

FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE

Weekly Digest for the Week of September 4, 2009

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 Friday 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. This summer we will send you a bi-weekly edition to update you prior to the semester. Information will be sent to both INTD 1800/1820 and Learning Community instructors. Comments, suggestions and constructive critique are welcomed. E-mail kevin.sullivan@uconn.edu or David.Ouimette@uconn.edu

Thoughts from the Director, David Ouimette

So how did it go? How was the first class? Many instructors have commented that first year students seem engaged and excited to begin their college career. I have also heard many positive comments about FYE classes this week.

Each week, I receive a number of e-mails, providing me with interesting websites and helpful information. Jeff von Munkwitz-Smith passed along a blog named *Prof. Hacker or Tips & Tutorials for Higher Ed: productivity and pedagogy in a digital age*. A recent blog contributor wrote about the [importance of learning names!](#) As you may recall, I have written many times about developing a classroom culture that supports student success. One of the steps in doing so is taking the time to learn names. And if you are like me, several class sessions are needed to remember all my students. So, I would like to share a 10-15 minute exercise that that helped me immensely.

Ask students to write their full name on a piece of paper with the story of their names. Where did it come from? How do you feel about it? How do you think your name has influenced who you are? Encourage them to add anything else that comes to mind about their names. Then, have each student tell his or her story. I have found this a great way to get to remember names and have heard great stories. Here is the short version of mine: I was almost named Wilfred (my Dad's name). In my kindergarten class, four boys were named David. I like my name.

On another note, we are receiving many requests from departments and organizations to disseminate information to FYE classes. We have done our best to gather all this information in the *FYE Weekly Digest* rather than inundate instructors with e-mails. Each week we will list events and activities as well as programs that are looking for first year student participation. Please feel free to share with your students via HuskyCT or as announcements in class.

Have a great Labor Day weekend.

Instructor Information

(This section will include schedules for HuskyCT training sessions and instructor workshops as well as information for planning your classes)

Community Outreach Class Presentations:

As you plan for fall semester and finalize FYE course plans, please consider building a presentation by Community Outreach into your syllabi. Community Outreach student leaders and public relations specialists will present to your incoming class highlighting our programs and services. By inviting Community Outreach to your class, your students will gain valuable information about:

- Various community service opportunities
- Transportation to and from site
- Developing a service program
- Resources for further information

Community Outreach seeks to work with you to enable our first year students with the information and tools necessary to become engaged citizens at the University of Connecticut and beyond. Our opportunities allow students to gain an experiential education to bridge material learned in the classroom with real life experience.

Please contact us at communityoutreach@uconn.edu to request further information or to schedule a presentation for the fall 2009 term. When scheduling a presentation, please include:

- Your name
- Contact information
- Date & time of presentation
- Location of class
- Number of class members

Active Minds Class Presentations:

Active Minds is a national organization concerning suicide prevention/mental health whose mission is not only to help those in need and provide resources, but to lower the negative stigma we all know exists surrounding mental health. The motto of Active Minds is “***Changing the conversation about mental health***”; this is precisely what we are attempting to do with the First Year Experience classes.

The F.Y.E. classes would be a perfect place to have open discussions about topics such as mental health illnesses and behavioral disorders. There are so many resources on-campus that students are extremely unfamiliar with due to the lack of discussion surrounding the subject. Many people are scared to begin discussions about this topic due to the negative stigma.

Prior to beginning classroom sessions, the peer educators from Active Minds at UConn will sit with Barry Schreier, Director of Counseling and Mental Health Services, to learn how to facilitate such discussions. Also, emergency procedures will be discussed if a student admits to suicidal thoughts. The main goal of this section of the lesson is to teach students that everyone shares similar stories and no one should be ashamed of sharing their own.

Contact Jeremy Bersin at jmb1836@comcast.net to set up a presentation.

