CNS /Update Newsletter Feature

Computer Challenge Officially Kicks Off

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UF Information Technology

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Table of Contents

Computer Challenge Officially Kicks Off .................................................................3
Jodi Gentry kicked off the Computer Challenge by awarding mousepads as door prizes.

From left to right, Pandora Cowart of the Health Science Center, James Albury of CIRCA, and Mike Harrington of CITT, explained technical training that their departments provide for the Computer Challenge.
Marie Dence, associate director for NERDC, holds up a handout during her presentation about the NETg component of the Challenge.

About 80 people attended the Computer Challenge Kickoff.

The Computer Challenge Kickoff formally launched the integrated, campuswide approach to computer training at UF. Speakers at the Kickoff, held on October 18, 2001, explained how the Challenge works. "The Computer Challenge is really an initiative to coordinate training opportunities across campus. We knew employees often didn't know what was available," said Jodi Gentry, assistant director for University Personnel Services and one of the coordinators of the Computer Challenge.

The Computer Challenge officially began earlier this year. This program allows faculty and staff to earn a certificate in one of three areas of concentration, or "tracks," by taking a series of information technology classes. The Desktop Application skills track is designed for faculty, office staff, and other end users. The IT Provider track includes more technically-oriented courses for IT professionals and other more advanced users. For most Computer Challenge certificates, employees must complete four core courses and three electives. There is also a specialty track for the University of Florida Communications Network.

About 80 employees and faculty who wanted to learn more about the Challenge showed up for the Challenge Kickoff.

The Kickoff featured a panel of speakers, each of whom represented an IT provider on campus. Each explained what his or her unit offers and how it fits into the Computer Challenge. On the panel were Mike Harrington of CITT (Center for Instructional Technology & Training), James Albury of CIRCA (Center for Instructional and Research Computing Activities), Pandora Cowart of HSC (Health Science Center), Bryan Garey of University Personnel Services, and representatives from the Department of Continuing Education and NERDC.

"With the Computer Challenge Web page (http://www.it-train.ufl.edu), you can walk your way through the Computer Challenge. Each department provides information about what it offers. The idea is for faculty and employees to get the training they need to do their jobs," said Marie Dence, NERDC associate director.

The coordinators of the Challenge had hoped to present the first certificates at the Kickoff, but no one had completely finished the Challenge yet.

"We have a lot of people who are quite close. There are currently 643 people working toward the challenge and more than 1,000 courses completed. A few only need one more course," Gentry said.

Your Comments are Welcome

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