Successfully integrating information technology into the existing liberal arts environment is one of the most significant priorities at West Virginia Wesleyan College. Our goal is not to develop sophisticated software applications, to be the “most wired campus,” or to have students arrive at each class with their laptops; rather, our goal is to use IT to best support faculty and students in teaching and learning. With the help of the campus technology team, my colleagues and I have laid the foundation for faculty and students to use technologies when appropriate. Exactly how they do that is as distinctive as each individual.

I came to the college knowing the important role that IT plays in higher education. While serving as Vice President of Public Affairs and Acting President at Reed College, I had the privilege of interacting with such important IT figures as James Powell, Martin Ringle, Bob Gillespie, and Steve Jobs, all of whom helped me to understand the innumerable possibilities of using information technology not only to educate but also to assist in everyday endeavors. These men are visionaries, and their insights helped shape my own understanding of the central importance that IT has for higher education.

West Virginia Wesleyan College has come a long way since I first took over the presidency in February 1995. But the success we’ve had in bringing information technology into all aspects of education at the college has not happened by chance. We had a well-developed plan from the beginning. In fact, I was presented with a copy of a draft technology plan shortly after I arrived. What this initial plan lacked was the comprehensiveness that became the hallmark of the final version. Our planning effort was also greatly enhanced by superb advice from Charles Faulkner of Bellevue, Washington, a consultant who specializes in helping higher education organizations with IT planning.

Although faculty and staff were willing to move forward with the plan, we needed the support of the board of trustees to fulfill our vision. Fortunately, the trustees of the college saw, and continue to see, the IT initiative as an investment in the future and as a risk worth taking. They believed that investing in the initiative served the college and our future students better than anything else we could do. Still, executing the information technology plan was a risk, even with the supportive faculty and board. But it was a calculated risk.

In planning the infrastructure for the IT initiative, Duwane Squires, vice president and chief information officer, listened and continues to respond appropriately to the needs of the academic community, to their need for collaboration and for standard tools that, having a low learning curve, could be easily used and understood. From the faculty and staff planning to the dial-tone connectivity that the campus depends on, he has chosen the right technology and has poised the college for the deployment of current technology as it becomes available.

One of our first goals was to provide the campus with ubiquitous computing. Ubiquitous access, in its purest definition, is anytime, anywhere computing. Since we are committed to using information technology to the point that it becomes transparent—like air—we decided that the appropriate tool would be the laptop computer, allowing a 1:1 student-to-computer ratio and 24x7 access to resources. However, it was not the laptop alone that made our program viable. The mobile computing ability, the reli-

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able network, and the variety of the electronic information we provide through Wesleyan's library also helped to make our program one of the most distinct in the country. The laptops, the high-speed network, and the robust information resources afford our students access to the world—from their dorm room, from their classroom, from anywhere, all the time.

I feel strongly that if you can have only one thing, you must have people you trust to utilize the potential of the systems that are in place. To help the college make a smooth transition and to allow faculty to envision the power of access to digital information, Richard Clemens, one of our faculty members, devoted an intense year of on-campus sabbatical leave to mentoring faculty on the use of technology in the academic environment. His efforts were absolutely essential in our success. Karen Petitto, instructional technology specialist, has taken over this role and continues to work one-on-one with faculty on the appropriate use of technology in and out of the classroom. Karen's approach to faculty development is, first, to recognize the strength of each faculty member and, second, to complement that strength with the appropriate technology that will enhance the existing curriculum. Her talent lies in being able to bridge the gap between the faculty world and the technology world.

Our unique initiative, which combines the integration of technology and the commitment to remain a strong liberal arts institution, can serve as a model program for similar institutions nationwide. We are one of the few colleges in the nation that are taking advantage of the emerging technologies and capturing their power to enhance the liberal arts environment. In fact, we were one of only eleven schools in the nation to be awarded the Pioneer Award for Ubiquitous Computing in January of this year.

Currently, we are working with many other institutions in our technological endeavors. We recently joined with the University of Charleston, Davis & Elkins College, Alderson-Broaddus College, and Emory & Henry College to share a common administrative computing system. The alliance, known as ICE (Independent College Enterprise), is expected to streamline administrative and data-processing procedures. We hope to increase our collaborations and partnerships with other colleges and companies in the coming years.

Although we have advanced our use of technology and improved our technological infrastructure, we still have much more to accomplish. The challenges that face us now are to continue to make the best use of our relationships and to remain credible in our accomplishments and forward-thinking in our vision. We have confidence in what the future holds because we have demonstrated that we can make the best use of the opportunities that are available to us.

**William R. Haden is President of West Virginia Wesleyan College.**