Continuing the Tradition: UConn Dairy Bar:

A favorite among students, instructors can take their class on a field trip to the dairy bar for ice cream and/or a tour of the facility. When planning to visit the Dairy Bar, please use the following guidelines (also found on the HuskyCT instructor site):

- Ask your students which flavor from the list on HuskyCT they would like (orders are now either a 4 oz. or 8 oz cup)
- Telephone your order to Jackie Patry or the Student Manager (6-2634 or 6-1021) with a one-week lead time. Identify yourself as an FYE instructor and give Jackie your class number and section (i.e. 1800.001)
- She will need to know your arrival date and time
- If you want a tour, you may also schedule at this time
- There is no need to stop by FYE for a voucher, it is all done electronically

Career Services Resume Writing Assignment for FYE classes:

(Contact Larry Druckenbrod at 486-3013 or larry.druckenbrod@uconn.edu for questions or to schedule a presentation)

You may be wondering why we are having your students write a résumé when they have just arrived on campus. Career Services has partnered with First Year Programs to help them develop this very important document that they may need sooner than they think. The writing of a résumé is typically associated with upper-class students; however, Career Services strongly believes first year students will benefit from creating this document early in their academic career. [Please see attached for information about this assignment.](#) Results from last year’s pre and post- surveys indicated that students gained a significant amount of information from this assignment:

Wellness and Prevention Services

The Department of Wellness and Prevention Services is new to campus this year. Affiliated with Student Health Services, this Department brings together longstanding existing units that focused on health education (Joleen Nevers's area), alcohol and other drug prevention (Liz Prince's area) and nutrition (Amy Pumerantz's area) to create a holistic approach addressing impediments to health with the aim of promoting a state of wellbeing, and not simply the absence of illness or disease, or the reduction of risky behavior. The approach used will focus on community collaboration and the implementation of evidence informed practice that respects the unique culture of the UConn community.

Joleen, Liz, and Amy have long participated in FYE and INTD courses and students have greatly benefitted from all that they have shared. In order to facilitate this process in a more streamlined manner, you may now contact the Wellness and Prevention Services Department Administrative Assistant, Nisha Hardnett, at 486-9436 to begin scheduling FYE or INTD presentations

For more information on this new Department you may also call the Director, Beth DeRicco at 486-9430.

Upcoming Workshops

[Sign up for workshops on-line.](#)

First Year Programs is offering some "Just in Time" brown-bag workshops for instructors. These workshops are designed to address questions instructors have about assignments and communicating with students who may be struggling academically.

Workshop Title	Presenter	Date	Time	Location
Just in Time: Grading Papers for the FYE Writing Assignment	Writing Center Staff, Tom Deans and Gordon Fraser	Sept 16 Wednesday	Noon to 1:00 pm	Library, Class of '47 room
Just in Time: Mid-Term Grade Reports and Strategies for Students Getting Poor Grades	Kevin Sullivan	Sept 22 Tuesday	Noon to 1:00 pm	CUE 134
Just in Time: Incorporating the Résumé Assignment into Your Class	Career Services Staff, Nancy Bilmes	Oct 1 Thursday	Noon to 1:00 pm	CUE 134

Just in Time: Grading Papers for the FYE Writing Assignment

As you may have noticed, this year, First Year Programs is encouraging FYE instructors to assign a Writing Assignment to their students. This workshop will examine how to grade the assignment by presenting samples of student writing that all can review and discuss what grade should be given. (NOTE: This Assignment is detailed in the HuskyCT site for your class → Home Page > Instructor Resources > CORE Topics and Assignments > Assignments > (Instr) Writing Assignment.)

Just in Time: Mid-Term Grade Reports and Strategies for Students Getting Poor Grades

Around early October, First Year Programs sends FYE instructors a list of all their students who are getting below a C- in their other classes. Kevin Sullivan will lead a conversation in how to approach a student who is receiving poor grades and how to direct them to campus services that promote student academic success. Many times, taking an interest in a student's academic standing in other, larger classes, helps them develop a strategy to do thing differently for the rest of the semester and pull out of a downward spiral.

