Thomas College Student Survey Shows Technology Use Increasing

Waterville, Maine --- December 2, 1998 --- Are today's college students keeping pace with business in learning and using new technology? Thomas College students certainly are, according to the results of a recent survey. In just a single year, PC ownership among students increased by 50%. The recent online survey about student computer use was conducted by the Department of Information Technology Services at the College.

"I think this survey shows that our students are keeping pace in learning new technology at a rate equal to or better than most mid-sized businesses," noted Chris Rhoda, Director of I.T. Services. Over the past several years, Rhoda has overseen an expansion of technology available to students, including adding Pentium II computers to all labs at the College. The results of the recent survey have shown a trend to increasing use of technology by Thomas College students, who now enjoy such comprehensive services as a web-based server systems that allow them to conference with professors, use their laptop computers to access the world wide web, and even schedule courses online.

Rhoda explained that the survey for Thomas College students will be used to decide how to expand technology services further. "Over the past few years we have expanded web-based services, added computers, and now have achieved a student-to-computer ratio of 7-to-1. Now we are gathering information to help us decide how to proceed further," Rhoda explained. The survey shows that of the commuter students who responded, 83% own home computers, while a full 60% of students who live in dormitories own their own computer. In addition to the significant percentage of all Thomas College students who own their own computers, 87% of all students said they regularly use computers in the school's computer labs.

"This survey shows that both our commuter and day students benefit from our computer labs, meaning we will still need to expand lab space in the future," Rhoda noted. College officials are currently evaluating the survey and discussing options for further technological expansion.

Rhoda also noted a trend among students towards laptop computer usage. "We have seen an increase in the number of students who use laptops, and that's a trend I expect to continue; it's the wave of the future," Rhoda explained. "A laptop computer is versatile; students can bring it to the library or to class. It is likely that we will add more computer ports available in classrooms in support of this trend."

Given the range of computer services the survey showed are used by Thomas College students, Rhoda stressed his belief that students at the College are computer literate in a way that makes them attractive to business. "This survey paints a picture of a very technologically sophisticated student body."