

SITE 2004 Preface

Our Learned Learning Society of Information Technology and Teacher Education

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Our Society of Information Technology and Teacher Education in its fourteenth year is both growing and maturing in its community and its responses to the wider world. As Presidential leadership moves to Allen Glenn for a year, we are on the bridge to a new generation of leadership. Over the four years of my Presidency, we have built infrastructure with governance and services that distribute leadership across committees and councils. Allen plans to continue this process and support the emergence of a new generation of leadership. This preface, in common with those I have written since my incoming Presidential Keynote in 2000, provides a sort of 'state of the nation' for the Society, which goes well beyond the USA to care for teacher education in diverse national, international and indigenous populations. The challenges we face to promote and support equitable access to information technology and teacher education may be increasing, and they are certainly becoming more urgent for many populations worldwide.

SITE's governance (see http://www.aace.org/site/Site_governance.htm) has provided a structure for sharing the leadership, and we are working to bring this alive as a "learning organization" to become a society that learns and develops as it grows to serve its community at the individual, organizational and societal levels. With my ISU class in *Technology diffusion, leadership and change* this spring, I will be analyzing the ways in which our ISU Center for Technology in Learning and Teaching (CTLT) is a "learning organization" using Senge et al (2000) as a guide and creating maps of the interactions at the various levels to communicate multiple perspectives on our activities and influence. I hope this will also sharpen my perception of ways in which we can improve SITE as a learning organization. I will share this perspective with the first invited summit for SITE leaders during our conference.

The invited SITE leadership summit is an exciting development to empower the leaders of SITE's councils committees (Vice Presidents and Associate Vice Presidents) and draw in their expertise and concerns. Our incoming President Allen Glenn, University of Washington, former president of the American Association for Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE), will lead the workshop so I know it will be fun with his energetic style. Leaders of our two councils also provide significant leadership expertise. Michael Berson, who leads SITE's Teacher Education Council, is an international leader in social studies teacher education and Past-President of the College and University Faculty Assembly of the National Council of Social Studies. Ian Gibson, who is leader of SITE's Information Technology Council, is an expert in educational leadership and leads a global dimension for educational leadership over the web with strategic support from the Boeing Corporation. Our governance requires committees to meet at SITE and online in SITE community forums (<http://www.aace.org/site/forum>) and participation remains open. To facilitate the quality of interaction, committee members are required to select the most relevant committees for their professional activities and to engage with their work over the year. This work includes development of the topic within our field through stimulating relevant papers and activities within the conference, publications of the society, and reviewing these proposals and award winners. We have also introduced a lead paper led by each committee in the proceedings.

Our maturing infrastructure for SITE is largely the responsibility of Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education (AACE) under the leadership of its Director/Founder and SITE's Executive Officer, Gary Marks. Essentially SITE has continued appointment of AACE as the managing organization and AACE blends its services for SITE with related conferences and journals publishing to make an effective non-profit enterprise. SITE has remained an independent society since its foundation in 1989, but it has become increasingly clear that SITE branding is confused with that of AACE, even by their memberships. Therefore this year, SITE will introduce a

membership card, a smart redesigned logo, and a redesigned web site and URL (<http://site.aace.org>). We encourage all of our conference participants and journal readerships to clarify their membership of SITE and ensure that they receive a membership card.

AACE has been responsive to SITE's changing needs over the years, with state of the art technology to handle the conference and journal activities. The reviewing of over 2000 conference proposals to the SITE conference, collaboratively collecting and editing them into proceedings that now fill at least 4-6 volumes, plus printing them on paper and on CD in time for the conference, is an extraordinary feat! The SITE editorial team for the proceedings was strengthened for 2004 with the appointment of two of our new generation leaders. Rick Ferdig of the University of Florida and Caroline Crawford of the University of Houston-Clear Lake have accepted the role with thoughtful and energetic commitment. I have resigned from the editorial team for 2005, but they will continue to have the support of a team that includes our founder, Dee Anna Willis of Northwestern University Louisiana, conference academic coordinator Roberta Weber from Florida Atlantic University, Roger Carlsen of Wright State University and technical editor Jerry Price of the University of Houston. We should also note our thanks to Florida Atlantic University and Dee Anna's mother in West Palm Beach for hosting the intensive retreat to review proposals in November that is part of our shared community enterprise. Dee Anna's lifetime commitment to SITE is an inspiration to us all. The Proceedings editorial team intends to continue to improve the quality of the SITE conference and proceedings, while maintaining the foundation of welcome and support for new members. For the first time this year, they restricted participants in SITE to two presentations at the request of the SITE executive committee.