Just in Time: Incorporating the Résumé Assignment into Your Class

Staff from Career Services will introduce the Résumé Assignment that First Year Programs is encouraging instructors to assign to their students. Discussion will cover grading, how to present the assignment to the class, and the peer mentoring process. (NOTE: This Assignment is detailed in the HuskyCT site for your class → Home Page > Instructor Resources > CORE Topics and Assignments > Assignments > (Instr) Résumé Assignment.)

Focus on Students

(This section will include helpful assignments/activities/information for your INTD 1800/1810/1820 students.)

- **Involvement Fair.** The Fall 2009 Campus-Wide Involvement Fair takes place on **Wednesday, September 9, from 3:00-8:00PM** in the Student Union. The Involvement Fair is an easy way to explore many of the exciting things to do and get involved with on campus. It also is an excellent opportunity for students to find something enjoyable to join, discover a new interest, and even meet new people. More than 200 student organizations will be represented! Go to http://www.studentactivities.uconn.edu/inv_fair.html for more information.
- **[Suicide Prevention Week, September 14-19](#)** (click for Poster)
Alison Malmon, Keynote Speaker
September 15th 7:00 p.m.-8:30p.m., Jorgensen Theatre <http://www.suicideprevention.uconn.edu>
Alison Malmon is the founder of Active Minds. Ms. Malmon started Active Minds following the suicide of her older brother, Brian, who was experiencing depression and psychosis for three years and had concealed his symptoms. On March 24, 2000, as Alison was wrapping up her freshman year at Penn, Brian ended his life. Recognizing that few were talking about mental health though many were affected, Alison wanted to change campus culture. She wanted to combat the stigma of mental illness, encourage students to seek help early, and prevent future tragedies like the one that took her brother. After searching unsuccessfully for existing groups to bring to campus, Alison created her own. Active Minds expanded onto other campuses leading to the establishment of a National Headquarters in Washington, D.C. In five years, Active Minds has grown into a recognized entity in the field, respected as the voice of student mental health advocacy. Featured on CNN, in The New York Times, Chronicle of Higher Education and much more, Active Minds has become the voice of young adult mental health advocacy nationwide. With over 150 campus chapters, hundreds of thousands of young adults are benefiting from the Active Minds model.

Out to Lunch Series

LGBT Youth and Suicide

September 16, 12 p.m., Rainbow Center, Student Union 403

Robin P. McHaelen, Executive Director of True Colors, Inc., discusses the assumption that LGBT youth commit suicide at much higher rates than their straight peers. This interactive presentation will focus on the risks and realities of LGBT youth experiences, explore the subsets of youth at higher or lower risks of suicide, and identify protective factors and strategies participants can use to help prevent or reduce self-harm.

Student Voices Panel

September 17, 5:30 p.m., African American Cultural Center, Student Union, 407

Suicide is the second leading cause of death for college students. We have an opportunity to make a difference in our community. Please join us for a riveting talk by a student panel who will discuss: "What Can We Do to Help? Suicide Facts, Awareness, and Prevention."

QPR Suicide Prevention Training

Monday-Friday, September 14-18

<http://www.suicideprevention.uconn.edu> (sign up for training)

QPR – Question, Persuade, Refer) is a nationally recognized suicide prevention program. Training teaches how-to identify the warning signs of suicide, how to ask questions about suicide, and how to refer for help. Suicide is the second leading cause of death for college students. Suicide prevention is everyone's business, and you have the opportunity to make a difference at UConn.

- **Benton Museum of Art and First Year Experience**

FYE Educators! Museum Tours Alert!

Many people know that the Benton Museum's budget was cut this past spring, which resulted in closing our doors to the public on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. But, did you know that you can still schedule a tour for a Tuesday or Wednesday? We're not going to let budget cuts prevent us from what we do best,

introducing students to art! Tour hours are still 10:00 – 3:30, Tuesday through Friday and 1:00 -4:00 on weekends. If you would like a tour for your group, please see information below.

