High Praise from Fiske, Forbes and the Princeton Review

*Forbes* again lists Florida Tech among America’s Best Colleges in its annual rankings of top colleges. The university climbed 52 spots, coming in at #453 overall. This compares to #505 in 2011 and #550 in 2010—an almost 100-spot increase in two years. *Forbes* recognized Florida Tech among the top American undergraduate institutions in a ranking of the top 650 universities in the nation. The rankings are prepared for *Forbes* by the Center for College Affordability and Productivity (CCAP).


The Happiest Day on Earth

**Brian Ehrlich**

While the title might be a bit misleading, for many students the culmination of reaching a life goal could be just that. Commencement ceremonies at Florida Institute of Technology are a family affair. All of the different locations (campus, online and our remote sites) are invited to the fall and spring ceremonies. The online students are part of their home academic area and graduate with their campus counterparts. It never ceases to amaze me how many online students spend their first and only day on campus graduating.

In the spring 2012 ceremony, approximately 110 students participated, which is over 25% of the total students walking. Many of our students choose to make it a Florida family vacation and enjoy the theme parks or beach. At the Friday night reception before commencement, I was fortunate enough to hear a few of their personal stories. The most repeated comments were how much their online faculty encourages them and how much discipline online classes require. That means to me we are right on track with classes.

On a personal note, I have attended multiple graduation ceremonies for over 15 years now and it’s by far one of my very favorite days on campus. It really is one of the days where Maslow was right about self-actualization and we get to watch it happen in living color.

Please let the Office of Online Learning know if you would like to attend a commencement ceremony in the future. We would be happy to have you as a guest.
Faculty Interview: Catherine Cook

Dr. Catherine Cook is the Academic Chair for Online Business Administration/Marketing, with the Nathan M. Bisk College of Business, Florida Institute of Technology. She teaches several courses online, but one of her favorites is Principles of Marketing. Dr. Cook enjoys helping students understand what marketing is about and wants them to have a positive experience. She has been teaching online at Florida Tech for five years and she taught for 10 years before that at a local community college.

Dr. Cook became involved in teaching online about 15 years ago when her supervisor asked for volunteers to teach online. Designing courses was much different then: the department hired a programmer and the instructors outlined how they wanted their courses to work. The programmer then built the courses with HTML. Now she uses the e-Learning platform for Florida Tech University Online.

Dr. Cook especially enjoys reaching different adult students. One of the things she likes about working with this student population is that they understand that education is meaningful. Additionally, there is an element of immediate impact with these older learners as they immediately begin to apply what they learn in the online course.

She believes that one of the greatest difficulties of teaching online is not seeing the students. Not making eye contact with your learners can make an instructor wonder if he or she is getting through to the class. Engagement is of utmost importance in online environments.

One important thing Dr. Cook would like to share with other faculty members is that teaching online is not a shortcut to teaching. In fact, teaching online is usually more work than a face-to-face course (F2F). In online environments, it can be difficult to find out the students’ comfort level. Finding this comfort level can take time and there are often technical issues to be overcome.

Dr. Cook has three suggestions for those teaching online. First, instructors need to have a keen interest in their subject, no matter the medium. Instructors also need to have enthusiastic patience when teaching online. Finally, she recommends that instructors check their courses every day. This lets students know the instructor cares about them and keeps instructors from falling behind.

Many thanks to Dr. Catherine Cook for sharing her insights into online education.

◊

A Conversation on Process versus Product

What are our long-term objectives in having students research, analyze and write research papers or other big projects? Is it just to assess to get a score? Are we interested only in the final product or should the process matter to us?

These are interesting questions with no easy answers. As a former writing instructor, I prefer having big projects broken up into smaller parts throughout the semester, so I can give feedback not only on the students’ content but also on their writing processes.

Strong communication skills are not only necessary for academic success—they are also essential to success in the business world. If students have content expertise but are poor communicators, then they may have difficulty finding employment after graduation. It is in the students’ interest, then, to become strong writers and communicators.

When I assign long-term projects—such as research papers, group projects, portfolios, etc.—I have several smaller deadlines spread throughout the semester, in order to keep the students improving both their research and writing process and the final product that they will submit. For example, if I required my students to write a 15-page paper by the end of the semester, then I would first have them submit an annotated bibliography early in the term for a small percentage of the overall assignment grade. This gets the students working on their projects immediately. Based upon the feedback they receive, the students then begin using the valid sources in writing their first draft. Next, the students must submit their first draft for feedback. This allows the students a chance to get feedback from the instructor on the accuracy of the content, the direction of the argument and the strength of the written submission. The student then takes this feedback and expands the paper into its final version, which usually accounts for 60% of the grade.

