

Anne Raymond Savage's recollections about the beginnings of TELETECHNET

Savage: ... So here we had experience with the broadcast station, with the cable channel, with receivers around the country, with a microwave network within Hampton Roads, so we had experimented and become quite capable of doing television production and had won a lot of national awards. So that when in 1989 the electric power commission in Roanoke went to Richmond to the coordinating board for higher education--the state council for higher education in Virginia and said, "We really don't need more graduate engineers." Remember this is the era of early workforce development and economic development efforts in the towns. They said, "What we need is more trained workers in our industry. We don't have enough engineering technologists. We need the workers at that level." Old Dominion at that time was the only school in Virginia that had an accredited Engineering Technology program so they had to turn to us and say, "Would you be interested in providing engineering technology to the Roanoke area." Obviously we said, "Yes." It was within the School of Engineering and the Dean of Engineering [Jim Cross] made two very, very important decisions that... became part of the whole sub-straight for our Teletechnet initiative. One of them was that he felt as though he could deliver engineering technology to Roanoke if he could do so by delivering it to the community college in that area which had an associate's degree in engineering technology so that it would transfer the first two years into the four year program. He did not want to deliver a four year baccalaureate program. They wanted a baccalaureate program. He did not want to do all four years because it was just very complicated to do that but as a two plus two in a partnership with the community college where they got the academic prerequisites for the engineering technology program. They had the laboratory facilities. They had faculty that could help with the laboratories. They had a network in the community of what needed to be done with the curriculum. All of those things were very important to him and said if that's the case we can do that. I think that we began actually delivering the courses in 19—in the spring of 1990 really. But we did it using the KU band uplink because there was no room on the C band. There was already a KU band dish at the community college [Virginia Western Community College].

It was interesting that the politics of that in Virginia became one in which the community colleges that had those programs began to compete for whether or not they were going to be a receive site for engineering technology. They all wanted to have it. Therefore they went to their legislators to lobby for them becoming a site. So once Roanoke became the first site, Richmond lobbied strongly to become the second site. Danville lobbied to become the third site, but they were actually bumped by Lynchburg because of the politics of it. There was a more powerful legislative group in the Lynchburg area. So while Danville lobbied for it and won it, they didn't get it until the fourth year. So, in 1990 we're in Roanoke. 1991 we're in Richmond. 1992 we're in Lynchburg. And at that time now we're delivering the baccalaureate in nursing to Martinsville and then two other community colleges in the west that came up to us on KU band on our own in engineering technology. Together we had partnerships with seven community colleges for those two programs. We were still doing the other kinds of things that we were doing in terms

of training and offering courses to high school students and doing the foreign language and doing some of those other things.

But in 1992, State Council for Higher Education said, "You know, there's a lot happening in Norfolk. I wonder what they could do if we gave them some money?" In 1991, former President Koch came into office here. And it was in 1992 that he stopped me in the hallway and said, "Ann, I think we have an opportunity because I have been contacted by the State Council for the purpose of asking us if we gave you some money, what would you do with it to deliver programs with technology?" So, he and I sat down to write the proposal and he was very instrumental in the direction that it took from an economic point of view. I had developed some experience in terms of the partnership with the community college. It was the right thing between the nursing and engineering technology to do a two plus two with the community colleges, to only do the last two years of the baccalaureate degree, do KU band delivery, use the community colleges as the locations, and by offering up six programs initially that were all what we call economic engines for the community. We hit the real big buzzer of the time which was economic development. So, we identified the bachelor's degrees in criminal justice, in business management, in teacher preparation, in professional writing, engineering technology and in nursing, and those were all very, very important programs to bring to the community college location. Dr. Koch brought to the table his you know strong background in economics and laid out for me and mentored me in terms of thinking in terms of how many students do you think that you could indeed provide access to, multiplying a registration times a tuition dollar, and then using that total amount as half the cost of the total budget. And in backing out of that, what is it that I would need in order to budgetarily prepare for this big initiative. We wrote the proposal. We offered . . . we offered to provide within six years each of the 23 community colleges access to these programs. We were going to provide access to 4,000 students by the end of the decade by the year 2000, and that we were then asking Richmond to fund us at the level of approximately three million dollars of state money and then to hold on to the tuition dollars that we also would generate from that, so that became the budget. We asked to spend the money and the first thing that we wanted to do was to buy seven new faculty--one for each college and two for the college of sciences that we needed to have infrastructure, that we needed to have personnel, that we needed to have operating dollars. So we were then able to back out what it was that would have to work with our budget. And that was a very exciting time for me in professional growth in terms of developing a business plan. Something I had done again in continuing education but I had not done with tuition dollars before of this magnitude.

Full interview at:

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