

# **FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE**

## *Weekly Digest for the Week of December 10, 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](mailto:kevin.sullivan@uconn.edu) or [David.Ouimette@uconn.edu](mailto:David.Ouimette@uconn.edu)

### **Thoughts from the Director, David Ouimette** **Finals Week**

I took a few moments to review our Weekly Digests beginning with our July 15th *Summer Edition* (for all the Digests go to <http://web.uconn.edu/fye/08WeeklyDigest.htm>). Looking at what we have accomplished in the last fifteen weeks is impressive. Beginning with a record number of 181 sections of FYE (1800, 1820, and Learning Communities), over 2700 students enrolled, and over 100 upper-class mentors, the number of specialized opportunities for our first-year students and the quality of experiences keeps getting better each year! Thanks to all of you who make this possible each day of the week!

#### **A couple of reminders as finals wrap up and students begin packing for the holiday:**

**Grades:** At the end of this *Digest*, please find a detailed memo from our Registrar related to submission of grades. Please note that grades need to be entered by **Tuesday December 16th!** Please remember that students should be given the grade that they earned in your class. Despite what many first-semester students believe, not every student gets an A in FYE. In fact, we have seven years of research that shows students who do not do well in FYE, do not do well in other classes; a low grade in FYE is a great indicator (early warning so to speak) for us to intervene. Remember, other students who have done the work deserve an A. While I give many A grades, there will be some students who have not done the writing assignments, have missed participation points, turned projects in late, or have failed to make the effort to follow-up and won't be getting one. The guiding principle is your syllabus -- whatever you specified for requirements in your grading policy should be how grades are determined. I am more than happy to talk with you about grades, because evaluating our students' performance is one of the toughest tasks in being an FYE instructor.

**NOTE:** If you do not know how to access Peoplesoft, please call the Registrar's Office at 486-3331. Remember, do not use your administrative logon when entering grades; use the seven-digit PeopleSoft number.

**Changing Grades:** Last year there were a number of changed grades after the grading deadline. I encourage instructors to finalize grades before December 16, and change a grade only when there is a computational error or an extenuating circumstance! Please let me know if you are submitting several grade changes after the deadline. I know that at times, issues come up, and changes are inevitable, but I would encourage you to keep them to a minimum.

**Student Performance:** Once grades have been submitted to the registrar, Lesa von Munkwitz-Smith, a First Year Program assistant, will be notifying you via e-mail about students in your class who have made the Dean's List or achieved a 3.5 or better and are eligible to join Alpha Lambda Delta (ALD) a National Honor Society for First-Year Students. We encourage you to write a personal note to these students congratulating them on their achievements. I like to send a note to all Dean's List students informing them of opportunities that they may think about getting involved in on campus -- Honors, Undergraduate Research, the ExPlore Program, Community Outreach, and other programs.

Likewise, Lesa will be notifying you via e-mail of students who had a term GPA of below a 2.0 for the semester. Please encourage these students to participate in UConn Connects:

<http://web.uconn.edu/uconnconnects/signup.htm>

Designed as a one-to-one intervention program, UConn Connects helps students who are on academic warning or probation. The program's facilitators and mentors have been very successful in helping struggling students find the skills they need to improve their grades, so we appreciate your time in contacting your students individually and steering them to this program.

Finally, if you would like to see a grade distribution for your entire class, we can certainly obtain the information for you. I find it helpful to see if my perception of how a student was doing throughout his or her classes was accurate for the semester. Sometimes the star of my class ends up on probation and the total loser ends up on the Dean's List. (But most often the star makes the Dean's List.)

**Evaluations:** Office of Institutional Research (OIR) evaluations are usually distributed to First Year Programs in early January. As soon they appear, we will be sending you all the information, including the comments of your students.

**Overview of the Semester's Accomplishments:** Currently we are collecting information from various departments related to the number of FYE classes they reached this semester. We are very pleased with the number of visits FYE students made to the Writing Center. Last Fall 07, we had over 500 students and this Fall 08, we will easily surpass this amount. The resume project was another huge success. While we do not have the final numbers, we know that over 500 students not only completed resumes but also were critiqued by staff in Career Services. Further AOD, Health Education, and other departments saw an increase in class presentations.

In our Faculty-Student seminars, we offered wonderful [seminars](#) that exceeded our expectations of pushing first semester students to think creatively and to explore a broad range of interdisciplinary topics. Please see the website for FYP [In the News](#) for other related articles.

