

# The NCDLA e-letter

Volume 5, Number 2 Fall 2007

## University of North Carolina Online Puts Degree Programs Within Reach



The UNIVERSITY of  
NORTH CAROLINA *Online*

*16 Universities. One Link. Unlimited Possibilities.*

<http://online.northcarolina.edu>

Responding to a growing statewide demand for affordable and accessible higher education, The University of North Carolina Online Web site is now live and offers students 155 online-degree, certificate and licensure programs from the 16-campus system. The comprehensive selection of online academic programs is one of the largest in the United States. Students can search for online programs or courses by subject, program, campus, keyword or advanced search.

The University of North Carolina Online wants to position itself as a regional, national, and eventually international leader in online higher education. The 16-campus collaboration is a way for online programs to serve a projected 80,000 additional students who will enroll in the UNC system by the end of the next decade.

The site lists more than 1,200 online courses that are available for the fall term. One goal for this is to enable students to find a course that may help them to meet graduation requirements in a timely manner. All online programs are offered through the individual campuses, but students can look for the programs of their choice in one central Web site. The programs are fully accredited and taught by

the same faculty who teach face-to-face on the state's campuses.

This initiative reflects the tradition of The University of North Carolina in allowing each UNC campus to emphasize its unique educational strengths and distinguishing features while providing centralized functions and services that are most efficiently addressed at the system level.

### QUALITY Statement

The quality of online courses and programs is extremely important to The University of North Carolina. All sixteen institutions in The University of North Carolina are accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, which has quality standards for distance education programs that all courses and programs affiliated with The University of North Carolina Online must follow. The University of North Carolina endorses the Southern Regional Education Board's [Principles of Good Practice](#). Through the work of the UNC Online Quality Workgroup, all UNC institutions have documented the processes and policies they use to ensure that online courses are of the highest quality. In addition, each UNC campus Chief Academic Officer has appointed a representative to an Online Quality Assurance Council that will meet periodically to review quality assurance processes and standards.



The University of North Carolina Online Military Education

## Military Online Partnership

<http://online.northcarolina.edu/military>

On July 24, at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, Dr. Alan Mabe, Dr. Jim Sadler, and Kay Zimmerman formally unveiled The University of North Carolina Online Military Education Web site. Military Education Service Officers, representatives from the 16 UNC campuses, NCCCS representatives and other partners attended the event to see the new Web site. Representatives from the NC military education service centers have requested a single point of contact and information from the 16 campuses, and the online military website is the answer to their request. The Military Education site provides information about each military installation in North Carolina, including UNC campus programs offered at the bases and UNC community college partners. Announcements of the site were placed in base newspapers and local newspapers near the bases.

## The University of North Carolina Online 2+2 Website

<http://online.northcarolina.edu/2+2/>

The University of North Carolina and the North Carolina Community College System received legislative funding in 2005 for the UNC-NCCCS 2+2 E-Learning Initiative. The funds were to be used to develop additional courses for 2+2 online programs in mutually agreed upon high-need areas. The two systems have focused on creating online degree programs primarily in teacher education, especially high-need licensure areas. This strategy is resulting in full, four-year, articulated online degree programs—accessible from anywhere in North Carolina—that can be used to increase the number of teachers being produced, especially in high-need content areas. Initial areas identified for 2+2 online program development are

- Mathematics Secondary Education
- Science Secondary Education (specific fields and comprehensive)
- Middle Grades Education (concentrations in mathematics and science)
- Special Education (general curriculum licensure)
- Elementary Education
- Birth through Kindergarten

