

FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE

Weekly Digest for the Week of November 5, 2008

Welcome to the FYE community of faculty, staff, and students dedicated to supporting our new first-year and transfer students create a more successful transition to the University of Connecticut. The Weekly Digest will publish every Wednesday during the Fall semester and contain details about workshops, upcoming events, tips/techniques, and other information geared to help you have the best semester possible with your FYE class. Comments, suggestions and constructive critique are welcomed. E-mail kevin.sullivan@uconn.edu or David.Ouimette@uconn.edu

Thoughts from the Director, David Ouimette

Week 11 – What We Have Been Up To

First Year Programs has been busy! Besides the large number of classes in full swing, FYP continues to make an impact across campus in many other ways. Here are just a few of the recent activities and highlights:

Off to Broadway! The *Fine Arts* and *Connecting with the Arts* living and learning communities (LLC) went to New York City on Saturday, November 1. The group divided into two, and one group went to see a matinee of *Spring Awakening* and the other, *Young Frankenstein*. After the performance of *YF*, actors Fred Applegate, Kevin Ligon, and Matthew LaBanca (a UConn alum) met with students for a question-and-answer period and a behind-the-scenes view of the play. Matt was presented with a Fine Arts LLC T-shirt! A great time was had by all!

In the News. An article in the October 31 *Daily Campus*, featured a story on FYE entitled: "First Year Experience Classes More Than Just the Basics." In particular, it highlighted the growth of the FYE program, and some of the unique INTD 1820 courses being offered, including Steven Park's "Pirates of the Caribbean" and Tom Roby's "Dancing with Jane Austen". The article can be viewed at <http://media.www.dailycampus.com/media/storage/paper340/news/2008/10/31/News/First.Year.Experience.Classes.More.Than.Just.The.Basics-3518419.shtml>

PumpkinFest a Success. Alpha Lambda Delta hosted its second annual PumpkinFest on Halloween, this past Friday. Students, faculty, and staff from all over campus came out to enjoy holiday treats and carve pumpkins. The judging panel consisted of Matthew Cecil, Mathematics Professor and ALD Faculty of the Year Award Winner 2008, Christine Wilson, Associate Dean of Students, Stephen Rhodes, Executive Assistant to the President, John Saddlemire, Vice President of Student Affairs, and Joseph Briody, Associate Director- Student Development & Learning. Judges chose from a collection of impressive designs for the top four to be awarded prizes. ALD would like to thank all of the judges, volunteers, and participants who helped make this event a success. We look forward to next year!

Homecoming Winner. The Global House living and learning community won first place in the Non-Fee Funded category in this year's homecoming lip sync competition for their performance "Dungeons and Dragons" as part of the overall "Game On UConn" theme. This is the first time that Global House has performed at lip sync.

Focus on Instructors

(This section will highlight FYE instructors that are making a significant contribution to the University.)

This week, **Carol Artacho Guerra** shares an activity that sparks awareness of diversity.

What would it be like to understand nothing of what is going on in your class? To be so lost that you don't even know what the instructions are? To be unable to ask for help? To fail academically regardless of how well you know the material? This "Language Diversity" activity gives students a taste for the challenges that language can present in a classroom. First, pick a lesson, a well-planned, exciting, interactive lesson, using best practices for teaching, and the most awesome resources.

But teach the lesson in a different language. We teach it in Spanish, and we do not allow students to use any language other than Spanish in the classroom to boot. The result: a very stressful and thought-provoking 15 minutes for our students. Some get angry, some discouraged, some check out... The goal? To start a discussion on power dynamics, privilege, and differentiating between circumstances and abilities.

Collaborative Learning Workshops

On October 31st, The Institute for Teaching & Learning offered a day of workshops and discussions that addressed the increased teaching challenges that we are facing here at UConn. The workshops and discussions included: *Handling the Challenges of Large Classes*, *Providing Prompt Student Feedback Using HuskyCT*, *Instructional Design for Providing Effective Student Feedback*.

Kevin Sullivan, Director of Academic Support, facilitated the session *Organizing and Supporting Student Group Study Efforts*. The workshop, using collaborative learning techniques, put faculty members into teams to explore the possible advantages and disadvantages of group work. What the approach might specifically look like in particular classes, the role of the professor in the process, and the cost and benefit of using group/collaborative techniques was also discussed.

Instructor Information

Some important information for 1800/1820 Instructors

AOD Education (Alcohol and Other Drug). Sign-up for the AOD education session by e-mail: nisha.hardnett@uconn.edu. Make sure students fill out this pre-test survey the week before the scheduled AOD presentation. The survey can be found at http://web.uconn.edu/alcohol/consent_form.php.

If you are **not** having AOD present in your class, please consider having your students take a short pre- and post-test that will create a control group for Dr. Lyn's study.

Contact jeffrey.carlson@huskymail.uconn.edu for details.

Violence Against Women Prevention Program (VAWPP) Peer Educators. To request a workshop, please send an email to VAWPP@yahoo.com. The email should include: Professor's Name, Course Title, Number of Students enrolled, Location, Date and time, and Workshop preference. If you have any questions or need any additional information, please contact Kathleen Holgerson at Kathleen.Holgerson@uconn.edu or 860-486-4738.

