

# December 2001

## ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

From the Office of the Associate Dean Vol. 5 No. 10

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### New Course Numbers

The UIUC Senate has approved a new schema for numbering courses. With an anticipated implementation date of Fall 2004, plans are being made for converting to the new system. Highlights include the following.

000-level courses carry no academic credit, but do count for tuition and load

100-level courses are lower division, typically with no prerequisites, and are entry-level or freshman-level

200-level courses are lower division, sophomore-level courses

300-level courses are upper division undergraduate, junior-level courses

400-level courses are upper division, senior-level courses and can be taken for graduate credit if approved

500-level courses are graduate credit only

600-level courses are professional school only (law, vet med, medicine)

Some additional changes include limiting course rubrics to four spaces, so some ACES rubrics will need to be changed. Course titles will be limited to 30 characters; however, the same title will appear in the Courses Catalog, the Timetable, and on student transcripts!

The ACES Executive Committee will approve a process for the conversion of ACES courses. Campus has not yet established a time line for the process to be completed. However, it is anticipated that all changes will need to be approved in the college by May 2003.

Academic Programs will be working closely with department committees to ensure a timely process and consistent changes across departments. Hopefully a fast track approval process will be in place for course changes that are considered to be minor.

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### Ten Principles for Teachers

1. Think of yourself as a student as much as a teacher.
2. Do not pretend to know more than you do or assume that what you think you know is beyond challenge.
3. Give your students truthful answers even when this is unpleasant.
4. Discourage the passive acceptance of expert opinion, including your own.
5. Ask questions and pose problems that invite reflection, discussion, and inquiry.
6. Do not shirk controversial issues in the classroom
7. Do nothing to discourage curiosity and imagination in your students.

8. Show respect for your students' ideas by taking them seriously, and cultivate in yourself kindly feelings towards your students.

9. Try to respond to the particular interests and talents of each student, and see in each of them the potential to become independent and autonomous.

10. Do not be afraid to use your own well-informed judgment.

From an article in October 2001, *The Teaching Professor*, by William Hare.

The author recommends a Bertrand Russell essay, *The Functions of a Teacher*, which appears in *Unpopular Essays*, a 1950 publication of George Allen and Unwin. The author has written an essay, *Bertrand Russell on Critical Thinking* that was published in the *Journal of Thought*, 2001, 36 (1), 7-16. It points the way to many other references in Russell's work, which reveal the influence of his thought on the principles suggested.

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## **Course Contract Encourages Student Responsibility and Civility**

From an article in November 2001 *The Teaching Professor* by Deborah A. Byrnes

I pass out a course contract with the course syllabus that lists the expectations students should have for me, expectations I have for them, and expectations we should have for each other. I have signed the copy of the contract they receive and, after we have discussed it, I ask them to sign the contract as well. On the last day of class each student returns the contract along with an evaluation of how well they and the rest of us have fulfilled its terms.

Students have a right to expect:

1. A complete syllabus on the first day of class with clearly stated assignments, due dates, course objectives, and a fair grading policy.
2. A course that starts and ends on time.
3. Opportunities to discuss the course outside of class with the professor.
4. The opportunity to have drafts of papers reviewed by the professor if submitted well in advance of the due date.
5. The return of papers within two weeks provided they were turned in on time.
6. Reevaluations of any work that a student thinks may have been graded unfairly.

The professor has the right to expect that the students will:

1. Arrive on time prepared for class and stay for the entire class unless extenuating circumstances interfere.
2. Be actively involved in creating a successful course experience.
3. Ask for clarification or assistance when needed.
4. Share any concerns about the class in a timely fashion.
5. Turn in assignments on time.
6. Inform the professor of any extenuating circumstances affecting attendance.
7. Observe codes of academic honesty in the completion of all course work

Human Rights and Responsibilities (expectations of each other) include such items as:

1. I will listen to others respectfully and not speak while others are talking.

2. When I disagree with someone, I will critique his or her ideas in a respectful and constructive manner.

3. I will try to understand other people's behavior and perspectives rather than simply criticizing them.

4. I will avoid stereotypes and humor that are disparaging of others.

5. I will intervene politely if I notice people are being disrespectful or unfair to others.

While one would hope that students would already be well aware of the expectations above, I have found that formalizing them, and asking students to self-evaluate at the end of the term, reminds students of their own responsibility as members of a learning community. Students evaluate every course they take at our university, but they are rarely asked to evaluate their contributions to a course. I found this contract encourages students to take more responsibility for their success (or lack of it), to interact more thoughtfully with each other and with me, and to make more constructive use of the course evaluation opportunity.

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## **Students Participate in Leadership Conference**

Fifteen ACES undergraduates participated in the Agriculture Future of America 2001 Leaders Conference in Kansas City. The ACES student participation was supported by the Louis V. Logeman Leadership endowment and several private gifts.

The AFA Leaders Conference brings together college age men and women who are pursuing careers in the agriculture and food industry. These individuals share a common belief in the future of agriculture and have an interest in enhancing their personal and professional skills.

Students from UIUC included: Katie Dierker, ACE, who serves on the AFA Student Advisory Team; Brea Nelson, ACE; Jeremiah Fleming, ACE; Jason Moss, ACE; Leah Schlee, ACE; Kevin Ward, ACE; Luke Behme, AN SCI; Tim Hausman, AG ENG; Kristen Lyons, ACE; Genny Schutz, ACE; Diane Plewa, CR SCI; Aaron Smiley, AN SCI; Sarah Viall, FSHN; Melissa Stierwalt, HCD; and Jenny Ifft, ACE.

