARY KNOWS, STUDENT SERVICES KNOWS

Multimedia message boards will be in place this fall to inform Vernon College students of services and events on our campuses. They will be located on the Vernon campus in the Library and Colley Student Center; at Century City Center in the New Student Lounge, the West Entrance Foyer, and the Library; and at Skills Training Center in the Library. The 42" screens will allow the offices of Continuing Education, the Library, and Student Services to post electronic flyers promoting a service or event.

### NURSING KNOWS

LVN Instructor, Thomas Hickey, and Director of Associate Nursing, Cathy Bolton, will utilize clicker technology in the classroom this year. Specifically they are trying to enhance engagement and retention in their distance learning courses.



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Vernon Campus:  
Faculty Innovation Center  
Library RM 208

Century City Center:  
Faculty Innovation Center  
RM 505