

FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE

Weekly Digest for the Week of October 23, 2009

Welcome to the FYE community of faculty, staff, and students dedicated to supporting our new first-year and transfer students create a more successful transition to the University of Connecticut. The Weekly Digest will publish every Friday during the Fall semester and contain details about workshops, upcoming events, tips/techniques, and other information geared to help you have the best semester possible with your FYE class. This summer we will send you a bi-weekly edition to update you prior to the semester. Information will be sent to both INTD 1800/1820 and Learning Community instructors. Comments, suggestions and constructive critique are welcomed. E-mail kevin.sullivan@uconn.edu or David.Ouimette@uconn.edu

Thoughts from the Director, David Ouimette

This has been a tough week for the UConn community. I know that many FYE classes spent some time discussing the tragic events of last Saturday night. I want to underscore what many others have written: members of our Counseling & Mental Health Services are here to help. In addition, they have a [webpage regarding grief reactions](#) related to our campus loss. I found [Responding After a Tragedy: An In-Classroom Guide](#) to be particularly helpful.

Important Information. The *last day* to drop a class and receive a 'W' without the Dean's approval is November 2. (Direct student athletes to consult with their CPIA counselor before withdrawing or dropping from a class.) Quite a few myths about the 'W' grade abound and you may want to address them in your class. The first one is that, "If you drop a class you will lose your housing." Dropping a class and going to less than 12 credits will **NOT** result in a loss of campus housing. The other myth that comes up repeatedly is "You will lose your financial aid." While this is important to consider, students are evaluated yearly about their progress, and it takes at least two years of poor grades to lose aid. I then talk about how they can use the [GPA Calculator](#) to see how they are doing and assess their progress. If they feel that they are in danger of failing, or know in their heart of hearts that this will not turn around, I encourage my students to seek advice from their academic advisor and make the tough decision to stick it out or drop the class. Lesa has sent out 2 rounds of early warnings (a third one will be sent out next week), so you should have some idea of which students are in this predicament. Remember, however, that not all faculty participate in providing early warnings, so that students still need to be on top of their grades.

Related Data to Ponder. This is a critical time of the semester for students to do some reflection and gauge how they are studying. Is how they are taking notes, reading the texts, and preparing for tests working? Polling my students suggests that they need to start much earlier! With this as a back drop, check out what the University Registrar, Jeff von Munkwitz-Smith, passed along to me last week. (Thanks Jeff!)

Among Fall 2008 Storrs entering freshmen, the average cumulative GPA at the end of the first year:

- **Students who took either INTD 1784 (Honors Equivalent) or INTD 1800 = 3.1 (2154)**
- **Students who did not take either INTD 1784 or 1800 = 2.8 (1462)**

Jeff further evaluated the impact of the FYE grade. He did a recalculation without INTD 1784/1800 grades. "If you assume that all of the students who took either INTD 1784 or 1800 received an 'A' in that class – this is not actually the case, but it works for the sake of argument – and exclude it from the GPA calculation, the cumulative GPA for the group would still be **slightly over 3.0.**" The higher education literature suggests that higher GPAs in the first year seem to correspond to higher graduation rates. Our ability to help students understand more about the resources on campus and how to access them goes a long way to improving their performance. I appreciate your on-going efforts to reach out and assist students in making sound decisions/wise choices as they learn to take responsibility for their learning.

Have a great week. Please do not hesitate to call us with questions or concerns.

Instructor Information

(This section will include schedules for HuskyCT training sessions and instructor workshops as well as information for planning classes)

Active Minds Class Presentations:

Active Minds is a national organization concerning suicide prevention/mental health whose mission is not only to help those in need and provide resources, but to lower the negative stigma we all know exists surrounding mental health. The motto of Active Minds is “***Changing the conversation about mental health***”; this is precisely what we are attempting to do with the First Year Experience classes.

The FYE classes would be a perfect place to have open discussions about topics such as mental health illnesses and behavioral disorders. There are so many resources on-campus that students are extremely unfamiliar with due to the lack of discussion surrounding the subject. Many people are scared to begin discussions about this topic due to the negative stigma.