Looking for a class on Student Involvement? Contact [Andrea Lama](mailto:Andrea.Lama) with preferred times and dates for the presentations. "We look forward to helping your students get involved!"

Writing Assignment. The University Writing Center liaison to the INTD 1800 instructors is Mandy Suhr-Sytsma. She is happy to answer your questions/concerns, as well as offer suggestions for the Writing Assignment. Her office is in CUE 125. Her office hours are Monday from 1-3pm and Tuesday from 1:30-3:15pm. Her office phone number is 860.486.2419 and email is mandy.suhrsyttsma@gmail.com.

Nutrition and Wellness Services. To request a program or for more information, please contact Amy Pumerantz, Nutrition Coordinator of Student Health Services: 486-0771 or amy.pumerantz@uconn.edu.

Focus on Students

(This section will include helpful activities/assignments/information for your INTD 1800 and INTD 1820 students)

- **Community Assistants Needed.** Being a Community Assistant is a great opportunity to gain leadership experience, be a mentor, build campus connections, and of course have fun. Requirements: must have lived on campus for at least 1 semester at UConn and have a 2.5 GPA. Additional Information and the application

are available on our website: <http://www.communityassistant.uconn.edu>. Applications are due by December 5, 2008 by Noon. Optional information sessions will be held throughout November, see the website for more details.

- **Financial Literacy Survey.** Recently, many articles have discussed the current state of financial literacy amongst today's college students. The Wall Street Journal reported in August that the average credit card debt for graduates is \$2169, and that about 10% have a debt of \$10,000. Given the volatile economic climate, it is important to communicate with students about debt, student loans, and credit cards. To begin this conversation on campus, Office of Student Financial Aid Services is working to develop a Financial Literacy program for students that will include a web component (modules on several different topics), targeted presentations to student groups, and "train the trainer" materials. To get started, we are conducting a survey to find out which topics in Financial Literacy interest our students. We request your help in referring your FYE students to this survey. The survey is on the Student Financial Aid Services homepage and can be accessed using the following link <http://spreadsheets.google.com/viewform?key=poA-UuqblzLRq0fDtS-1YBQ>. Thank you in advance for your assistance! Jean Main, Director - Student Financial Aid Services
- **Urban Semester Program.** The Urban Semester Program is currently accepting applications for the spring 2009 Semester. The program offers students a unique and exciting opportunity to live in Hartford and perform public service internships. Students spend 3-1/2 days a week in an internship in a local organization and attend two weekly seminars. Internships are available for a variety of majors. Students receive a full 15 credits for the classes and internship. For applications and further information, please stop by or contact the Urban Semester Office in room 323 of the Center for Undergraduate Education, telephone 860-486-5997.
- **Discovery Leadership Program Series.** Recommend your students get involved with the Discovery Leadership Program Series. Have students visit www.leadership.uconn.edu and click on *Discovery* for more information.
- **Long River Review Literary Magazine.** Students may submit works of fiction, non-fiction, and poetry for publication in the *Long River Review Literary Magazine*. Submissions for the first issue will be accepted until February 12th, 2009. Collection boxes are found in the CLAS building in the main English Department office, in the Freshman English office, and right outside the elevator on the third floor. For more information, email AmandaWLR08@gmail.com.

Special Events: Expand your Students' Horizons!

Encourage your students to attend these events as part of the *Writing Assignment* or for personal enrichment.

November 7 and 8

- **Rockapella, Cabaret**
8 pm, Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts, tickets on sale

November 11

- **"Globalization: India Present at the Creation": Nayan Chanda**
3:30pm, Babbidge Library Class of '47 Room

November 13

- **Dramatic Reading of My Nose and Me: A TragedyLite or TragiDelight in 33 scenes**
7-9 pm, Nafe Katter Theatre
Benefits the Covenant Soup Kitchen in Willimantic
- **"Waking from Dreams of India" : Neil Chowdhury**
4:00pm, Room 101 Dept. of Art and Art History

November 14

- **Essence of the Caribbean**
8-10 p, Anna M. Snow Residence Hall
Promotes awareness of the different Caribbean islands' language, food, and culture.

November 15

- **Robert H. Gray Memorial Lecture in the Arts: Maestro Keith Lockhart, conductor, Boston Pops**
2 pm, von der Mehden Recital Hall, free and open to the public

November 18

- **Warsaw Philharmonic, Antoni Wit, Conductor; Valentina Lisitsa, Piano**
8 pm, Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts, tickets on sale

November 19

- **Last Lecture Series: Dr. Olivier Morand, Economics**
3-4 pm, Buckley Lounge

November 20

- **International Nite**
5-11 pm, Rome Ballroom (above South dining). Donation: \$3 (benefits scholarship)

November 20-23 & December 3-6

- **CRT: The Skin of Our Teeth, by Thornton Wilder, directed by Helene Kvale**
See the [CRT website](#) for times, Harriet S. Jorgensen Theatre

HuskyCT Training

Do you feel you need a quick refresher for HuskyCT? Contact [Lesa von Munkwitz-Smith](#), 6-1735, to arrange a session – your office or the FYP office in 235 CUE.