

West Chester University's RECAP Conference

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Earlier this month, I had the opportunity to join about 150 faculty and staff colleagues participating in [West Chester University's RECAP](#)



conference. RECAP is an annual conference held each May at [West Chester University](#), showcasing “the use of technology to enhance teaching and learning in higher education.” The conference dates back to 1996, when the acronym for the conference was coined (Resources for the Electronic Classroom: A faculty/student Partnership). Our conference this May was the 21st RECAP – a pretty impressive run!

Over the years RECAP has grown to involve faculty from Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education and regional higher education institutions, and to reflect advances in technology related to teaching and learning in higher education.

There are many wonderful things about RECAP, starting with the enthusiasm of all of the organizers and the participants. I also truly appreciate how it takes place right after WCU's spring commencement, which means we attend the conference while still in the afterglow of watching another group of students achieving a major life milestone and knowing that we played our part in that success. Commencement is always such a great reminder of why we teach and why we apply our technology and course design expertise to the teaching and learning goals of our universities.

The thing that I love the most about RECAP, though, is the way that the typical walls between faculty members and technical staff members fall away for a day. We share thinking on course design, on technology tools, and on ways to make online or hybrid courses as personal and interactive as face-to-face courses. We all come together with common purpose, in the belief that when we combine students who want to learn, an expert faculty member who is passionate about his or her subject, and the right mix of course design and learning tools, we bring out the best in all involved in the learning process. The result really is greater than the sum of the parts.

At this year's conference, we were fortunate to have an invited keynote by [Marc Andonian of Gartner](#) to open the day. Marc, who is a Gartner Vice President and Executive Partner, has decades of strategic IT experience, much of it involving higher education. Marc used two of the Gartner frameworks,

the [Hype Cycle](#) and the [Market Clock](#), to put the conference session talks into a useful context, encouraging attendees to think about the maturity of the ideas and technologies. With that helpful context, attendees might be better able to decide which ideas and technologies warrant their attention and investment.

When the day's sessions were done, I got the chance to close out the conference with a Recap of RECAP. We looked back on the day and the comments heard from attendees via Twitter and other feedback mechanisms, and in an interactive session attempted to tie it all together with observations from all sixteen sessions.

I very much hope that all RECAP attendees came away feeling as inspired as I did, ready to try some new ideas and technologies and to grow as educators and educational technologists. New students continue to arrive at our campuses each year and it's exciting to think that we can bring great new ideas to help them on their college and life journey.

Links:

- <https://www.wcupa.edu/recap/>
- <http://www.gartner.com/technology/research/methodologies/hype-cycle.jsp>
- <http://www.gartner.com/technology/research/methodologies/it-market-clock.jsp>