Prior to beginning classroom sessions, the peer educators from Active Minds at UConn will sit with Barry Schreier, Director of Counseling and Mental Health Services, to learn how to facilitate such discussions. Also, emergency procedures will be discussed if a student admits to suicidal thoughts. The main goal of this section of the lesson is to teach students that everyone shares similar stories and no one should be ashamed of sharing their own.

Contact Jeremy Bersin at jmb1836@comcast.net to set up a presentation.

Community Outreach Class Presentations:

As you plan for fall semester and finalize FYE course plans, please consider building a presentation by Community Outreach into your syllabi. Community Outreach student leaders and public relations specialists will present to your incoming class highlighting our programs and services. By inviting Community Outreach to your class, your students will gain valuable information about:

- Various community service opportunities
- Transportation to and from site
- Developing a service program
- Resources for further information

Community Outreach seeks to work with you to enable our first year students with the information and tools necessary to become engaged citizens at the University of Connecticut and beyond. Our opportunities allow students to gain an experiential education to bridge material learned in the classroom with real life experience.

Please contact us at communityoutreach@uconn.edu to request further information or to schedule a presentation for the fall 2009 term. When scheduling a presentation, please include:

- Your name
- Contact information
- Date & time of presentation
- Location of class
- Number of class members

Career Services Resume Writing Assignment for FYE classes:

Career Services reports that the maximum number of presentations for “Preparing Résumés” has been reached. However, the 30-minute, “Overview of Career Services” presentation is still available.

Contact Larry Druckenbrod at 486-3013 or larry.druckenbrod@uconn.edu for questions or to schedule the 30-minute presentation.

Continuing the Tradition: UConn Dairy Bar:

A favorite among students, instructors can take their class on a field trip to the dairy bar for ice cream and/or a tour of the facility. When planning to visit the Dairy Bar, please use the following guidelines (also found on the HuskyCT instructor site):

- Ask your students which flavor from the list on HuskyCT they would like (orders are now either a 4 oz. or 8 oz cup)
- Telephone your order to Jackie Patry or the Student Manager (6-2634 or 6-1021) with a one-week lead time. Identify yourself as an FYE instructor and give Jackie your class number and section (i.e., 1800.001)
- She will need to know your arrival date and time
- If you want a tour, you may also schedule at this time
- There is no need to stop by FYE for a voucher, it is all done electronically

Wellness and Prevention Services

The Department of Wellness and Prevention Services is new to campus this year. Affiliated with Student Health Services, this Department brings together longstanding existing units that focused on health education (Joleen Nevers's area), alcohol and other drug prevention (Liz Prince's area) and nutrition (Amy Pumerantz's area) to create a holistic approach addressing impediments to health with the aim of promoting a state of wellbeing, and not simply the absence of illness or disease, or the reduction of risky behavior. The approach used will focus on community collaboration and the implementation of evidence informed practice that respects the unique culture of the UConn community.

Joleen, Liz, and Amy have long participated in FYE and INTD courses and students have greatly benefitted from all that they have shared. In order to facilitate this process in a more streamlined manner, you may now contact the Wellness and Prevention Services Department Administrative Assistant, Nisha Hardnett, at 486-9436 to begin scheduling FYE or INTD presentations

For more information on this new Department you may also call the Director, Beth DeRicco at 486-9430.

Focus on Students

(This section will include helpful assignments/activities/information for your INTD 1800/1810/1820 students.)

Husky Outreach for Leadership Development, Understanding, and Pride (HOLDUP!)

(FYE Instructors note that this organization is looking for interested students to join its program.)

Interested in gaining leadership experience? Enjoy working with high school students? Apply to become a member of HOLDUP!

Husky Outreach for Leadership Development, Understanding and Pride, HOLDUP!, provides UConn students with the opportunity to work directly with area high school students to enhance their leadership skills and self-awareness. HOLDUP! members gain valuable experience working together to develop and present workshop material and mentor high school students while preparing them for a life of leadership beyond high school.