Students Steer the Way

Did you know UCONN students can make impressive docents? This past year we began training interested students to give tours of our exhibitions for their peers. Our docents are not only art history majors, but also include science, engineering and political science majors. The field of study is not as important as a desire to learn about art, working with people and dependability. If you or someone you know is interested in our Student Docent Program, please contact us at the address below. Keep in mind, we still maintain our veteran Docent Program with volunteers from the campus and community. New docent training starts in September.

Walkers of the World Unite!

We are pleased to introduce to our program schedule, *Walk, Talk Art!* This art tour begins at The Benton and takes the experience of looking at art, *outside* museum walls. This campus-wide tour may be scheduled April 15 through October 15 for groups of 4 or more. Our walking pace will vary, depending on the participants. If you would like to schedule *Walk, Talk Art!* for your group, contact us for more information.

Tracy Lawlor, Education Coordinator

phone **486-1711**

e-mail tracy.lawlor@uconn.edu.

Tour requests may also be made by going to our website www.thebenton.org and click on *Education*.

Special Events

(This section will include events in September and early October that students can attend for the Writing Assignment or personal enrichment.)

September 8

- **Human Rights Film Series: *Human Rights in the USA*.**

Kickoff film will include a showing of *Living Broke in Boom Times (2008)* and a reception with the filmmaker Peter Kinoy and one of the community activists interviewed in the film, Willie Baptist. Dodd Research Center, Konover Auditorium, 4:00 PM. [Poster](#)

September 10

- **Ramadan Awareness Dinner**

South Campus, Rome Ballroom, 7:00PM

RSVP via e-mail to uconnmsa@gmail.com or khayriyyah.munir@uconn.edu

September 14

- **Suicide Prevention Week Film**

Tie a Yellow Ribbon,

Asian American Cultural Center, Student Union 428, 6 p.m.

September 15

- **Suicide Prevention Week Keynote Speaker**

Alison Malmon, founder of *Active Minds*

Jorgensen Theatre, 7:00-8:30PM.

September 16

- **Suicide Prevention Week Films**

Tie a Yellow Ribbon,

Asian American Cultural Center, Student Union 428, 6 P.M.

- *Dead Poets Society*

Student Union Theatre, 6 P.M.

September 17

- **Constitution Day 2009: *The Constitution and Civil Liberties in War Time.***
Keynote speaker will be John E. Finn, Professor of Government, Wesleyan University. Konover Auditorium, 5:00-6:00PM. www.constitutionfacts.com
- **Benton Museum of Art Talks: *Faculty Exhibition***
Will likely include discussion and the artists' thoughts about his or her work.
Benton Museum, 12:15PM.

September 18

- **Suicide Prevention Week Film**
Prayers for Bobby,
Rainbow Center, Student Union 428, 6 P.M.

September 24

- **Benton Museum of Art Talks: *Women's Work, Women's Dreams: A Century of Swedish Women's Arts***
Will include a staff-lead tour of the exhibit.
Benton Museum, 12:15PM.

October 6

- **Opening of the Asian American Heritage Month**
Special speaker Socheata Poev, director and producer of *New Year Baby*, a film about human rights conditions in Cambodia.

October 7-8

- **Metanoia: *Preventing Violence Against Women***
Look for more information on specific programs as the planning progresses.

October 13

- **Human Rights Film Series: *Human Rights in the USA***
The Least of These (2009)
Dodd Research Center, Konover Auditorium, 4 P.M.
An exploration of the detention of immigrant families in prison-like conditions while awaiting asylum hearings and other legal procedures.

November 10

- **Human Rights Film Series: *Human Rights in the USA***
Ask Not (2008)
Dodd Research Center, Konover Auditorium, 4 P.M.
Examines the military policy "Don't Ask Don't Tell," which has resulted in the discharge of thousands of gay and lesbian member of the US armed forces.