



TC3 Ports Power of PowerCAMPUS Self-Service to Cell Phones

Tompkins Cortland Community College (TC3) often refers to itself as “the biggest little school around.” Certainly, the small rural college has embraced technology in a big way.

TC3, a College of the State University of New York, utilizes a wide range of technology applications, from a host of online student services and weather cams to Web-enabled digital cameras in its residential buildings. TC3’s latest initiative is to further enable what they call “communications on the go” – making information within its SunGard Higher Education administrative and portal systems available via cellular phones.

“We constantly ask ourselves which technology applications make sense,” said Marty Christofferson, director of information technology at TC3. “We are a small, rural community college with a limited budget. So we look for technology that is cost effective and that will improve the lives of our students and faculty. And we are fortunate to have an administration that is willing to support our initiatives.”

Because cell phones are a favored technology tool of students, the College began exploring ways to use the ubiquitous devices to enhance communications with the school. As a result, TC3 has made some of its Web applications available via cell phones. Many of the Web applications are provided by PowerCAMPUS Self-Service from SunGard Higher Education. The solution offers students, faculty, administrators, and others secure, real-time access via the internet to the information they need in an easy-to-use format. PowerCAMPUS Self-Service features include Web registration and payment, online grade book and course manager, online personal calendar and task lists, online advising and academic plans, and alumni services and online giving. The online applications are integrated to the PowerCAMPUS student administration system and PowerFAIDS financial aid system from SunGard Higher Education.

“PowerCAMPUS Self-Service and the PowerCAMPUS solutions have revolutionized the services we provide to students,” emphasized Christofferson. “Students have really embraced the online environment; almost all administrative functions are done online now. But we had to think differently about what students would want to access with their cell phones. For example, we don’t envision someone trying to register for courses from a cell phone key pad. But they would want access to easy-to-execute applications, like checking their grades.”



Dryden, NY
Enrollment: 3,174
www.tc3.edu

Results from PowerCAMPUS and PowerCAMPUS Self-Service:

- Information and services are readily accessible to students and faculty
- Students’ college experiences are improved





The College's IT staff took existing PowerCAMPUS Self-Service pages and modified them to suit cell phones' 2 x2 ½ inch screens, stripping out graphics and including only simple text. Today, students can check grades and their schedules, including the time and location of a course. Similarly, faculty can check their schedules. "A student might be on his way to class at the beginning of semester and have forgotten to note the location. Using his cell phone, he can check the location of the classroom," said Christofferson.

Faculty also can email their students and advisees. Christofferson, who is also a faculty member, recently had a firsthand experience with the application. A change in a flight schedule delayed his arrival for an evening course that he teaches. He logged onto Mobile.IQ and with three strokes, sent an email to all his students telling them to read the next chapter in their books while waiting for him. When he arrived half an hour late, the students were seated in the classroom.

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— Marty Christofferson, director of information technology, TC3

The College also has made other resources available via cell phone. These include access to directions, contact numbers, athletic scores, and the College's weather cam. By making information and services easier to access, the College is supporting the administrative and academic needs of its learners. The College's commitment to the success of its learners has fueled a surge in enrollment, growing by 50 percent in the past eight years. This year (2006-2007), enrollment climbed to 3,189 FTEs.

The College's robust application of technology also earned it a first place ranking in 2005 for the top digital community college by the Center for Digital Education and American Association of Community Colleges. TC3 ranked first in the small/rural college category based on how it deploys technology to streamline operations and better serve students, faculty, and staff.

"Technology applications, like those from SunGard Higher Education, help us provide our web-savvy learners with desirable tools," said Christofferson.

"We try very hard to use technology in ways that are smart to support learning and the non-academic needs of our learners," added TC3 President Carl Haynes. "We pride ourselves on the strong collaborative effort between our academic and administrative technology staffs who have created a great vision for how we use technology."