ConnSCU Commons

Last month the Board of Regents for Higher Education launched ConnSCU Commons, an internal, online community across all 17 Connecticut State Colleges and Universities. This is a safe and secure forum for faculty and staff to share ideas, ask questions, and interact with each other.

Go to http://commons.ct.edu to logon. Use the same username and password that you use to logon to the computers on campus and then select your home institution as the authentication source. The first time you login, make sure to set up your profile and personal information.

General Information:
• ConnSCU Commons is built on the popular open-source Drupal platform and supports collaboration among a group of individuals.
• All ConnSCU faculty and staff can create and host their own groups.
• As a group owner, you may add/remove group members and designate access privileges of each member.
• The group members may share files and collaborate via blogs, discussion board, and wiki.
• Questions and comments should be posted within the Commons Support group, where they will be addressed by site administrators.

Is No Critical Thinking Really the Answer?

Mark Bauerlein, a freshman composition instructor at Emory University, wrote an article called "All Summary, No Critical Thinking." In this article, Bauerlein explains how his students are not able to summarize well, which then means they cannot interpret, analyze, or describe what they read. His solution is to require his students to write 14 two-page summaries instead of three to four essays that have a thesis, argument and lots of analysis. His students focus more on summarizing rather than critical thinking or higher-order thinking skills.

Bauerlein states that summarizing will be the most common writing task people will be required to complete in the workforce. As his students work on their summaries, Bauerlein is able to focus instruction on grammar and style. Once a student demonstrates mastery of summarizing, he adds critical thinking and higher-level skills to his assignments.

The comments following the article are fascinating to read. There are some “ah ha” moments and someone questioning if this is an April fool’s joke.

We are bringing in outside professionals to conduct interesting and thought-provoking workshops on advanced teaching pedagogy. Light refreshments will be served. Contact Nina Stein at nstein@trcc.commnet.edu or 860-885-2357 to RSVP or if you have any questions.

Past Session:
- **Session 1: Identifying the Potential in Students**
  - **Date, Time & Location:** Wednesday, April 18, 2012, 4-6 PM, B214
  - **Presenter:** Michele Campagna, Montclair State University

Upcoming Sessions:
- **Session 2: Net Generation Students: Who They Are, Why They are Different, and Teaching Strategies That Work For Them**
  - **Date & Time:** Thursday, May 3, 2012, 4-6 PM, C243
  - **Presenter:** Robert Feldman, University of Massachusetts Amherst
  - **Description:** In this workshop, we will focus on today's Net Generation students, discussing how they are different from students of prior generations. We will then talk about strategies that address students of today, focusing on ways of engaging them and on several innovative (and inexpensive) technologies that can be incorporated into the classroom. We'll also consider the changing roles of instructors, and talk about preparing Net Generation students for careers and lifelong learning.

- **Session 3: Transformational Leadership in the Classroom: Teachers as charismatic, motivating, and influential leaders**
  - **Date & Time:** Monday, May 7, 2012, 4-6 PM, B214
  - **Presenter:** Darrin Griffin, University of Buffalo
  - **Description:** Teachers provide leadership in college classrooms, and the behaviors they exhibit as leaders impact a variety of student outcomes (Bolkan & Goodboy, 2009). Bolkan, S., & Goodboy, A. K. (2009). This workshop will examine how to use transformational leadership in the classroom to foster student motivation and, subsequently, students’ approaches to their studying. Results suggest that when teachers influence students’ intrinsic motivation through the use of intellectually stimulating behaviors, students approach their learning in deep and strategic ways, and are less likely to adopt a surface-level approach to their studies.

- **Session 4: Re-energizing Your Teaching**
  - **Date & Time:** Tuesday, September 11, 2012, 4-6 PM, B214
  - **Presenter:** Maryellen Weimer, Penn State University
  - **Description:** Most college teachers begin their careers full of enthusiasm for teaching. But their idealistic goals and the realities of academic careers often collide, leaving teachers with tarnished goals and sometimes cynical perspectives. The goal of the session: propose ways of thinking about growth and change that can increase both the motivation to teach and effectiveness in the classroom.
Accreditation: Can it be used to Aid Adjuncts?

Adjunct instructors account for more than four fifths of the instructors in public two-year colleges, more than two thirds of the faculties at private-four-year colleges, and more than half of the faculties at public four-year colleges. Advocates for adjunct faculty see adjunct training as an educational problem, and have lobbied for more rigorous examination of the treatment and training of adjuncts as a part of institutional reviews.

Some advocates for adjuncts are skeptical that accreditation pressures will make a difference, since accreditors are reluctant to promote policies that are not widely accepted as necessary. Another alternative, from the American Federation of Teachers, encourages would-be college students, their parents, and their high school guidance counselors to consider the training of adjunct faculty members when judging higher-education institutions, since, more than likely, these students will be taught by adjunct instructors.


Learning Science Workshop

What: Learning Science: A workshop for Teachers on Student Engagement  
When: May 18th, 9:30 AM – 4:00 PM  
Where: University of Connecticut, Storrs Campus, Student Union building room 304B  
Fees: $20 - Light lunch and refreshments will be served.

