Dean’s Comments

This will be my last dean’s column as I am stepping down as dean effective May 7. I have enjoyed my time working to launch the Florida Tech University Online program, but it’s time to try new opportunities. Brian Ehrlich, director of online program administration, will become assistant vice president and director, Online Learning effective May 7. I ask you to support him as you have supported me.

As of the May commencement, we will have 1,458 individuals who have graduated from the online programs since their inception. That’s a tremendous achievement and we could not have done it without you!

With the growth in the online programs, Florida Tech decided to hold two commencement ceremonies so that students will be able to have more of their family members attend the ceremonies. Commencement is always such a joyful day! I am always delighted to actually meet our students and their family. They come from far and wide to participate. For many, it is their first trip to campus—and we hope that they’ll return many times in the future. ◊

Grade Submission

Vicky Knerly

Another successful term has been put to rest with the culmination of the Spring 2 grading process and subsequent processes that, for many students, led to graduation on Saturday, May 5, 2012. A big thank you to all Online Learning faculty and facilitators who were able to get their grades submitted in PAWS by the deadline. It makes our administrative lives much easier when you do that. We implemented some changes to the grading process over the last several terms that resulted in greater compliance with faculty meeting the deadline.

For example, we send reminders and instructions for submitting grades to your TRACKS (@fit.edu or @my.fit.edu) email accounts in Week 6, Week 8, and the Monday after classes end. We’ve worked hard to prevent technical glitches that might prevent you from being able to enter grades (mostly successful), and we try to provide as much information, contact and feedback as possible so that you know what needs to be done by when.

So thanks for all your efforts teaching for Florida Tech University Online. You are sincerely appreciated! ◊
LERN Conference

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

I recently attended a LERN conference in Savannah, Ga., titled “Pedagogy of the 21st Century” presented by William Draves and Julies Coates. This conference offered fascinating insights into where higher education is headed this century. The conference began with a discussion about how the invention of the automobile drastically changed society in the early 20th century, from how towns and cities were designed, to changes in legislation, social mores, and to education, which was focused upon producing workers for the factories. What was truly fascinating about the conference was the discussion of how between 1910 and 1920 there was conflict between those who were part of the agrarian past and those who were part of the industrial future. There was great social unrest until society was able to adjust to the many new changes brought about by the automobile.

The focus of the conference was upon how we are going through similar changes now with the invention of the Internet and how it has impacted our lives. By studying the types of changes that occurred in the early 20th century, it is possible to extrapolate some of the trends that are coming to higher education.

One of the main points of the conference is that as educators we need to work to increase the number of knowledge workers, or those workers whose main capital is knowledge. In the 20th century, each factory worker helped support four support jobs in town. Now we need knowledge workers to do the same in our own emerging 21st century economy.

Some of the other predictions about upcoming changes in higher education are that buildings are going to be an increased burden for institutions of higher learning as more learning takes place online. Because buildings require so much capital to maintain, they predict there will be a great rise in telecommuting to work in higher education, especially since telecommuters are 25% more productive than workers on-site. Finally, the presenters predict that all face-to-face (F2F) courses will have all of their information delivery online with F2F interactions focused on mentoring, discussions, community building, etc. Thus, teaching online gives instructors valuable skills for their future F2F courses as well. It should be interesting to see how many of their predictions will come true in the coming years.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>TIMES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engaging students online</td>
<td>This session will focus on tips and strategies for engaging students in online learning environments.</td>
<td>June 14, 2012</td>
<td>2–3:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The art of the discussion forum</td>
<td>This session will focus on creating engaging and dynamic discussion forums for online environments.</td>
<td>June 21, 2012</td>
<td>2–3:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning styles or preferences</td>
<td>This session will focus on the various learning styles based on Gardner’s work with multiple intelligences.</td>
<td>June 28, 2012</td>
<td>2–3:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Ethics</td>
<td>Ethics for educators, including accessibility, professionalism, diversity, conflicts of interest and more.</td>
<td>July 5, 2012</td>
<td>2–3:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instructional strategies</td>
<td>Strategies for providing instruction, ranging from mnemonics to chunking and frames.</td>
<td>July 12, 2012</td>
<td>2–3:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Generational Learning Styles</td>
<td>Learn about the characteristics and needs of different generations.</td>
<td>July 19, 2012</td>
<td>2–3:30 p.m.</td>
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For more information on these workshops, call ext. 8531 or email Andy Stanfield at astanfield@fit.edu.
The Faculty In-Box