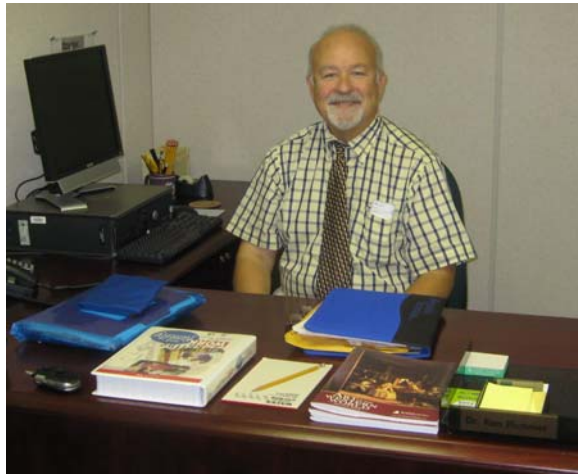
With funding provided by the NC General Assembly, in 2007-08 The University of North Carolina Online will develop additional features for UNC campuses to update their online program and course information, for inter-institutional course registrations to be handled in a seamless and transparent manner, and for development of innovative and demand-driven online programs that respond to the needs of North Carolina.

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## Founding NCDLA President, Dr. Ronald J. Plummer, to Retire

Few members of NCDLA realize that in 1999 while attending an E-Learning conference in California, Dr. Ron Plummer, Adult Learning Manager for UNC-TV, initiated and financed the establishment of the North Carolina Chapter of the United States Distance Learning Association. This is just one example of the major accomplishments that this highly respected pioneer in the field of distance learning has realized during his 32 year career. During that initial year of NCDLA, through his diligence, enrollment reached 125 members.



While in the 1970s, at UNC-Greensboro, Ron pioneered the use of video self-assessment in teacher training for classroom presentations. In the 1980's his research into the integration of instructional tele-communications into community college curriculum planning set a standard for what was to become distance education. As manager of the North Carolina Tele-course/Teleweb Consortium, he has watched the enrollment grow from 623 students to nearly 20,000 students annually. In 1998, The North Carolina Telecourse Consortium won the Telecourse People Award due to Ron's untiring efforts, traveling across North Carolina to conduct utilization workshops on campuses and promote distant learning at statewide meetings.

Additional national awards include recognition in 1986 of his newsletter, *TeleTalk* and in 2006, the

Instructional Technology Council picked him as one of the two educators nationally to receive the Lifetime Achievement in Distance Education award.



Ron has served on the PBS Adult Learning Services Advisory Board and he is a favored presenter at the National Educational Telecommunications Association, the Association for Educational Communications and Technology and at PBS conferences.

He has served on the national board of the Southern Educational Communications Association and he was president of the Post-Secondary/Adult Learning Council of SECA. The author of many articles and publications pertaining to distance learning, in addition to implementing statewide telecourses/teleweb courses, Ron also works in the Literacy community with GED on TV, and many Hispanic literacy and health literacy projects. His efforts have brought many national grants to UNC-TV that he has implemented statewide.

Although he is retiring, we know that this distance learning pioneer and innovator will continue to promote knowledge based technology in the digital revolution.

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Rowan-Cabarrus Community College



Catawba Valley  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Caldwell Community College  
& Technical Institute

## 1<sup>st</sup> Annual MyLC Consortium Year in Review

In March 2006 Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute, Catawba Valley Community College and Rowan-Cabarrus Community College formed a Blackboard Consortium. The consortium was implemented in the Fall semester of 2007. The MyLC consortium gives the members the main benefits of Blackboard ASP hosting, greater server space, and the ability to upgrade to the full Academic Suite (Learning System, the Community System, and the Content System).

The first North Carolina Community College System Blackboard consortium, the NC Learning Consortium (Cleveland, Guilford, Craven, and South Piedmont community colleges) inspired the formation of MyLC. Each institution receives the benefit of a collaborative environment and resulting costs savings with added features.

The year has passed quickly since implementation of MyLC. The consortium members learned that the benefits of the consortium do not solely rest in the ability to offer additional blackboard features of the full Academic Suite to students, faculty and staff. Nor are the benefits of the consortia limited to the benefits of ASP hosting (allowing members to focus on innovation and growth, opposed to server maintenance and performance). In addition to these core benefits, the three community colleges have found great value in collaborative idea sharing, collective problem solving and sharing resources across institutions. The number of users, courses, and organizations has grown significantly at each of the institutions over the last academic year.

