

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS



College of Agricultural,
Consumer and
Environmental Sciences

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

From the Office of the Associate Dean

Vol. 4 No. 7

Class Attendance

The faculty of UIUC adopted a general policy on class attendance as a part of the *Code* (Rule 34). All instructors would be well-served to be familiar with that policy. Section 7 of that rule indicates that excessive absences shall be reported to the student's college. "Irregular Attendance Report" forms are available in department offices and 104 Mumford Hall.

Why bother? First, the student may have a serious problem that is not being addressed adequately. Contacting the student, in the least, is an appropriate step to be taken. Secondly, the instructor may find an error in schedule processing that can be handled long before a grade roster still shows that the student is enrolled erroneously. The hassle with grade rosters can be easily avoided by handling absence issues early in the semester.

Habitually absent students may be dropped from the course by the college. With constant pressure on course enrollments, it is only fair to drop students who are not serious about the course to make room for those who are. The Academic Programs staff can assist in addressing these issues.

Teaching Enhancement Grant Opportunity-- Due September 15

The Fall 2000 Teaching Enhancement Grant request for proposals was distributed in late summer. If you need a copy, be sure to contact Anne Stites at a-stites@uiuc.edu.

Grants of \$500 - \$2,000 are available for teaching development activities related to course and/or curriculum revitalization. The grants are funded through three endowments for teaching enhancement activities in ACES.

Proposal (two pages max) are due by Sept. 15.

The First Minor

Congratulations to Crop Sciences for establishing the first new minor in the College of ACES! The minor in Crop and Soil Management has been approved by the Senate and reported to the Board of Trustees; that makes it official.

Several other proposals are in various stages of development and approval. Proposals for minors in Food Science and in Nutrition are awaiting final approval, and a minor in International ACES will be reviewed by the College faculty in fall 2000.

Be sure that students are aware of these opportunities, along with minors that are offered outside of ACES. A complete listing of UIUC minors can be located at <http://www.provost.uiuc.edu/advising/minors>.

D'Arcy Joins Academic Programs

Professor Cleora J. D'Arcy joined ACES Academic Programs on August 21 as a part-time Assistant Dean. Cleo is a professor of Plant Pathology in the Department Crop Sciences and has served as the department teaching coordinator for the past four years. Her role in Academic Programs includes providing leadership for the development of capstone experiences for seniors, expanding Gen Ed and Discovery courses in the College, and continuing leadership for various teaching and learning enhancement programs. Cleo will continue to teach in the department and will maintain an office in Turner Hall.

About ACES Graduates

Assistant Dean Chuck Olson has compiled a report of *Characteristics of Graduates May 1998 –May 1999*. The report has been distributed to ACES departments. The data are gleaned from student records. Here are some interesting facts about the 785 students who graduated from ACES during the study period.

- 62% graduated in 8 semesters or less, not counting summers
- 70% enrolled in summer school at least once
- 48% entered ACES as freshmen in the same curriculum as their degree
- 8% entered ACES as freshmen in a different curriculum
- 20% transferred to ACES from another UIUC college
- 19% transferred from a community college
- 5% transferred from another institution
- Average graduate completed 135 semester hours
- Average GPA at graduation was 3.06

Grade Distributions - What Should They Be?

An article in the April 28, 2000 edition of the *Chicago Tribune* raised the issue of “diminished standards” in college courses as evidenced by the proportion of students who receive an A grade. Among others, UIUC was included in the article. Data were shared which show that the proportion of UIUC students earning an A in 1967 was 24%, and in 1999 the percentage had increased to 42%.

What is the reason, and should we be alarmed? We’ll probably never answer the first question adequately; there are likely several (many?) reasons. The better question is, is it a problem and, if so, what should we do about it?

Department teaching coordinators may want to provide leadership in working with instructors to identify the real issues and propose steps to be taken to address them. One outcome, of course, may be that there is no concern among the faculty and, therefore, no problem. But the issue probably deserves some careful thought. Illinois and ACES are regarded as exemplary academic venues. We as faculty should strive to protect that image.

About the New Freshmen

Data from summer orientation show that the new freshman class in ACES is much like previous years. About 56% of the new students are female. While about 30% are from urban areas of 50,000 or more people, 20% are from rural areas and farms. More than half are interested in a study abroad opportunity while they are students at UIUC.

