$350,000 Mellon Grant Will Enable Faculty to Expand Use of Technology in Teaching

Beginning next school year Oberlin College will take a major step to help faculty increase their use of technology in teaching—and do so in a way that will be comfortable for faculty and students. Thanks to a $350,000 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the college will become the operating base of the Oberlin Center for Technologically Enhanced Teaching (OCTET).

Directed by Gary Kornblith, assistant professor of history, the center will help spread the use of teaching technology more evenly across the curriculum, evaluate the effectiveness of the technology, and establish models of its use. A major goal will be to stimulate faculty members' and students' expertise, confidence, and willingness to employ computer technology. The first focus of the center will be to help faculty use educational technology to strengthen teaching in expository writing and quantitative proficiency.

"Incorporating technology to teach expository writing and quantitative methods should have broad impact," says Kornblith, "because demonstrated proficiency in these areas is one of the few curricular requirements placed on all students and an endeavor in which a large number of faculty across the curriculum are involved."

OCTET's first undertaking will be a workshop for incoming students without computer experience. Next will be a comprehensive assessment of current uses of technology in each department; departments' curricular and technology goals, needs, and priorities; and the level of technological proficiency, experience, and interest of each faculty member. Also, the center is offering a "a lot of public presentations" about educational technology, says Kornblith, along with brown-bag demonstration-and-discussion lunch- and-learns, and a World Wide Web home page with examples of innovative electronically enhanced pedagogy taught in a wide variety of disciplines at Oberlin and other institutions.

Staffing and Activities

Kornblith will have a two-thirds-time appointment as director of OCTET. He will continue to teach one-third time (one or two courses a year), thereby maintaining a tie with the faculty as a fellow practitioner of technology in the classroom.

In addition, the center will be part of a broader initiative to encourage excellence and innovation in teaching. The General Faculty Educational Technology Committee will supervise the work of the center and its director.

"Technology clearly has the potential to assist greatly with innovative pedagogy," says Clayton Koppes, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. "This Mellon grant, for which we are deeply grateful, will be a decided boost in the collegewide efforts by Oberlin faculty to introduce the newest pedagogical and technological techniques, where appropriate, for our students."

"I'm delighted that Gary agreed to take on this challenge. He ranks high on the charts of what's known in the computer business as 'early adopters.' And his exemplary service last year as acting director of the Houd Computing Center gives him an unrivaled experience in both the teaching and technical camps."

OCTET will help faculty in the con-

3 More Students Receive Fellowships; Recent Graduate Accepts a Mellon

Joining this year's earlier two Watson Fellowship winners (see Observers of April 25 and 11), three more Oberlin seniors have received important fellowships and an alumna has been named a fellow in the Mellon Fellowships in Humantistic Studies program.

Neuroscience major Mark Emerson will be attending Harvard University in the fall on a fellowship from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI). The fellowship pays for three years of support and may continue for two more years. Interested in the molecular basis of behavior and development, Emerson, who is from Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania, will study for a Ph.D. degree in the neuroscience department of Harvard's medical school. Emerson was offered a National Science Foundation fellowship in favor of the more selective HHMI honor, which covers more years and offers more financial support. The annual HHMI fellowship is for 1997-98 and covers $15,000. The award includes a $15,000 cost-of-education allowance.

English major Margaret Dredge, from Arlington, Massachusetts, will undertake a year-long training program in orchestra management with the American Symphony Orchestra (one or two courses a year), thereby embracing by the Office of the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, the center will be part of a broader initiative to encourage excellence and innovation in teaching. The General Faculty Educational Technology Committee will supervise the work of the center and its director.

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William Lanier, Geology Department

William Lanier died April 28 in Emporia, Kansas, at age 43. He had been a member of Oberlin’s Geology Department for the four years between 1985 and 1989, two as a visiting assistant professor and two as a research associate. He left a legacy as a faculty member of the Department of Earth Science at Emporia State University, where he had worked ever since. He was a geologist at the time of his death.

"Bill was an energetic, hands-on scientist who did important research on subjects as diverse as modern tidal flats in France and 3.4 billion-year-old volcanic strata in South Africa," says Bruce Simonson, professor of geology. "The breadth of his interests, both in geology and beyond, was matched by the passion with which he pursued them. As a first-rate chef as well as a keen competitor in sports, Bill could cook a mean paella, and he capitated the event. He was also a keen football fan, and we note with regret his passing this year.

