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For Immediate Release

SBC Foundation supporting an online teaching and learning initiative at the University of Southern Indiana

The SBC Foundation is helping underwrite the cost of a summer institute for faculty at the University of Southern Indiana with a grant of \$58,280. The Institute for Online Teaching and Learning will assist faculty develop and implement online courses that are part of the University's Core Curriculum or a school/department's distance education development plan. The project begins May 13 with an intensive two-week training program and continues throughout the 2002-03 academic year.

As the interest in technology-enhanced instruction continues to grow, the percentage of faculty using technology in learning activities has grown significantly; the number wanting to participate in training and development activities exceeds the ability of University's fiscal resources to respond fully.

Rick Borries, director of SBC Ameritech's External Affairs for Southwestern Indiana, said, "We are pleased to support a program that provides additional learning opportunities to educators through the use of advanced technology. This is an investment in progress and SBC Ameritech commends University leadership for pursuing this important initiative."

Karen Bonnell, director of Instructional Technology Services, said an objective of the institute is to implement 14 online courses in the next academic year. Institute participants are chosen based on a competitive process of reviewing course proposals.

Some of the topics to be covered in the institute are

- teaching strategies that engage students and foster student-teacher and student-student interactions;
- organizing materials for online distribution;
- using software called Blackboard to build the course Web site;
- designing interactive surveys and quizzes; and
- managing a threaded discussion and managing the online gradebook.

An estimated 2,800 students will benefit from online learning at USI in the next academic year.

The SBC Foundation is the core of SBC's charitable involvement and is committed to using its resources to strengthen the communities where SBC employees live and work.

Sent to: Fox 7, WEHT, WFIE, Pat Swanson, WIKY, Mt. Vernon Democrat, Our Times, Gleaner, WKDQ, WGBF, Web