

# Sloan-C View

## Perspectives in Quality Online Education

A Publication of the Sloan Consortium

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THE SLOAN CONSORTIUM  
A Consortium of Institutions  
and Organizations Committed to  
Quality Online Education

## Blended Learning: Sleeping Giant

Jack and the Beanstalk is a familiar allegory about overcoming obstacles to achieve a goal. The allegory's lesson is that with forethought and intelligent planning, we can overcome even gigantic inertia to secure treasure needed for survival.

For educators with pioneering experience in ALN as well as deep experience in traditional modes, an analogous treasure—quality education as an ordinary part of everyday life for all who are qualified and motivated to pursue it—seems sometimes a distant dream, sometimes within reach. For educators who met at the April 2005 **Sloan-C Workshop on Blended Learning and Higher Education** hosted by the [University of Illinois Chicago](#), blended learning is a kind of sleeping giant which, carefully managed, could transform education. Blended learning has the potential for profoundly integrating education, an integration that demands rethinking the ways we teach and learn.



Swift's Premium Calendar; Jessie Willcox Smith, illustrator; Swift's Soap Products, 1916

At the workshop, representatives from 32 schools and organizations collaborated to set a strategic agenda for guiding the development of blended environments, beginning with key defining elements:

Courses integrate online with traditional face to face class activities in a *planned, pedagogically valuable* manner in which a portion (institutionally defined) of face to face time is replaced by online activity

The keywords—*planned, pedagogically valuable*—emphasize that while much may be known about classroom and about ALN instruction, effective integration of the two creates new synergies and challenges. Thus, the agenda includes examination of three challenge areas that will be addressed by workgroup members:

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forward ►

# ... From the Editors

A letter from the editors of the *Sloan-C View*

## This issue reviews some Sloan Consortium initiatives relating to rethinking paradigms for teaching and learning:

- **Blended Learning: Sleeping Giant** reports on an April 2005 **Sloan-C Workshop on Blended Learning and Higher Education** led by **Mary Niemiec** and hosted by the [University of Illinois Chicago](#) that generated a strategic plan for reporting on issues that surround "the fundamentally new paradigm" of blended learning.
- **What are the issues for which blending could offer solutions?** (a question formulated by **Peter Shea** of SUNY University at Albany) rounds up some questions of senior academic leaders about the future of higher education.
- An **Excerpt from a brainstorming session** gives a glimpse of the intense collaboration at the Sloan-C Workshop on Blended Learning and Higher Education.
- In "Hot off the Blog," **Ray Schroeder** of the University of Illinois at Springfield looks at three articles related to the instructor's role in online learning.
- In **Are Instructors Essential?** a synthesis of a Sloan-C listserv conversation, **John Sener**, Director of Sloan-C Special Initiatives, recommends rethinking our most basic assumptions about the importance of teachers to learning.
- In **Sloan Corporate-University Online Learning Workshop**, Elaine Cacciarelli, Executive Director of the Sloan Greater NYC Online Learning Center at Stevens Institute of Technology, reports on preliminary findings from an initiative to enable corporate elearning and academic ALN to learn from each other's best practices and provide greater access and personalization to more learners.
- The new issue of JALN, 9:1, includes 7 papers with implications for practice and development, including a featured case study on learning objects.
- **What is the Sloan-C Quality Framework?** provides an excerpt of a framework you can adapt to help strategize progress towards goals with demonstrable evidence via metrics.
- **Welcome to new and updated programs in the Sloan-C Catalog.** Why not submit your ALN programs so visitors to the Catalog can see what distinguishes your programs?
- In **Sloan-C Member News**, UMassOnline reports continuing growth, and [Quality Matters](#) receives the Maryland Distance Learning Association's distinguished program award for 2005.
- Upcoming online workshops are opportunities to learn and to network with colleagues worldwide. Join Sloan-C for the [Copyright Compliance for Online Educators](#)—Start Date: June 1, 2005. [Sign up here to be notified of new events](#), and for more information,

### Sloan-C Member News

[UMassOnline Enrollments Grow 19 Percent in Fiscal Year 2005](#) UMassOnline, the University of Massachusetts' Web-based learning division, announced that online education program revenue and enrollments grew by 30 percent and 19 percent, respectively, in fiscal year 2005 (July 2004–June 2005). Visit <http://www.UMassOnline.net>.

