Welcome

Thank you for taking a few moments to read the fall 2009 edition of Ecampus eFaculty News. Please let us know if you would like to submit an article or see a specific topic addressed in a future edition. Please Contact Us if you have questions about any of our services. We appreciate your comments and suggestions.

OSU Academic Calendar

Transformation is the Word - Dave King, Associate Provost, Outreach and Engagement

The words that most dominate our administrative conversations these days are transition and transformation. A cursory glance might suggest they are similar in some ways. However at Oregon State University in the context of our current economic climate these words point to vastly different outcomes. Transition has come to mean managing through the economic situation, making opportunistic changes where possible and required, and holding on until the inevitable turnaround. Transformation, on the other hand, has come to mean fundamental change in how the University provides access to learning opportunities, research, and outreach. And based on the level of budget cuts the University is taking, as well as the direction provided by University leadership, transformation is the direction we are headed. It is a commonly accepted fact that the University will look significantly different on July 2010.

What role will Ecampus play in that transformation? How different will we look mid-year 2010? What will the transformation mean to our target off-campus students and the growing number of on-campus students taking online courses through Ecampus?

These are all great questions and are at the core of our current strategic thinking. Answers and ideas are forming in an environment of expectation and anticipation. Right now only a few points are absolutely clear. Ecampus is a critical aspect of the future success of the University. Among our strategic goals are to increase learner access in the transformation and expand our strategic partnerships. More students and learners will be able to turn to online courses to address their needs. More partners on-campus and off will play a role in identifying needs statewide and in local communities, and then begin working with us to address those needs.

As the University transforms before our eyes, the magic act will be to continue to address students' needs in more effective and efficient ways. That will mean some courses and programs will be available only online. Others will become more blended in their approach, meaning larger portions of traditional on campus courses will be online. The use of technology to expand and enhance the learner’s interaction with classmates, professors, and experts around the world will become the norm.
for every learner and student who engages with Oregon State University in some fashion.

So “buckle up!” and we’ll keep you posted as we start down specific pathways in the next weeks and months toward transformation.

Blackboard Version 9 is coming soon! Karen Watte, Training Specialist

Blackboard is scheduled to be upgraded to Version 9 in January 2010. The new version will feature drag-and-drop editing, a condensed control panel, and new and improved group options. For a sneak peek, view the [short tutorial](#) located on our training website. Training classes coming at the end of Fall term!

View the session schedule

Featured Instructor - Joan Sandeno, Crop and Soil Sciences

I learn so much from the online students! They come from all over the world and expand the knowledge of student and instructor alike. So what have I learned while teaching an online class? The student from Iceland had trouble collecting a soil sample; she wrote that the Vikings had cut down trees on Iceland to make their boats and they brought with them sheep that grazed off just about anything that grew. The soil itself is a light volcanic ash so the student said when the wind blew, the soil “picked up and left for England.” The student from Indonesia had trouble collecting a soil sample from next to a river because the rivers in the area were encased in concrete. The student in Alaska chose a winter term soils class and had to take his soil samples with an ice drill – which became frozen into the soil and had to be removed with a crowbar. Students from all around the world can create an entirely new dimension to a class; problems that may be common in one area may be unheard of in a different country.

I also learned that yes, it really is possible to teach an effective online lab class. Online students in CSS 205 may work a little harder than the on-site students because they need to follow precise instructions to find acceptable locations for soil sample collection whereas the on-site students may be taken to appropriate sites. However, the online students often sample soils in their own fields or around their homes so what they learn becomes very relevant. I had an opportunity to meet previous soils students at a reception when they came for OSU Commencement. They told me how they had used soils from their farms and ranches for their laboratory exercises and that the results prompted changes that improved their farm practices.

Most students in the soils class major in agriculture, forestry, fish and wildlife, ecology, and natural resources. There also may be a few Liberal Studies students who are looking to fulfill a laboratory requirement. Most of the non-degree students have a specific goal for taking the class; they may want to improve their farm practices but often they want to advance in their careers. One student was working part-time in a state parks system but was offered a full-time position if he could fulfill some requirements that included a soils class. Two or three students needed to know more about soils since their jobs include inspections for septic tanks. One student who works for FEMA, and several who have worked for NRCS indicated they need to additional classes for career advancement.

Since the students come from such a variety of backgrounds, they bring many different viewpoints to The Discussion Board. The discussion topics concern issues with soils and I am always a little surprised when the
students become involved with problems introduced by other students. They suggest French drains to reduce poor drainage, checking with a watershed council concerning erosion and turbidity, or the merits of desalinization. They argue farmland vs. developments, water for farms vs. golf courses, rejecting building permits in areas where mudslides are common. They learn to call it “soil” and not “dirt.”