**FYE Instructor of the Year and John T. Szarlan Memorial Award:** This spring 2009, be on the lookout for the nomination process for our major awards! This is a wonderful way to celebrate the excellent work of Instructors and Mentors at the Instructional Excellence Banquet this spring. See more at [http://web.uconn.edu/fye/annual\\_awards.htm](http://web.uconn.edu/fye/annual_awards.htm)

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## Instruction for submitting Fall 2008 grades / Grade upload capability now available

E-Mail sent by the University Registrar, Jeffrey von Munkwitz-Smith

The Fall 2008 Grade Rosters are now available. **All grades should be submitted by 4 PM on Tuesday, December 16.** It is extremely important that grades be entered by that deadline. Late submission of grades affects graduation, probation and dismissal, Dean's List, financial aid eligibility, among other things. The deans have asked that they be notified of late grades. **Please enter your grades by the deadline!**

**INSTRUCTIONS (a demo is available at <http://www.peoplesofthelp.uconn.edu/instructor/in06cs90.html>):**

After logging in, navigate to **Final Grades** by clicking:

- **Self Service** in the Menu, then click **Faculty Center**.

From the **Faculty Center**, look for the **Grade Roster** icons next to each class in your teaching schedule. The icons indicate grade rosters are available for entry.

- Click the Grade Roster icon next to the class for which you wish to enter final grades. The Final Grade roster for the selected class displays.

Access the Roster Grade drop-down list for each student and select the final grade.

- When you have entered all grades, click **Save**.
- Once the grades are saved, reviewed for accuracy, and ready for approval, access the **Approval Status** drop-down list to change the status from **Not Reviewed** to **Approved**.

**NOTE:** If you change the Approval Status prior to clicking Save, the grades will be lost.

- After changing the Approval Status, click **Save** again.
  - A confirmation of successful grade submission displays. Click **OK**.

The Final Grades are now saved. The Registrar's office will post the grades, at which point the students may view them online.

### **GRADE UPLOAD CAPABILITY NOW AVAILABLE:**

Instructors can now upload grades using a CSV (comma separated value) file, see <http://www.peoplesofthelp.uconn.edu/instructor/in10cs90.html> for detailed instructions.

It is also possible to export from a HuskyCT Grade Book to a CSV file. Detailed instructions are available at [http://irc.uconn.edu/Vista\\_Help\\_Files/HCT\\_Grades\\_import\\_PS1.htm](http://irc.uconn.edu/Vista_Help_Files/HCT_Grades_import_PS1.htm). If instructors wish to use grades from a HuskyCT Grade Book to create a CSV file for the new grade upload option they can also contact the Instructional Resource Center staff for assistance (<http://irc.uconn.edu> ; 6-5052; [irchelp@uconn.edu](mailto:irchelp@uconn.edu)).

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

It is not necessary for you to enter all of the grades for the course in a single session. As long as the Approval Status is not set to Approved and the Registrar's Office has not posted the grades, you will be able to update the Grade Roster. **You must click on the Save button before leaving the grade posting page in order to save the grades you have entered.** A feature of the system allows you to [Display Ungraded Students Only](#) by clicking on a check box.

Periodically throughout the grading period the Registrar's Office will run a process to "Post" the approved grades, which will allow students to view their grades on the Student Administration System.

If you need to change a grade that has already been posted, you may do so using the PeopleSoft system. The instructions are available at [www.peoplesofthelp.uconn.edu](http://www.peoplesofthelp.uconn.edu).

A Final Examination Checklist, with information on the University's grading policies, is available at <http://www.registrar.uconn.edu/checlist.html>

**Please remember that grades must be entered and approved by 4 PM on Tuesday, December 16, in order to be included in such processes as Probation, Dismissal, and Dean's List and to avoid delays in the graduation of May degree candidates.**

If you have difficulty logging in to the system you can use the forgotten password feature (see the PeopleSoft Help for Instructors web site at [http://www.peoplesofthelp.uconn.edu/faculty\\_index.html](http://www.peoplesofthelp.uconn.edu/faculty_index.html) for more information).

If you have questions regarding grade submission, you can contact the Registrar's Office at (860) 486-3331. That number is answered Monday - Friday, 8 AM - 5 PM. At other times, you can leave a voicemail message and we will contact you when the office re-opens.

Jeff von Munkwitz-Smith  
University Registrar