Congratulations to the [Quality Matters](#) project team! The Maryland Distance Learning Association (MDLA) recognized Quality Matters as the Best Distance Learning Program for 2005.

and to register, visit [Sloan-C Online Events](#).

- Time to plan your attendance at the [11th ALN Conference: The Power of Online Learning: Mobilizing to Expand Community](#), in Orlando, Florida, November 17-19, 2005. Remember, [premium members](#) receive discounts on conference attendance.

For a wealth of useful information, please visit the Sloan-C [free resources](#) page. And, to contribute in kind, please share your effective practices with the higher education online community in the Sloan-C [effective practices](#) collection.

We look forward to hearing from you and to seeing you online,

... for the Sloan Consortium

Frank Mayadas, John Bourne and Janet Moore

*The purpose of the Sloan Consortium (Sloan-C) is to help learning organizations continually improve the quality, scale, and breadth of their online programs according to their own distinctive missions, so that education will become a part of everyday life, accessible and affordable for anyone, anywhere, at any time, in a wide variety of disciplines.*

You are welcome to join Sloan-C:  
<http://www.sloan-c.org>

## Sleeping Giant (continued from [cover page](#))

**Blended Learning Research:** Although blended learning is rapidly accelerating, research protocols characteristic of other learning environments such as ALN have not yet evolved for blended environments; initial research is focused on specific instructional situations and tends to bear on learning effectiveness. Research is also needed on other key issues, especially those bearing on benefits such as cost effectiveness and increased access to instruction.

**Effective Pedagogical Practices in Blended Teaching:** This area will focus on pedagogical approaches in successful blended learning courses that are learner-, knowledge-, assessment-, and community-centered, particularly on best practices for achieving the teaching and learning enhancements claimed for blended environments.

**Strategic Institutional Approaches to Blended Learning:** Recognizing that there is no 'template' for transformation, campus leadership and various levels of administration need basic information, examples of successful strategies, risk and benefit analyses, and tools for successfully pursuing blended learning, particularly in meeting campus mission and goals.

In his concluding remarks to the workshop, Frank Mayadas, President of the Sloan Consortium, appreciated the forward momentum that the workshop generated, noting that blending is a fundamentally new paradigm. While we have researched the efficacy of face to face education for hundreds of years, and ALN for a decade, and have learned much about success in these modes, blending the two modes effectively is actually a new field. Institutions approach blended learning with a variety of outcomes in mind: some believe blending improves the quality of learning outcomes; some believe blending improves access to programs and resources; some believe blending offers cost efficiencies such as optimum use of physical space. Whatever the motivator, the quality principles—learning effectiveness, cost effectiveness and institutional commitment, access and faculty and student satisfaction—are the same. It is important to bring ALN and blended learning to the attention of senior leadership, engaging higher education in using a framework to collect and share data that will continuously improve quality, scale and breadth in

education.

Stay tuned to hear more from the workshop challenge groups who are planning a series of publications and workshops to further engage the national higher education community in taking advantage of research, pedagogy, and strategic institutional approaches to create effective blended environments.

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**The Eleventh Sloan-C  
International Conference  
on Asynchronous Learning  
Networks (ALN)**



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of Online  
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Mobilizing to Expand Community

**November 17 - 19, 2005 Rosen Centre Hotel Orlando, FL**

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**Executive Digest**



## What are the issues for which blending could be the solution?

A panel of senior leaders in higher education [1] encouraged the April 2005 **Sloan-C Workshop on Blended Learning and Higher Education** participants to focus the strategic agenda on issues of importance to students and institutions. In brief, issues that panelists cited include creating comparable or equivalent standards and benchmarks for quality learning—including f2f, online, and blended.