Each institution now creates a user account for every new student, faculty member, and staff member. Everyone is finding expanding and

creative ways of using Blackboard as a communication resource.

The Blackboard administrators at each college have been able to share best practices, training materials, and provide students and faculty added resources toward enhancing learning opportunities. New initiatives planned in the next academic year include e-portfolios, expanding usage of the content collection, and the addition of several building blocks across the consortia. The consortium also plans to continue to share faculty face to face technology training sessions across institutions (four to date), which have been wonderful opportunities to bring people together across disciplines and institutions.

The three colleges are proud to be a part of this synergistic community and all look forward to continuing the partnership in the semesters to come. For additional information regarding the MyLC consortium, please contact:

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## Preparing My Virtual Office: Using Second Life to Connect with Distant Students

In June I held my first student meeting in Second Life. I consulted with a graduate student preparing to embark on dissertation work. We had never met face-to-face, but I recognized her avatar immediately. We spent an hour discussing her topic and refining her approach to the study. I recall the event as something similar to face-to-face discussion. We seemed to make eye contact as we spoke, though “speech” was actually typed text and eye contact was based on pre-programmed movements that avatars engage in while idle. Technically we were just sending text back and forth; doing what we might have done using Instant Messaging. However, it felt like much more – it felt *real*.

Gestalt theorists might explain the experience as my mind filling in gaps; my thoughts creating more complete memories by adding impressions of speech and gesture from similar experiences. Neuroscientist Antonio Damasio’s insights into the role emotion plays in cognition suggest the experience was made richer, more memorable, and more important by virtue of the engaging graphics that triggered positive emotional response to the situation. Regardless of what causes the richness of the experience, I find myself looking to do more with it, and I suspect a growing number of my distant students will want this experience as well.

I teach online and I am constantly seeking opportunities to build a sense of community among my students. This semester I will hold traditional office hours. However, I will add an extra hour to my schedule, offering students the opportunity to visit my virtual office.

My Second Life office is similar to my real one, with some interesting differences. In my virtual office there are a number of take-away items such as a t-shirt in our university’s colors, with our program logo, which one’s avatar can wear.

Second Life is not particularly difficult to use. However, the learning curve is steep. Free membership in Second Life allows one to control an avatar, but not to own land. To create a virtual office, I found it necessary to invest in a “premium” membership (\$72 annually). I added \$25 to my account, providing a very reasonable amount of personal spending power.

I believe the effort I spent experimenting with Second Life was worthwhile. There are, however, technical restrictions that one must keep in mind as one forays into online virtual reality. Not everyone currently has the computing power or bandwidth necessary for access. Though I encourage its use, I will not require Second Life activity among my students because a few are using dial-up connections as the only option available to them, and many are using computers that cannot handle Second Life’s processing demands.

Overall, I am glad I spent much of my summer immersed in Second Life: learning to use it was time consuming; imagining how to use it is exciting; remembering that Second Life is not accessible to everyone is sobering. To paraphrase The Bard, it is indeed a brave new world that has such (virtual) people in it. I look forward to a few of them showing up during office hours.

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My avatar (“Max Mesic”), waiting for visitors in my virtual office. The pictures on the walls link to websites and documents about the Instructional Design and Technology program at East Carolina University.



## Leadership in the Public Sector

[www.chass.ncsu.edu/lps](http://www.chass.ncsu.edu/lps)

North Carolina State University has a newly established degree program that is in *completely distance education format*, the BA Degree is called Leadership in the Public Sector (LPS). LPS assumes that exercising effective leadership in the public sector is different from leadership practices in the private sector due to unique features of the public sector. In other words, LPS is a degree completion program designed to focus on leadership in non-market environments (such as local, state, and federal government organizations, and non-profit institutions, as well as teaching). The curriculum covers management, statistics, surveys, political science, public policy and psychology, as well as related social science fields. Please see the LPS Website for a complete list of courses.

