



## Sakai Newsletter Extra Edition

June 9, 2006

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### Charles Severance Selected as First Executive Director of the Sakai Foundation

On June 2, during the closing session of the Vancouver Sakai Conference, the Sakai Foundation Board chair Joseph Hardin announced the selection of Dr. Charles Severance as the Foundation's first Executive Director. This culminates an extended public search process, the winnowing of applicants, and the interviewing of a number of exceptional candidates.



"The Board and the Sakai Community are fortunate in having such interest expressed in its leadership, and in having such a skilled and experienced member of that community step forward. Congratulations to Chuck, and to all of us for making this moment possible," said Joseph Hardin, Sakai Foundation Board Chair.

*"We are reassured by the continuity implied by Chuck's appointment as Executive Director at this exciting time in Sakai's evolution, and welcome his ongoing leadership and vision."*

"IU is delighted with the choice of Dr. Severance as the Executive Director," said Dr. Brad Wheeler, Indiana University CIO and Dean. "He has the experience and skills to serve the Sakai partners well as Sakai strengthens its core collaborative learning environment (CLE) while developing richer engagements with the e-research, libraries, portals, commercial affiliates, publishers, and other communities."

Stephen Marquard, Learning Technologies Coordinator at the University of Cape Town, said, "We are reassured by the continuity implied by Chuck's appointment as Executive Director at this exciting time in Sakai's evolution, and welcome his ongoing leadership and vision."

Dr. Severance has been the Chief Architect of the Sakai Project since the project began in 2004. "As Sakai transitioned to a foundation and community from its grant-funded origins," said Dr. Severance, "our focus now is to develop the community, enhance the software, and ensure our long-term future. I'm honored that the Board has entrusted me with this worldwide responsibility. I look forward to continuing work with our many collaborators in this exciting time of change and growth."

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Vivie Sinou, Dean of Learning Technology & Innovations at Foothill College, commented, "If we waited to do things so well that no one would find fault at what we'd done, Sakai would not be the success as it is. Chuck operates under this "learn as you go" principle, a necessary ingredient (evil?) for open source, and has provided critical leadership in technical and strategic directions of Sakai. Chuck brings in an interesting perspective to the leadership of the Sakai Foundation, as he wants us to be safe and good, yet he is not afraid to push us to take chances and be greater. He is the kind of guy who would jump off a cliff, and would build his wings on the way down -- and prepare a 132-slide PowerPoint presentation by the time he landed."

"In many ways, he has served as the Executive Director, made all the hard decisions and was expected to solve all the ugly problems, but without the title and the authority, which made his job that much harder. He is responsible for opening up the project to the wider higher education community when the rest of us were not ready. A charismatic leader, Chuck has slowly created a nice supportive environment that allows talented individuals in the community to step up and take lead roles and mentor and nurture new talent. He understands personal sacrifice and effort; he's dealt with insurmountable obstacles and challenges and he still wants to be with us! "

Dr. Severance is currently involved in online collaboration systems for teaching and learning as well as e-Research. Prior research interests include High Performance Computing, having written the O'Reilly book on the subject. He is currently one of the lead investigators on the Open Grid Computing Environments ([www.ogce.org](http://www.ogce.org)). He is also active in a number of standards activities including the IEEE POSIX ([standards.ieee.org](http://standards.ieee.org)), IMS ([www.imsglobal.org](http://www.imsglobal.org)), and the Java Community Process ([www.jcp.org](http://www.jcp.org)). He is currently a member of the Expert Group looking at the next generation of the Portlet Specification JSR-286. Severance received B.S, M.S. and Ph.D. in Computer Science from Michigan State University.

The Sakai Foundation is the organizational home of the Sakai software, a collaboration and learning environment for use in higher education and research. It provides an application framework and tools for students, instructors, and researchers. A global alliance of universities, colleges, commercial organizations, and individuals, known as the Sakai Community, work in open partnership to design and develop Sakai.