Because blending is going on under the radar, we need to know and be able to define for our constituencies what blended is. We need to understand exactly when a course is truly blended, not just a random mix of f2f and technology. In addition to quality, cost, and logistics (for example, how to best use and schedule classroom space to best use resources, and how to let students know the schedule before they register, how to share courses and resources with external partners), we need a richer set of quality indicators, including longitudinal data. Does blended truly make a difference in how well people learn? If so, do investments in blending make a difference in how well people learn? What are the costs for starting up? Without such focus, all we are doing is adding costs. We need in-depth case studies to help us estimate where we are going and which investments will take us in the right directions. We know that while marginal costs decrease following initial start up costs, infrastructure costs, including hardware replacement and new software systems, will continue to increase at a higher order of magnitude.

We need to keep always in mind the question: **What's the best way to teach the material in this class?** Since 'new' technology is anything invented after you were born, we need to be aware of mismatches between faculty and student technological capabilities. We need to make it a national priority to revise standards for promotion and tenure to eliminate disincentives for teaching with technology. As online and blended instruction make teaching more visible, we should reward teaching as a public enterprise comparable to public nature of research.

[1] Thanks to panelists **Carole Bulakowski**, Interim Vice President for Educational Affairs, College of Lake County; **James Muyskens**, President, Queens College, City University of New York; **R. Michael Tanner**, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, University of Illinois at Chicago. And to **Mary Niemiec** who hosted the workshop for the University of Illinois.

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Excerpt from a Brainstorming Session of the April 2005 Sloan-C Workshop on  
Blended Learning and Higher Education:  
Challenge group on learner-, knowledge-, assessment-, and community-centered pedagogy.

	F-2-F	Blended	Online
Objectives	Rarely stated. I guess it is the book.	Like online, plus I learn why the mix of teaching approaches/delivery approaches.	I learn the objectives during the Orientation and they are repeated throughout the course.
Orientation	First day of class. Show up, meet professor, say hello, and leave early. Get critical seat.	Could be like f2f or online or both. I learn about the flow of the course in detail and about expectations of me.	Pre-class activity. Introductions, profile, technology check.
Communication	Office hours and before/after class for 10 minutes. More formal. Plays to people oriented individuals. Some e-mail usage. Plays to people with strong oral skills.	I can communicate in the way that I am most comfortable. More options = less risk which may drive more participation. Plays to both types of communication skills.	e-mail, threaded disc, IM, virtual office hours. I need to learn the netiquette, plan communications, know response expectations. Harder to hide, there is a permanent record. Plays to people with strong written skills.
Progression and Navigation	Passive. I am told each class where we are going. I am told when to show up.	I must have a clear picture of the course structure. If it is not given to me I need to get it!	Active. I need to understand the course site and determine the schedule. I need to manage my time.



## Are Instructors Essential?

Synthesis of a Sloan-C listserv conversation, by John Sener, Sloan-C Director of Special Initiatives

Sometimes it is useful to re-examine basic assumptions from a "beginner's mind" perspective. One of Sloan-C's central tenets has always been that instructors are essential to the educational process. This viewpoint is not universally shared, however. In the commercial sector, learner-content interaction is often seen as the only essential learning transaction, with instructors viewed as a cost rather than a necessity. Even some academicians believe that, as a recent *Chronicle of Higher Education* title put it, "Courseware That Could Replace Instructors Is 'Inevitable'" [1].

What's wrong, if anything, with this viewpoint? What are instructors essential for, really? This query was discussed recently on the Sloan-C listserv. Some respondents answered this question by pointing out what was *not* essential for instructors to do. Several suggested that designing and developing courses with (teams of) instructional designers, content experts, and other specialists is preferable to relying on untrained instructors to fill these roles. Some suggested replacing large lectures with on-demand multimedia presentations, using trained content experts to facilitate group discussions, using software to automate assessment processes, outsourcing tutoring activities, and using artificial intelligent agents to diagnose learner needs. Collectively, this unbundling and outsourcing of instructor roles whittles away much of what is essential. What's left for instructors to do?

Plenty, it turns out, according to listserv participants. Instructor roles vary widely according to the educational

environment and learner audience, thus the ways instructors are essential depends on the "situation," i.e., the characteristics of the learners and the environment. Student and instructor goals, motivations, and perceptions also determine what is seen as "essential." Using familiar labels (expert, coach, motivator, guide) encourages 'same-old' thinking, so here are a few new labels to view with fresh eyes what discussants saw as essential for instructors in higher education:

**"Meaning makers"**—Instructors use their expertise to supply context, explaining how and why information is important, helping learners integrate disparate content and make sense of it so that information can become "knowledge and maybe even wisdom," notes **William Housel** of Northwestern State University.

