

AU Moves Ahead With Technology Initiative

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Alfred, NY - Alfred University is investing nearly \$2 million this summer to prepare the institution to provide the best-possible technology-enhanced education to its 2,200 students, said Lana Meissner, University librarian and assistant vice president for information services. The part of the project that students, returning to campus later this month, will see is nearly 400 new and dozens of upgraded computers, located in faculty offices, student computer laboratories and residence halls. The first 155 of the new computers, in familiar black-and-white boxes, arrived this week and will be distributed to the labs in Seidlin Engineering Annex, the Science Center, the F.W. Olin Business Building, Herrick Library, Myers Hall and the Admissions office in Alumni Hall. "Our first priority has been providing new computers for student use," said Meissner. The next priority is to make sure that faculty associated with the newly equipped labs in the engineering and science buildings, for example, have comparable computers so that they can work with their students, she explained. Other faculty, administrators and staff will also receive new or upgraded units when the next "herd" moves in. "Our goal is that by the end of year, all students, faculty and staff will have access to appropriate networked computers," said Meissner. But the rest of initiative is something that students can't see, just experience: some \$1.6 million is being spent in wiring the campus to bring ethernet access to the Internet to every room in every residence hall. "We will have a 'port' for every pillow," said Meissner, meaning that a room for two students will be wired to provide internet access to two computers. In addition, the initiative will wire all faculty and staff offices and all classroom buildings in the endowed units of Alfred University, including the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the College of Business and the School of Engineering and Professional Studies. The New York State College of Ceramics, a state-funded unit of Alfred University, is also upgrading the ethernet wiring in all of its classroom buildings. "We will be a totally wired campus," said Meissner. "We are all very excited and enthusiastic about the prospects for the coming year, and beyond. This really does prepare us to meet the needs of our students in the new millennium." Another part of the initiative is the creation of an Information Services Help Center at Herrick Library, coordinated by Rima O'Connor and Laurie McFadden and administered by Patricia Crast, technology user support/help desk manager. Included in the facility is an office for the University's new Student Technology Assistants (STA) Program, a core of specially trained students who will undertake a variety of computer-related projects; the students will also have their own web page server to manage under University guidelines.