Inside Independent Learning

Spring Cleaning

The receding snow-cover and warmer temperatures of the season inspire outdoor activities such as hikes, grilling, and gardening. For many, the tradition of "spring cleaning" is also triggered by the warmer temperatures and the return of migratory birds.

I encourage you to include your Independent Learning courses in your spring cleaning routine. Sifting through and purging unneeded documents on a yearly basis can help to make your experience as an Independent Learning instructor more efficient and rewarding.

This month's newsletter contains important information about rules and regulations related to student records and information.

As you engage in your Independent Learning spring cleaning, please keep these regulations in mind.

Announcing the Third Quarterly DCS IL Instructor Appreciation and Professional Development Meeting: A Working Lunch

May 21st from 1-3 pm
Room 7045, 21 N. Park Street
Madison, WI 53715

Self-Evaluation Reminder

As part of the pilot run of the annual ad hoc instructor review, all DCS Independent Learning instructors should have received a self-evaluation in their email. Please complete and return this self-evaluation to Sarah, the IL Academic Program Coordinator, by April 15th so your responses can be included in your annual review.

The annual review is part of the larger DCS program to increase ad hoc instructor support and professional development opportunities.

The purpose of the annual performance evaluation is to identify individual instructor strengths and to help facilitate professional development in a few targeted areas.

IL ad hoc instructors will work directly with Sarah to identify instructional strengths as well as goals for professional development.

The content of future professional development opportunities will largely be inspired by responses to the self-evaluation and conversations related to the performance evaluation.

Together, we will continue to develop our instructional skills and ensure that Independent Learning remains a leader in asynchronous undergraduate education.

Continuing Studies
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

Purging Files & Records

Do you have records for students who completed their courses over a year ago? Do you have students listed in your D2L course(s) who have timed out or completed their courses?

Spring is a great time to purge old files so you can more easily focus on your active students.

According to UW-Madison policy, all student records must be kept for at least one semester past the end of the term they pertain to. As an instructor with Independent Learning, this means that all student records must be kept for at least 12 months after the course end date listed in LRMS/LPV.

At the Division of Continuing Studies, we keep paper exam copies on file for one calendar year after they are completed.

As exams and courses are moved online in D2L, all student records will be stored in the D2L platform. In the meantime, IL instructors can purge all student records, including assignment feedback, 12 months after the course completion date listed in LRMS/LPV.

Instructors who wish to retain student records for a longer period of time may wish to move student records to an archive. Moving files to a zipped archive folder is a great way to keep records you do not yet want to delete without using up a lot of storage space on your electronic devices.

Students in D2L courses can also be deactivated in the D2L platform when they complete or time out of your course(s). IT can deactivate students, so they no longer appear in your course view, while also keeping their records in a virtual file. In order to deactivate students from your D2L course, send a list of students to be deactivated along with the course title to Sarah, your Academic Program Coordinator.

If you are unsure whether a particular student record can be purged, please contact Sarah for assistance.

Activating your NetID

Activating your Net ID is an important step in the hiring process. Your net ID gives you access to MyUW and its associated tools, including WiscMail, your UW email account.

In order to activate your NetID, you will need a WiscCard. Your WiscCard is available to you at no cost as a UW-Madison faculty/staff member. Instructions on how to obtain your WiscCard are located here:

http://wiscard.wisc.edu/get-your-wiscard.html

If you do not currently have a WiscCard, it is suggested that you call the WiscCard office first to ensure that

your name does appear in the system. You can reach the WiscCard Office at 608-262-3258.

One you have your WiscCard, you can activate your Net ID here:

https://mynetid.wisc.edu/activate

You will need the 11 digit ID number from your WiscCard and your date of birth.

Once your NetID is activated, you will be able to use your NetID to log in to MyUW and use the MyUW tools, including WiscCal, WiscMail, WiscChat, and Web Conferencing. You should also be able to view your earning statements and tax statements under the "Work Record" link.

You can log in to MyUW by going to: my.wisc.edu

If you do not live in the Madison, WI area and have not activated your NetID, please contact Sarah to discuss options for activating your NetID Account remotely.

Accessing WiscMail

WiscMail is easy to access via any internet browser. You can access WiscMail by logging in to MyUW and selecting the "Email/Calendar" link at the top of the page, or by going directly to wiscmail.wisc.edu

You may have heard that UW-Madison is in the process of migrating away from WiscMail. Students are already able to use Office 365 to manage their UW email account. The migration kick-off date for the Division of Continuing Studies has not yet been set, so all DCS Independent Learning ad hoc instructors should continue to use WiscMail for now. Sarah will offer more information about this email migration as it is available.
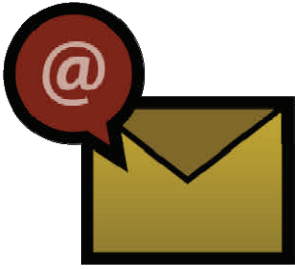
Good Practice Reminder: WiscMail

As an Ad Hoc Instructor with the UW-Madison Division of Continuing Studies (DCS), you have access to certain UW-Madison resources. One of these resources is a net ID, which grants you access to MyUW tools. This also allows you to set up a UW email account.

In the past, Independent Learning instructors often used personal email accounts to conduct IL business and communicate with students. While this strategy fit the needs of instructors and students in the past, it can promote a feeling of disconnection from the Division of Continuing Studies and the Independent Learning Partnership with Extension.

Beginning July 1, 2015, all new DCS IL ad hoc instructors will be required to use their WiscMail accounts for IL business and communication.

Existing instructors are strongly encouraged to activate their WiscMail accounts, notify Sarah of their new e-mail contact information, and begin to use WiscMail for all IL program business. WiscMail can be easily accessed online through MyUW or integrated with email software programs on your personal computer.