**"Growth agents"**—Instructors are what **George Otte** of CUNY calls the "sand in the oyster;" they goad, prod, and challenge learners, pushing them, as **Bruce Winston** of Regent University notes, "beyond their level of comfort and into areas of improvement."

Continued on [page 6](#)

[1] Evelyn, J. [Courseware That Could Replace Professors Is Inevitable, New York College Official Says](#) (subscription required). *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Monday, March 7, 2005.

## Instructors, cont'd from page 5

"**People builders**"—Instructors fill a far more important role than being academicians. **Shalni Gulati** of City University, London gives a student perspective, that the role "is about helping us realize what we are capable of and help[ing] us get the confidence, resilience and opportunities to get there," citing three teachers "who were essential in the building of 'me.'" Students construct themselves and their own knowledge, but instructors serve as a bridge—in some situations, the only bridge—between learners and the society in which they seek a place.

As instructors' roles change, what is essential about instructors will change as well. There was widespread agreement that, as George Otte stated, "The

instructor's role as (mere) deliverer of information is at a dead end." Some participants think that there will be a renewed emphasis on once-important role—for instance, **Boria Sax** of Mercy College sees a new need for and emphasis on mentoring, and **Terri Buckner** of UNC Chapel Hill proposes reconfiguring the instructor role by reconceptualizing courses so that knowledgeable facilitators focus on more complex reasoning tasks.

Practitioners in K–12, corporate training, and other sectors will arrive at different answers about how instructors are essential to the learning process. Re-examining this question for your context is worth the effort to gain a deeper understanding of how instructors are, and are not, essential to the educational experience.



**Sloan Corporate-University Online Learning Workshop**  
New York City, January 25, 2005

**Elaine Cacciarelli, Executive Director Sloan Greater NYC Online Learning Center, Stevens Institute of Technology**

Co-chairs **Robert Ubell** of Stevens Institute of Technology and **Nancy Lewis** of IBM welcomed representatives from corporate elearning and academic ALN programs to a comprehensive discussion of the need for close corporate-university partnerships in online learning. Given that the applicability of the Sloan-C quality framework with minor adaptations could benefit both the corporate and academic learning environments, several significant reasons emerged for pursuing joint follow-ups:

~Both learning environments need a basis for understanding and tracking learning quality.

~Compared with Sloan-C pillars, the Kirkpatrick 4-level model, which is liberally used by corporations, is somewhat limiting since it examines only the effectiveness of specific learning content and does not really take into account measuring the wider learning environment that is addressed by the five Sloan-C pillars.

~With large proportions of students from the academic learning environment feeding into industry, it would be very useful for both the corporate and academic worlds to better understand each other and form some commonality for measuring the quality of learning.

~The application of a commonly based model could likely accelerate the evolution of the quality of learning in both environments through cross learning and encourage further collaboration between corporate and academic learning professionals.

Sloan has already begun to formulate how to implement suggestions that emerged from the workshop, including collecting reactions, comments, recommendations.

## Sloan-C Online Seminar Series

### Copyright Compliance for Online Educators

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**As an online educator, you face a new world of legal issues.**

In this seminar, Linda Enghagen, of UMassOnline will take you through the key copyright issues that you and your colleagues should be aware of when delivering your online courses.

Using asynchronous collaboration software provided by Moodle.com and powerful synchronous collaboration software provided by Elluminate, Sloan-C provides an innovative, collaborative format that caters to learners in a variety of ways.

[www.sloan-c.org/workshop/copyrightworkshop.asp](http://www.sloan-c.org/workshop/copyrightworkshop.asp)

**Dates:** Designed to fit your schedule, starting June 1, 2005

**Pricing:** \$97.50 - \$195 (depending on your Sloan-C membership level)

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## Welcome New Programs in the Sloan-C Catalog

Note to members: Listing ALN programs in the Catalog is a member benefit. ALN programs are instructor-led, cohort based, requiring less than 20% face to face time, and emphasizing interaction with instructors and peers. To submit an ALN program for peer review and approval, login to the Sloan-C web and click on [catalog](#).