AACE has taken risks with SITE to develop the society's activities with innovations under Gary Marks' leadership. For example the Playground in the conference was stimulated by Tom Carroll's seminal SITE keynote (2000) "If we didn't have the schools we have today, would we create the schools we have today?" The Playground is now led by Maggie Veres with support from Roger Carlsen and, in addition to its informal professional development role for participants, it is also a rallying ground for graduate students who attend SITE. Stephanie Van Hoover of the University of Virginia plans to provide leadership to develop a graduate students' strand. Roger Carlsen has mentored both Gary and me as we developed a web-based environment to facilitate committees outside of the conference, and SITE will continue to seek strategies to match the technical infrastructure to our learning community. On the publishing side, AACE shared the risk to support Glen Bull to establish our truly innovative online journal in collaboration with complementary societies, and we should be proud of the leadership that our society and AACE provides in these areas.

For its first decade, SITE managed to celebrate all its Awards at the annual conference. However, due to the increasing volume, Outstanding Paper awards in 2003 were only made in the fall following the conference. Poster awards continued to be made at the conference. Requesting committees to nominate Outstanding Papers and to submit these nominations to the President for final selection strengthened the selection process through SITE's committees in 2003. This year, SITE hopes to improve on this process and return to judgment of the awards before the conference with a celebration of these awards at the conference. For this purpose AACE and our technical editor Jerry Price have been developing access to the final papers for the committees before they are published. From my experience as a journal and book editor, I know that this service to our society is outstanding and I would like to express my appreciation to the team that is working to make it possible. If SITE does not manage the feat this year, then I trust that it will become possible for SITE 2005 and provide SITE committees with greater ownership of the process. Refining and developing that process to support the shared leadership of SITE's scholarship is part of the agenda for our leadership summit mentioned earlier. In addition, the SITE award for *Outstanding Service in Digital Equity* (OSDE) in teacher education is now in its third year and developing well (<http://www.aace.org/site/awards.htm>). It is delightful to note that the design of this year's annual symposium capitalizes on the process, with Guest Speaker Paul Gorski, the 2003 OSDE award winner, plus contributions from three nominees: Patricia Leigh, Carla Meskill and Jane Manner.

On the national (US) level, SITE has continued its support and collaboration with a range of professional associations and the US Department of Education. SITE's online journal, *Current Issues in Technology in Teacher Education* (CITE) created and edited by Glen Bull, is one major vehicle that links directly with four teacher education associations. This year the executive boards of the four associations editing CITE journal content sections have formally agreed to continue our collaboration. Glen has also strategically developed a National Technology Leadership Summit as a fall meeting that has brought SITE leaders along with complementary organizations

together with a leading-edge theme. The timing of the fall meeting in the season between the NECC June conference sponsored by ISTE and SITE's annual spring conference is successful and supports planning for these conferences and other activities of our societies. This year's fall summit, held at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., was used as an opportunity to coordinate an academic dialog across the respective associations and seven educational technology journals and periodicals. The editors of the respective journals met to plan a series of theme issues on the topic of *Digital Images in the Curriculum*. Federal policy makers and corporate partners also participated in the meeting.

The representatives from the six teacher educator associations sponsoring the summit recommended establishment of a permanent cross-disciplinary association that builds upon the foundation of the past five years of cross-disciplinary collaboration. The *National Technology Leadership Coalition* (NTLC) would continue the successful activities described above and have the following objectives:

- To coordinate cross-disciplinary discussion of appropriate uses of technology in the core content areas across professional associations,
- To serve as a clearinghouse for consultation with corporate partners who are designing advanced uses of technology intended to facilitate learning,
- To collaborate with federal policy makers and legislators to ensure that this topic remains at the forefront of the national education agenda, and
- To support and facilitate scholarly dialog in professional journals and conferences.

The representatives from the respective associations at this year's summit recommend appointment of a senior leader from each participating association for a three-year term as representative to NTLC. Terms could be staggered to ensure continuity. Once approved by each participating association, the respective representatives would constitute an executive board that would coordinate the on-going activities of the coalition. Sustained cross-disciplinary collaborations of this kind are rare. The success of the CITE Journal, jointly sponsored by the teacher education associations participating in the Coalition, is unprecedented, for example. However, the professional dialog that emerges from such collaborations can be invaluable and may offer unique opportunities to facilitate advances in education. It is part of SITE culture that Glen, as a past president of SITE, is encouraged to continue his support of our mission.