HOLDUP! is currently seeking new members. For more information, go to:

http://www.studentactivities.uconn.edu/leadership_holdup.html or contact UConnHOLDUP@gmail.com

Applications are due by November 3th at 5 P.M.!

Benton Museum of Art and First Year Experience

FYE Educators! Museum Tours Alert!

Many people know that the Benton Museum's budget was cut this past spring, which resulted in closing our doors to the public on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. But, did you know that you can still schedule a tour for a Tuesday or Wednesday? We're not going to let budget cuts prevent us from what we do best, introducing students to art! Tour hours are still 10:00 – 3:30, Tuesday through Friday and 1:00 -4:00 on weekends. If you would like a tour for your group, please see information below.

Tracy Lawlor, Education Coordinator
phone 486-1711
e-mail tracy.lawlor@uconn.edu.

Tour requests may also be made by going to our website www.thebenton.org and click on *Education*.

Special Events

(This section will include events in September and early October that students can attend for the Writing Assignment or personal enrichment.)

October 26

- **[A Night of Hope](#)**
Celebrate Breast Cancer Awareness Month with Geno's Cancer Team for the Night of Hope event to benefit the V Foundation for Cancer Research and the WBCA Kay Yow Cancer Fund.
Keynote speaker: Geno Auriemma
Student Union Theatre, 6:00-7:00 P.M.
Price: \$3

October 29

- **History Department Eleventh Annual FUSCO Distinguished Lecture**
"Poor Richard's Poor Jane: Benjamin Franklin and his Ill-Starred Sister."
By Jill Lepore of Harvard University
Dodd Research Center, Konover Auditorium, 4 P.M.

October 29

- **The Best of Momix, Contemporary Dance**
In a spectacular blend of physical artistry, inventiveness and humor, these world-renowned dancer-illusionists transport audiences from their everyday lives to a fantasy world, full of psychedelic colors and surrealistic images. Shadows give birth to light, human bodies transform into enchanted beings, and symbols are imbued with life, as reality shifts, and dreams become possible.
Jorgensen Center Main Stage, 7:30 P.M., UConn Student Hot Seats \$7 with valid student ID.

October 29-November 8

- **Connecticut Repertory Theatre: Abraham Lincoln's Big Gay Dance Party**
By Aaron Loeb, Directed by Kristin Wold
A small town elementary school teacher outs Abraham Lincoln in the fourth grade Christmas pageant. The hilarious anarchy, marked by interludes of campy dances, is cleverly contained in a spontaneous structure wherein the audience votes each night on how the play will unfold. The fun and farcical surface story belies the play's insightful reflections on American history and identity.
See CRT website for ticket and performance schedule: <http://www.crt.uconn.edu/index.html>
Drama-Music Building, Studio Theatre

October 30

- **India Studies Lecture**

“The Emergence, Context, and Content of Gandhi’s Nonviolence”

By Rajmohan Gandhi, the grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, is currently Research Professor, South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Illinois.

Dodd Research Center, Konover Auditorium, 4 P.M.

November 5

- **Office of Leadership Programs Lecture**

The Power of Arrogance and the Arrogance of Power

John Rowland, former US Congressman and three-term governor of Connecticut will discuss “the other side of success” and share the lessons he learning from serving as a prominent political leader and the dramatic downfall of his administration.

Dodd Research Center, Konover Auditorium, 4 P.M.

November 7

- **Bruckner Orchestra of Linz, Classical Music**

The Bruckner Orchestra, conducted by Dennis Russell Davies, has become one of Central Europe’s leading orchestras. Fluent in both classical and contemporary genres, the orchestra will present a full evening of music by the quintessential 20th-century urban American composer, Leonard Bernstein.

Jorgensen Center Main Stage, 8 P.M., UConn Student Hot Seats \$7 with valid student ID.

November 10

- **Human Rights Film Series: *Human Rights in the USA***

Ask Not (2008)

Examines the military policy “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell,” which has resulted in the discharge of thousands of gay and lesbian member of the US armed forces.

Dodd Research Center, Konover Auditorium, 4 P.M.

