

# COLLEGE CORNER

## Wireless Laptops Get High Grades From Professors

(NAPSA)—One university has just turned its entire campus into a classroom. When Buena Vista University launched its wireless laptop program three years ago, the school gave laptop computers to all of the full-time students and professors on its main campus in Storm Lake, Iowa. The laptops allowed students and faculty to access BVU's new wireless network at any time and from anywhere on its 60-acre campus.

The wireless laptop program also integrated technology into the classroom in ways that some professors never dreamed could be so useful.

Dr. Michael Whitlatch, professor of speech and drama at BVU, discovered how powerful e-tools could give new immediacy and relevancy to his lectures, expand opportunities for collaborative projects, and enhance the learning experience for his students.

Whitlatch consistently uses PowerPoint with his lectures, puts his course syllabus and group projects online, and does testing and grading electronically. During class, he often has students visit Web sites to follow new plays throughout the semester—from opening night to their runs on Broadway—via Internet access to critics' reviews in newspapers in cities where the plays open.

One of the favorite projects of Janet Berry, assistant professor of exercise science, is a video assignment for students in her Motor Learning and Motor Development class to analyze the mechanics of children's motor skills, such as throwing a ball. Her students use a digital camera and edit their films on the computer.

Dr. Jim McFadden, assistant professor of English, says the laptops are invaluable for the collaborative writing projects in his



upper-level Written Communication classes. "Today, teaching writing without a computer would be like teaching piano without a piano," McFadden comments.

Dr. Steve Remington, associate professor of marketing, schedules evening online "chat" sessions 13 times a semester with provocative topics like, "Do you have to be unethical to be successful in business?" This lets students who are reluctant to speak up during class have an alternative way to do so online.

The textbooks used by Dr. Beverly Edmondson, associate professor of educational psychology, have Web support sites with summary notes, study guides, tests, and links to other relevant Web sites. "It gives me the opportunity to teach and explore more than when I was just using a chalkboard and overhead projector," says Edmondson.

With students having access to the Internet, digital library materials, online course platforms, and instant messaging from anywhere on campus, at any time, Whitlatch sums up the benefits Buena Vista University professors are experiencing: "Students are more actively engaged in the process of learning."