“Education, like the mass of our age’s inventions, is after all, only a tool; everything depends upon the workman who uses it.” —The Simple Life

Evans Library Research Guides

Cheryl Davis, Distance Learning Librarian

Research subject and course guides are especially created by our professional librarians to provide our students with the BEST in library resources and beyond …

Here’s what they’ll find:

- Subject Guides
  - Detailed and organized information in areas such as Criminal Justice, Human Resources, Humanities & Communications and others
  - Detailed information on reference sources, books and e-books, articles and databases, journals, Internet sites, citing sources and theses and dissertations
  - Links to news, RSS feeds, blogs and more

- Course Guides
  - Specific library resources and services for courses such as COM 1101, COM 1102, and others

Students can access the Research Guides on the library website at http://lib.fit.edu.

On the left side of the screen are links to the subject guides (1). To see both the subject and course guides, click on “Browse all guides” (2).

Remember! If you have any questions, I am here to help. I can be reached at (321) 674-8766 or at cdavis05@fit.edu. ◊

Articles of Interest

Peer Driven Learning

Dr. Lee Bessette comments on using peer-driven learning, and how social media makes her a better teacher.

Read more: www.insidehighered.com/users/lee-bessette#ixzz1totohBYt

The Rise of the Machines

Technology has made dramatic changes in production, education, information, communications, medicine, all facets of our lives. It would seem reasonable for us, involved in academics, not to ponder what the future holds. Will artificial intelligence and holographic facilitators take over? This article seems to say that in the mid-term there might be some uses for this situation. The larger question beyond dollars and regimentation of curriculum is faculty experience, flexibility, community, all those human elements that are present. What are your views?

Read more: www.insidehighered.com/news/2012/05/01/report-barriers-rise-artificially-intelligent-tutors-traditional-universities

The iPad and iTunes U

Apple has just upgraded the capabilities of iTunes U in conjunction with the surge of iPad use in academia. It seems to me at this point that the capabilities are directed to the pedagogy of the student-teacher relationship. Apple is continuing to move into the Web-based applications and strong support of the future of e-books in education. What is lacking at this point, are the administrative tools and data collection that eLearning platforms provide. At this point, these tools seem ancillary.


What articles/books/blogs have you found interesting? ◊
Portfolios

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

Introduction

Portfolios are a great way to not only assess students’ work but to decrease academic dishonesty because the instructor views iterations of assignments throughout the semester. Portfolios work great with both those new to higher education, upper division students and graduate students. Portfolios are also great for those who wish to create collections of their work to show future employers.

Portfolios can work in any discipline and be on any topic. They are basically collections of students’ work. They work best, however, when there is some type of reflective writing assignment at the end, allowing the students to discuss what they learned, what they would do differently, etc. It is also important to allow students to work on iterations, so they revise their work, teaching them both process and product—they learn process through continuous revisions and product from the strong work they eventually produce through their efforts.

Some people do not realize how well portfolios work in online classes. All students have to do is to take all of their Word documents and other files and convert them to a PDF. Microsoft Office 2007 and 2010 have a built-in feature to create PDFs, but if all of your students do not have access to this program, then you might want to share links to a PDF conversion website, such as www.PDF995.com.

All you have to do is require your students to include everything they have worked on during the term. A great deal of learning may occur if you allow the students to continuously improve upon their assignments. This can help them develop their professionalism and their eye to detail as they go through multiple iterations of a project.

However, this model is a big change from the way many instructors think about assessment, where the first thing the students hand in is the final draft. Using portfolios can also help student learn to evaluate their own work, helping them to take ownership. One negative concerning using portfolios is that they take an investment of time on the part of the instructor. Students need to receive timely feedback on their assignments, so they can have time to reflect and make improvements.

