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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Selected News Releases

Bell Atlantic Gift Boosts UMaine Technology Training for Teachers

ORONO, Maine -- Technology is changing the way the world communicates and how teachers teach and students learn in Maine classrooms. A new partnership to further expand the digital bridge from classroom to a transformed society was announced today by the Bell Atlantic Foundation and the University of Maine College of Education and Human Development.

Bell Atlantic's \$100,000 grant will expand the College's capacity to model the best use of technology in its own instruction and to prepare teachers who are technologically competent and confident. The Bell Atlantic grant is targeted at developing educator expertise in the effective use of the broadband, interactive ATM telecommunications network.

Robert Cobb, dean of the College of Education and Human Development, and Edward Dinan, state president and CEO of the Bell Atlantic Corporation, announced the partnership in Augusta during a working session of the Maine Distance Learning Project Advisory Committee. This panel is comprised of administrators of the 27 schools committed to developing ATM sites in 1999-2000.

The Bell Atlantic award will extend the work of the Maine Distance Learning Project, through the College, by providing professional development to educators and exposing UMaine students studying to become teachers to exemplary educational practices using the ATM network. ATM enables instantaneous transport of voice, video and data exchange between connected sites. The College is one of five original pilot sites established three years ago to test equipment and innovative use of the new network.

Cobb and Dinan point out that Maine's technology infrastructure is one of the best in the nation, noting that Maine is the first state to have all digital phone switching systems, to link all schools and libraries to the Internet and to widely deploy high-speed ATM switches.

The emphasis must now shift to effective educational use of these resources, Cobb said. "In partnership with the private sector, we can teach practicing educators to take advantage of Maine's infrastructure and also guarantee that our new teachers will be more sophisticated in the application of existing and emerging technology to increase student learning," he said.

"We are very excited to continue our partnership with the University of Maine in the awarding of this grant," said Dinan. "Bell Atlantic has made substantial investments in our infrastructure in this state providing Maine with one of the most advanced telecommunications networks in the world," he added. "Our grant will help the development of the applications and content in this new distance learning medium that will bring Maine to the forefront of innovative education for the 21st Century."

(The Bell Atlantic Foundation supports a variety of projects domestically and internationally, with an emphasis on new technology applications in education, health and human services, the arts and humanities, and civic development in the communities served by Bell Atlantic. Bell Atlantic is at the forefront of the new communications and information industry. With more than 42 million telephone access lines and 8.6 million wireless customers worldwide, Bell Atlantic companies are premier providers of advanced wireline voice and data services, market leaders in wireless services and the world's largest publishers of directory information. Bell Atlantic companies are also among the world's largest investors in high-growth global communications markets, with operations and investments in 23 countries.)

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