Family Meeting

GF Discusses Final Planning Document in Special Meeting

Before discussing the final long-range planning document at a special meeting May 6, the General Faculty heard reports from faculty members and administrators. The final report is the result of a study conducted by the Faculty Forum, which was created to address campus planning. The report was compiled by a working group of faculty members and campus staff, and its final version was presented to the General Faculty at its meeting May 6.

The report includes recommendations for changes in the structure and governance of the College, as well as suggestions for improvements in the physical plant. The report also addresses the issue of sustainability and the need to reduce the College’s carbon footprint.

One member of the faculty called the report “a remarkable first step,” adding that it “draws upon the wisdom of those who have contributed to its development and serves as a call to action for all members of the Oberlin community.”

Another faculty member noted that the report “lays the foundation for further discussion and debate.”

Correction on Suzuki Method: Off by a Decade

The late Clifton Craig, professor of music and director of the Suzuki Method Program at Oberlin, was not 80 years old when he died in 1988, as reported on page 1 on May 9. He was actually 79 years old, as confirmed by his widow, Dr. Roberta Craig.

The Observer regrets the error and apologies for any confusion it may have caused.
Wired... Continued from page 1
The Chronicle of Higher Education is one publication that reported on the controversial nature of the survey. For an article appearing in the May 9 issue "Colleges Attack Data Used in Ranking 'Most Wired' Campuses," the Chronicle spoke with J. Derek Bucher, Oberlin's director of computing.
I can't say that [the survey] was advertised as it should have been, as saying, "but I've made some hay out of it here at Oberlin, by pointing out how well we're doing with regard to networking issues on campus." Earlier Bucher had told the Observer: "I don't think that you can read much from the survey's numbers, but it serves as a campus, that a campus that was way behind the curve in networking issues probably wouldn't make it to the list of 'Most Wired' campuses by now...we owe thanks to past and present administrators and trustees who planned and supported this initiative as part of our network infrastructure. And although it sits behind the scenes, it's what makes everything else go. As with any complex system, we're always putting money and effort into it to keep it working, and the components of our network that allow us to make this list must be constantly upgraded.

Fellowships... Continued from page 1
The College will demonstrate and discuss with faculty new applications and teaching strategies under development in the College and around the world. Faculty will be offered stipends for their participation in the week-long workshops.

The Computing Center OCTET will organize short-term workshops and training sessions during the academic year and Winter Term. A limited number of travel grants will allow faculty to attend technology conferences or visit other educational institutions and use applications or software in innovative or effective ways. Competitive summer curriculum development grants administered by the College's Faculty Educational Plans and Policies Committee will support faculty who wish to integrate pedagogical applications and technologies into their teaching.

The second and third years of the project will involve faculty fellowships (involving release time for one course a year) for those who search for adaptive technology and applica-
tions or software in innovative or effective ways. Competitive summer curriculum development grants administered by the College's Faculty Educational Plans and Policies Committee will support faculty who wish to integrate pedagogical applications into their teaching.

Mellon Minority Fellowships to Continue

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has awarded Oberlin $321,873 in a new round of Mellon Minority Undergraduate Fellowships (MMUF). First established at Oberlin in 1988, the fellowship is designed to increase the number of undergraduate minority students pursuing doctoral degrees in disciplines that continue to produce few minority students. Because of financial needs of minority sophomores are accepted to the program, which is open to underrepresented minority majors in the humanities, an-

technology, computer science, mathematics, physics, and related fields.

Associate Professor of Sociology Clovis White, director of the Office of Undergrad-
technology, and staffing such courses require. "A-

nology-based curriculum development, OCTET on expository writing and quantitative proficiency projects, tech-

nology-based curriculum development, and assessment of new applications.

A full-time re-graduate intern and two part-time student interns will assist the director, test software for re-

lability, and help faculty prepare and run equipment and applications dur-
ing the academic year.

Fellowship Development Includes Summer Workshops

One of the center's most critical initia-
tives, says Kornblith, will be to summer workshops for teachers in the teach-
literature, including professors of African-American studies, classics, East Asian studies, German, Russian, Judaic and Near Eastern languages, and English. The 1999 and 2000 summer workshops will serve as a nucleus of a range of disciplines. The workshops will feature an educational technol-

ogy specialist from outside the

has been a marketing and public-rela-
tions intern for the Akron Symphony; she has worked for the Tanglewood Music Festival in the summer.