I found that communication is essential for a successful class. I send one or two e-mails to the students each week to remind them of a quiz or a discussion or to provide an explanation for some troublesome concept. I participate in some of the discussions. Some students contact me before they enroll in class; there have been students in the military and on ships which meant they had to plan well in advance and collect the required soil samples for the labs before they ever started the term. I also learned that an online class can be more time-consuming than an on-site class; it seems that most of the students have families and full-time jobs so they do their class work weekends which means I should be available to explain questions about the labs when students are available to work on them. Lab reports are submitted every week and need to be graded promptly. Students are required to submit photographs of the laboratory work and instructor feedback is important. A student 18 time zones earlier than mine will need to have new labs and lectures or tests opened earlier than my usual scheduled assignments. An occasional student may have a power failure or computer meltdown.

So what have I learned from online classes? Lab classes can and do work. Every term fills quickly and has a waiting list. Most important, I never knew that a class could be this much fun!

---

Course Promotion through the Natural Resources Distance Learning Consortium (NRDLC) - Jessica DuPont, Assistant Director of Marketing

If you're teaching an online course that relates to natural resources, did you know that there is a whole consortium helping to market your class nationwide?

In 2008, Oregon State University joined the Natural Resources Distance Learning Consortium (NRDLC). The consortium is a partner with the United States Forest Service (USFS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and is comprised of 10 universities, including Virginia Tech and Penn State, that provide over 250 online classes, professional certificates, and degrees in a variety of natural resources disciplines.

The consortium focuses on graduate courses and programs, but also highlights upper-division undergraduate courses as well. They have a great “in” to sharing online professional development offerings directly with agency training directors and employees. Their marketing tactics include their website, online newsletters sent to agencies, and other online communications, including Twitter updates. Last spring, OSU was part of their national broadcast to the BLM and FS. The session was also uploaded to YouTube and to agency websites for additional viewing.

To see if your courses is advertised on their website and to learn more about the consortium, visit [http://nrdlc.org](http://nrdlc.org). For additional questions, please contact Jessica DuPont, Assistant Director of Marketing for Ecampus, who serves on the NRDLC Marketing Committee.
New Academic Advisor for Environmental Sciences - Rick DeBellis, Assistant Director, Department and Student Services

We are writing to share the good news that Environmental Sciences in conjunction with Ecampus has just hired an Academic Advisor to work with Environmental Sciences students who are pursuing the degree through OSU’s Ecampus. Her name is Dawn Marie Gaid, and she comes to us fresh from having completed a MS degree here at OSU in Public Policy with the Rural and Environmental Option. Her BS degree was also from OSU, in Natural Resources. Some of you may know her, as she worked previously in the office of the Dept of Forest Resources, with the NASA Space Grant Consortium here at OSU, and as an Administrative Assistant in the Research Office also at OSU.

Her office telephone number will be 541-737-2404 and can be reached via email at dawn.gaid@oregonstate.edu or visit Dawn's faculty profile on the Ecampus website.

Ecampus Pay Information - Vickie Bailey, Admin Program Specialist

Each term a “payletter” is sent out by email to most Extended Campus instructors, so we can track and ensure that you have received and read this important information. The exception is AHE and TCE course instructors. This payletter email is sent out through EROI, an email list management program. The information in the email consists of the course(s) you are scheduled to teach, how you are paid, and term information.

In reviewing the responses to the spring 09 Faculty Survey, it was evident that a lot of instructors don’t know what the Ecampus payletter is.

This email is purposely kept short, so you can scan the information and let Ecampus know right away if any of the information is inaccurate, as it could affect your pay.

Note: The Extended Campus business department is now combined with the new business center, so changes will not be as speedy as they have been in the past, so please notify us ASAP if you see any errors!

New Online Tutoring Service! - Joan Oakes, Admin Program Specialist

We have a new online tutoring service, NetTutor! Ecampus will continue to provide support for this service.

In addition to begin more cost effective, NetTutor provides a wider range of tutoring subjects, with no limit on the number of hours a student may access their services.

NetTutor will be accessed through Blackboard for ease of student user authentication. However, their service will be implemented slightly differently than the prior service, and can be enabled or disabled at your discretion:

- There will no longer a ‘tutoring tab’
- Instead, the NetTutor link will appear in the “Communication” area of your Blackboard course site. It is from there that students will access the online service
- If the NetTutor service is not enabled in your course, we can make it available for you. Contact:
Dianna Fisher 737 8658 or cell 230 4029
Mandy Misner 737 9341

• Note: that if you have disabled the "Communication" area of your Blackboard course site you will need to re-enable it

Thanks for reading Ecampus E-News. This email was delivered to Email Placeholder by OSU Extended Campus. To ensure delivery, please add ecampus.enews@oregonstate.edu to your address book.

Send this email to a friend! | Having trouble viewing this email?

You may unsubscribe to Ecampus E-News, update your email preferences, and/or share your comments.

Oregon State University Extended Campus, 4943 The Valley Library, Corvallis, OR 97331-4504 | 800-667-1465