Putting the “Tech” in Ability - Gloria Melton

What could you do with a pen that not only functions as a writing implement but as an audio recorder which produces a Word document? Ask Elena Fierro. After experimenting with the Livescribe Pulse Pen, this electrical engineering senior developed a fall workshop for fellow students. Elena not only credits the Pulse pen with improving her note-taking skills, but adds, it has helped “to analyze my notes later for studying.” Using a special pad, the writer captures a written and audio record which can be “tapped” later to hear the lecture—and what’s more, the notes can be transferred as a file onto a computer for subsequent study.

The Pulse Pen represents one “tool in the box” among several devices, services, and software offered through Student Disability Services. Prospective and current students who meet with coordinator, Christy Oslund, find her interested not only in their documentation supporting accommodations, but in their strategies for effective learning.

In 2009-10, 143 students requested accommodations for diverse physical, sensory, medical, and psychological conditions (nearly doubled since 2007-08). A variety of assistive technologies are finding their way into the student’s experience and reducing some barriers to learning and success.

A visually oriented dyslexic student may prefer “concept mapping,” as featured in a software product such as Inspiration. A different dyslexic student might prefer dictating a paper on Dragon Naturally Speaking software. Some cognitively or visually impaired individuals prefer audio CD or e-text formats for reading, while others find a popular alternative in Kurzweil 3000 software which supports reading fluency, comprehension, vocabulary and study skills.

Perhaps the most challenging technological situation occurred last year. Oslund joined in an adventure with the Educational Technology (ET) department to set up “remote captioning” of lectures for a hearing-impaired student. A “captionist” in Illinois produced close to real-time captions and transcripts of lectures for the student sitting in a Michigan Tech lecture hall. Oslund reflected that technology is “not perfect,” and one has to prepare for some frustrating trials from time to time.

Still, the future of technologies intersecting with the needs of diverse individuals—some labeled as “disabled” and others attuned to their learning preferences—is bright and exciting. In the spirit of our “one-word” creations: “techability”—we foster that.

Mary Smallish (left) Materials Science and Engineering, Sophomore
Elena Fierro (right) Electrical Engineering, Senior

Staff Match
Mel Norwood
Jim Turnquist
Gloria Melton
Ginger Sleeman

A) Advises students on their careers
B) A GPA of 3.50 will get a student on their list
C) Supervises Husky Host program
D) Advises and assists minority student organizations

Match the staff member to the respective clue for a chance to win a large pizza from the MUB. Submit your guesses to lheinone@mtu.edu by Friday, December 10.

The winner from the spring newsletter was Kathy Ross from Admissions.
“You hit home runs not by chance but by preparation.”—Roger Maris

Staff Match  — From left to right

Mark Provoast
Since 1981, Mark has been connected to Michigan Tech as a student or staff member. He spent his first nine years with the Admissions Office as a regional admissions counselor, living in the Detroit and Grand Rapids areas. Mark, his wife Susan, and their two sons moved Houghton in 1997. He enjoys golfing, hunting, and fishing and is looking forward to cross country skiing.

Amy Raffaelli
Amy graduated from NMU in 1993 with an associate degree in business. She and her husband Jaime live in Houghton with their three children, Joel (22), Bailey (15) and Derrian (10). Amy is a hockey and golf Mom and enjoys spending time with family and friends. In the summer, they spend time at the family camp in Twin Lakes. In the fall, winter, and spring their time is spent running from rink to rink and traveling for their kid’s hockey.

Madeline Mercado Voelker
In 1993, Mrs. Mercado Voelker moved to Michigan from Puerto Rico and joined Michigan Tech. Madeline serves as advisor for the student chapter with the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE). She is the Director of the Michigan College/University Partnership (MICUP) Program. Recently the MICUP Program was selected to receive ABET’s 2010 Claire Felbinger Award for Diversity. She is the liaison in working with Hispanic Serving Institutions in Puerto Rico.

Staff Presenting at Conferences

Noel-Levitz National Conference on Student Recruitment, Marketing, and Retention, July 2010
Presenters: Alison Carter and John Lehman
Title: The Three C’s of a Successful Communication Plan: Creative, Collaborative, and Cross-Campus

JCMU (Japan Center for Michigan Universities) Conference at Michigan State University, October 15
Presenter: Greta Gustafson
Title: How to Advise Students on Gilman Scholarship Opportunities

Book Recommendations  — Pat Gotshalk

The Little Book of Conflict Transformation, by John Paul Lederach. This book is one of several titles in the The Little Books of Justice & Peacebuilding. The author, a scholar at the Institute of Conflict Studies at the University of Notre Dame, defines “conflict transformation” as an opportunity for seeking constructive change. In clear, easy to understand language, the author explains that conflict as normal part of life, but more importantly, conflict is an opportunity rather than something to avoid. He recommends that we look at the “big picture” of conflicts, not just the immediate problem that presents itself. By so doing, we can get out of our old patterns of destructive behavior and achieve constructive change, leading to a more just and peaceful society. This book has much to offer all of us as we work with students and with each other, and is strongly recommended as a resource (plus it only costs $4.95!)
New Staff - From left to right
• Rachel Misenheimer, Youth Programs
• Joan Tapani, Registrars Office
• Derek Yu, International Programs and Services
• Shezwae Fleming, Center for Diversity and Inclusion
• Matthew Norrod, Admissions

