Distance up close

NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF DISTANCE LEARNING

FROM THE DIRECTOR

A new year and new semester bring opportunities for reflection, growth, and change. As we begin 2019, I'm eager to share the goals of our revised strategic plan that we'll be implementing throughout the year. In each issue of the newsletter, I'll be introducing one of our six goals—academic integrity, growth, quality, student support, accessibility, and affordability.

FSU's strong commitment to academic integrity is a reflection of our belief in the importance of honesty and trust in the academic process. At ODL, we're continuously working to improve awareness of the Academic Honor Policy and promote practices to increase academic integrity in the courses we support. This is also a key objective in the Testing Center. This year we'll be working to ensure that the Testing Center is recognized nationally as a standard for student success and academic integrity. We want to make the center not only a secure location to host high-stakes exams but also a welcoming and supportive environment where students can thrive academically.

As part of improving our assessment and testing services, we'd like to announce new leadership at the Testing Center. Please welcome Dr. Joe Clark, who will be guiding the staff in pursuing our new initiatives. You can read more about Joe in this issue, along with Testing Center enhancements over the past year and how our course evaluation system has helped increase online response rates.

So, please join us as we work to fulfill our goals and support you in developing instructional innovations that can help our students succeed.

Sincerely,
Robby Fuselier

IN THE NEWS

Testing Center Gets New Leadership

The Office of Distance Learning is pleased to announce that Dr. Joseph ("Joe") Clark, Associate Director at the Office of Distance Learning, will be taking over leadership of the Testing Center. Clark has a long tenure at FSU that includes test development and administration; instructional design; and consulting in pedagogy, instructional technology, and online learning. As a faculty member, he's served on and chaired a number of committees during his nearly 20 years at FSU. Clark currently represents FSU on the State University System of Florida Board of Governors Distance Learning Subcommittee on Quality.

A key goal of ODL's strategic plan is to ensure that the Testing Center will be known as a model for academic integrity and student success. One of the first steps in that process is to pursue certification with the National College Testing Association, a highly regarded source of standards and community for testing professionals. We're also re-examining our internal and external communications for greater efficiency and clarity, and to improve the test-scheduling and test-taking experience for our students.

"The Testing Center staff are a committed and experienced group of professionals and I'm proud to work with them to serve the FSU community," said Clark. "We're looking forward to making the center an even better place to take tests while maintaining critical standards that preserve the security and validity of the testing process."

Over the last year, the Testing Center has made a number of improvements. We hired a Customer Service Manager who has implemented customer service training for our front-line staff. We added a second scanning drop box with extended hours, and we upgraded the network and electrical infrastructure in Miller Hall, enabling us to provide an overflow facility to accommodate additional students during high-volume weeks of testing.

More improvements are planned for the future. We're currently replacing our testing stations with newer, more robust hardware, and we will improve our exam scheduling and registration process to better serve the needs of our instructors and students.

Spring Course Evaluation Info on the Way

Instructors and department administrators should be on the lookout for email reminders the week of March 5, 2019, to take the necessary steps to ensure a smooth course evaluation process this semester. These emails will provide all the necessary information to conduct evaluations and will include tutorials to guide users through the process.

Important Dates for the Spring 2019 Semester

Tuesday, March 5: Administrative window opens
- Instructors and administrators should check enrollment information and add any custom questions in EvaluationKIT at this time
- Paper packets may be ordered at this time

Wednesday, April 3: Last day to order paper packets

Friday, April 12: Evaluation window opens
- Students may begin evaluating courses and instructors

Friday, April 26: Evaluation window closes
- Last day to administer evaluations

Wednesday, May 1: Deadline to return paper packets

Friday, May 10: Reports are released

Student feedback is an essential part of improving FSU courses and programs, so we ask that instructors encourage students to complete evaluations for all their courses. If you have any questions regarding the course evaluation process, please contact Scanning and Evaluations Supervisor Mike Straszewksi.

Online Evaluation Responses on Rise

Response rates for online course evaluations are on the rise for online graduate programs, according to data pulled from our online course evaluation system EvaluationKIT.

The College of Business posted a double-digit increase in course evaluation response rates over the past year. In 2018, the response rate for the online graduate MBA program was 25.7%. That figure increased to 77.2% in 2019, for a jump of over 50%. Other programs also showed an upsurge. Programs that participated in a 2017 pilot of EvaluationKIT, such as Computer Information Technology, saw an increase in evaluation response rates during that time. After this initial increase, EvaluationKIT participants maintained elevated response rates in respect to historical averages.