Violin-performance major Danitza Kostova has won the Montgomery Symphony Orchestra Violin Fellowship and will become a concerntoast of that orchestra Septem-ber 1. Her prize includes a concer-toperaformance with the Montgomery Symphony Orchestra in each of the next two seasons, three solo recitals, and a $25,000 annual concertmaster/salario. Kostova, whose home is Pazardjik, Bulgaria, is a stu-

ent of Professor of Violin Tarias Gab-

o. Last year she was a semifinalist in the Panagani Violin Competition in Italy. Her previous honors include the Gold Medal at the Bulgarian National-

munity Music Festival, and will become a member of the New England Simeonova Competition, Second Prize in the Swetsvolu Obre-
toan Competition, and First Prize in the Tokyo Symphony Concor-
toan Competition.

Michael Kirmagne '95 has received a

Mellon Minority Fellowship in Humanistic Studies. Currently studying at Oxford University for a second B.A. degree in European history under a British Marshall scholarship (see "Awarded Marshall Scholarship" in the December 8, 1994, Observer), Kirm-

egin studying for his Ph.D. degree in the history of American civilization at Harvard University. The fellowship includes fees and a stipend of $13,750 for the first year of graduate study.

Technology... Continued from page 1

The Mellon grant program will ad-

ress quantitative proficiency at three levels. OCTET will help faculty from the mathematics department and stu-
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y Committee Kornblith and faculty fel-

loes will explore ways that educational technology can help increase the num-

ber of offerings that teach certain skills, such as those necessary to understand graphing techniques and limitations of various mathematical techniques. OCTET and the quantitative-proficiency curriculum initiative will help faculty in various ways, including development of new computer programs and the innovation of educational games—and provide critical support and assistance in their development.

Expectations

Today about 10 percent of Oberlin's fac-

try regularly incorporate educational technology into their teaching. In one or another context uses it occasionally or in a limited fashion.

"Oberlin faculty are already fine teachers," says Kornblith, "and given a host of competing demands on their time, many faculty are reluctant to ex-

lent new educational technologies. They don't feel great urgency to change the way they do things, and some worry about the distraction of a computer in the classroom. We designed the center to make it easier for faculty to try out new teaching tech-

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technology, computer science, mathematics, physics, and related fields.

Associate Professor of Sociology Clovis White, director of the Office of Undergrad-
technology, and staffing such courses require. "Ap-

ting technology to the teaching of writing can alleviate these pressures and enhance learning in new ways. Technology can facilitate peer review of drafts and collaborative writing, lead-

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o college. Oberlin students have been integral to Oberlin's mission, and the college has been one of the most im-

portant and effective.

To find out how well we're doing with regard to in-depth retraining. We aim to pro-

vide the customized guidance and sup-

port that faculty need to take advan-
tage of user-friendly software and Oberlin's impressive network capabili-
ties to enhance teaching and learning.

"Of course, it's not realistic to expect all faculty members to embrace the use of new technology. Nor would it be desirable to require everyone to learn all the skills needed to use a computer or technical backgrounds. We do expect all faculty to be reading about new developments and be ready to adapt technology to their teaching while an-

on for research and development, and Pamela Snyder, director of corporate and foundation support, wrote the grant application with advice from a committee that included (in alphabetical order) Jim Bucher, director of computing; Jan Cooper, Reid Associate Professor of Economics; Writing and associate professor of English; Rudi Crawford, associate profes-

or of mathematics; Ray English, Root College Dean of the Arts; Fuchsdan, director of federal support; Suzanne Gay, associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences; Kimblith; Associate Professor of Chemistry Michael Negri, chair of the Department of Chemistry; Con-

ete Bruce Richards, associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences; and Gloria White, associate dean of student academic services and instructor in mathematics.
Astronomical Sabbatical

By Dan Stinebring

Dan Stinebring, Josh Kempner, and Naomi McClure-Griffiths appear to be holding up a radio telescope on the grounds of the ATNF in Sydney. Not the one that had Dan reconsidering his profession, this much smaller telescope has been used by other astronomers to map the distribution of gas in the Milky Way. They both got credit for their research work for the last four years, has been extended and the Interstellar Medium.

Dan Stinebring, associate professor of physics, has just received word that his funding from the National Science Foundation, which has supported his work for the last four years, has been extended for three more. The title of his project, which will involve student researchers, is Pulsar Studies and the Interstellar Medium.