

FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE

Weekly Digest for the Week of November 19, 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 13 – Penultimate Week!

Happy Thanksgiving!

It is hard to believe that we have completed 13 weeks! Where did the time go? If your classes are like mine, the students are ready for the break. Just a few reminders as we head into our last couple of classes for the Fall 08.

1. **Final Exam Time:** Students in my class had a fair amount of questions about preparing for final exams! I found a couple of students who did not realize they needed to find the schedule: http://adastrarpt.prod.uconn.edu/reports/exams/STORRS_1088/finals.htm. Also many were aware of bunched exams but were confused about the various types--here is a resource: http://www.dos.uconn.edu/docs/finals_list.pdf. And finally, preparing for the exams and what they can do over break to begin the process. Here is a good conversation starter for your students - http://web.uconn.edu/uconnconnects/resources/test_taking.htm.
2. **GPA Calculator:** I returned to the GPA calculator http://web.uconn.edu/uconnconnects/calc_gpa.htm in class this week! I pulled it up in class (sorry for those who don't have high-tech) and I asked random students to talk about individual classes and the worst possible scenario in terms of grades and we looked at what a B- is (2.7) etc. This branched into a discussion of what percentage of your grade is still left in each class (many of them have one more exam before the final) and how they are going to strategize to achieve their goals. Obviously, many realized there is plenty of time to raise their grades. We also talked about the probation standards (1.8) and Dean's List (see <http://www.registrar.uconn.edu/dean.htm>). A good discussion prompting urgency in some and a sense of relief in others.
3. **Evaluations:** You should have received your evaluations by now. Please work them into one of these last classes! If you have not received them, let us know ASAP by calling Ronnie 486-3378.
4. **Mentors(this year and next):** Don't forget to pick up your surprise for this year's mentor. Also help us recruit great mentors for next year! We encourage you to have a conversation with those students who you feel would be excellent mentors next year. There seems to be 2-3 students in each class that could really benefit from the experience and help others in the process. Students, who are interested, should go to <http://www.fye.uconn.edu/mentors.htm>.
5. **Midnight Breakfast:** Encourage your students to take a study break

Thanks so much for all you do! Please do not hesitate to contact us with questions or concerns. Have a wonderful Thanksgiving break.

Focus on Instructors: Dr. Kim Chambers

Dr. Kim Chambers teaches a First Year Seminar, *My Family Mirror* in which family history becomes a vehicle for self-discovery. The flyer for the class states, "Learn more about yourself, your family, and how to document your place in history."

Students in *My Family Mirror* talk with their families and use online and documentary materials to learn more about their ancestors. These budding genealogists prepare a "practice ancestor post," seeking information about an ancestor of their choosing. They then share their post with class members on a HuskyCT discussion board, soliciting feedback to improve their post. They then post their refined inquiry to select genealogy sites on the internet seeking help from the genealogical community to locate information about their ancestor. Frequently students are amazed "strangers" are very willing to help and are able to provide valuable information about the student's ancestors.

Here are just two examples of students' successful on-line inquiries this semester:

1. [Alvina HAINAULT/ Aurora Gaynor circa 1920, Gouverneur, NY](#)
2. [William Dunion, b. 02 Jul 1895 –d. Jan 1963, CT](#)

Often the examples generated from these on-line inquiries set up further topics like the census or newspaper searching we use later in the class.

HuskyCT Survey

HuskyCT Instructors,

Please consider taking this HuskyCT survey that is a part of a doctoral research project. Your responses will also help us collect valuable information our use of HuskyCT.

Please take 15 to 20 minutes to complete a short survey about your perceptions of HuskyCT. This survey is being offered to over a dozen research one universities across the U.S. to examine the types of support departments may use to bolster acceptance of technologies like HuskyCT at different points in time. The survey was designed by an instructor and Ph.D. student from Penn State University. The research was reviewed and approved by the Internal Review Board at both Penn State and the University of Connecticut.

To read more about the survey, obtain contact information from the investigators, and participate, click on/or insert the following URL into your browser: [HuskyCT Survey](#)

Your time and collegial support of this research are appreciated immensely.

Volunteers needed to help at Midnight Breakfast.

Faculty, staff, and administrators are invited to take part in this semester's Midnight Breakfast, scheduled to take place in the Student Union on Dec. 7-8, from 10:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. Traditionally, students take this time before exams begin to eat a good breakfast served by faculty and staff and relax with live entertainment in the Student Union Theater and North Lobby.

The event, which has become one of the largest community-building events on campus, regularly draws thousands of students and hundreds of volunteers.

Volunteers will meet at 9:30 p.m. in Student Union Room 303.

To volunteer, call 860-486-3423 or send e-mail to Melissa.Arroyo@uconn.edu by Monday, Dec. 1. Midnight Breakfast is sponsored by Student Activities, Dining Services, and Student Union staff.

Focus on Students

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

- **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. T-shirt Design Contest.** Open to all UConn students! The winning design will be used for the official 2009 UConn MLK Day T-shirt, and will be given out as a door prize the day of the event.

Submissions should reflect the 2009 theme, "Continuing the Legacy: Time for Transformation." Submissions would do well to focus on the transformational time we are currently experiencing in this country, and how Dr. King's activism has contributed to where we are today, and where we need to go in the future. The winning submission will receive a \$100 UConn Co-Op Gift Card.

Be one of the first students on the day of the event to receive a free t-shirt with the winning student design! Events will take place beginning at 1:30pm on Monday January 19, 2009 in the Student Union Cultural Centers, with the main program beginning at 4:00pm in the Student Union.

Contest Guidelines:

- The design cannot violate any copyright laws or trademarks.
- By submitting your design, you give non-exclusive rights to use the image in the design of a t-shirt for the UConn MLK Day and associated advertisements.
- Submissions need to be completed in Illustrator and done in vector art, and can have a maximum of three colors. Please convert all type to outlines. Submissions must also be sent in JPG or PDF format.

E-Mail your electronic submission of a T-Shirt Design to Ryan Barone at Ryan.Barone@UConn.Edu by December 1, 2008

- **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. 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.** 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-UuqblzLRg0fDtS-1YBQ> Thank you in advance for your assistance!
- **Urban Semester Program.** The Urban Semester Program is currently accepting applications for the spring 2009 Semester. 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 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 [Lesla von Munkwitz-Smith](#), 6-1735, to arrange a session – your office or the FYP office in 235 CUE.