Instructors are also encouraged to use a standard e-mail signature for all IL correspondence. An example of the preferred standard signature is:

Your Name

Independent Learning SUBJECT/COURSE Instructor

Division of Continuing Studies

University of Wisconsin Madison

Continuing Studies
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Should you have any trouble setting up your WiscMail account, please contact Sarah for assistance.

D2L Gem: Typos

One of the benefits of modern technology and online courses is that, since the courses exist in an online platform instead of a printed course guide, it is relatively easy to make corrections to a course.

In the former world of printed course guides, typos that made it through the editorial process were embedded in the course guide until the next revision and printing when, hopefully, someone recalled or located the typo and fixed it.

With D2L courses, we have the flexibility to request that typos be addressed between major revision cycles.

This isn't to say that major changes can be made to the course between revision cycles, but that, should you find typos in the course that confuse or contradict other information in the course, these minor issues may be able to be resolved between revision cycles.

It is in the best interests of our students, our courses, and our program that we address glaring and misleading typos so they do not work against the perceived value of our courses and program.

If you notice a typo, please make note of the course and page where the typo is located, as well as what the text currently says and what it should say instead.

This information can be forwarded to Sarah, who will collect such requests and forward them on to the Instructional Design Team.

Typos may not be addressed immediately, and the order and pace at which they will be repaired will be determined by our partners.

"Your resume says you spent 'fore years at collej.'"

Ideas & Suggestions

Remember, if you have any questions or concerns that you think would be of interest to your IL colleagues, please submit them for future IL Newsletters.

Email ideas to: skorpi@dcs.wisc.edu

Coming Next Month: Looking Back and Looking Forward

If you have any helpful tips or hints that you would like to share with your IL colleagues, please be sure to let Sarah know by April 15. If you have any questions that you would like to see addressed in future newsletters, just let Sarah know.

Introducing: Sharon Van Sluijs

Sharon Mariel Van Sluijs was born on the east coast of Wisconsin in an area settled nearly homogeneously by religious Dutch immigrants. Born into a family of farmers and ministers, she resolved early to avoid both paths.

With the assistance of a high school French teacher, Sharon was able to begin her undergraduate studies at Beloit College, but finished her degree in English (minor in French) at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. After a few years, she earned an MFA at the Iowa Writer's Workshop (The Program in Creative Writing) at the University of Iowa, where she was a student of Gerald Stern, Jorie Graham, Elinor Wilner, and Madison Smartt Bell (both poetry and fiction). A generous national award in 1992, the Amy Lowell Poetry Travelling Scholarship, allowed her to travel extensively throughout 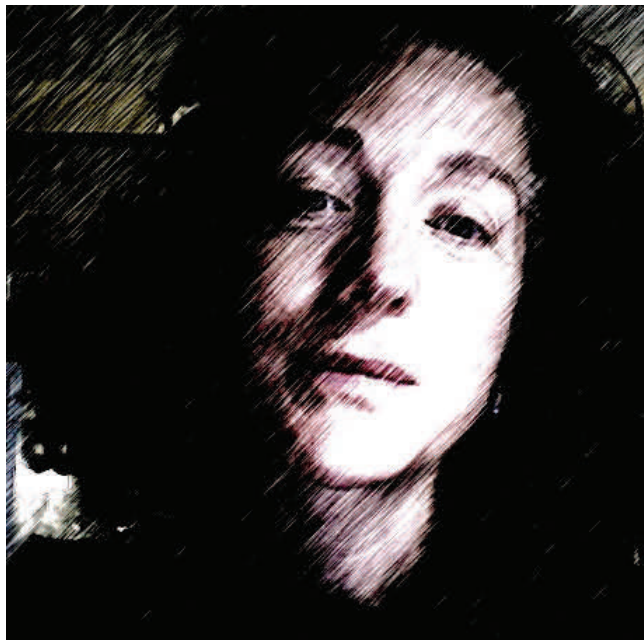Europe and England and finish a collection of poetry. *Under the Influence of Blackbirds* was published in 1994 by New Rivers Press, now under the auspices of Minnesota's Moorhead University. It was selected as an outstanding book by a Wisconsin author by the Wisconsin Library Association. It is in print; still available.
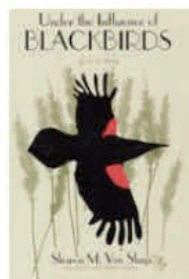
Through the 1990s, Sharon taught fiction and poetry, English composition and literature at the University of Wisconsin, Washburn University, and SUNY-Oswego. She was a member of Madison's Mind's Eye Radio Collective for about ten years, writing and performing essays with embedded poetry for that program. From 2004-2007, she studied and worked with graduate students at the Lab for Affective Neuroscience and became a certified coder of FACS—Facial Action Coding (see the TV series "Lie to Me" starring Tim Roth).

More recently for DCS, Sharon developed its current online course "Grammar and Punctuation: Paths toward Clarity" in early 2012 and taught it until late 2014. For the professional/business community she has taught one-day seminars addressing writing in the workplace and English grammar review since 2010. She'll teach a writing course for the Certified Public Manager's program beginning in June. Her interest in language structure and language acquisition led her to complete the program for ESL/TESOL certification through Edgewood College in 2014. Sharon has assisted many English language learners—children and adults—navigate the twisty paths of English grammar and usage.

For Independent Learning, Sharon has taught the online course "English 203—Creative Writing: Short Story" since the spring of 2013. She is intent upon updating this course—now 24 years old—very soon.

What does she do when she's not engrossed in students' written exercises and short fiction? She reads (omnivorously and constantly), writes (fiction and poetry), indulges in movies (science fiction, preferably) whenever possible, gardens, renovates her house, and bicycles the country roads of Dane County.