



Sakai Newsletter

September 21, 2006

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1. Nominations for the Sakai Foundation Board of Directors Close on September 30

Please get your nominations in to the Sakai Elections Work Group as soon as possible.

Details: Nominations are open for three positions on the Sakai Foundation Board of Directors. Chuck Severance now serves in the position of Executive Director and therefore an ex officio member of the Board. The current terms for Joseph Hardin

(University of Michigan), and Lois Brooks (Stanford) expire in December. Previous board members are eligible to stand for re-election.

The Sakai Foundation is dedicated to the design and development of collaborative, open source software in support of education, research and related scholarly activities. The Board of Directors provides leadership for the Sakai Foundation by serving the interests of the entire Sakai community, promoting the objectives of the Sakai Foundation, representing and coordinating Foundation projects, ensuring that project management is consistent with the Foundation's mission, and that the Foundation operates within its fiscal resources.

The Board of Directors meets in person at least twice a year at such times and places as designated by the Chair. Board members are expected to attend bi-weekly audio conferences and regularly conduct Board business electronically. Board members are not compensated for their work but expenses will be reimbursed in line with Foundation policies. Nominees will be expected to confirm that their institutional leadership approves of this commitment of time if elected.

Board members shall serve for a term of three years. Board members may serve only two consecutive terms. More detailed information about the Sakai Foundation and the responsibilities of the Board of Directors can be found in the Bylaws of the Sakai Foundation.

Nominations must be emailed to sakaiproject_elections@umich.edu no later than 5:00 PM EDT (GMT-4) on Saturday, September 30, 2006. Anyone can be nominated to stand for election to the Board. Self-nominations are also allowed. Receipt of any nomination you submit will be confirmed. The Elections Work Group will notify all nominees, explain the expectations for board members and confirm their willingness and ability to run for election. If they agree, additional information about them will be solicited.

Board members will be elected by the institutional and corporate representatives as specified in the Sakai Foundation bylaws. A current list of institutional and corporate representatives has been posted at:

http://sakaiproject.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=104&Itemid=203#reps

The election is scheduled to be conducted online in early November with results announced in early December.

Thank you very much for helping us present the most qualified slate of candidates. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Carl Jacobson
Sakai Elections Working Group

2. Largest Community College in North Carolina Partners with Optimized Learning and Houghton Mifflin to Pilot Sakai

Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC), the largest two-year college in North Carolina, has recently begun a pilot of the open source distance learning platform, Sakai. The school has partnered with Optimized Learning, Inc. (OLi), Unicon, and Houghton Mifflin to provide select students with access to an online English 112 course. OLi is hosting the pilot for CPCC. The school, in coordination with CPCC's Futures Institute, has been exploring alternatives to the commercial online platform they are currently using. CPCC built a team of faculty and administration to explore open source options for the school's online learning initiative. The team included Dr. Rod Townley, Dean IT/Engineering, and the Futures Institute, Melissa Vrana, Director of eLearning Development and Delivery, Instructional Developer, Catalina Ramirez, and Rebecca Fagan, English Distance Learning Instructor. After evaluating many options, the team settled on piloting Sakai 2.2, an open source online learning program that allows tremendous flexibility for the academic setting. The team was also enthusiastic about Sakai's price tag: the software is free. Once CPCC settled on Sakai, the school sought out the open source expertise and hosting capabilities of Optimized Learning (OLi) and Unicon. OLi hosts the pilot version, and Unicon is providing training for faculty and IT staff on how to use Sakai. Once the decision was made to pilot Sakai for fall classes, OLi and Unicon had the course up and running within 6 weeks. Speaking to the potential hesitancy faculty may have regarding switching from a known platform to Sakai, Rebecca Fagan noted enthusiastically, "Sakai is extremely easy to use. The transition from the commercial platform we've been using to Sakai's interface involves less than a two-hour learning curve."

To ease the transition even more, OLi and Unicon are providing a duplicate of the English course in Sakai and making it available to all faculty and staff at CPCC. Butch Porter, OLi's CEO, notes that "...OLi's mission is to help schools of all sizes learn about and make the transition to the freedom and lower cost of using open source e-learning solutions. We're thrilled to be working with CPCC by hosting their Sakai test pilot." Additionally, Houghton Mifflin is providing English course content for the Sakai course. Brian Murphy, Houghton Mifflin's National Sales Manager, remarked "the Sakai pilot with the CPCC team has been a homerun for all involved." Those involved in the pilot at CPCC are enthusiastic about the new opportunities that an open source e-learning environment can provide.