Finally, it is important to have all of your requirements for the portfolios explicitly stated in your syllabus, so students have all the necessary information from the beginning of the course. You might want to get students to sign consent forms, so you can show future students examples of good and bad portfolios.

Conclusion

Portfolios are not just for face-to-face courses. Electronic portfolios in PDF format are easy to submit and grade. The iterative nature of portfolios can increase students’ professionalism and eye for detail. However, the most important aspect of a portfolio is the reflective elements that allow students to see their progress and abilities change over the course of a semester. ◊
Weekly Tech Tip 71: Using Access Florida Tech

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

INTRODUCTION

Access Florida Tech, our new Web portal, is now available for use by staff and faculty members. This tool is a great way to access many of your most-used university websites and tools in one smooth dashboard interface. While there are small differences between what different users will see (faculty, online faculty or staff), the differences are minimal. It is recommended that you log into Access Florida Tech and explore the different tabs to see where your most-used tools and features are located. Access Florida Tech is easy to use and should make many of your basic tasks easier to accomplish.

USING ACCESS FLORIDA TECH

To explore Access Florida Tech, click on this link: http://access.fit.edu.

Log in with your TRACKS account and your password. You should now be logged into Access. Please explore the different tabs to see what features are available to you.

To learn more about Access Florida Tech, please click on “View Training Videos” link and watch the appropriate training video based upon your role of staff or faculty.

CONCLUSION

If you follow these guidelines, you should be able to use Access Florida Tech. If you have any questions, please contact me at ext. 8531 or astanfield@fit.edu.
SMARTHINKING

Overview

Smarthinking is an online tutoring service that your school is making available to its students. Smarthinking provides tutoring in mathematics (basic math through Calculus including Bilingual Math), Biology, Intro Human A & P, Chemistry, Organic Chemistry, Physics, Economics, Accounting, Intro to Finance, Statistics, Spanish, Writing, Reading, and IT Support. Please join this session to learn more about this service and the ways in which it can help your students succeed.

Register for a session by going to the URL listed below the date and time. Once registered, you will receive an email confirming your registration with information you need to join the Webinar.

Thursday, June 21, 2012

- 2:00 PM EDT/1:00 PM CDT/Noon MDT/11 AM PDT
  https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/491667728
- 4:00 PM EDT/3:00 PM CDT/2:00 PM MDT/1:00 PM PDT
  https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/297982000
- 7:00 PM EDT/6:00 PM CDT/5:00 PM MDT/4:00 PM PDT
  https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/118236553

System Requirements

PC based attendees: Required: Windows® 7, Vista, XP or 2003 Server
Macintosh® based attendees: Required: Mac OS® X 10.4.11 (Tiger®) or newer

Summer Hours

We are pleased to announce that we are now expanding our summer hours in the following subjects:

Math—Basic Math, Algebra, Geometry and Trigonometry, and Calculus Available 24/7 beginning on July 10, 2011

Accounting and Statistics—Available Noon–2 a.m.  Sunday–Thursday
Noon–6 p.m.  Friday and Saturday (all times ET) beginning on July 10, 2011

The hours are directly influenced by the exciting response to your requests for service expansion.

Student Success Specialist Joins Online Learning

Jeseca MacDonald

Hello everyone, I am Jeseca MacDonald, and I am your new student success specialist for the Online Learning program at Florida Tech. It will be my job to help with solutions to the always-popular retention issues within our online program. I will be working in various capacities to try to increase our retention rates. I will be helping with Panther Pass (the new student orientation) and other new student events such as Welcome Houses to make sure the students get off on the right foot. I will be working with students with ADA support, grade reports and other course issues once they start classes to make sure they are getting the necessary help to be successful. I will also be taking over the ASC 1006 Mastering E-Learning courses, so you may be working with me if you are a facilitator for that course. Finally, a large part of my job will be researching, planning, analyzing and implementing strategies for retention, persistence and success. A big part of this will require help from you, the faculty, in determining where we are going wrong with these students and different ways to try to improve. Please feel free to contact me with any questions, problems or ideas at macdonaldj@fit.edu. I look forward to working with all of you!