Headlines from Enrollment Services
• Admissions- Attracting the Best and Brightest: Admissions Hosts Regional Evenings of Excellence and Tech Nights
• ESIS- ESIS moving to the second floor of the Administration Building
• Financial Aid- Preparing to Bring the Next Cohort of Leading Scholar Scholarship Candidates to Campus
• IPS- IPS invites the Michigan Tech community to celebrate International Education Week beginning November 15th
• Registrars- Academic Advisor information for all academic programs is now available in Banner
• Youth Programs- Michigan Tech Youth Programs changes its name to Center for Pre-College Outreach

Involvement Link - Rachel Wussow
Involvement Link offers students a central database to get information regarding all registered student organizations. It also gives them access to a calendar with a multitude of upcoming events.

The Event Flyer Board is seen to the right, electronically displaying this weekend’s events, similar to what you would see on the posting boards in Fisher Hall.

Involvement Link, is hosted by Collegiate Link 5.0, a program of Student Voice. The Sum of All Involvement represents the ideals behind this new resource, as the site hosts more than just student groups. Currently we have 205 registered student organizations as well as 15 student life initiatives listed on the site.

A listing of organizations that begin with the letter S can be seen to the left with logos, pictures or Greek crests to identify and represent the group’s mission and goals.

Groups also display updated constitutions, membership rosters, executive board officers, advisors, and contact information on their organization profile.

There are 3415 users (~48% of student body) and each user creates a profile of their interests. From those interests a recommendation of organizations and events appears on their home page.

For more information on our registered student organizations please visit... www.involvement.mtu.edu or click on Involvement off the Michigan Tech homepage.
Yes, it’s that time of year again. It’s dark on our way to work and getting dark on our way home. Even the daytime can seem dreary, with little sun for days on end. Many of us joke about this season in our area (we have 2 seasons here in the U.P., winter and the 4th of July, etc, etc.). For many of us, this time of year is no joke. In our northern climate, it is estimated that between 6 and 10% of us suffer from Seasonal Affective Disorder or SAD, sometimes referred to as the “winter blues.” Symptoms can vary from slight depressive symptoms to significant impairment in daily functioning. Symptoms are limited to the fall and winter and often include increased need for sleep, increased cravings for sweets or carbohydrates, and lack of energy. These symptoms are often combined with feeling down or pessimistic. The Mayo Clinic suggests that women suffer from SAD at a much higher rate than men, accounting for about 70-80% of SAD sufferers. SAD is thought to be caused by decreased light, which results in a disruption in our sleep patterns. As it gets darker and colder, our bodies want to use less energy to cope with the seasonal changes http://www.sad-therapy.com/images/sad-therapy.jpg (think semi-hibernation). Some doctors treat SAD with melatonin (a chemical that our bodies produce to help us sleep). Fortunately, there are a number of other effective treatments for this disorder. These include light therapy, vitamin D, ionized air, anti-depressants, and cognitive behavioral therapy, which are often prescribed in combination.

The staff at Counseling and Wellness Services has been treating students for SAD for over 15 years. Full spectrum lights are often used to help off-set the low light of the season. Full spectrum light is a more natural light than fluorescents or incandescent lights and is administered in specialized lights that are very bright. Often sitting in front of the light for 30 minutes a day can make a huge difference in how someone feels. Vitamin D, melatonin, and anti-depressants should be given under the supervision of a medical professional. Cognitive behavioral therapy may be used to help combat a person’s negative thought patterns. Exercise, particularly done outdoors, can be very effective (snowshoeing, walking, cross country skiing). Ionized air is one of the latest treatments and is done with a machine that electrically charges the air. This is similar to the way air feels after a thunderstorm or near a large waterfall and again, should be recommended by your doctor.

SAD can often be confused with “regular depression” and is best diagnosed by a physician or therapist with a background and understanding of the nature of SAD.

If you think you may be suffering from SAD, talk with your doctor or for more information call Counseling and Wellness Services (906-487-2538).

Like the saying goes, “Don’t hibernate, participate and enjoy our U.P. winter!”

Headlines from the Dean of Students

- **Career Services** - 186 actively hiring companies attended the 2010 Fall Career Fair – up 20% from fall 2009
- **Counseling and Wellness Services** - Relocated to the 3rd floor, Administration Building, and open Thursday evenings for appointments
- **Disability Services** - Electronic door openers installed on Walker building and Fisher Hall
- **Judicial Affairs** - Pat Gotschalk and Deb Charlesworth collaborate in blitz of all academic departments to talk about academic integrity and responsible conduct of research!
Over the past 5-6 years it seems like everywhere you go and everything you hear seems to talk about branding and messaging. We all know a well defined brand and messaging strategy articulates the value proposition of the organization, as well as each of the individual parts and underlying and services in a way that is consistent, relevant and easily digested.

