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1. INTRODUCTION

Online Weather Studies (OWS) is the first science course with electronic delivery to be offered at State University of New York / College at Old Westbury. Located twenty miles from the center of New York City, Old Westbury has been, since its inception, an experimental college with innovative curricula, procedures and academic policies. The College recently initiated its first graduate program, and includes in its mission the goal of educating a diverse, multicultural student population through a curriculum that addresses fundamental issues in American society. The 3000 - member student body is one of the most ethnically diverse in the SUNY system, with 26% African American, 7% Asian, 32% Caucasian and 14% Hispanic. The science departments are among the strongest at the College, with small classes leading to the bachelors' degree in Biology, Biochemistry and Chemistry (ACS-certified). Most of our science majors participate in undergraduate research, with support provided by federal and state funding.

Old Westbury will offer Online Weather Studies for the first time during the Spring 2005 semester. We have designed this first-time offering as a hybrid, with a traditional lecture accompanied by the full AMS online laboratory program. The course will be taught by an atmospheric chemist, who participated in a week-long training workshop provided through the AMS OWS Diversity Program.

2. IMPLEMENTING OWS

The course implementation presented some challenges. Our campus has a rigorous General Education program that includes a requirement for two semesters of science, one with laboratory. Nonmajors science courses are not viable unless they are part of this core. It was necessary to convince some of our more traditional colleagues that the web

activities may be viewed as a true laboratory component before the course was accepted.

3. ENCOURAGING STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Because students frequently are reluctant to try new courses, we have adopted a multi-pronged strategy for encouraging student enrollment. We have invited ourselves to meetings of student clubs in the majors that are most likely to be interested in OWS, Teacher Education, Computer Science, and Business. At these meetings, we described the course and made a Powerpoint presentation that included a tour of the AMS OWS web site. To gain the attention of other students, we have created a colorful poster advertising the course for placement around campus. Our College home page had a feature about our participation in the OWS Diversity Project, and a press release on the subject was picked up by a local newspaper, *The Westbury Times*. We have asked the campus newspaper to write a feature article on the course during peak registration time.

3.1 Teacher Education and OWS

For the Teacher Education club, we presented the alignment of OWS course content with NY State Learning Standards, and demonstrated the first learning activity from the OWS course web site. As part of a self-study for accreditation by the National Council on Accreditation of Teacher Education, our institution recently developed a conceptual framework that describes our teaching philosophy. Many of the principles that undergird our framework fit perfectly with the OWS experience: belief in an interdisciplinary approach to teaching, a celebration of diversity, development of analytical skills, and the use of technology. We believe that our efforts to connect a science course to their conceptual framework will appeal to Teacher Education students.

4. PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

We anticipate that these efforts will result in full enrollment for OWS during its first semester. Thereafter, we plan to expand the electronic

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component to the lecture portion of the course, using the Blackboard system. In addition, SUNY has a distance learning program, the SUNY Learning

Network (SLN), that delivers fully electronic course content state-wide. We plan to add OWS to the SLN offerings once it has been tested on our campus.