The new students were asked about their visits to UIUC prior to enrolling. Nearly 60% reported visiting with family or friends, 34% reported attending a UIUC athletic event, 32% visited ACES, and 25% visited the Campus Visitor Center. Approximately 12% had participated in a 4-H or FFA event, and 20% attended a high school athletic event.

Academically, the new class should fit in quite well. The average ACT composite score is 25.3, and the average percentile rank in the high school class is 78.7.

Faculty Participate in Workshop

Several faculty from ACES participated in the annual North Central Teaching Symposium, held this year at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. The theme for the conference was globalizing the curriculum.

ACES participants included: Darin Eastburn, Crop Sciences; Shufeng Han, Ag Engineering; Janeen Johnson, Animal Sciences; Hilda Lakner, ACE; Stephen Moose, Crop Sciences; and Dean Riechers, Crop Sciences. Their participation was sponsored by ACES Academic Programs, the Academy of Teaching Excellence, and their departments.

TIME Change!!

ACES New Student Welcome
Thursday, August 31
8:00 p.m.
Colwell Playhouse at Krannert

ACES Among Top 20

The College of ACES is among the top 20 colleges of agriculture, renewable natural resources and forestry in the country in terms of enrollment. Fall 1999 undergraduate enrollment placed Illinois at number 16, just behind Purdue and ahead of Missouri. The largest college in terms of total enrollment was the University of California at Davis with 6,207 undergraduates.

The enrollment report also shows rankings when non-agricultural programs are excluded. Illinois ranks 17th, between Wisconsin and Virginia Tech. The largest enrollment excluding non-agricultural programs is Texas A&M University with 5,007 undergraduate students. Six of the seven Big Ten agriculture colleges are in the top 21 enrollments.

Just a Reminder

As another semester begins, please remember that a complete course syllabus is the students' road map through your course. Be sure that you provide specific learning goals for the students and sufficient information for them to navigate through 16 weeks.

Every syllabus should include a simple statement about academic integrity. All you need is a reference to the effect that violations of Rule 33 will not be tolerated, and that students have the responsibility to be familiar with the rules in the *Code*. A little planning now can save lots of headaches when the rules must be enforced.

ACES Web Portal

The new ACES portal to courses on the web is now in operation. Be sure to visit:
<http://classes.aces.uiuc.edu/classInfo>
or link from the ACES homepage to "Courses on the 'Net'".

The ACES Web Portal serves as the front door for every course in the college. The goal is to have each course listing "hot linked" to the course web site. Right now, approximately 165 of the 550 courses in ACES have an operational site.

John Schmitz, ITCS, will continue to work with departmental coordinators in developing a

course web site for each course. The site can range from a straight-forward description of the course, course goals and class topics, to a sophisticated site that includes video, assignments, chat space, and other enhancements. It is also possible to have a "front door" to the course for all to see with a protected class site that only enrolled students can access.

Check out the new site, and let's get every course available on the web.

New Student Convocation

___ Thanks to faculty in ACES participated in the campus new student convocation. Those who represented the College included:

- ___ Wayne Banwart, Academic Programs
- ___ Kirby Barrick, Academic Programs
- ___ Hans Blaschek, Food Science and Human Nutrition
- ___ Loren Bode, Agricultural Engineering
- ___ Don Bullock, Crop Sciences
- ___ Kris Campbell, Food Science and Human Nutrition
- ___ David Chicoine
- ___ Cleo D'Arcy, Crop Sciences
- ___ Thomas Fermanian, Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences
- ___ Robert Hauser, Agricultural and Consumer Economics
- ___ Gary Heichel, Crop Sciences
- ___ Michael Hirschi, Agricultural Engineering
- ___ Darrel Kesler, Animal Sciences
- ___ Gary Kling, Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences
- ___ Michael Mazzocco, Agricultural and Consumer Economics
- ___ Jeff Moss, Human and Community Development
- ___ Michael Murphy, Animal Sciences
- ___ Charles Olson, Academic Programs
- ___ Jim Painter, Food Science and Human Nutrition
- ___ James Robinson, Animal Sciences
- ___ Roger Shanks, Animal Sciences
- ___ Robert Skirvin, Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences
- ___ Daniel Warnock, Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences

ACES New Student Welcome

Be sure to stop by Krannert Center for the Performing Arts on Thursday, August 31 at 8:00 p.m. to welcome our new students to ACES. After a brief general program, students will have the chance to meet faculty and continuing student and learn about the various student clubs in the college. Cookies and punch will be served!

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