Virtual Lab

Grant helps Cabrillo establish tech lab

Nearly $1 million awarded to college

By BEK PHILLIPS
OF THE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN
APTOS — At Cabrillo College, the Center for Engineering, Science and Math buzzes with a low hum as students pour over materials, ask questions and scour for information. With just one week before finals, cramming is in but soon the students will have more to celebrate than just leaving another semester in the dust.

This fall a new virtual net lab will grace their campus that will be the result of a nearly $1 million grant. The purpose for the building is to house a shared regional Internet, Communications and Technology lab facility that will serve 25 community colleges around the San Francisco Bay Area.

“There will be huge advantages to having this new lab,” Gerlinde Brady, the chair for the Computer and Information Systems Program at Cabrillo, said.

As a teaching facility for computer systems, students can access the lab in person or virtually, logging in to complete class work or ask questions from any computer with Internet access.

“You log on to real hardware to serve the network and learn configuration,” Brady said. “You are applying the concepts you learn in class in a hands-on way.”

This comes at a time where job opportunities in computer networking and specialists are expected to grow 18.1 percent by 2018. Cabrillo used these statistics from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics in order to

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convince the Bay Area Community College Consortium (BACC), who awarded the grant, that the lab was imperative for students looking for training in relevant fields.

According to Rock Pfotenhauer, the BACC chair and Cabrillo Dean of Instruction, Career Education, and Economic Development, students can graduate and use these skills to get jobs that start at $31 an hour and fill the labor market gaps.

“The lab was founded to assist labor market demands through community colleges and to use and apply their collective strengths,” Pfotenhauer said. “It creates ‘sandboxes’ that allow students to try out and make mistakes while using the same expensive software and hardware they will be expected to use in industry.”

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