LPS is specifically created to provide non-traditional students with a sound foundation in the ethical, theoretical, analytical, and technical skills necessary to be effective leaders in public and non-profit sector organizations. The program allows students to change or advance their careers without taking a leave of absence or adhering to a rigid class schedule. **Students are not required to come to campus at all.** Also, LPS graduates will hold a B.A. degree which *will be identical to any other NCSU college degree*. Some students in the new program will simply acquire a bachelor's degree; others will be interested in government or private sector careers, teaching, and graduate or law school. This program is also open to military personnel stationed in North Carolina.

Students seeking admission to the program should have between 30 to 60 credit hours of

college level work from an accredited college or university. Preference will be given to students who hold an AA degree from a community college. A total of 122 hours are required for the Bachelor of Arts degree in Leadership in the Public Sector. The program consists of 30 LPS credit hours with additional course credits all available through NC State's Distance Education Flexible Access program. NCSU's extensive distance education catalog is available to LPS students. For more information please contact:

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## LEARN NC Announces Fall Professional Development Courses

<http://www.learnnc.org/courses>

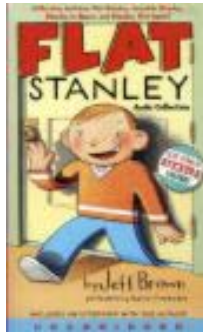
Whether you prefer to earn your CEUs at one a.m., from a wireless coffee shop, or simply during your planning period, LEARN NC's professional development courses offer the convenience and flexibility you need to acquire new skills and knowledge. This fall, you can take courses in Content Area Reading Comprehension, Teaching Online Courses, ESL, Adolescent Literacy, and much more, on your schedule. All LEARN NC courses follow a research-based model for quality professional development and online learning. Our instructors' cutting-edge coursework and research expertise set them apart from other teacher-trainers.

To see our current list of courses and to register, please visit the website or contact Ross White ([ross@learnnc.org](mailto:ross@learnnc.org)).

## Digital Flat Stanley Visits Rural Hall School

<http://www.magpi.org/programs/flatstanley.html>  
<http://digitalflatstanley.blogspot.com/>

This fall, five sections of the first, second, and third grade classes are beginning a geographical tour of the U.S. as part of MAGPI's Digital Flat Stanley collaboration project. (Flat Stanley is the title character in a children's book.) The students will create a "Flat Stanley" or "Flat Stanleigh" to send to another school.



Along with Flat Stanley, a scrapbook will go on the journey to the schools. The classes will share information about their classroom and their area by email, blogs and the scrapbook. At the end of the month, the paired classes will meet in a videoconference for a live "meet and greet and share." Afterwards, the Flat Stanley will be mailed to another school. Again, each pair of classes will share information and they will meet for a videoconference at the end of the month. There are six schools in each classrooms' journey with Flat Stanley.



Bulletin boards and maps of the journey are marked around the school, building interest in the project, as Rural Hall School students visit a total of 30 locations around the U.S.

 Smithsonian American Art Museum

[http://americanart.si.edu/education/programs/artful\\_connections.cfm](http://americanart.si.edu/education/programs/artful_connections.cfm)

Who could resist a quick trip to the Smithsonian! Well this year students in grades two through five will visit the Smithsonian American Art Museum for an hour's tour absolutely free by

just taking a short walk down the hallway to the Distance Learning classroom. Imagine asking your children what they did at school and hearing, "We went to the Smithsonian!" The sessions the students will participate in include:

2nd Grade – To See Is to Think: Visual Literacy

3rd Grade – Free Within Ourselves: African American Artists

4th Grade – Folk Art: Beyond the Everyday

4th Grade – Native Americans

5th Grade – American's Art: Highlights from Our Collection

5th Grade – Beating the Odds: African American Women Artists

(There are no fees associated with the above connections.)



