

### Introduction to *InfoCast*

This is the first issue of *InfoCast*, an electronic communication from the Instructional Design Unit (IDU), a division of Instructional Technology and Distance Education. *InfoCast* is a publication designed to share information with faculty regarding online teaching tips and resources, eCollege tips and announcements, upcoming workshops, webinars and other faculty development opportunities related to online teaching and learning. During the first few weeks of the Spring 2008 term, *InfoCasts* will be sent weekly as a means of communicating important semester start-up information.

I'm excited to be part of the Instructional Technology and Distance Education (ITDE) team under the direction of Dr. Charlotte Larkin, Director of ITDE. We have spent the past few months redesigning the Instructional Design Unit in order to provide a framework for growth which best services the needs of a diverse faculty and academic programs. Please take a few minutes to read the IDU Mission, Vision, and Guiding Principles. Important in this redesign process was the hiring of additional support personnel. IDU team members are highlighted in this issue of the *InfoCast*. Thank you to all who have provided input into this redesign process.



*Julie A McElhany, Ed.D.*  
Coordinator for Instructional Design

### Instructional Design Unit Team

**Dr. Julie McElhany** serves as Coordinator for Instructional Design. Julie earned her Doctorate of Education from Texas A&M University-Commerce. Her dissertation was on the "Interrelationships of Faculty Concerns and Faculty Development in the Design, Development, and Delivery of Online Courses." Julie has served in her current role as Coordinator for Instructional Design at TAMU-C since September, 2007. Prior to coming to TAMU-C, she served seven years as Director of Instructional Design and Support at Southwestern Assemblies of God University, Waxahachie, Texas. She has taught adjunct online courses for eight years. Julie leads the IDU team and works in a consultation role with faculty in the design and development of online courses.

**Dean Aslinia** earned a Masters in Psychology from the University of Houston. Currently, he is working on a doctorate at Texas A&M University-Commerce. He recently accepted an eLearning Support Specialist position at TAMU-C. Prior to coming to TAMU-C Dean served as an enrollment counselor for the University of Phoenix. As an eLearning Support Specialist, Dean will assist faculty in the development and support of online courses.



**Shahab Dean Aslinia**  
E-learning Support Specialist

### IDU Mission

The Instructional Design Unit supports the purpose of the Instructional Technology and Distance Education Department. We assist the teaching staff of Texas A&M University-Commerce in providing online instruction that is consistent with best practices on quality online teaching and learning by providing interactive faculty development opportunities and practical online teaching assistance, supporting technologies that enhance the online teaching and learning process, and encouraging innovation. We also assist faculty in research related to online learning.

### IDU Vision

To accomplish this mission, the Instructional Design Unit provides multi-faceted training and support through an array of formats including small group seminars, online sessions, self-study materials, and individual consultations. Additionally, we conduct ongoing investigative research regarding emerging online learn

**Jess Lamphere** earned his Bachelor of Science in Public Administration from the University of Texas-Dallas. He

**Jess Lamphere** earned his Bachelor of Science in Public Administration from the University of Texas-Dallas. He is currently pursuing a Masters degree from Texas A&M University-Commerce. Jess joins the IDU team with strong experience in support-related positions. As an eLearning Support Specialist, Jess will assist faculty in the development and support of online courses.



**Jess Lamphere**  
E-Learning Support  
Specialist

**Alan Francis** earned both a Master of Business Administration and a Master of Science degree from Texas A&M University-Commerce, and is currently working on a Doctor of Education at TAMU-C. He has worked with ITDE since May 2006, assisting in the transition from Educator to eCollege. Alan now serves as the eLearning Administrative Specialist. In this role, he cares for the copying of courses, creation of online course surveys, and other related eCollege administrative tasks. He also provides training and support in the use of Respondus and Adobe Presenter. Additionally, he conducts weekly workshops for basic computer skills and MS Office software.



**Alan Francis**  
E-Learning Administrative  
Specialist

ongoing investigative research regarding emerging online learning technologies and practices which promote sound instructional design, development, evaluation, and scholarship teaching.

### IDU Guiding Principles

- The IDU supports a campus culture that recognizes and values the faculty role and diversity of teaching styles.
- The IDU attempts to increase communication and collaboration regarding online teaching and learning.
- The IDU provides a place for accessing resources and exchanging ideas on online teaching best practices.
- The IDU values research and desires to partner with faculty in conducting research related to online learning.

**Contact information for online course assistance:** Email: [online@tamuc-commerce.edu](mailto:online@tamuc-commerce.edu)  
Phone: 903.886.5511



## New Resource Available for Faculty to Assess Student Readiness for Online Learning

The Readiness for Education At a Distance Indicator (**READI**) is a web-based tool designed to serve as an early warning device to identify students who may be deficient in the skills and attributes necessary for successful distance learning. READI indicates the degree to which an individual student possesses attributes, skills and knowledge that contribute to success in online learning, including: self-motivation; time-management skills; self-discipline; reading comprehension; persistence; ability to use a laptop, printer, software and the Internet; and typing speed and accuracy. **READI** provides an immediate score and diagnostic interpretation of results to the student and the instructor

If you would like your online students to take advantage of the resources provided through **READI**, please include this link in your online course <http://tamuc.readi.info/>. **Students will login with the following username/password combination: tamuc/online.** Students will be directed to create a personal login and be given access to the assessment.

As instructors you may receive a summative report detailing the individual **READI** scores of your students. Results are presented in easy-to-interpret charts and graphs. The on-screen report consists of colorful charts that indicate the participant's level of READIness in reading speed & comprehension, technical competency, individual attributes, typing speed & accuracy, and preferred learning styles. To learn more about how to access these reports for your students, please e-mail [online@tamuc-commerce.edu](mailto:online@tamuc-commerce.edu).