

Western Michigan University

Center for Electronic Portfolios and Assessment (CEPA)

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Western Michigan University, supported by two corporate partners, Sungard SCT and Nuventive, will create and implement a virtual Center for Electronic Portfolios and Assessment (CEPA). The Center will be a state-of-the-art technology center recognized internationally and nationally for excellence in the use of a university-wide assessment system. An advisory board of external colleagues, faculty, students, and staff will govern CEPA. CEPA will serve as the University's support structure and research center for assessment activities at WMU. Two major products, assessment documentation (TracDat) and the electronic portfolio product (iWebfolio), will comprise the backbone for an integrated assessment system for students, faculty, and the University. The Center's primary focus will be on the development and demonstration of innovative assessment practices to:

- Improve individual learning and increase comprehension of integrated learning
- Foster positive changes in individual courses, academic programs, and services
- Document human capability and manage the organization's knowledge assets
- Build an inventory of best technology-based assessment practices through research
- Document the continuing improvement of institution-level performance.

WMU and its partners will identify the best assessment practices necessary to implement the appropriate use of portfolio technologies by both undergraduate and graduate students, academic and faculty advisors, professional staff, graduate schools, and employers at WMU and elsewhere. This multi-year effort will be an intensely collaborative task involving learning, research, and experimentation. In particular, the SCT-Nuventive-WMU partnership will offer other universities and colleges a demonstration model with insight into competing considerations when deciding whether to adopt these two tools as their main integrated, institution-wide assessment system. Knowledge about technology-based assessment practices will enable other institutions to:

- Improve instructional and integrated learning outcomes for students
- Focus institutional resources on methods, techniques, and tools with the highest academic and fiscal return for students, faculty, and the institution
- Lessen the time and repetitive documentation requirements associated with the assessment and accreditation mandates placed upon academic programs

CEPA will provide a formal framework for partnership among SCT, Nuventive, and WMU for a four-year period (2005-2009), which may be extended by mutual consent. This partnership will allow WMU, SCT, and Nuventive to demonstrate best assessment practices with the companion deployment and adoption of electronic portfolios, and with the integration of solutions through WMU's Unified Digital Campus (powered by SunGard SCT). Additionally, this partnership will enable WMU to adopt a continuous model of institutional assessment improvement. Finally, as a national student-centered research university using Sungard SCT's TracDat and Nuventive's iWebfolio, WMU will demonstrate how to leverage scarce human and fiscal resources to positively impact students, faculty, and the institution.

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