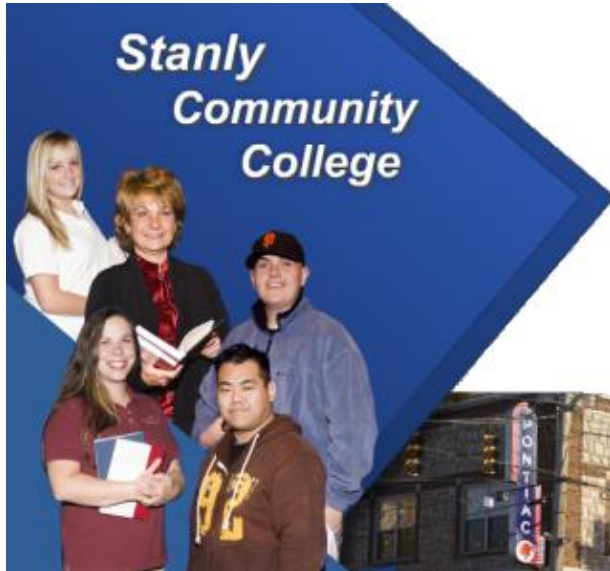


Success Through the Innovative Use of NETLAB+ Stanly Community College

“Education for the future...Any Time. Any Place. Any Pace!”



“NETLAB+ is the best thing we have done for our online technical programs at Stanly Community College”.

Jim Hillier

*Chief Technology Officer
Stanly Community College*

Stanly Community College, located in Albemarle, NC, is a leader in the development and delivery of online programs and courses. SCC is committed to serving the needs of the increasing number of students who prefer the flexibility and cost effective advantages of online programs. Beginning in Fall 2009, the Networking Technology and Information Systems Security programs at SCC will be offered in a completely online format. These highly technical, hands-on, 2 year degree programs provide the training needed to succeed in the Information Technology field, and the opportunity to continue on to earn a four-year degree through a transfer agreement with Pfeiffer University.

How does Stanly Community College offer hands-on IT training in a distance format? SCC has found the means to successfully sustain and continue to grow its technology training programs through its innovative use of NETLAB+®. NETLAB+ is a remote lab appliance for information technology training and distance learning, developed by the Network Development Group, www.netdevgroup.com. Using NETLAB+, students and instructors can share worldwide access to real networking equipment and remote PCs in a training environment that is easy to use and manage.

NETLAB+ provides an effective way to make IT equipment accessible to students in distance learning programs, a key factor to the success of Stanly Community College. Distance learning is the source for 35% of SCC's funding. “NETLAB+ is essential to our ability to give online students the same hands-on experience as seated students. Also, it allows seated students to practice on real equipment anytime 24 hours a day, 7 days a week,” explains Jim Hillier, Chief Technology Officer of Stanly Community College.



NETLAB+®

Stanly Community College has had a NETLAB Academy Edition® (NETLAB_{AE}) system for over four years. One important feature of the NETLAB_{AE} system is the ability to share system access with other Cisco Networking Academies. Currently, SCC allows a select number of local Cisco Academies to share their NETLAB_{AE} system. SCC has had a NETLAB Professional Edition® (NETLAB_{PE}) system for two and a half years. These NETLAB+ systems are used to support several IT training programs at SCC including the Cisco Networking Academy program and several Microsoft Technology courses. Stanly Community College also runs a national online program for the Communication Workers of America, using NETLAB+ to provide a hands-on approach to Information Technology training.

SCC's NETLAB_{PE} system is used to support the CIS 110: Introduction to Computers course, which is required for all students. Many students elect to take this course online, which has increased the visibility of Stanly Community College's NETLAB+ system and shown the important role it plays in SCC's online offerings. Use of the NETLAB+ system has allowed SCC to expand the number of courses offered online.

NETLAB+ is delivered as a network appliance and requires no customer knowledge of UNIX, web server software, or other system administrator functions. Technical support and a library of documentation are available to make installing and maintaining a NETLAB+ system as simple as possible. "Best technical support I have ever worked with. Support staff is always quick to respond to inquiries with knowledgeable answers in a professional manner," says Jim Hillier.

NETLAB+ supports access to *virtual machines*, a remote PC or remote server that runs on virtualized hardware. The installation of virtual machines on a NETLAB+ system can be a complex process. However, the benefits and range of functionality achieved with remote access to virtual machines is quickly becoming a critical element for success in technology training and well worth the time and effort. Jim Hillier explains, "The implementation of virtual machines is not an easy task. Still, the addition of virtual machines has made the NETLAB+ systems one of the best online learning tools around." As NDG begins beta support of additional VMware virtualization products including VMware Server 2.x and VMware ESXi, virtual machine implementation will be greatly simplified.

With Networking Technology and Information Systems Security programs offered in a totally online format starting Fall 2009, NETLAB+ will continue to play a key role in the success of SCC's IT Technology programs. Jim Hillier explains, "Without NETLAB_{AE} and NETLAB_{PE}, this would not be possible. As these programs grow and expand, we plan to add pod types (both NDG developed and locally developed) to allow students to complete all necessary coursework". Use of the NETLAB+ system has increased SCC's student retention rate by over 50%. "NETLAB+ is the best thing we have done for our online technical programs at Stanly Community College," states Jim Hillier.

