

## **Cambridge College Blends Technology and Education**

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Cambridge College is in the forefront of blending technology and education. On Tuesday, April 24<sup>th</sup>, the Cambridge College Center for Adaptive Learning and Programs (CALP) hosted a technology symposium, “The Breakthrough Potential of Academic Technology in the Cambridge College Learning Model,” at 1000 Massachusetts Avenue in Cambridge. The symposium presented an overview of how Cambridge College uses technology to reach out to students and a glimpse of what is possible in the future.

“Education may be the last information intensive endeavor to be disrupted by the Internet,” said Allan Cohen, Chairman of the Academic Technology Committee of the Cambridge College Board of Trustees. “Consider how you engage in financial services, entertainment, news, real estate purchases, shopping, travel planning, and even your personal learning. And yet, most formal education still consists of an instructor standing in front of a room bringing students through standard printed texts. Cambridge College, with its unique teaching and learning model, is well positioned to demonstrate what is possible: high tech and high touch.”

The symposium took place in an international classroom, with live video feeds connecting the audience in Cambridge with participants in Springfield, Massachusetts and India. All viewers listened to presentations by Mr. Cohen, who explained the current state of technology to his audience, Cambridge College President Mahesh Sharma, and Vice President and Associate Dean of CALP and Information Technology Dr. Nish Sonwalkar. President Sharma and Dr. Sonwalkar presented “Vision 2012 for a High-Touch/High-Tech Approach with Adaptive Blended Learning,” discussing the important role technology will play in the future of the Cambridge College education. President Sharma and Dr. Sonwalkar demonstrated Cambridge College’s unique High Touch/High Tech Learning Model, which would extend learning possibilities for students, both by reaching more students at a distance and by enhancing the learning process for all students. By the end of the night, Mr. Cohen, President Sharma and Dr. Sonwalkar succeeded in showing that in the next five years and

beyond, technology will play a crucial role in bridging the competency gap and sustaining the educational excellence of Cambridge College.

“This is a daunting goal, but Cambridge College has a plan,” said President Sharma. “We have to make sure that students have the technology that gets them interested in science, mathematics, physics and engineering.” President Sharma introduced Cambridge College’s proposed teaching and learning method of Vertical Acceleration, through which concepts introduced in grade school are applied all the way through high school. Through several demonstrations the audience became engaged and began to understand the College’s plan.

After the presentation, guests addressed and discussed their concerns regarding technology and education with each other. Each table had a question to answer and share pertaining to the pros and cons of technology heavy education and the Cambridge College mission.

“This event marks the beginning of a new vision for Cambridge College, one which infuses technology tools and processes into a high touch/high tech approach for the next generation of Cambridge College students,” said Dr. Sonwalkar. “The Cambridge College teaching and learning model that has served our students for the last 35 years will be enhanced by the integration of appropriate technology.”

The AdaptNet and CALP programs at Cambridge College have received acclaim and attention over the last year. The United States Distance Learning Association (USDLA) selected the Masters of Management AdaptNet program for the Best Practices in Distance Learning Programming Award, which is presented to outstanding organizations that have designed and delivered outstanding and comprehensive best practices for programs through online, videoconferencing and satellite delivery technologies. Dr. Sonwalkar received the USDLA Award for Outstanding Leadership by an Individual as well as the 2007 Award for Innovative Excellence in Teaching, Learning and Technology, which recognizes significant contributors and scholars in the development and administration of distance learning programs.

“The student, the teacher, and the technology. That is the Cambridge College adaptive blended learning model,” said President Sharma.

Founded in 1971, Cambridge College is a private, non-profit institution dedicated to providing academically excellent, time-efficient, and cost-effective higher education for a diverse population of working adults for whom those opportunities may have been limited or denied. Cambridge College has sites in Cambridge, Springfield, and Lawrence, MA; Chesapeake, VA; Augusta, GA; Ontario, CA; and San Juan, Puerto Rico.

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