



<http://itimes.ucdavis.edu/>

# Women in Technology

## A Profile of Bo Botelli

By DONNA JUSTICE AND HEATHER THOMPSON

*Note: This is the first in a series of profiles of UC Davis women who provide technical assistance and expertise to the campus.*

Like many women in technology, Bo Botelli's path has been unconventional and hard-won. With more than 15 years of service to the campus under her belt, Botelli has moved from providing general administrative support in the Internship and Career Center to serving as the Systems Administrator and Electronic/Print Coordinator for Advising Services (a unit in Student Affairs). The road has sometimes been bumpy, but always rewarding according to Botelli, who leveraged her natural talent and ambition to learn the ins and outs of network administration and cutting-edge Web and print design.

### Harnessing desire and talent

Botelli did not get a degree in computer science, engineering or design. "I started on this campus answering phones," says Botelli. "I was looking to get my foot in the door." Now she provides core technology support to one of the most visible student service units on campus.

"I have been so fortunate to have the support and encouragement of Dennis Beardsley, Director of Advising Services. I know without Dennis' willingness to let me learn more and more about computing and electronic design, I wouldn't be doing what I am now," says Botelli. "I'm sure that is a truism for most self-taught tech support people -- women or not. You have to have a supervisor who can see the benefit not only to you but to the campus. It really is a win-win situation."

Botelli has made the most of her time here, relying on a seemingly endless supply of energy to move toward her current position. She started her career in technology at the Internship and Career Center when she found an old beehive computer buried in a dark corner of the office. Some of her first projects on campus included designing advertisements for the Aggie and other promotional materials. Then she moved to Advising Services. "The campus offered a new Technology Support Program so I volunteered for the program. Once I became the Technology Support Coordinator (TSC), by default I almost instantly became the computer person for the office."



*"We are all gifted in various areas. The trick is to find that gift, develop it and share it with others," says Bo Botelli.*

### Wearing many hats

As the Technical Support Coordinator (TSC) for her department, Botelli serves as a liaison between her department and the central Information and Educational Technology organization. She identifies herself as one of the many conduits on campus who aid departments in the face of the technological explosion that began about five years ago and continues to present new challenges every day.

"The speed at which technology is changing is supersonic, and often the learning curve is steep," says Botelli. "To succeed at this business, you have to have a strong desire to learn and the willingness to learn in a lot of different ways -- from classes, books, the Internet, CD-ROM programs, and magazines to learning from colleagues and friends. Sometimes it feels like you are both working and going to school full time."

Botelli also designed and administers the Web sites for Advising Services, Student Handbook, and New Student Orientation and contributes her expertise to many campus programs such as Fall Welcome, Graduate Information Day, and the Undergraduate Research Conference.

"Half of my day is spent on Web and print publications, the other half is on systems administration. I know of only one other person on campus who does a kind of 50-50 job like mine," says Botelli.

### Responding to rapid change

As the only technical support person in her small department, Botelli is responsible for supporting any and all technical questions and problems. In part, she credits her affiliation with the Technology Support Program (TSP) with her success. The TSP offers a wide variety of courses for TSCs that address day-to-day software, network, and systems topics. This knowledge aids departments in adjusting to upgrades, learning how to install campus administrative software and hardware, troubleshooting, and departmental technology planning.

In the five years since Botelli transitioned to the TSP, she has seen her department expand from six units with Windows 3.1 with one server, to 30 units with Windows 95, 98 and NT and three servers. Botelli calls being a TSC a “constantly evolving job,” and has an impressive resume of TSP courses, information technology training classes, Staff Development classes, and other seminars that prove being a TSC requires assimilation of massive quantities of information.

### Volunteering on campus

Incredibly, Botelli also finds time on the side to volunteer on campus. At the Women’s Resources and Research Center, she serves as a mentor in a program called Women In Technology (administered by Assistant Director Diane Adams). Essentially, this program mentors staff and students looking for technology assistance, such as how to use a particular piece of software or how to research on the Internet. Typically, Botelli sees students once or twice weekly, assigns homework, and tries to match what she knows with what the students want to know. In this way, as in her role as TSC, Botelli demonstrates her core philosophy of life: teaching and sharing knowledge are not just money-making propositions, but methods of making the world work better.

Because of her service to the UC Davis campus, Botelli has received several campus awards, from the Student Affairs Vice Chancellor’s Recognition Award to the Citation for Excellence for Campus Service Award given by Chancellor Vanderhoef.

“I know what it is like not to have access to the information you need.... You need to be willing to ask questions and to share what you know with others,” says Botelli. “Helping others is really an obligation we all have to one another.”

Botelli and her husband also serve as “mom and pop” to the Alpha Gamma Omega fraternity and Alpha Delta Chi sorority on campus. “I am trying to be a good steward over what I have -- my talent, time, and knowledge.”

### Facing special challenges

Botelli believes women who might be interested in working with technology face challenges different from those of men. First, there are many more men with careers in technology than women. This provides a challenge, according to Botelli, because women have fewer peers to consult and fewer models to follow.

“I know this is true for women in many fields, but it is especially difficult for women in technology,” says Botelli. “To keep up with all of the emerging technologies, women have to be bright and have lots of time to set aside for learning. I think men are much more likely to live on their computers. At least that’s my experience.”

Botelli believes that middle-aged women face the biggest challenge of all. “Unlike many of the women students I know on this campus, I was not raised on computers and the Internet,” says Botelli. “I think women in their late thirties, forties and fifties are more vulnerable to the pressures of juggling a technology career and our responsibilities outside of work, too.”

Botelli believes women in their twenties are now choosing careers in technology with a foundation of knowledge that older women don’t have. “Today’s young women grew up using computers,” says Botelli. “Many women my age are still feeling the effects of transitioning from typewriters to word processing to complex programs on a computer. But we are the first generation of women in computer technology; that makes us the pioneers. I guess that’s what they may say about us years from now.”

**For more information, see:**

<http://advisingservices.ucdavis.edu/>

<http://orientation.ucdavis.edu/>

<http://studenthandbook.ucdavis.edu/>