From the Editor

Lots of news in the Ferris online community this year!

Please read across this page for the national recognition that Ferris has received this year, and follow the links to find information about the ranking criteria. Ferris was also ranked eighth in the top ten affordable online colleges in Michigan. For information about the ranking criteria, please go to http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/archive/2013/november/online.htm

The Office of Academic Affairs has created a new position related to online education at Ferris: an Associate Provost and Dean for Online and Instructional Technologies. The hiring process is now underway. Please see page 2.

The OTLC announces the results of its four-year comparison study of more than 8200 student completions of online and face-to-face sections of ENGL 321 and of ENGL 325, courses with respectively the highest and the fifth-highest online enrollments at Ferris. Please see page 3.

The theme of Third Annual Online Courses Fair, to be held in FLITE 112 and 114 on February 19 and 20, will be comparing strategies used in online and face to face courses. Please see page 4 for additional information about the Fair; we urge all those interested in online to come to the Fair! We in the online community at Ferris have a lot to talk about this academic year!

And that includes the Desktop and Classroom Technology Standards Committee’s work in establishing Student Technology Standards. See Jody Gardel’s article on page 6.

~Elaine
Provost Erickson has created a new administrative position to head online education at Ferris.

On October 25 the Office of Academic Affairs began advertising for an “Associate Provost and Dean of Online and Instructional Technologies.”

In the November 14 meeting of the E-learning Management Advisory Team (E-MAT), Provost Erickson stated, “It is our desire to elevate online to the status it deserves in the university. It is bigger than three colleges in its budget. Working in partnership with Don Green, Vice President for Extended and International Operations, there is a great opportunity to extend and grow online. There are opportunities for new program development, extending existing offerings and finding ways to help serve more students both in Big Rapids and at a distance. It will determine how we are going to really grow online, how we are going to implement some of the policies that have come from E-MAT, and how we have someone who sits on Deans’ Council and is someone who has the administrative authority to push forward with online.”

Here is the description of the position that was advertised: “The Associate Provost and Dean for Online and Instructional Technologies provides leadership and oversight for online course/program development and operations. As a senior academic administrator, this position will be in charge of all online program design, development, marketing and delivery. Working in partnership with college Deans, this position will have administrative authority of all online operations. Examples of responsibilities include: developing new online initiatives, overseeing all online staff, managing online budgets, working directly with faculty in online program development, serving on the Deans’ Council, and leading the E-Learning Management Advisory Team (E-MAT).The Associate Provost and Dean for Online & Instructional Technologies reports directly to the Vice President for Extended and International Operations and works directly with the Provost/VPAA.”

Here are the required qualifications listed for the position:

- A terminal degree from a regionally accredited institution.
- Demonstrated significant progressive experience in Academic Administration in Higher Education.
- Significant experience with design and delivery of online and alternative delivery systems.
- Experience with curriculum development and implementation in higher education.
- Outstanding written and verbal communication skills.
- Ability to develop positive interpersonal relationships.
- Able to take a broad perspective on complex teaching issues.

Here are the preferred qualifications listed for the position:

- Significant experience working with emerging technologies.
- Prior experience working as a Dean or Associate Provost in higher education.
- Prior teaching experience including online.
- Experience as a tenured faculty member.
- Faculty with a rank of Professor.
- Demonstrated research experience
- Demonstrated experience obtaining grants/external funding opportunities.
- Budget experience.
- Prior experience working across multiple divisions in a University setting.

Thus far 28 candidates have applied for the position. The search committee is now determining the most qualified from that group and will be scheduling video-phone interviews for late December and early January, with the goal of bringing the finalists to campus by February 1. Open sessions will be planned, at which Ferris stakeholders may meet the candidates and offer input. Many in the Ferris online community will want to attend these sessions!
The OTLC has now completed Phase 1 of its four-year comparison study of 8200 student completions of online and face-to-face sections of ENGL 321 and ENGL 325, thanks to the invaluable data and analysis provided by Kathy Fisher and Kristen Salomonson and to the review of the data by these Languages and Literature faculty involved in the study: Jody Ollenquist, Lynn Chrenka, Tom Stoffer, Elaine McCullough, Katherine Harris, Roxanne Cullen, Robert von der Osten, and Nate Garrelts.

Our primary finding is that from the beginning of the summer semester of 2009 through the spring semester of 2013, we find no significant difference between the final grades earned by students in the online and face-to-face sections of ENGL 321 nor of ENGL 325.

Therefore, we conclude that course outcomes, as measured by final grades, are essentially the same in online and face-to-face sections of the highest and the fifth highest enrolled online courses at Ferris.

To measure the difference in the mean final grades of sections delivered in the two modalities in each of the two courses over the four years of the study, we used a common statistical measure of significant difference: a variation of 5% or more in the means of the two numbers being compared.

The median difference between online and face-to-face final grades over four years in ENGL 321 was 1.6% and in ENGL 325 was 4%, both percentages < 5%.

In ENGL 321, the median difference between online and face-to-face final grades, not including F’s, over four years was 2.45%, again < 5%.