By having students submit multiple drafts of an assignment, they are able to focus on both the process of writing and on the final product. These are all key skills that can aid them in future endeavors. Sometimes the journey is more important than the destination.

◊
“Education should consist of a series of enchantments, each raising the individual to a higher level of awareness, understanding and kinship with all living things.”—Author Unknown

Digital Faculty: Professors and Technology, 2012

Steve Kolowich

Professors occasionally get lampooned as luddites responsible for the famously slow pace of change in higher education. But in truth the majority of professors are excited about various technology-driven trends in higher education, including the growth of e-textbooks and digital library collections, the increased use of data monitoring as a way to track student performance along with their own, and the increasingly popular idea of “flipping the classroom.”

However, other technology trends are more likely to make professors break into a clammy sweat. These include the proliferation of scholarship outlets operating outside the traditional model for peer review, the growth of for-profit education, and the intensity of digital communications. The digital era has brought to the surface other tensions as well, particularly differences in how professors and academic technology administrators perceive how broader technological changes are affecting their campuses and how they should feel about it.

These are some of the findings in the second of two reports from surveys conducted by Inside Higher Ed and the Babson Survey Research Group. The first report, focusing on faculty views of online education, was published in June. A PDF of the new, second report can be downloaded here; the text of the report can be viewed here. The survey relied on the responses of 4,564 faculty members, composing a nationally representative sample spanning various types of institutions; and 591 administrators who are responsible for academic technology at their institutions.

The faculty members’ net-positive outlook on several tech-related pedagogical trends suggests that student performance feedback loops and “flipping the classroom” are durable enough to outlast their current buzz. “The increasing collection and analysis of data on teaching and learning on a course-by-course basis” garnered the most enthusiasm of any of the excitement/fear questions in the survey, with 74 percent of professors saying it is, on balance, a good thing.

“Digital Faculty: Professors and Technology, 2012” is the second of two surveys of college professors and academic technology administrators about faculty attitudes about and approaches to technology. On Monday, Sept. 24, Inside Higher Ed will sponsor a free webinar to discuss the results of the survey of faculty views on technology. Inside Higher Ed editors and bloggers will share and analyze the findings and take your questions.

Inside Higher Ed collaborated on this project with the Babson Survey Research Group.

The Inside Higher Ed/Babson survey of faculty views on online education was made possible in part by the generous financial support of CourseSmart, Deltak, Pearson and Sonic Foundry.

The counterargument has been that this trend could lead to an overreliance on data-based metrics to assess not only student performance but teacher performance, leading to a No Child Left Behind-like regime at many colleges, continued on page 4
especially public ones. But the vast majority of professors seem to think that the advantages of Big Data in the classroom outweigh the hazards.

As for “flipping the classroom”—that is, banishing the lecture and focusing precious class time on group projects and other forms of active learning—a decisive majority of professors seem to be on board. Asked their feelings on the notion of “changing the faculty role to spend less time lecturing and more time coaching students,” 69 percent said they were excited more than fearful.

The survey did not ask about the specific anxieties behind these responses. Perhaps some professors feel more comfortable doing research than engaging with students, and use the lecture as a crutch. In any case the findings of this survey suggest that most faculty members do not fear the prospect of “coaching” students rather than talking at them.

Ambivalence about Digital Content

Some technology-driven movements have caused tension, particularly in academic publishing.

In general, professors are pro-digital. A decisive majority, 71 percent, said the prospect of “libraries focusing on digital instead of print collections” makes them more excited than fearful (which may come as a surprise, given occasional reports of faculty protesting the removal of print collections from campus libraries). And 65 percent said they were excited about “e-textbooks and e-resources replacing traditional print textbooks.”

But professors remain uneasy about scholarly publishing outlets that eschew “traditional” models of peer review. Asked for their gut reaction to the emergence of “outlets for scholarship that do not use a traditional peer-review model,” 64 percent of professors said it mostly filled them with fear. (Administrators were far more enthusiastic, with 54 percent saying they are excited about this.)

As “open peer review,” post-publication review and other alternative models have gained momentum, would-be reformers have occasionally called for an end to the old system—calling it tedious, cabalistic and, by now, unnecessary—and inevitably provoking a heated debate about quality control.

Kathleen Fitzpatrick, the director of scholarly communication at the Modern Language Association, has been at the center of such debates. In her latest book, she argued for a new model of peer review that leverages wikis and other technological apparatuses to improve the process.

