

About the eLearning Competition

OVERVIEW

The Institute for Distance and Distributed Learning (IDDL) at Virginia Tech utilizes a holistic approach to eLearning where all aspects of the student's educational experience are considered. Towards this end, IDDL in cooperation with the Graduate School and the division of Student Affairs, and through funding support from the Virginia Tech's Parent Fund, is sponsoring a virtual space design competition to create a Virtual Student Center (VSC). The purpose of this competition is for student teams to design and develop a prototype Virtual Student Center (VSC) that will serve online/distance learning students. The VSC should be engaging, entertaining, and offer services and programs that meet student needs. Consideration of specific user groups' cultures, gender, lifestyles, and environments is expected. Similar to the Graduate Life Center (GLC) and University Unions and Student Activities (UUSA), both student centers of the Hokie community, the proposed VSC should be a central area for online and distance learning students. The GLC is the hub of graduate student life, providing students with opportunities to meet and collaborate with faculty and peers across disciplines, develop skills for academic and professional success, and maintain a healthy work-life balance. The UUSA is committed to the development of all students through co-curricular opportunities that advance student learning, leadership development, foster respect, civility and the commitment of service to the university community and beyond.

OBJECTIVES FOR THE VIRTUAL STUDENT CENTER

- Create a social networking space that is a virtual student center for online and distance learning Virginia Tech students and is accessible by all students.
- Engage students in the design and development of a VSC that will meet student needs for social networking and for academic and student services.
- Engage students in a design competition that provides a centralized online space for students to interact and to learn about the whole student.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To enter, participants must be:

- a graduate student enrolled in a program of study at Virginia Tech for the duration of the competition(10/17/07 through 5/2/08);
- a full-time Virginia Tech undergraduate student (enrolled in at least 12 or more credit hours)for the duration of the competition(10/17/07 through 5/2/08);
- a member of a team of at least two students, but not more than 5 students

THE COMPETITION PROCESS

The virtual design competition process is a three phase competition.

Phase I:

Teams must submit a concept proposal (a clear, detailed design specification that can be taken to prototype) of the virtual student center. The design should be student-centered, with an in-depth consideration of different aspects of what students would need or want in a center and these should be accessible, adaptable and scalable for further development. Specifically the proposal must include:

- A list and brief description of spaces (rooms), services and functions available in the VSC. (Include social, student services and academic support services)
- a detailed description of the user interface
- the method(s) of user access to the Virtual Student Center
- a project plan that includes the development of the prototype including milestones and deliverables
- software and hardware tools needed to develop the prototype
- end user requirements-(must not exceed Virginia Tech's minimum requirements (see <http://www.compreq.vt.edu/gettingready-one.php> university studies/undecided as the baseline platform preference)
- a description of how the VCS will be maintained, updated and secured
- a description of how the VSC meets university acceptable computer use guideline
- team members bios (not to exceed 250 words)

A team of judges comprised of faculty, staff and students will select up to three finalist teams to move on to the second round. If chosen as one of the teams to move to the next level, team must deliver a short presentation of their winning design to at least two of the panelist of judges and must agree to complete a prototype in order to receive the Phase I prize money.

Phase II:

Each finalist team will receive a total of \$500 to assist in the development of their prototype. The finalist teams will develop their written proposals into prototype VSCs. The prototype VSC must demonstrate that it is accessible, adaptable and scalable. The prototype must include a least two of the virtual spaces, services and functions outlined in the team's proposal.

Phase III:

Each of the finalist teams will make a formal 20 minute presentation and demonstrate their VSC to the team of judges. This will be followed by a short question and answer period. The presentation will be held in a venue open to the university community. The first place team receives \$5,000 total. The second and third place teams receive \$500 total per each team.

GUIDELINES FOR PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

1. All submissions must be emailed to vsc-competition@iddl.vt.edu Please make sure your submissions can be easily opened with a standard image file or MS Office, Acrobat, or webpage. File size should not exceed 5MB. If you are unable to make your submission in that manner or have questions please contact vsc-competition@iddl.vt.edu. All submissions must be received by 4:00pm Eastern Standard Time(EST) December 15, 2007. **Late submissions will not be reviewed.**
2. All submissions must include an electronically scanned copy of the Virginia Tech Virtual Student Center Entry Form with all team members signatures ([VT_VSC Entry form](#))

TIMELINE

October 17, 2007, - Competition begins

December 15, 2007, 4:00pm EST - Phase I - Design proposals due.

December 16 – 19, 2007 - Judges review proposals and select up to three finalists to move on to the next round.

December 20, 2007 – The team leader of each finalist team is notified by phone and email that they are advancing to the next round.

January 18, 2008, Phase II - Each team is awarded a total of \$500 to assist in the development of their prototype VSC. A schedule of three milestone meetings will be established with each team to meet with judges to ask questions and obtain feedback related to their progress, quality of design, match to requirements and overall project status.

April 30, 2008- Phase III Each finalist team presents a 20 minute presentation and demonstrates their VSC prototype before the judges in a venue open to the university community.

May 2, 2008- Winner of the Virtual Design Competition for best Virtual Student Center is awarded. The first place team receives a total of \$5,000. The second and third place teams receive a total of \$500 each.

JUDGING CRITERIA

The winning design and winning prototype will be selected by a representative group of faculty, staff and students. In Phase I, judges will be looking for proposed Virtual Student Centers that accomplish the following:

- Increase student involvement in learning, discovery and engagement
- Provide for a variety of spaces (rooms), services and functions that meet the social, student services, and academic support needs of online and distance learners
- Provide an appropriate user interface
- Are easy to access and use.
- Possess a realistic manageable and inclusive project plan
- Identify the software and hardware required to develop and operate the VSC
- Require end user computer requirements that do not exceed Virginia Tech's minimum computer requirements
- Are easily maintained and updated
- Account for appropriate levels of access and security
- Are adaptable and scalable for further development
- Meet university acceptable computer use guideline

In Phase II, judges will be looking for Virtual Student Center prototypes that accomplish the following:

- Effectively translate the concepts identified in the paper proposal to a prototype environment
- Effectively meet the need for a virtual student center for online and distance learners
- Are adaptable and scalable for further development

In Phase III, judges will be looking for the Virtual Student Center prototype presentation and demonstration that accomplish the following:

- Most effectively translates the concepts identified in the prototype development stage to a prototype environment
- Most effectively meets the need for a virtual student center for online and distance learners
- Most effectively articulates the development and prototyping process.

Judges reserve the right to not award monetary prizes if the entries do not meet generally agreed upon quality standards and rules of the competition.

PRIZE AWARDS

Phase II- \$500 per team (no more than 3) will be awarded

Phase III- Winning Team will receive \$5000. The second and third place teams will receive \$500 each.

Total prize money awarded during entire competition shall not be more than \$7500.