For More information please visit:

Optimized Learning Incorporated: www.optimizedlearn.com
Houghton Mifflin Publishing Company: www.hmco.com

3. "Happy 1,000" for Yale's Classes v2

Congratulations are in order for the local instance of Sakai at Yale, Classes v2 (<http://classesv2.yale.edu>). This week the system reached the 1,000 course mark for the semester. That number is significant because it represents a "high water" mark far greater than the load its predecessor handled and shows tremendous progress towards turning off the legacy system in fall 2007. Some significant portion of the growth is due to local decisions by the School of Management and School of Public Health to convert from WebCT and Blackboard respectively. While Sakai, the software, clearly deserves praise, accolades are also due the stellar members of Yale's staff like David, Gloria, Cheryl, Mike, Jen, Andy, Matt and Tonie and countless others who dealt with the bow wave of faculty and students to make this possible.

Chuck Powell
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4. Sakai Version 2.2.2 Released

The Sakai Foundation announces the release of the Sakai Collaboration and Learning Environment, version 2.2.2. As 2.2.2 offers an additional security fix to the 2.2.1 maintenance release that involves the simple removal of some test files from the Apache Axis distribution and no other code changes, this release simply supercedes 2.2.1.

For more information about Sakai and to download the 2.2.2 release, please visit:
<http://www.sakaiproject.org/release>

5. 1st European Sakai Day, Sept 6 and 7 -- a Great Success

The 1st European Sakai Day, hosted by oncampus GmbH and Lübeck University of Applied Sciences, took place in Lübeck, Germany. Around 100 participants from all over the world, e.g., Portugal, UK, France, Italy, Scandinavia, Ethiopia, etc., attended this event for discussions with the Sakai Community or for informing about Sakai. There were around about 20 presentations in two parallel sessions about developing, internationalisation, real practice experience, and about the Bologna process and some paedagogical aspects. Please enjoy the presentations and some movies:

<http://www.oncampus.de/index.php?id=732&L=1>

Some impressions (<http://www.oncampus.de/index.php?id=819&L=1>) and photos (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/20854041@N00/>) are also available.

This was the beginning of various European Sakai activities and new Sakai pilot projects are now on the road. The event was a big success and all participants were astonished by the number of Sakai-Europe activities and they really enjoyed it. The organizer, Andreas Wittke (wittke@oncampus.de), and the Project Manager of oncampus, Rolf Granow (granow@oncampus.de), say thank you to all participants and presenters. Sakai is now established in Europe.

6. Call for Proposals for the 6th Sakai Conference in Atlanta: Teaching and Learning Track

We invite you to submit a conference proposal for what we hope will be a very strong teaching and learning track at the Atlanta conference.

There is much to be excited about in the Sakai and OSP communities, and we want to capitalize on that excitement by providing a track that will attract faculty and others interested in pedagogy to explore innovative examples of how the Sakai and OSP tools can be used to enhance teaching and learning.

Ideally, this track will emphasize best practices with current portfolio or Sakai functionality while also highlighting recently developed tools (e.g., Wiki, Wizards) that provide promising new ways to think about engaging learners. Even for smaller implementations of Sakai or OSP, it would be very helpful to hear about innovative ways that the tools are being used on your campus.

We hope that you will consider submitting a proposal. We also ask your help in forwarding this message to others who may be interested in submitting a proposal. As a reminder, the deadline for submitting a proposal is September 30th. To submit a proposal, go to:

http://sakaiproject.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=418&Itemid=567

Anastasia S. Morrone
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7. Call for Proposals for the 6th Sakai Conference in Atlanta: User Experience Track

I'm pleased to announce the new User Experience session track for the 6th Sakai Conference in Atlanta. The goal of these sessions is to show the human side of the Sakai project, bringing together presentations which address the design, customization, and use

of Sakai. I would like to invite members of the community to submit proposals for sessions related to user interface design and usability, accessibility, instructional design and support, internationalization and localization, and institutional integration.

Proposals are due by September 30th. More details and a link to the proposal submission form are available at:

http://sakaiproject.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=418&Itemid=567

As part of the User Experience track, Mara Hancock is helping to organize a U-Camp at the conference.

Colin Clark
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(See the next section of this newsletter for information about planning the U-Camp.)

8. U-Camp Planning Brainstorm

Between the answers on the list and direct emails from individuals, it looks like there is strong interest in hosting the U-Camp at Atlanta. Daphne and I would like to bring interested planners together for a brainstorm meeting next week. I know it is short notice, but how does Monday at 1:00 pm (GMT-7/ San Francisco) work for folks? If you can make it, please send me a confirmation ASAP. Meanwhile I'll hold that time. I have added a brainstorm/planning page to the UI DG space on Confluence: <http://issues.sakaiproject.org/confluence/x/eW0> Add your ideas and agenda items there.

Hope you can make it!

Mara Hancock
mara@media.berkeley.edu

9. rSmart's Hannah Reeves will Demonstrate OSP at the Michigan Higher Education Sakai Conference

Hannah Reeves of the rSmart Group will be joining representatives from IBM, the Sakai Foundation, and the University of Michigan at the Michigan Higher Education Sakai Conference in Lansing, Michigan on October 3. Reeves will be demonstrating the latest Open Source Portfolio (OSP) tools and discussing how portfolio functionality is being used to enhance teaching, learning and assessment practices within the Sakai environment.

