Missouri Research and Education Consortium (MERC)

What is MERC?

Missouri Education & Research Consortium (MERC) is the primary provider of network services to Missouri's higher education institutions through MOREnet. MERC is comprised of non-proprietary Higher Education organizations in Missouri.

History: In 1991, with support of National Science Foundation grants, nine Missouri universities and colleges formed a consortium in order to gain access to Internet connectivity and support resources for their students, faculty and communities. As a result of the formation of the MOREnet Consortium, the MOREnet organization was formed to link the Consortium member institutions to one another and the Internet. **On July 1, 2000, the MOREnet Consortium was renamed the Missouri Education & Research Consortium (MERC) to reflect the unique identity of the Consortium and to lessen confusion with MOREnet the organization.**

Purpose: To advance the collaborative use of networked technology and applications in higher education, research, public service and work together to share resources for the benefit of all consortium members.

Vision: MERC will strive to be recognized nationally as the model of cooperation and collaboration in the use of networked technology and networking in higher education.

FOCUS AREAS

I. Collaboration

II. Policy/Leadership

III. Higher Education Practices

IV. Services

MERC GOALS AND ACTIVITIES

I. Collaboration

Foster collaboration in order to improve quality of education in Missouri.

- Provide a high quality, high capacity network with operational.
- Provide unified support for efforts to build the MOREnet infrastructure through communication among MOREnet participates.
- Promote and lead collaboration efforts among institutions in the state by organizing groups.

II. Policy/Leadership

Serve as the primary resource for policy development advice to CBHE regarding network technology applications in higher education.

- Provide a unified voice on statewide technology issues through the development of a leadership core of institutional policy makers.
- Provide statewide directions for technology in education through a polling of higher education needs.
- Promote the use of technology throughout the state through strategic leadership activities within other conferences, groups, and events.

III. Higher Education Practices

Serve as the central repository for information on tools and best practices for educational activities.

- Promote and lead collaboration efforts among institutions by sponsoring an annual conference.
- Provide support to collateral efforts to build the MOREnet infrastructure
- Expand the online resources that MOREnet offers

IV. Services

Act as a broker for shared network-based services that provide value to collaboration and education.

- Provide distance education related services which could include a variety of items including providing support for online course development, faculty and staff development and training for video based and web based courses, promotion of distance learning, assistance obtaining distance education grants, establishment of best practices and standards for distance education

- Provide technology training and support for faculty and staff through statewide and regional workshops.

- Provide statewide contracts and volume purchasing agreements for members.

- Provide host services for institutional applications such as CourseInfo, WebCT.

- Expand the online resources that MOREnet offers.