

Overview: Faculty Learning Community on Virtual Worlds

University of Notre Dame, 2007-2008

A faculty learning community is a cross-disciplinary group that seeks to enhance teaching and learning by engaging in a program of personal development and community building. A virtual world is an online graphical environment inhabited by multiple users who interact using avatars; it mimics features of the real world, such as gravity, topography, and communication. During the 2007-2008 academic year at the University of Notre Dame, a faculty learning community will *explore the potential of virtual worlds to enhance student learning*. Community members will include faculty, individuals from the Kaneb Center, OIT, and other appropriate areas. It may also collaborate with groups at other institutions.

Broad goals:

- Enhance student learning
- Pursue personal development
- Build a community of teacher-learners

Specific objectives:

- Share information electronically via wiki, e-mail list, and virtual space
- Foment discussion of virtual worlds at Notre Dame
- Contribute to the development of a Notre Dame space in Second Life
- Develop three demonstration projects (one each in summer, fall, and spring)
- Produce a public presentation to share the community's work with the greater campus
- Create a white paper that outlines opportunities and challenges presented by virtual worlds

Timeline (subject to revision):

- July – applications received and community formed
- August 1 – first **community meeting** – for those who are in town
- *August 24-26 – Second Life Community Convention in Chicago – limited funding available*
- September 10 – Sarah Robbins presentation, **community meeting** with her over dinner
- November 2 – **community meeting**, first demonstration project completed
- *November 17-18 – possible presentation at Lilly Conference in Ohio – limited funding*
- December 11 – **community meeting**, second demonstration project completed
- February 1 – **community meeting in Second Life**, first draft of white paper completed
- March 11 – **community meeting**, second draft of white paper completed
- March 13 – public presentation
- May 7 – **community meeting**, third demonstration project completed
- June 1 – white paper published

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