10. Question Pool Import for Sakai 2.1.x

I'd like to let you know we are testing question pool import code for Sakai's 2.1.x Samigo implementation on our UC Davis instance. A Sakai 2.3 version was coded first and handed off to the Stanford team, but it needs code review and QA, and did not make the code freeze date.

What UCDavis Question Pool import does: Based on a review of BlackBoard and Respondus xml import documents I've received from other Sakai members, I coded the question pool import to follow the same ASI format as the current QTI v1.2 assessment import.

Currently, questions from an imported assessment may be assigned to a question pool one at a time. The advantage of the import question pool function to faculty is that an assessment exported from Samigo may be handed off to another faculty member for import as an assessment or as a question pool (or both.) Using the Question Pool import function, all questions are saved to the question pool at once. All question types which can currently be exported and imported as an assessment may also be imported as a question pool.

A limitation of this function is that only single-section imports will work. All the translated documents I have from other systems appear to be single-section, so this may not be a migration issue.

There is no conversion code yet for manual imports (via the Samigo UI) of BlackBoard, WebCT or Respondus quizzes, however, the Common Cartridge team have developed some translations for migration from other systems. These translations are developed based on the individual schools needs.

I'd like to hear from members whose schools have the need to import content from other systems, to get a better idea of what the priorities are for translation (i.e., BlackBoard, WebCT, Respondus, etc.)

Also, could I get a heads up on who might be interested in Sakai v2.1.x import question pool code once we're past the QA phase here?

As we move forward with import/export for Samigo, I'm looking forward to continuing discussions with Steve Lay, Zach Thomas, Joshua Ryan, and others regarding QTI v2.x and Common Cartridge, to improve my understanding and to see migration with media content become a reality. I hope to see you all in Atlanta this December!

Lisa J. Wilson
Programmer, Sakai Development Team, IET Mediaworks, UC Davis
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11. Sakai Community Practice Working Group

The Sakai Community Practice WG works with other groups and individuals in Sakai to refine and document practices of general use to our community. The SCP-WG recently received a document describing the Sakai Release process. Your comments are welcome at: <http://bugs.sakaiproject.org/confluence/display/SCP/Sakai+Releases>

Mark J. Norton
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12. Sakai Requirements Process

With the code freeze of Sakai 2.3 last week, the Requirements WG is looking ahead to Sakai 2.4. There are still many suggestions for improvements to Sakai that haven't been implemented yet. The working group will be looking at these in the weeks to come and work up summaries of them for distribution to the Sakai community. Meanwhile, if you have new suggestions, please add them using JIRA. An upgrade to JIRA is anticipated in the next month or so that will enable us to improve the suggestion / requirements gathering process. This will allow us to better track and manage suggestions and promote them to the developer and designer members of our community. We will be presenting a report on the process and some success stories at the Sixth Sakai Conference in Atlanta this December. We're also exploring a suggestion writing workshop, perhaps as part of the other workshops being planned. If you have questions about this process, please let me know.

Mark J. Norton
markjnorton@earthlink.net

13. Conference Call Schedule and Information: Requirements Working Group

For 29 September - 8 December, 2006

Conference Dial-in #: 734-615-6802

Conference Password: 7545

Start Time: 11:00 a.m. (Note shift from gmt -4 to -5 after Eastern Daylight Savings Time ends on October 29.)

Duration: 01:30 (one & one-half hour duration)

Ports: 15

29 Sep 2006 EDT gmt -4
13 Oct 2006 EDT gmt -4
27 Oct 2006 EDT gmt -4
10 Nov 2006 EST gmt -5
24 Nov 2006 EST gmt -5
8 Dec 2006 EST gmt -5

14. Conference Call Schedule and Information: QA

Conference Dial-in #: 734-647-7898
Conference Password: 5534

On the following dates, the time will be 11:00 - noon (Note shift from gmt -4 to -5 after Eastern Daylight Savings Time ends on October 29.)

20 September EDT gmt -4
27 September EDT gmt -4
4 October EDT gmt -4
18 October EDT gmt -4
25 October EDT gmt -4
1 November EST gmt -5

On the following dates, the time will be noon - 1:00 p.m. (Note shift from gmt -4 to -5 after Eastern Daylight Savings Time ends on October 29.)

11 October EDT gmt -4
8 November EST gmt -5

15. Events

Unicon's Sakai Developer Training with Mark Norton

October 16 - 18, 2006 in
Chandler, Arizona

For more information or to register for the workshop, visit the training section of
www.unicon.net

6th Sakai Conference

December 5 - 8, 2006
Atlanta Marriott Marquis
Atlanta, Georgia
sakaiproject.org

LAMS Conference 2006
First International Learning Activity Management System (LAMS)
Conference December 6 - 8, 2006
Conservatorium of Music
University of Sydney
<http://lamsfoundation.org/lams2006/index.htm>