Online Program	2018 Response Rate (%)	2019 Response Rate (%)
MBA	25.7	77.2
Non-MBA Business	65.0	83.7
Computer Information Technology	80.2	78.8
Criminal Justice	62.3	80.4
Education	70.7	85.4
Bachelors	59.1	72.9

Mike Straszewski, Scanning and Evaluations Supervisor, attributes the higher response rate to the implementation of EvaluationKIT, which streamlines the student feedback process through Canvas. ODL piloted EvaluationKIT in Summer 2017 and implemented automatic online evaluations in Summer 2018. "Through this new process, instructors are automatically in compliance with the governing evaluation policy and are able to insert their own questions tailored to the nature of the course," said Straszewski.

The response rate data were compiled as part of the *U.S. News & World Report* Best Online Program rankings. Each year, ODL gathers data for submission to the annual rankings. Data included in the 2019 response rates reflect Summer 2017, Fall 2017, and Spring 2018 enrollments.

Online Grad Programs Rank in Top 20

Four of Florida State University's online graduate programs ranked in the Top 20 nationally, according to **U.S. News & World Report's 2019 Best Online Programs**.

The College of Criminology and Criminal Justice's online graduate program continues to rank among the best in the nation at No. 6, jumping one spot from the previous year. The college offers a master's degree in **criminal justice studies**.

"We are excited that our college's online graduate program continues to be recognized among the very best in the nation," said Thomas Blomberg, Dean of the College of Criminology and Criminal Justice and Sheldon L. Messinger Professor of Criminology. "We also remain extremely pleased that, through this program, we are able to offer a diverse group of students from across the country the same high-quality education and instruction as our on-campus students."

The College of Business's non-MBA online graduate program placed No. 12 in the nation. Students interested in this field can pursue master of science degrees in **management information systems** and **risk management and insurance**. The college's online **MBA program** checked in at No. 21.

The College of Education's online graduate program held steady in the No. 13 position. The college offers degrees in **curriculum and instruction**, **educational leadership**, **instructional systems and learning technologies**, and **learning and cognition**.

The College of Communication and Information's online graduate program in **information technology** was ranked No. 14 in the category of computer information technology. The master of science degree is offered by the college's School of Information.

The methodology for ranking online programs included five general categories: student engagement, faculty credentials and training, student services and technology, peer reputation, and admissions selectivity.

Helping Develop Accessible Course Materials

With the new year under way, ODL would like to remind faculty that Florida State University offers several resources to help you make your courses more accessible to all students. For assistance, please contact one of the following offices:

- Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC) works to ensure that reasonable accommodations are provided to students with disabilities. For more information, contact SDRC at 850-644-9566 or sdrc@admin.fsu.edu.
- Office of Distance Learning (ODL) assists with the development of accessible courses and offers workshops to familiarize faculty with universal design and accessibility. For more information, contact ODL at 850-644-4635 or odl-faculty@campus.fsu.edu.
- Center for the Advancement of Teaching (CAT) supports faculty in the development of quality learning experiences and the advancement of a culture that values effective teaching for all students. For more information, contact Director Leslie Richardson at 850-644-6643 or larichardson@fsu.edu.

CANVAS FYI

Using Course Dates in Canvas

Have you ever looked at your Canvas course settings and wondered why your course dates are empty?

All Canvas courses are assigned to a particular term, such as Spring 2019, which determines the default dates for that term during which students may submit assignments and complete other activities in your course site. The start and end date fields in your course settings allow you to override the default term dates, as needed, for the term that your course has been assigned. If you would like to allow a student extra time to submit the final paper before final grades are due, you can override the default term dates. However, we do not recommend extending the course end date unless absolutely necessary. Keep in mind that extending the course end date too far can cause problems, including:

- Keeping the course on your and your students' Dashboards long after the course has ended. If you teach a similar course from semester to semester, this may make it more difficult to locate your current courses.
- Potentially making it possible for students to accidentally resubmit assignments or post to discussion items.
- Students receiving notifications about the course after it has ended.

If you have a student who needs to finish an incomplete, contact ODL Technical Support for assistance so that the course remains active for only that particular student and not the entire class.

If you want your students to have access to the course material after the course is over, you don't need to extend the end date. Students automatically default to having read-only course access for up to a year after the course ends. For more information, learn how user enrollments and course access work in Canvas.