This year the fall summit was immediately followed by a PT3 leadership retreat in Washington DC, with a sharp focus on 'scientific evidence' at the request of the Department of Education. Despite challenges resulting from hurricane Isabel, the retreat promoted intensive discussions with leaders of PT3 projects from across the USA. The resulting green paper edited by Ann Thompson, another SITE past president, will be shared with the SITE conference and informed by further input, including a number of Keynotes. For example, M.D. Roblyer asks, "If technology is the answer, what is the question?" and thus she prompts us to refocus our research questions to make the case for why we use technology in teaching, and also in teacher education. SITE is also creating a committee with a mission to promote and enhance research in our field. This newly-formed Research Committee chaired by Gerald Knezek, has charted a course to extend the strong reputation that the SITE conference and proceedings have earned over the past decade as a premier source for scholarship in the field of information technology and teacher education. Many long-term SITE participants have entire bookshelves developed to SITE proceedings on paper and/or CD. SITE's contribution to the new AACE Digital Library has been massive (<http://www.aace.org/DL>). The Research Committee plans to enhance this strong foundation by focusing on topics such as the following over its first year:

- Organizing and conducting a workshop/symposium on scientifically based research in teacher education. This initiative would be primarily to aid compliance with the intent of the No Child Left Behind Act in the USA, but it could be useful for anyone wishing to produce experimental or quasi-experimental findings from preservice and/or inservice teacher education activities.
- Encouraging the use of common instruments across similar projects (for example, across the 2003–2006 Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers to Use Technology grants in the USA); coordinating the extraction of common findings across these projects; and exploring the establishment of a repository for such instruments.

- Contributing to the growing dialog on a national research agenda for technology in education; supporting completion of the white paper begun by SITE in this area during 2003 and initiating future links to forums on this or related topics at conferences such as the American Educational Research Association Conference (AERA), the National Educational Computing Conference (NECC), and at selected international conferences (International Federation of Information Processing (IFIP) meetings of education working groups and others).

International activities of SITE are developing through the activities of members, including your President. For example, my attendance at the World Summit on the Information Society was related to my role in the International Federation of Information Processing, but I was also able to signal the presence of SITE. I presented a comprehensive synthesis of research into information technology in education, which brings together balanced reviews of research (Davis & Carlsen, 2003). I agree with Roblyer's concern with potential over confidence in the use of technology in education, including teacher education. The increasing disparity between those who have access to resources, including technology and well educated teachers, and those who do not appears to be increasing. In contrast, our knowledge of ways in which to address this issue seems to be growing at a pitifully slow rate. Our award for outstanding service in digital equity in teacher education is such a small start, inspired by my collaboration with the group writing UNESCO's planning guide for ICT teacher education. Perhaps this year's Keynote by Sir John Daniel, the leader of the education sector for UNESCO, will help our organization learn more of the causes and develop our knowledge of ways in which our society should respond to the issues discussed in the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). As we noted in the comprehensive synthesis of information and communication technology (ICT) in education:

The *Draft Plan of Action* that was published for WSIS in November 2003 included objectives for the connection of educational and community institutions with ICT and "to adapt all primary and secondary curricula to meet the challenges of the Information Society, taking into account national circumstances" (p 2) Action lines include "Capacity Building", in terms of ICT literacy and the use of ICT to "eradicate illiteracies" and "to empower local communities, especially those in rural and underserved areas". (p 5) (Davis & Carlsen, 2004)

It is an honor for SITE that UNESCO has seen fit to invest time with us. Our response may include strengthening of SITE's mission for today's pluralistic global context. In line with SITE governance, I plan to bring this to the attention of our incoming President, Allen Glenn.

My final year as SITE President has been a busy one, and I hope that you will agree that the society has continued to develop and mature as a learning organization, and I recognize that we are still in the very early stages. We are significantly closer to a mature organization that serves its membership and also recognizes that it has a wider responsibility to our communities and cultures, within the first world and in the second and third worlds. As I move on from leading SITE as President, I plan to continue efforts with both SITE and IFIP to use technology to reach underserved teachers and teacher educators and to increase intercultural perspectives on education with a more balanced view of the affordances and distractions that information technology may contribute in education. I have enjoyed being President and thank everyone for the experience with the personal and professional development that it has provided, especially my mentors and colleagues in the SITE executive. Having just read Roblyer's keynote paper for SITE 2004, I am as keen to return to the role of a simple participant in SITE again. So as I bid farewell as President of SITE and wish good luck to my successor, I am delightfully aware that I can go back as a player into the SITE playground and into our organization as a member who learns and supports the learning of others. I also suspect that I will be called upon for extra duties at times and that is fine too – hopefully the shared responsibility for leadership in our learned learning Society of Information Technology and Teacher Education will become a stronger part of our culture each year as planned!

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