Fitzpatrick says that when considering “outlets that do not use a traditional peer review model,” many professors might be failing to distinguish between alternative models of peer review and no peer review at all. “Frankly, though, I’m quite enthused to hear that over a third of respondents are excited by the possibilities of publications that use something other than a traditional peer review system,” she told Inside Higher Ed via email.

For the rest, it is reasonable to assume that much of their fear revolves around the assumption that alternative methods of vetting or filtering academic articles will not be as reliable as traditional peer review.

Textbook companies have tried to fuel similar skepticism about the quality of open educational resources, or OER. But according to the survey professors seem to be less concerned about quality control in the context of OER: 67 percent said they are excited about “the growth of free online educational content.”

continued on page 5
Fewer seem interested in producing such content, though. Just under 50 percent said they "created digital teaching materials/open educational resources," such as lecture recordings, even occasionally. Only 20 percent said they do so regularly.

This does not necessarily amount to hypocrisy on the part of professors. Just because they are excited about a trend does not mean they have to participate. In some cases it might not be appropriate. In others it might not be an option.

But it could be that colleges are just not making it worth their while. Only 27 percent of faculty respondents said they believe their institution "has a fair system of rewarding contributions made to digital pedagogy." That roughly accords with the proportion who regularly record and share lectures and other digital resources (20 percent) and those who have ever published novel forms of digital scholarship such as visualizations or game-based projects (22 percent).

Producing digital work also might not be the best career move. While 65 percent of professors said that online-only scholarship "can be equal [in quality] to work published in print," only 13 percent said they believe such work is given the same respect in tenure and promotion decisions. Meanwhile, 57 percent of professors said online-only scholarship should be given equal respect, with only 13 percent actively disagreeing.

**Using the LMS**

The learning management system, or LMS, is the nexus of traditional and online education. Not all colleges hold courses online, but virtually every college has an LMS. And since the online platforms can serve as a vehicle for other digital teaching tools, the ways the LMS are being used on a particular campus—and the ways it is not—are a pretty good indicator of technology buy-in of an institution and its faculty.

But fewer professors are using the LMS than administrators think. Administrators believed that 73 percent of the professors at their institutions used data logged by the LMS either "regularly" or "occasionally" to identify students who need extra help. This would be true if every professor who expressed enthusiasm about the availability of fine-grained classroom data actually used those data. In fact, only 51 percent of faculty reported doing so.

About half of the administrators estimated that professors regularly or occasionally posted video-recorded lectures into the LMS, but just 25 percent of the faculty respondents actually do. Nearly 80 percent of administrators said their faculty members regularly or occasionally used the LMS to track student attendance; the professors clocked in at 44 percent. A whopping 94 percent of administrators believed professors recorded student grades in the LMS; the actual faculty rate was 75 percent—high, but hardly unanimous.

"Institutional administrators' perception of faculty use of LMS systems is not a good match to the reality of faculty usage," wrote I. Elaine Allen and Jeff Seaman, co-directors of the Babson Survey Research Group, in a summary of the findings. "Administrators perceive a much higher degree of faculty use of LMS systems for every dimension than faculty actually report."

"Education is the best provision for old age.”
—Aristotle
At the same time, the administrators did seem to have a pretty good idea of how many professors were devoted LMS users. For example, while administrators overestimated by 22 percent the rate at which instructors use the LMS to identify struggling students, their guess about how many do so “regularly” (31 percent) was spot-on. They underestimated the percentage of instructors who upload lecture videos to the LMS by 3 percentage points, and they lowballed the percentage who were assigning e-textbooks through the LMS by 13 percentage points.

Over all, the discrepancies between administrative and faculty perceptions of LMS usage were largely in their estimations of “occasional” usage. In many cases, the administrators’ estimates for such casual LMS usage were vastly optimistic.

The ‘Always-On’ Lifestyle

The advent of the “digital era” has not made every professor’s job more stressful, but 41 percent said it has done so for theirs. And while nearly half the faculty respondents said digital communications have made them more productive, very few said it has reduced their stress levels (16 percent) or hours on the job (19 percent).

This was particularly true of the women in the survey. Female professors were 10 percentage points more likely to report higher stress and hours worked as a result of digital communications.

Cathy Ann Trower, director of the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education at Harvard University, says it makes sense that the ease and expectations around digital correspondence would affect the professional lives of female academics disproportionately.

“I think women often feel more compelled to be immediately responsive to students and colleagues than men do,” she wrote in an email.