- **India Studies Lecture**

“Squaring the Circle: Exploring Indian and Jewish Concepts of Sacred Space.”

Robert Kirschbaum, Professor of Art, Trinity College.

Sponsored by India studies, the Department of Art and Art History and Judaic Studies.

Art Building 107, 3:30 P.M.

November 13 and 14

- **Big Bad Voodoo Daddy, Swing and Big Band Music**

Get ready to dance the night away as America’s favorite contemporary little big band recreates the sound of swing from the 1940s and ’50s.

Jorgensen Center Main Stage, 8 P.M., UConn Students \$10 with valid student ID.

November 16

- **India Studies Lecture**

“India: The New Rising Power”

By Dr. Ravi Ramamurti, CBA Distinguished Professor of International Business and Director, Center for Emerging Markets, Northeastern University. He is currently researching the internationalization strategies of multinationals from Emerging Market.

Co-sponsored by Center for International Business Education and Research.

Homer Babbidge Library, Class of 1947 Room, 4 P.M..

November 17

- **Pacifica Quartet, Classical Music**
Raymond and Beverly Sackler Artist-in-Residence Program for the Advancement of the Arts

Named 2009 Ensemble of the Year by Musical America, the Pacifica Quartet is recognized for its virtuosity, exuberant performance style, and often daring repertory choices. Its players are adept at split-second timing without sacrificing intricate interpretation, tonal balance, or unity of artistic purpose. The Pacifica Quartet will be joined by violinist Theodore Arm and cellist Kangho Lee. Jorgensen Center Main Stage, 7:30 P.M., UConn Student Hot Seats \$7 with valid student ID.

November 19

- **Teale Lecture Series, Nature and the Environment**
"Coming Down to Earth: Valuing Nature to Improve Decision-Making," Dr. Stephen Polasky, Fesler-Lampert Professor of Ecological/Environmental Economics, University of Minnesota. Dodd Research Center, Konover Auditorium, 4 P.M.

Nov 23-29: Thanksgiving Break

December 1

- **Kangho Lee, cello and Minyoung Lee, piano – Classical Music**
Formed at Yale University, the Lee duo performed extensively in North America and Europe. Cellist Kangho Lee has been a sought-after soloist and chamber musician worldwide since his orchestral debut with the Seoul Philharmonic at the age of 12. Acclaimed for her "extraordinary sensitivity" and "mesmerizing" playing by the San Francisco Classical Voice, pianist Minyoung Lee has performed throughout the United States, Europe, and Asia. Jorgensen Center Main Stage, 7:30 P.M., UConn Student Hot Seats \$7 with valid student ID.

December 3-12

- **Connecticut Repertory Theatre: Galileo**
By Bertolt Brecht, Directed by Gary M. English
Galileo hears of a new invention, a telescope, and builds one for himself. With it, he confirms that the earth rotates around the sun. For this, he is summoned before a tribunal of the Inquisition where he is threatened with torture if he does not recant his findings. Bertolt Brecht puts the dilemma of one of history's greatest thinkers center stage; is it more important to cling to one's principles or save oneself to enable further contributions to knowledge?
See CRT website for ticket and performance schedule: <http://www.crt.uconn.edu/index.html>
Jorgensen Center for Performing Arts, Harriet S. Jorgensen Theatre

December 4

- **Jingle Jam – A Cappella Holiday Show**
Boston's premiere group a cappella group, Five O'Clock Shadow, joins select UConn a cappella groups for a Holiday Jingle Jam like no other!
Jorgensen Center Main Stage, 7:30 P.M., UConn Student \$3 with valid student ID.

December 5

- **Boston Pops Winter Gala, Popular Music**
Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra, Keith Lockhart, Conductor
Since its beginning in 1885, the Boston Pops has evolved into a beloved American institution. Celebrate the magic of the holiday season as Keith Lockhart leads the Pops in their annual Holiday Concert of traditional carols and festive modern classics.
Jorgensen Center Main Stage, 7:30 P.M., no student discount: \$60, \$50, \$30