



Computer Access and Training (CAT) – A result of WACFO Diversity & Pluralism committee 2005-06 recommendations for the Inclusion of Labor Staff as Valued Members of the University Community. Through the Computer Access and Training (CAT) initiative, Michigan State University is investing in its employees and creating a more inclusive work environment by enhancing computer access and providing training for labor employees. Under the umbrella of MSU's Boldness by Design strategic positioning, the CAT initiative supports the institutional values by which the university is guided: quality, inclusiveness, and connectivity.

The move to electronic communications and processes has been occurring for years, but recently the pace of these changes has increased. Attention was focused on the lack of labor employee computer skills and access during the 2005 WACFO Web-based "Status of Women" survey, when not a single woman from the labor employment groups responded to the electronic survey. It was apparent that lack of computer access and skills were still major concerns impacting the inclusion of labor employees in communication and other essential processes.

Goal of the Computer Access and Training Task Force

Fall 2006 Vice President for Finance and Operations Fred Poston charged the Computer Access and Training Task Force with addressing the issues of labor employees' basic computer skills and workplace access to computers. The three-fold charge to the task force was to:

- Enhance computer access and training for labor employees;
- Identify MSU workforce skill and knowledge development opportunities; and
- Work collaboratively to design initiatives and programs.

Major purposes of the CAT initiative

The four purposes of the initiative relate to communication, processes, and overall inclusion. Specifically:

- Enhance electronic communication options to ensure information flow to labor employees as e-mail becomes the norm for official university communications;
- Enhance the ability of labor employees to perform electronic self-service functions related to MSU employment;
- Remove computer skill-related barriers to process improvements that will improve efficiency of these processes and reduce costs; and
- Enhance the inclusiveness of the university work environment overall by opening electronic communication and access to electronic processes to all employee groups.

Impact of the CAT initiative

As a result of the CAT initiative, MSU labor employees will have improved access to computers during their workday and will gain skills to perform basic Internet and e-mail functions needed for communication and for various electronic processes such as: receiving information and work instructions from supervisors in a more efficient manner, entering attendance, checking benefit balances, and applying for jobs. The university will realize efficiencies and cost savings through electronic communications and processes that will be more effective and available to all employees.