“Quite frankly, women tend to have more difficulty saying no—and that includes demands that are now being made via technology,” added Trower. “I know that, personally, I’m getting more requests than ever (to review papers for publications, to speak, online surveys, etc.) and I think that’s in part a function of how much easier it is to reach out, quickly, to people.”

As for many working people, the intensification of the professional lives of college professors can be measured by the length of their email queues. In general the faculty respondents guessed that they received between 11 and 50 work-related emails per day—with 33 percent receiving fewer than 26 emails and 34 percent getting 26 to 50. (More than 20 percent of professors said they got north of 50 emails on a typical day, and an unfortunate 6 percent said their daily haul exceeded 100.)

About 37 percent of professors said they got more than 10 emails per day from students. (Most got fewer than 25.) Most felt the need to reply briskly: most return at least 90 percent of student emails within 24 hours.

Professors teaching online or “blended” courses reported getting more daily emails from students, but even among them it was rare to get more than 25 student emails per day.

In terms of discipline, the daily onslaught heralded by the digital era seems to have been most merciful to professors of the natural sciences. They reported increases in stress at a rate of 33 percent—low, especially when compared to the 47 percent of humanities and arts professors who said their lives had become more stressful. Social science professors reported similarly high levels of stress, while math and computer science professors were largely spared.

Adding insult to injury, the social science, arts and humanities professors who reported the greatest increases in stress also reported relatively low gains in productivity and creativity compared to their colleagues in other disciplines—particularly those teaching in professional and applied science programs.


“Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other.”
—John F. Kennedy
Weekly Tech Tip 78: How to Create an Outlook 2010 Rule to Automatically Sort Messages from Particular Senders

Andy K. Stanfield, Director, Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence (CTLE)

Introduction

If you receive a large amount of email throughout the day, you may find it difficult to keep up with messages from particular senders. One way to help you with this is to create a rule that places all of the email from particular senders into a folder automatically. This is a two part process. You will first create a new folder in your inbox folder and then create the rule to automatically add email from particular senders in it.

Folders – How to create them
1. Click the **Folder** tab and click **New Folder**.
2. When the Create New Folder dialog box displays, enter the name for your folder and then select where you want to place the folder. I suggest clicking on “inbox” and creating the folder there. I also suggest naming the folder with an @ symbol to have the folder show up at the top of the list of folders. Example @Jared.

How to create a rule for a particular sender
1. Click the email that is from the sender you are interested in.
2. Click the **Home tab** (Mail) < Rules button < Create Rule.
3. Click the checkbox “From [name of person].”
4. Click the checkbox “Move the item to folder:”
5. When the Rules and Alerts box displays, click the drop down arrow, and then select the folder you just created. Click the OK button.
6. Click the OK button.
7. The **Success** box will display and ask you if you would like to run the rule on the messages that are in the inbox. If you check this box and click OK, all of the emails that you have received from that person will be placed into the folder, sorted by date. If you leave the checkbox unchecked, only new emails from the particular sender will show in the folder.
8. If you checked the box, Outlook will then search and find all emails from that sender and add them into the folder.

It is important to note that future emails from this sender will only display in this folder and not in your inbox. The folder name will display as bold with the number of unread emails from the sender indicated.

Conclusion

If you follow these steps, you should be able to create a rule to automatically sort your messages from particular senders into a folder. If you have any questions, please contact Andy Stanfield at (321) 674-8531 or astanfield@fit.edu.
Weekly Tech Tip 79: How to Use the Custom Sort Feature in Excel 2010

Andy K. Stanfield, Director, Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence (CTLE)

Introduction

When working with Excel 2010, sometimes it is necessary to custom sort. Custom sorting allows you to sort in a user defined order. This is a helpful tool and it is easy to use.

How to Custom Sort

1. Select one of the cells that you would like to use in sorting.
2. Click the Sort & Filter button on the Home tab.
3. Next select Custom Sort.
4. A Sort box will display. If your data has headers, that is to say there are descriptive titles at the top of the columns, then double check that the “My data has headers” checkbox is checked. It is checked by default.
5. Using the Sort by dropdown menu, select the descriptive title that you would like to sort first. In the Sort On, leave it on its default “Values” setting. You can also sort by cell color, font color or by icon.
6. Next select whether you’d like to sort ascending or descending or if you would like to do a custom sort. Using custom sort, you can specify the order of a list.
7. Add the next level to sort by clicking the Add Level button. You can first sort by one column and then sort by another and another as needed. In this screenshot I am sorting first by country then by Salesperson and then finally by Order amount.