However, in ENGL 325, the median difference between online and face-to-face final grades, not including F’s, over four years was 5.8%, which is > 5%. Although the percentage is not a lot more than 5%, in Phase 2 we will study this difference, which may be connected to an anomaly we discovered about the relative percentage of W’s given in ENGL 325 (see below*).

The average number of F’s in English 321 over 4 years was 7.8% higher in online sections than in face-to-face sections and in ENGL 325 was 8% higher in online sections than in face-to-face sections. In Phase 2 of the study, we will study why our online students receive more F’s than our face-to-face students do in these classes and what we can do to alleviate this problem.

In ENGL 321, the average number of W’s was 7.8% higher in online sections than in face-to-face sections. However, in ENGL 325, the average number of W’s was 6.1% lower* in online sections than in face-to-face sections. One explanation for this apparent anomaly of a lower percentage of W’s in online ENGL 325 sections is that many marginal students don’t withdraw from this course (Advanced Business Writing) because their business programs accept a D for its completion, a lower grade than that accepted by most programs. We will explore this hypothesis in Phase 2 of our study.

Phase 2 of the study will begin in fall of 2014, when faculty involved in the study will begin exploring ways to help our marginal online students succeed.

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About the OTLC Newsletter

*L and L on Line* is published twice a semester by the Online Teaching Committee of the Department of Languages and Literature, Ferris State University. Its purpose is to keep members of the Department and others at Ferris apprised of issues affecting our online teaching. Your contributions and suggestions are welcome. The editor is Elaine McCullough, ASC 3077, x5875, mcculloe@ferris.edu.
As you fill in your spring schedule, please save an hour or two for the Third Annual Online Courses Fair on February 19-20, 2014, from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm in FLITE 112 and 114.

This year you have three options for participating:
1. You may demonstrate your course
2. You may make a brief (10 minute) presentation on one of your favorite online teaching tools (either available in Blackboard or elsewhere)
3. You may both demonstrate your course AND make a brief presentation on a favorite online teaching tool

The theme of the Fair this year is Comparing Online and Face-to-Face Courses: Strategies and Challenges. Therefore, we hope most participants will emphasize the ways their online teaching differs from their face-to-face teaching.

Participation in the Fair is easy. Just email Elaine McCullough at mcculloe@ferris.edu, stating the option you have chosen for participating (1, 2, or 3) and the date (19 or 20) you’d like to participate. If you have chosen either Option 1 or Option 3, please state the length of time you’d like to demonstrate your course (11-1, 11-12, 12-1). If you have chosen Option 2, please state the approximate time you’d like to make your presentation. (You may schedule your presentation during the time you’re demonstrating your course.)

Special Reasons to Participate This Year:
1. We’re extending a special invitation to faculty new to Ferris, so please come and introduce our newcomers to the Ferris online community!
2. The new Associate Provost/Dean of Online Education may have been hired by then, so here’s an early opportunity to show him/her what we do!
3. Celebrate the fact that online education at Ferris is among the very best in the nation!

And best of all—we in the Ferris online community will get a chance to visit with each other!

Additional Perks:
• Fair Food—Hot Dogs, Cotton Candy!
• Four Drawings for Prizes, on the half hour!
• Certificate of Participation awarded by Academic Affairs!

Early in the spring semester, we’ll send you additional information about the Fair and answer any questions you may have.

Then, on the date and time you have chosen, just show up at the Fair, find your assigned computer kiosk, and open your course or make your online tool presentation. Then sit back in the chair provided as people ask about your course/presentation, or look at other courses, view the teaching-tool presentations, go through the buffet, and stroll around visiting other participants and guests, as you like. We have learned that we faculty are our own best audience for the Fair, so enjoy yourself!

Come to the Fair!

The Online Courses Fair is a faculty initiative of the Online Teaching and Learning Committee of the Department of Languages and Literature and is sponsored by Academic Affairs, the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning, the Department of Languages and Literature, and FLITE.
The 2013-14 members of the Online Teaching and Learning Committee are Elaine McCullough, Chair; Lynn Chrenka; Tom Stoffer; and Eric Warner. Members Jon Taylor and Dan Ding are on temporary leave from the University. The OTLC is an open committee and welcomes department members who wish to participate.

The mission of the Online Teaching Committee is to promote and facilitate online teaching and learning within the Department of Languages and Literature, act as a resource for best practices, support the use of online technology in the classroom, develop policy guidelines for offering courses online, and represent the department's online interests to other University bodies.

We meet at 11:00 am on the third Thursday of the month, publish a newsletter twice a semester, and host department workshops and campus-wide activities related to online teaching and learning.

The Desktop and Classroom Technology Standards Committee is in the process of posting a site where students can go to find information about software/hardware recommendations and requirements for their personally owned computers.

The committee would like to know more about how each academic program informs students of these requirements and if there is an interest to make this information available centrally from the committee website.

Click here to complete a short questionnaire to assist the committee with moving forward with this initiative.