Evidence of branding and the Michigan Tech value proposition is all around us. Just yesterday I had a student stop by my office to ask for my help in solving a peculiar dilemma that he was facing; during the conversation I learned he has three job offers on the table and the potential for 2-3 more. The even more interesting piece is that he doesn’t even graduate until December 2011.

A few weeks ago a Chronicle of Higher Education reporter was involved in a project soliciting stories from colleges/universities with unique and distinctive programs and features for inclusion in a postcard across America series. Jenn Donovan, director of public relations, captured the Michigan Tech brand perfectly. The story goes like this

“Hello, Lawrence, have you ever visited a university that enjoys more than 200 inches of snow a winter? That’s right - enjoys. Michigan Technological University, a state university in Houghton on Michigan’s fabled Upper Peninsula, celebrates its Northwood’s location and its wintery climate. In addition to highly-regarded engineering, technology and environmental sciences programs, Michigan Tech makes the most of its campus on the Keweenaw Peninsula, jutting out into Lake Superior, more than a day’s drive north of Detroit. The University has its own ski hill, Mont Ripley, open to the campus and the community, and miles and miles of lighted cross-country trails. There’s a designated parking lot for snowmobiles. And campus groups compete each year during a Winter Carnival to see who can build the biggest and most intricately detailed snow sculpture (some have topped 30 feet high).”

Jenn goes on about our non-snow adventure opportunities, the deep and significant history of the area and some of the unique foods available. Then she continues

Places to drink? How about the KBC (Keweenaw Brewing Company), a local microbrewery where Michigan Tech faculty and staff tend to gather, turning it into an informal faculty club. Or the Ambassador, where renowned “fishbowl” mixed drinks are served in gigantic brandy snifters - a sure cure for a cold winter’s night.

At the University itself, you’ll want to find out about Michigan Tech’s signature Enterprise Program, which gives teams of students hands-on experience solving real-world problems for industrial partners. You might want to talk with Tess Ahlborn, a civil and environmental engineering professor at Michigan Tech who recently helped the “Mighty Mac” (the famous Mackinac Bridge that connects the lower peninsula of Michigan to the Upper Peninsula and Canada) achieve national historic civil engineering landmark status.
After a few more examples she concludes

Then stop for a chat with Elena Semouchkina, the electrical and computer engineering professor who is working on an honest-to-goodness invisibility cloak. Her name isn’t Harry Potter, but she really can make microwave-sized objects disappear from view, and she’s hard at work on the bigger ones. Then Michigan Tech’s Provost, Max Seel, can tell you about the cross-disciplinary hiring initiative that brought Dr. Semouchkina and is recruiting other visionary faculty to the University.

And just last week, Michigan Tech’s Mind Trekkers initiative caught the attention of many. A parent writes “Your booth at the USA Science and Engineering Festival in Washington, DC, this past weekend was the highlight of the whole expo for my first grade son. Your booth was engaging, and your team was energetic and their excitement was contagious... your booth opened his eyes to new experiences in an age appropriate, fun way. It has already sparked his interest to learn--and do--more. We visited many other booths throughout our visit. But the Michigan Tech booth beat all the others--including NASA.”

These stories are but a few of those we commonly hear at Michigan Tech. The cool thing is they are not surprising, they are our brand. Michigan Tech is well poised to become as our vision articulates, “a premier research university of international stature, delivering education, new knowledge, and innovation for the needs of our technological world.” We are certainly well on our way. As we approach Thanksgiving I think it is important to remember these stories as they form much of the foundation for what we can be thankful for. We live and work in an amazing environment; an environment that is incredibly beautiful through all of the seasons; that embraces our students and their intellect and curiosity; and one in which we can all work together to make a difference in the lives of others. This is Michigan Tech, this is our brand.

Thanks and best wishes for a healthy, happy and restful holiday season.

Les

Headlines from Student Life

- **Housing Facilities**: Energy monitors installed in residence halls and Hillside Place to measure electric consumption
- **Housing & Residential Life**: Hillside Place dedication to occur December 10
- **Center for Diversity and Inclusion**: GLBT Coordinator to be hired during spring 2011
- **Student Activities**: 205 registered Student Organizations on www.involvement.mtu.edu
- **COMPASS**: 1-on-1 meetings held with over 80% of first year students with two or more unsatisfactory grades at midterm.

**A Step Up**

Bill Roberts, director of Financial Aid, poses with Kars Petersen from Livonia, MI. Kars’s father built the Financial Aid team a step stool in appreciation of the assistance they provided the Petersen family to help finance Kars’s education.

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You hit home runs not by chance but by preparation.--Roger Maris