Conclusion

If you follow these steps, you should be able to use the custom sort feature in Excel 2010. If you have any questions, please contact Andy Stanfield at (321) 674-8531 or astanfield@fit.edu.
**The ARCS model**

This session will focus on John Keller’s ARCS model, which focuses on building motivation into a lesson through gaining Attention, making content Relevant, instilling Confidence and fostering Satisfaction.

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**Motivational Theories**

In this workshop, we will focus on many motivational theories, ranging from constructivism to flow theory.

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**Learning styles or preferences**

This session will focus on the various learning styles based on Gardner’s work with multiple intelligences.

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**Using case studies**

This session will focus on using the case study approach to foster critical thinking.

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**Educational Ethics**

Ethics for educators, including accessibility, professionalism, diversity, conflicts of interest and more.

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**Writing Learning Objectives**

Learn to write three-part learning objectives focused on the behavior, conditions and criteria, and learn how these affect instruction and assessments.

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**Mastery vs. Performance Goals**

In this workshop, we will focus on the difference between mastery and performance goals (mastering a subject vs. passing an assessment) and how to encourage our students in mastery learning.

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**Multimedia Presentations**

In this workshop, we will focus on crafting presentations that maximize the auditory and visual channels of working memory by focusing on appropriate combinations of images, text and narration.

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**Project-based Learning**

In this workshop, we will focus on project-based learning with a focus on multiple drafting to instill a sense of professionalism in student work.

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**Social Learning in the Classroom**

In this workshop, we will focus on the social variables involved in learning and on best practices when using collaborative learning.

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**Rubrics**

In this workshop, we will focus on why rubrics are important and how to design rubrics to fit your learning objectives.

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**Educational Games**

In this workshop, we will focus on the criteria involved in designing and developing educational games (both paper-based and digital) for the classroom.

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For more information on these workshops, call (321) 674-8531 or email Andy Stanfield at astanfield@fit.edu.
Online Pedagogy: Theories & Best Practices


1. Encourages Contact Between Students and Faculty

Frequent student-faculty contact in and out of classes is the most important factor in student motivation and involvement. Faculty concern helps students get through rough times and keep on working. Knowing a few faculty members well enhances students' intellectual commitment and encourages them to think about their own values and future plans.

2. Develops Reciprocity and Cooperation Among Students

Learning is enhanced when it is more like a team effort than a solo race. Good learning, like good work, is collaborative and social, not competitive and isolated. Working with others often increases involvement in learning. Sharing one’s own ideas and responding to others’ reactions sharpens thinking and deepens understanding.

3. Encourages Active Learning

Learning is not a spectator sport. Students do not learn much just by sitting in classes listening to teachers, memorizing pre-packaged assignments, and spitting out answers. They must talk about what they are learning, write about it, relate it to past experiences and apply it to their daily lives. They must make what they learn part of themselves.

4. Gives Prompt Feedback

Knowing what you know and don’t know focuses learning. Students need appropriate feedback on performance to benefit from courses. When getting started, students need help in assessing existing knowledge and competence. In classes, students need frequent opportunities to perform and receive suggestions for improvement. At various points during college, and at the end, students need chances to reflect on what they have learned, what they still need to know, and how to assess themselves.

5. Emphasizes Time on Task

Time plus energy equals learning. There is no substitute for time on task. Learning to use one’s time well is critical for students and professionals alike. Students need help in learning effective time management. Allocating realistic amounts of time means effective learning for students and effective teaching for faculty. How an institution defines time expectations for students, faculty, administrators, and other professional staff can establish the basis of high performance for all.

6. Communicates High Expectations

Expect more and you will get more. High expectations are important for everyone—for the poorly prepared, for those unwilling to exert themselves, and for the bright and well motivated. Expecting students to perform well becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy when teachers and institutions hold high expectations for themselves and make extra efforts.

7. Respects Diverse Talents and Ways of Learning

There are many roads to learning. People bring different talents and styles of learning to college. Brilliant students in the seminar room may be all thumbs in the lab or art studio. Students rich in hands-on experience may not do so well with theory. Students need the opportunity to show their talents and learn in ways that work for them. Then they can be pushed to learn in new ways that do not come so easily.

NEWSLETTER STAFF

Editor:
Gil Conradis
eLearning Trainer and Coordinator
(321) 674-8203 | conradis@fit.edu

Contributors:
Brian Ehrlich
Assistant Vice President and Director of Online Learning behrlich@fit.edu
Andy K. Stanfield
Director, Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence (CTLE) astanfield@fit.edu
Cheryl Davis
Distance Learning Librarian, Evans Library cdavis05@fit.edu