

MnSCU grants fund workshops

By Nick Hanson

SCSU was recently awarded three grants to fund a trio of seminars planned in the coming months.

These seminars, each with several workshops, are aimed at providing opportunities to students and professors in the teaching and learning atmosphere.

The grants were awarded by the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) and the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL).

Topics of the seminars will include technology, service learning and assurance, and security of information. Professors and professionals in each field will make presentations at each workshop.

The first seminar, Feb. 28 and March 1, will focus on integrating service learning into the classroom for communication educators.

Service learning gives students academic credit for participating in community service for a particular class. Its objective is to bring outside experiences into the classroom.

Margaret Pryately, of communication studies, will be a host for the first workshop. According to Pryately, service learning is a good approach for students to take in the classroom.

"We are trying to look at learning with a very hands on approach, (we want) to look at learning in a more holistic way," she said. "In learning, students are also providing a service for others."

Other issues addressed at the seminar will include how to utilize technology in the classroom and how to involve students in politics and political campaigns for credit.

As for the service learning, the trips and service opportunities could range from local to global.

"This is to train people how to do a global trip with students and then how it can be incorporated into a class," she said.

The second seminar, March 21, will also address service learning. The workshop discusses how to integrate service learning projects into the social science courses.

Volunteer Link Coordinator, Lissa Staples, will speak on the topic.

"We want to encourage faculty to teach service learning classes in the social sciences," she said. "I think it will really enrich their (students) learning by giving them real life experience."

Service learning will teach students to apply classroom practices to the outside world, she said.

"Basically it gives students a chance to get out in the community and deepen their learning," she said. "It will test the theories and material that they are learning in the class."

The last seminar, April 18, is focuses on information assurance and security. Ideas and proposals will be given on how to protect computer and business information.

Professor of Business Computer Information Systems, Susantha Herath, said that the presented information is important to everyone.

"We are offering very important and timely workshops," she said. "It is a very on time thing and on time concept."

According to Herath, security is especially important in the wake of recent terror attacks.

"These are the areas that we need more people on -- assurance and security -- especially after 9/11," she said.

Participants of the seminar will hear from government experts and learn about recent developments in the MnSCU system.

"It's a great opportunity to see what's going on in MnSCU and important to see what's going on in the future," she said.

All three seminars are tentatively scheduled to be held at either the Miller Center or Atwood.