The workshop is intended for all those with an instructional role in science from high school through university, including graduate teaching assistants and adjuncts but everyone is invited. It will explore multiple ways of making science meaningful and exciting to students, thereby increasing learning and success.

This workshop is organized by STRONG-CT: Science and Technology Reaching Out to New Generations in Connecticut.

For further information contact Diba at dkhan-bureau@trcc.commnet.edu Registration and full program is available at http://www.regonline.com/learning-science
Techy Tip

Woopid

Have you ever found yourself in the middle of creating a PowerPoint presentation and wanting to do something like adding a background image or wanting to add a signature to your Word document? Often, it’s something you know you can do but can’t quite remember how. Maybe you try to find the answer using “Microsoft Help,” only to find the information to be of no practical use. Woopid could be your answer. Woopid is a website that contains searchable libraries of thousands of FREE training videos to give you quick step-by-step tutorials for specific technology-related user problems. If you can’t find what you’re looking for, you can request that they develop a video for the future. Another section of the website offers comprehensive bundles of tips and tricks for Windows, Mac OS X, Google, Facebook, eBay and other applications. You need to register to be able to access the site, but this is free. Check this out and share it with your students!

• Website: http://www.woopid.com/

Call for Articles and Events!

We are looking for articles for future IDEA Center newsletters. If you would like to submit an article, please e-mail Nina Stein at nstein@trcc.commnet.edu.

If you have an event that you would like included in the “Calendar of Events” section of the newsletter, please send the information to Nina Stein at the above e-mail address. Please include the name of the event, facilitator, location, date, and time.

Improving Student Participation

A workshop at the University of Wisconsin, Eau Clair, asked participants to identify one thing about participation in their classroom they most want to change. One response was the way students fail to listen and respond to each other. In the article listed below, the top three responses along with solutions were shared. Below the article are comments from educators on this topic that you might find of interest.


Maryellen Weimer, author of the article discussed on the left, will be speaking here at Three Rivers on Tuesday, September 11th from 4-6 PM. The topic of the workshop is “Re-energizing Your Teaching”.

Miss Representation DVD

*Miss Representation* is a documentary, by Jennifer Siebel Newson, "explores how mainstream media presents limited and often disparaging portrayals of women and thereby contributes to the underrepresentation of women in influential positions." The film premiered at the 2011 Sundance Film Festival and aired on OWN: Oprah Winfrey Network.

Watch stories from teenage girls and interviews from politicians, journalists, entertainers such as Margaret Cho, Katie Couric, Geena Davis, Rosario Dawson, Jane Fonda, Lisa Ling, Rachel Maddow, Nancy Pelosi, and Condoleezza Rice.

Learning Reconsidered: A Campus-Wide Focus on the Student Experience

*Learning Reconsidered*, written by ACPA and NASPA and edited by Richard Keeling, argues for the integration of all of higher education's resources in the education and preparation of the whole student. The publication re-examines widely accepted ideas about conventional teaching and learning and questions whether current organizational patterns in higher education support student learning and development in today's environment. This landmark publication builds upon historical student affairs statements that focus on student affairs as a profession and is a critical resource for every student affairs professional.

Learning Reconsidered 2: A Practical Guide to Implementing a Campus-Wide Focus on the Student Experience is also available in the IDEA Center.

The Course Syllabus: A Learning-Centered Approach


With teacher’s commitment to engage their students, the syllabus has evolved into a useful and lengthy document. Today's syllabus provides details about course objectives, requirements and expectations, and also includes information about teaching philosophies, specific activities and the rationale for their use, and tools essential to student success. As you are ending your semester, this book can help you re-examine your syllabus and make improvements for next semester.
## Calendar of Events

### May

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Facilitator/Contact</th>
<th>Room</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Getting Started with Bb Learn</td>
<td>N. Stein</td>
<td>E108</td>
<td>5/2</td>
<td>1-3 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Generation Students – Robert Feldman</td>
<td>N. Stein</td>
<td>C-243</td>
<td>5/3</td>
<td>4-6 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformational Leadership in the Classroom</td>
<td>N. Stein</td>
<td>B-214</td>
<td>5/7</td>
<td>4-6 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science Teaching Workshop</td>
<td>D. Khan-Bureau</td>
<td>U Conn</td>
<td>5/18</td>
<td>9-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting Started with Bb Learn</td>
<td>N. Stein</td>
<td>E108</td>
<td>5/22</td>
<td>10-12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### June

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Facilitator/Contact</th>
<th>Room</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>myCommnet/Blackboard – Faculty Support Open Lab</td>
<td>N. Stein</td>
<td>E108</td>
<td>6/5</td>
<td>10-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bb Learn – What is My Role in the Online Classroom? Ways to Engage and Interact with Your Online Students</td>
<td>K. Barfield</td>
<td>E108</td>
<td>6/25</td>
<td>1-2:30 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bb Learn – Why and How to Best Use Rubrics in Blackboard Learn 9.1</td>
<td>K. Barfield</td>
<td>E108</td>
<td>7/24</td>
<td>1-2:30 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting Started with Bb Learn</td>
<td>N. Stein</td>
<td>E108</td>
<td>7/25</td>
<td>1-3 PM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please use the Course Cart to register for the computer and Blackboard workshops located in E108.

*It is only out on the limb where the fruit grows. – Author unknown*