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## New Issue of JALN: Volume 9, Issue 1

**J. Bourne, D. Harris & F. Mayadas.** [Online Engineering Education: Learning Anywhere, Anytime.](#) Originally published in the *Journal of Engineering Education*, 94(1): 131-146, January 2005.

**D. Anderson & C. Haddad.** [Gender, Voice and Learning in Online Course Environments.](#)

**K.B. Kelley & K. Bonner.** [Digital Text, Distance Education and Academic Dishonesty: Faculty and Administrator Perceptions and Responses](#)

**R. Mason & C. Pegler.** [A Learning Object Success Story](#)

**K.A. Meyer.** [The Ebb and Flow of Online Discussions: What Bloom Can Tell Us About Our Students' Conversations](#)

**C.L. Finnegan, H. Xu, & L.V. Morris.** [Roles of Faculty in Teaching Asynchronous Undergraduate Courses](#)

**S.G. Reasons, K. Valadares & M. Slavkin.** [Questioning the Hybrid Model: Student Outcomes in Different Course Formats](#)

(Logged in members can read the full issue; non-members may read [abstracts](#).)

## What is the Sloan-C Quality Framework?

"In the business of education—to improve learning while achieving capacity enrollment—continuous quality improvement (CQI) helps people to set goals, identify resources and strategies, and measure progress towards the institution's ideal vision of its distinctive purpose" (*Elements of Quality*, 2002, p.5). Thus, as in the brief version of the quality framework link below, the goals of each of the five pillars are presented in CQI terms for measuring continuously improving learning, value (for institutions and for learners), access, and faculty and student satisfaction. These inter-active components focus on improving people networks, practices, achievement and growth. Adaptable to a clearly articulated vision of the ideal learning environment according to the institution's distinctive mission, and keeping in mind that the framework is intended as a flexible work in progress, for each of the pillars, the framework includes descriptions and ideals (see more information at <http://www.sloan-c.org/effective> and in a pdf, "The Sloan Consortium Quality Framework and the Five Pillars" at <http://sloan-c.org/resources/index.asp>).

[Click here for a brief version of the Quality Framework.](#)

## Coming Soon!

Sloan-C Announces a new publication...

### Elements of Quality Online Education: Engaging Communities

Online education has become the leading modality for distance education, and academic leadership expects online enrollment to grow as much as 25% per year. Thus, a central challenge to the nation is how to engage communities to make education "an ordinary part of everyday life." To address this challenge, leading scholars and practitioners from forty colleges, universities and organizations gathered at the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation's annual invitational summer workshop in September 2004. Workshop papers collected here in **Elements of Quality Online Education: Engaging Communities**, volume six in the annual Sloan-C quality series, include provocative responses to these questions:

- How can online pedagogy improve face-to-face pedagogy?
- How can asynchronous learning networks engage the core of higher education?
- How can the two worlds of academia and industry cooperate to contribute to a tenfold increase in online learning in the next ten years?
- What do we need to learn about the business of education?



by Ray Schroeder

**This month we are looking at three articles related to the instructor's role in online learning.**

**[Exemplary Online Educators: Creating a Community of Inquiry — Beth Perry and Margaret Edwards, Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education](#)** — Within most disciplines

there are those who are recognized as being exceptionally competent practitioners. These people are sometimes called exceptional or exemplary. In the educational realm, students remember these individuals as the teachers who most positively influenced their learning. The commonality of these exemplary

practitioners is that they do their work in a remarkable way and their teaching strategies and interpersonal interactions are regarded by their students as highly successful. Although there has been a "virtual explosion of online education" (Thiele, 2003) the literature remains lacking in terms of studies focused on what makes some online educators more effective than others. This paper outlines the initial findings of a qualitative study that asked students who study online their perspectives on why they recall certain online educators as outstanding.

**[Supporting Online Students with Personal Interaction — Ronald C. Thomas, Jr., Educause Quarterly](#)** — More and more colleges and universities seek to extend their reach by offering individual courses

and complete degree programs online. Planners of such initiatives will find it useful to examine the different challenges and approaches already in use on various campuses, as in the mentoring program at Florida State University (FSU). Numerous studies have indicated the need to create personal connections in distance education. A study of distance learning via educational television that compared the attitudes of on-campus and distance students found that the faculty offering courses in distance formats should be trained "to assume a more active role in communicating with the distance learner."

