

# January 2013 Distance Learning Newsletter

## Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice



### ONLINE SOCIOLOGY PROGRAM UPDATES

Our Online Sociology Degree Program has been growing from 31 students last semester to 56 students in Spring 2013. We had our first web-learner Sociology graduate in December, Ms. Jennifer Richards and are expecting at least two more graduations in the Spring. Robin has developed one upper-division major requirement, SOCI 4444 (Social Change and Modernization) which is now QM approved and offered this semester. Two more upper-division requirements are planned for development and QM approval this semester (SOCI 3314 and SOCI 3354). In addition, Robin, Judy and Cristina are in the process of setting up a virtual Internship option for our weblearners.

We **WILL** need additional faculty resources to add the next proposed program concentration next year (Medical Sociology) as well as be able to offer the existing courses regularly. We are currently still doing quite a few substitutions - a measure which we should aim to gradually eliminate.

Again, a gentle reminder for faculty who committed to developing SOCI 3304, SOCI 3333 and SOCI 4499! Here are the QM deadlines for the upcoming semesters:

- Summer 2013 - courses should be submitted by February 15, 2013 to guarantee an initial review prior to the opening of registration on March 18, 2013.
- Fall 2013 - courses should be submitted by March 8, 2013 to guarantee an initial review prior to opening of registration on April 1, 2013.
- Spring 2014 - courses should be submitted by October 4, 2013 to guarantee an initial review prior to opening of registration on November 4, 2013.

## D2L UPDATES

- As expected, not everyone is 100% happy with the new D2L platform ☹️. The ODL is currently discussing with the dean a forum in which faculty and staff can air their concerns, grievances ... and, to cite the very funny Tammy Powell, “homicidal rage” 😊. The purpose of the forum is to let everyone know what issues ACS, D2L, and the USG are aware of and what answers are available; and take questions and concerns to pass on to ACS, D2L, and the USG. If you have anything to ask or add please send these concerns to me or Tammy Powell.
- So far there seems to be a wide consensus that the e-mail function leaves a lot to be desired, but D2L has some plans to fix these shortcomings within the next 6 months.
- Some web-courses didn't transfer so faculty needs to check their D2L to make sure all courses they are interested have been migrated. Those that are not there will have to be migrated by the faculty member himself/herself (the ODL can help). Keep in mind that deadline for this **is February 22<sup>nd</sup>**! Just let me know!
- To keep a copy of student work from Vista for the next year, follow the instructions below that the USG has provided:

<http://d2.parature.com/ics/support/default.asp?deptID=8075&task=knowledge&questionID=2634>

**ONLINE COURSE SURVEY REVIEW.** The campus-wide ODL is preparing a survey designed to collect input in the Online Course Review Process and the internal use of the Quality Matters Rubric. This survey is about faculty satisfaction and perceptions only and participation is **strongly encouraged!** Please keep in mind that this survey is not related in any way to e-tuition, as some concerns were initially voiced. This initial survey is not related to the current online course compensation model which was approved on November 12, 2009 by the Dean's Council in response to Goal 1 of the 2007-2012 Strategic Plan to increase the proportion of courses offered off-site and online. This model remains in effect.

The purpose of this survey will be to gain insight into the current levels of satisfaction, and to investigate areas for improvement and/or change if warranted. It is a first response to the Faculty Senate Resolution which states: "It is the view of the Faculty Senate that the principle of certification of the instructor rather than certification of the course be examined seriously as the subject of certification of online instruction is reconsidered in the near future."

## **MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) and BWC (Build a Webcourse Workshop)**

Along with other online coordinators in the college, I will participate in, and contribute to a pilot MOOC course designed to present “best practices” in online teaching and which will start in March. All faculty who teach online will be invited to participate in this course. If this pilot

course works as expected, the ODE plans to start incentivizing the development of new online and hybrid courses. Faculty who have completed a BWC workshop and who have already developed and taught one course online, will be encouraged to do some advanced faculty development via the MOOC (a new course will run every spring), and receive \$1000 to develop a new online course.

**Virtual Owl.** Please encourage students to make use of the Virtual Owl Desktop. This desktop allow faculty and students to access expensive software from anywhere without purchasing it. With this application, both faculty and students can use, for example, Adobe Creative Suite or SPSS from anywhere.

Please consider including the following language in your syllabus or announcements:

*“Do you need access to Microsoft Office products or Adobe Creative Suite? Did you know that you already have it? Go to <http://virtualowl.kennesaw.edu/> and watch the Virtual Owl Presentation to see what to do to get the Virtual Owl desktop. If you have questions, contact service via email at [studenthelpdesk@kennesaw.edu](mailto:studenthelpdesk@kennesaw.edu) or by telephone at [770-499-3555](tel:770-499-3555). You can also visit service at the STS Helpdesk in the Burruss Building room 475”*

**Accessibility Standards for online courses.** One of the QM criteria for online course development is “course accessibility”. Apparently many faculty aim at creating accessible courses, but they find it difficult to navigate what is required versus what is recommended. Below are some USG guidelines on what is required (priority 1 items) that may be helpful to use as a checklist in your course development work:

<http://www.usg.edu/siteinfo/accessibility>

**Talon Tips.** The latest issue of Talon Tips - KSU's Distance and Technology Enhanced Teaching Newsletter.

<http://www.kennesaw.edu/dlc/TalonTips/index.html>

This edition contains selections on the Faculty Development Resources at the USG, D2L Training Updates, SmarterMeasure Online Readiness Updates, An Introduction to Livebinder and Faculty Members Experiences with D2L and Online Course Design.

The Newsletter always welcomes your 250-300 word submission, highlighting your best and innovative practices in technology enhanced teaching and learning.