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## **Assessing Faculty Performance Measures of Service**

During the 2000-01 academic year, faculty in ACES participated in a comprehensive survey addressing faculty performance assessment. This is the fifth article intended to provide discussion and thought on how faculty in each of the seven ACES departments might consider improvements in the annual performance systems currently utilized. This article is based only on aggregate data of the College, not individual department ratings.

Faculty responded to nine statements related to how service performance should be measured.

On the seven-point scale from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree, respondents rated these performance measures highest: leadership in professional societies (5.6); leadership in department committees (5.5); leadership on college committees (5.3); leadership on university committees (5.2); and peer evaluation of service (5.0). Peer evaluation of service, self assessment, conference with the department head and consulting with outside groups were rated

above 4.6. Leadership in community and civic groups was rated at the scale mid-point (4.0). What suggestions can be derived from these results? Service should be measured by leadership to the professional and academic communities. Peer and self assessments should also be considered.

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## Student Club Support

The ACES Development Fund in Academic Programs supports a variety of programs including leadership development activities. ACES undergraduate student clubs that are Registered Student Organizations and members of ACES Student Council submitted proposals for funding which were reviewed by a committee of undergraduate students. Nearly \$10,000 is being awarded to 17 ACES clubs. Many of the funded proposals will support student participation in regional and national events. Other funded activities include speakers for club meetings, club field trips, and student exchange programs.

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## Academy of Teaching Excellence Room

The ACES Academy of Teaching Excellence room is open daily for faculty to use. From small group meetings related to teaching and learning, to viewing and analyzing a video tape of your teaching, to checking out resources on many topics, you are encouraged to utilize this excellent resource. Stop by 115 ACES Library, Information and Alumni Center soon! New acquisitions include the following books on teaching and learning, donated by Academy members and the Academy for Teaching Excellence endowment.

### Author/Editor *Title*

Angela, Thomas *Classroom Assessment*

Cross, K. Patricia *Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers*

Baxter-Magolda, Marcia *Knowing and Reasoning in College Gender-Related Patterns in Students Intellectual Development*

Blythe, Hal *It Works for Me!*

Sweet, Charlie *Shared Tips for Teaching*

Carbone, Elisa *Teaching Large Classes: Tools and Strategies*

Davis, Barbara Gross *Tools for Teaching*

Duffy, Donna Killian *Teaching Within The*

Jones, Janet Wright *Rhythms of the Semester*

Gronlund, Norman *Assessment of Student Achievement*

Leamson, Robert *Thinking About Teaching and Learning: Developing Habits of Learning with First Year College and University Students*

Lowman, Joseph *Mastering the Techniques of Teaching*

McGlynn-Provitera, Angela *Successful Beginnings for College Teaching: Engaging Your Students from the First Day*

McKeachie, Wilbert J. *Teaching Tips: Strategies, Research, and Theory for College and University Teachers*

## **How To Translate Your Course Online Successfully**

From an article in November 2001 *The Teaching Professor* by T. Kaye Abight

### **Begin Slowly, Learn the Software**

It is essential to start slowly, becoming familiar with the software before taking your course online. Begin by taking a workshop on the application you will use.

Next decide what course you want to develop for online delivery and then proceed in small steps. Select a course that you teach regularly so that you can use your face-to-face class as the lab for what you will eventually put online. This approach has many advantages one being that confidence builds as students give feedback about what you put online.

I began the first semester by uploading the syllabus, and posting my office hours and contact information. I didnt distribute a syllabus; instead, students received written instructions on how to find the syllabus online. Later that semester, I began to use the group e-mail feature to notify students of class changes or upcoming events and posted additional announcements about assignments and tests.

### **Progress Gradually, Blending as You Go**

Over the following two semesters, my course became more and more hybridized as I blended more online components into my face-to-face class. With each new item, I field tested the material on current classes. Students gave me excellent feedback as to how something looked and about how it worked. I eventually uploaded course assignments, grading rubrics, test study guides, and examples (both good and bad) of previously submitted assignments. Always get permission from student authors to display their work online.

I began making PowerPoint presentations of my lectures and notes and used a game format for test review. Finally, I began testing online.

### **Use What Others Know**

Use the resources on your campus and elsewhere. Colleagues who already use online delivery systems can be an excellent source of information. And use the technology support personnel who work on your campus.

### **Start with a Small Online Course**

I would recommend no more than 25 students in your first online course, if you can control enrollment. I was open with my students. I told them it was my first online teaching experience, and I enlisted their help. Our software allowed me to have all students complete a 15-question survey within the first 24 hours of signing online. Survey questions concerned attitudes, skills, experiences, and student expectations for the course, and this gave me a comfort level about the kind of students I had out there.

### **Remain Flexible**

Don't be afraid to change something if you see its not working for you or the students. But be realistic. No instructional feature appeals equally to all students. Dont expect them to love everything

## Course Evaluations

Assessment of how the course worked for the students is a dynamic tool. I found my online students to be mature consumers, providing some wonderful suggestions on what would make a better online course. I managed to incorporate nearly all their ideas into my second offering of the course.

Internet teaching looks ominous. It is human nature to be afraid of the unknown, but whether you're being forced into this new realm or going there of your own accord, I believe that these steps will help make your first experience a positive one.

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*Academic Programs* is also accessible at: <http://w3.aces.uiuc.edu/Acad-Prog/goodteach.shtml>

101 Mumford Hall, MC-710

1301 W. Gregory Drive

Urbana, IL 61801