<http://seatrek.org>

Rural Hall Elementary is always looking for new connections for our kindergarten and first grade classes. With shorter attention spans, classes of 30 to 45 minutes on curriculum topics are made to order for these four to six year olds. This fall, our kindergarten and first graders will have one 30-minute program on Sea Me Read—Smiley Shark. We will connect with the MOTE Marine Laboratory in Sarasota, Florida for individual class sessions. The students will listen to a book about Smiley Shark and learn about sharks. This program has a \$50 fee which is being paid by our PTA for kindergarten and first grade. We are looking forward to adding a new quality program for our students in these grades, as kindergarten previously only had one program option.

We are happy to find new, free and affordable learning opportunities for our students while we continue to schedule the excellent programs offered by our own state agencies and institutions: NC Museum of Natural Sciences, the NC Museum of History, the NC Wildlife Education Center, and NC School of Science and Mathematics. We are so fortunate in NC to have such good, cost free programming available for the students.

*Linda McDermon*

*Distance Learning Coordinator*

*Rural Hall Elementary School*

<http://ruralhallschool.org/theme.htm>

NORTH CAROLINA  
MUSEUM OF HISTORY

## Visiting the NC Museum of History by Virtual Field Trip

<http://ncmuseumofhistory.org/edu/outreach.html#virtual>

The North Carolina Museum of History is offering virtual field trips during the 2007–2008 school year. The popularity of the original History Mystery virtual field trip, in which students work to identify medical artifacts from long ago, has led to three History Mystery spin-offs—Colonial, Rural Home Life, and Tools and Gadgets. American Indians in North Carolina, a look at today's eight state-recognized tribes, has been updated with new video focusing on education, legends and storytelling, crafts, and powwows. Moccasins to Motorcars, an exploration of North Carolina history through transportation, has been updated according to new Standard Course of Study curriculum goals.

Two questions most often posed by participants in the museum's distance learning classes are "What do you do at the museum?" and "Who works there?" Our new virtual field trip titled, "Behind the Scenes at the Museum: Who Works Here?" lets students see and hear museum professionals at their jobs and also reinforces public history vocabulary through games played on our new Symposium, a generous donation from Smart Technologies.

Newly created Gallery Cart Classes allow students to "see" the museum. These classes, conducted from the galleries themselves, explore two of the museum's current exhibits,



*Pleasing to the Eye: The Decorative Arts of North Carolina* and *Rhythm and Roots of North Carolina Music*.



Virtual field trips can take place through video-over-IP or at North Carolina Information Highway. Please see the NCIH [video sites list](#) for a site near you. If using direct video-over-IP, please call 919-807-7972 to arrange a site test. Virtual field trips are also available outside North Carolina. To schedule a virtual field trip, call 919-807-7972 or e-mail [jerry.taylor@ncmail.net](mailto:jerry.taylor@ncmail.net).

## Upcoming Conferences

NCCCFA  
(NC Community College Faculty Association)  
Greensboro  
Oct 7-9, 2007  
<http://ncccfa.org>

NCetc  
(NC Educational Technology Conference)  
Greensboro  
November 28, 29, 2007  
(workshops precede conference)  
[www.ncetc.org](http://www.ncetc.org)

NCCCADL - North Carolina Community  
College Association of Distance Learning  
Feb 18-20, 2008  
[www.ncccadl.org](http://www.ncccadl.org)

TLT  
(UNC Teaching and  
Learning Collaborative)  
Raleigh  
March 12-14, 2008  
<http://conference.uncitl.org>

NCAect  
(NC Association of Educational  
Communications and Technology)  
Concord  
March 12-14, 2008  
[www.ncaect.org](http://www.ncaect.org)

DLA Conference  
(Distance Learning Alliance)  
New Bern  
April 2-4, 2008  
[www.dlalliance.org](http://www.dlalliance.org)

IVC (Interactive Videoconference) Workshop  
Durham  
June 15-16, 2008  
[www.dlt.ncssm.edu](http://www.dlt.ncssm.edu)

## Building Connections by Interactive Videoconference

In August the Distance Learning Department at the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics (NCSSM) hosted a two day workshop on interactive videoconferencing (IVC). Issues key to the successful implementation of IVC were addressed.