Spring Training

Training in Canvas continues with workshops and webinars on Canvas orientation and course design using modules. You can sign up for sessions—as well as any of our consultations—on our **registration page**. If you would like to arrange departmental training, contact John Braswell at 850-645-0469.

Release Notes

The January production release notes from Canvas describe updated features and bug fixes. With the new Preview feature in Commons, instructors can review resource content before importing it into their course. Also, finding and importing Commons content is easier with a simpler user interface. You can access the **complete release notes** on the Canvas Community page.

TOOL TIME

Gradebook Tips

While it may seem early to be discussing grades, finals will be here before you know it. To help you keep your Canvas gradebook tidy and user friendly for both you and your students, we've put together the following tips.

- Make sure the Canvas course Grading Scheme in your course settings matches the scheme you provide in your course syllabus.
- Ensure that you un-mute assignments once you've finished grading them—students can't see their grade and any feedback you've given them while the Gradebook column is muted.
- Be sure to grade as you go and leave no grade cell empty.
  - Want to efficiently assign zeroes to only unsubmitted assignments after the assignment due date has passed? Use the Set Default Grade feature. Though leaving a dash in the grade cell will automatically penalize the student for not completing the assignment, it often results in confusion for students because they may not be seeing what you see.
  - For an excused or optional assignment: Make sure to mark "EX" in the student's grade cell for anyone who didn't submit the assignment. Leaving a dash in the grade cell will automatically penalize the student.
- Want to drop your students' lowest quiz score? You can do it automatically in Canvas, but make sure that all the quizzes are in their own assignment group that contains no "ungraded" items.
- If you're considering offering extra credit, make sure that it will be factored into your students' final grades correctly.
- Don't like working in Canvas? Or, trying to do a complex calculation? You can download your gradebook, complete your edits in Excel, and then upload the changes.

New Gradebook

Although the above tips apply to both the old and new Canvas gradebooks, we recommend opting in to the New Gradebook to get more familiar with it before it becomes the default gradebook beginning Summer 2019. New Gradebook features include simplified navigation, drag-and-drop organization, late and missing submission policies, and color coding.

For more information, see how to ensure the accuracy of final grades within Canvas, Canvas Gradebook Best Practices, and Canvas New Gradebook Best Practices.

TECHNOLOGY TIPS

Training for Instructor Request Tool

The November/December issue of *Distance Up Close* highlighted an upgrade to the proctor request system. The new **Instructor Request tool** allows all course and examination information to be captured in a single place. Instructors can upload materials, determine if they want to allow online proctoring, and track the progress of their requests. If you would like training on this tool, please contact ODL Business Analyst Dewel Lindsey at **dlindsey@campus.fsu.edu** or 850-645-9923.

Support Articles

Check out the latest articles from our **Canvas Support Center**.

- **How to adjust general course settings**
- **How to adjust which features are turned on in a course**
- **How to easily reuse directions across several graded items within a single course in Canvas**
- **How to check already submitted student papers for plagiarism by Turnitin**
- **How to download Bb Collaborate Ultra recordings**
- **How to share or give away media ownership in Kaltura**
- **How to publish audio/video to your course's Media Gallery**
- **FAMU-FSU engineering instructors: How to find courses you're teaching in Canvas**

ODDS AND ENDS

PIE Teaching Workshop

The PIE Coffee Hour & Teaching Workshop Series offers sessions on strategies that promote excellence in teaching. A 90-minute workshop addressing online teaching tips is scheduled for Feb. 19, 2019, at 3:30 pm. For more information and to register, visit the **workshop series page**.

Spring Conferences

- **UPCEA annual conference**, March 27–29, 2019, in Seattle. Register by Feb. 20 to avoid a late fee.
- **OLC Innovate**, April 2–5, 2019, in Denver.
- **U.S. Distance Learning Association national conference**, May 20–22, 2019, in Nashville.
- **International Society for Technology in Education conference**, June 23–26, 2019, in Philadelphia. Super early-bird pricing ends March 1.

LET US HEAR FROM YOU!

We are eager to receive your feedback on what you would like to see in future issues of the newsletter, so please **send us your suggestions** about ways ODL can better serve you.

Office of Distance Learning
University Center, C-3500, 296 Champions Way, Tallahassee, FL 32306
Phone: 850.644.4635
Tech Support: 850.644.8004 | canvas@fsu.edu
ODL website | Canvas Support Center
Twitter | Facebook