



HSU gets \$100,000 award

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Honoring Humboldt State University's teamwork with the Open Source Learning Management System (LMS) popularly known as Moodle, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has given HSU a one-year, \$100,000 Technology Collaboration Award.

LMS Project Manager Michael Penney and LMS Programmer Jeffry Graham accepted the award Dec. 4 from Tim Berners-Lee, director of the World Wide Web Consortium, during the Coalition for Networked Information conference in Washington, D.C.

HSU has been involved in the development of online learning systems since 1996. Since 2003, it has been building tools that serve as Moodle components and shared them with the international education community. The work has brought HSU national and international recognition for Web-based and Web-assisted teaching and learning systems.

Correspondingly, HSU's Dr. Kathy Munoz and Joan Van Duzer have performed research comparing Blackboard to Moodle, analysis that has been cited on education-related Web sites worldwide.

"I have presented HSU's Moodle work at a number of national and state conferences over the past two years," Penney said. "I have found that Humboldt State University's name is very well known, especially among public universities, community colleges and K-12s that are struggling with the question of how to provide online resources for their students and faculty at a reasonable and predictable cost."

The Moodle Learning Management System is in use by more than 8.5 million teachers and students internationally. Use is increasing dramatically as more institutions recognize the importance of Web-based learning systems in meeting the needs of the current generations of students and faculty. Open Source systems such as Moodle enable universities to meet the demand without the obstacles of restrictive or expensive software licenses.

HSU will continue to employ the current campus development model with help from the \$100,000 Mellon Award winnings. The grant also will allow for additional experiences in open source support and development for an expanded group of HSU students, who may in turn go on to become skilled staff for the growing number of institutions choosing open source systems for their teaching and learning needs.

The HSU development team has also collaborated with a number of other educational institutions in the advancement of open source learning tools, and the team intends to expand and strengthen those collaborations with the funds provided by the MATC Award.