

On October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2006 – UIS held its first COPE-L meeting. COPE-L stands for *Community of Practice for E-Learning*. As a community of practice (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002) COPE-L aspires to: 1) share knowledge and best practices related to e-learning; 2) develop informal networks and mutually helpful relationships among members; 3) identify problems and seek solutions to problems shared by members; and 4) provide opportunities for members to explore and innovate in the area of e-learning.

COPE-L has defined its domain or area of interest as e-learning because we wished to be inclusive of all members of the campus community who were engaged in the development and delivery of: 1) online courses and programs; 2) blended courses and programs; and 3) technology enhanced courses. Within this domain, we have identified areas of common interest including issues related to pedagogy, scholarship, technology, outreach and student services.

COPE-L was initiated by a group of cross-disciplinary faculty and professional staff who volunteered to organize the effort. Members of the COPE-L ad-hoc taskforce include:

- Peter Boltuc - Associate Professor, Philosophy & Director, Community Outreach Partnership Center
- Barbara Cass – Online Program Coordinator for Business & Economics Programs
- Scott Day – Associate Professor and Chair, Educational Leadership
- James Hall – Associate Professor, Management Information Systems
- David Larson – Assistant Professor of Management Information Systems and Chair, Academic Technology Committee
- Shari McCurdy – Associate Director, Office of Technology-Enhanced Learning
- Keith Miller – Professor, Computer Science
- Laurel Newman – Associate Professor, Business Administration & Director, CBM Online Programs
- Ray Schroeder – Professor Emeritus, Communication and Director, Office of Technology-Enhanced Learning

At the conclusion of the 2006/2007 academic year, COPE-L will have met 4 times. Topics for our meetings thus far have included UIS online student demographics, student engagement in online classes and information literacy in a wired world. An upcoming session will focus on one member's sabbatical research that examines the power of online education to connect the university to workplace and community needs. In addition, a survey identifying topics of interest was taken and is being used to assist in future programming decisions. Attendance at meetings have ranged from 20-30 individuals. 47 individuals have requested to be on the COPE-L membership list.

The Office of Technology-Enhanced Learning developed a website for COPE-L members' use. The website <http://otel.uis.edu/copel/> provides community members with opportunities to interact about topics of interest, request assistance from colleagues and access resources related to e-learning.