With broadband access a basic requirement for quality videoconferencing, Mark Johnson, the Chief Technology Officer from MCNC, was the first speaker with a presentation about the NC Connectivity Project. Mark explained the recently passed House Bill 1473 which allocates \$12 million in reoccurring funding to provide "equity of access" for all K-12 schools. To provide that access, the NC Connectivity Project goals are to define a sustainable funding model, develop a business operational framework, and design/develop a three year implementation plan. (See <http://connectivity.fi.ncsu.edu/> for more information.)

Ken Nuebler of NC ITS Video Network Services spoke about the mandated migration of K-12 schools from H.320 video-conferencing to H.323. Ken demonstrated the new website ITS has set up at [www.ncih.net/hsmigration/](http://www.ncih.net/hsmigration/) that features information, forms, and FAQs to assist ILEAs with the technology change. The migration of the high schools will enable all videoconferencing sites to operate on one standard, and it will make it possible to offer video services to many more K-12 educational institutions.



In the fall of 2006 Gaston County began sharing courses among eight high schools using video-conference. Chris Hall, Gaston's Distance and Online Learning Coordinator, provided the workshop participants with an overview of the program. Chris reviewed the planning and logistics to launch the multi-school program. He described the expanded course

offerings, the equipment in the classrooms and technology used to archive classes. As coordinator Chris is also responsible for training and technical support the participating teachers receive in this very successful endeavor.

In separate videoconference sessions, Jessica Humphries from the NC Museum of History and Susannah Thompson from the NC Wildlife Resources Commission engaged the audience in sample lessons using the typical hands-on 'realia' material both agencies furnish for their sessions.



NCSSM connected with Tim Barshinger in Indianapolis to learn about "Grossology Live" programs. This humorous and informative presentation lived up to the claim, "It's the first and only Live Inter-active Video Experience with the guts to tackle your guts, the schmooze to fend off the ooze, and a hip fascination with your friend's flatulation." [www.grossologylive.com](http://www.grossologylive.com)

A second out-of-state connection featured Dale Hinton from the Cleveland Museum of Art who described the different IVC programs the museum offers.

Concurrent sessions provided time for technical staff to meet with Margaret Melvin from NC ITS to learn about different split screen configurations for scheduling sessions, and facilitators joined in a discussion of the varied responsibilities they face in the classroom.



Sessions for teachers provided opportunities to learn presentation tips and strategies for engaging the IVC student; teachers also had time to practice in front of the camera and work with different tools (Symposium, drawing tablet, chromakey, flex cam).

Technical staff met with Margaret Melvin to learn about different split screen configurations for scheduling sessions, and facilitators joined in a discussion of the varied responsibilities they face in the classroom.

While most of the workshop attendees qualified as videoconferencing-enthusiasts, many report challenges finding ways to get teachers to use of IVC at their schools. To respond to questions teachers often ask like, "Why should I video-

conference? When am I supposed to fit this in?" Carole Stern moderated a panel of seasoned IVC users.



Linda Mc-Dermon, the Distance Learning Coordinator at Rural Hall Elementary in Forsyth County joined Carole at the podium and Janine Lim, Instructional Technology Consultant, from Berrien County, MI and Donna Farren, Distance Learning Specialist, from Rochester, NY connected by videoconference for a dynamic and informative discussion.

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