**[Establishing Trust Online is Critical for Online Communication Say NJIT Experts](#)**

— Establishing trust quickly is the key to effective Internet communication, especially when it comes to teaching online, according to researchers at New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT). "While our study focused on trust formation among teachers and students in online courses," said Nancy Coppola, PhD, associate professor, in the humanities department at NJIT, "our results are applicable for any group or team that interacts online. "Swift Trust in Virtual Teams," appeared in *Transactions on Professional Communication*, published by the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, Inc (IEEE). Starr Roxanne Hiltz, PhD, distinguished professor in the department of information systems and Naomi Rotter, PhD, professor in the School of Management, also participated in the research, which was partially funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation and the National Science Foundation. The most effective on-line teachers establish communication early and quickly. "Team members must perceive the instructor's presence as soon as they enter the course," said Hiltz. "Instructors do this by providing students with clear course introductory information and personal introductions that set the climate for warmth and responsiveness.

You can always see the latest items, and find many more articles posted seven days a week at the [Online Learning Update blog](#). Until next time, I'll see you online! ~ray

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**"The best way to predict the future is to invent it."**  
~ Alan Kay

\*Pricing for Premium Membership will increase \$25-50 depending on membership level for all registrations after May 1, 2005. Individual Premium Membership is also available, please visit the Sloan-C website.



**THE SLOAN CONSORTIUM**  
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**Contact Information:**

Sloan Center for OnLine Education (SCOLE)  
Olin College of Engineering and Babson College  
Olin Way, Needham MA 02492-1245  
**voice:** 781-292-2524  
**fax:** 781-292-2505  
**email:** [publisher@sloan-c.org](mailto:publisher@sloan-c.org)  
**on the web:** <http://www.sloan-c.org/>

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**ONLINE EDUCA BERLIN 2005**

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For press release: [https://www.online-educa.com/pdf/brandon\\_hall\\_keynote\\_04-2005\\_en.pdf](https://www.online-educa.com/pdf/brandon_hall_keynote_04-2005_en.pdf)

After the tremendous success of the last event, preparations for ONLINE EDUCA BERLIN 2005 are in full swing. The organizers of the 11th International Conference on Technology Supported Learning and Training are delighted to announce that Dr. Brandon Hall, the internationally renowned independent e-learning expert, will be making a keynote presentation.

**CADE-ACED: 2005 International Conference**

Date: May 7-11, 2005

Location: Vancouver, Canada

URL: <http://www.cade-aced.ca>

The Canadian Association for Distance Education (CADE-ACED) & Simon Fraser University are proud to announce the 2005 International Conference.

**Sloan-C: Copyright Compliance for Online Educators**

Date: Starts June 1, 2005 - designed to fit your schedule

Location: Online

URL: <http://www.sloan-c.org/info/05/vcopyright.asp>. Please see our ad on [page 6](#).

**U of Wisconsin - 21st Annual Conference on Distance Learning & Teaching**

Date: August 3-5, 2005

Location: Madison, WI

URL: <http://www.uwex.edu/disted/conference/>

2005 themes include: course design strategies, innovative faculty support, using video elements, and embedding learning objects. Look for Sloan-C in the exhibit hall.

**ALT-C 2005: Exploring the Frontiers of E-learning**

Date: September 6-8, 2005

Location: Manchester, England

URL: <http://www.alt.ac.uk/altc2005/index.html>. Please see the website for more detailed information.

**SLOAN-C International Conference**

Date: November 17-19, 2005

Location: Rosen Centre, Orlando, FL

URL: <http://www.sloan-c.org/info/05/valnconf.asp>

The 11th Sloan-C International Conference on Asynchronous Learning Networks (ALN): "The Power of Online Learning: Mobilizing to Expand Community."

If you know of, or are hosting, an event that should be listed on the Sloan-C View Calendar, please send the details of the event and url to [publisher@sloan-c.org](mailto:publisher@sloan-c.org).