

What's New in Distance Education?

Faculty Focus

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The Master of Public Administration (MPA) program located in the Department of Public Policy and Administration launched its first distance education courses in Fall 2014. Many of our students are working in a professional atmosphere. We have a diverse mix of traditional and non-traditional students with different needs and ideas of what constitutes a quality educational experience. In large part, this involves availability of different course delivery platforms. In an effort to meet these expectations, we have committed to offering the MPA fully online while maintaining our traditional course delivery structure.



I am currently teaching a blended course, Communications for Public Administrators. The class meets in-person the first four weeks of the semester. All subsequent meetings are individual student-instructor conferences to discuss how each student is progressing with the course requirements. In a short time, I have learned a great deal about the nuances of distance education. A lesson I have learned deals with finding the right balance between synchronous and asynchronous instruction. Too much synchronous interaction undermines the accessibility of distance education. Too little synchronous interaction can result in disinterest (from the students and faculty). I have found that scheduling regular but minimal synchronous conferences that accommodate student schedules and making myself available for additional conference opportunities works well. In this way, students can self-monitor. If they need more face time, they can have it. In both cases, flexibility is key.

Our Newest Instructional Designer

Our newest member, Lindsay Gaughan M.Ed, has joined The Office of Distance Education in September 2014 as an Instructional Designer. Lindsay holds a Masters of Education in Instructional Technology from East Stroudsburg University. She has designed and developed online courses for The Art Institutes, Brown Mackie College, South University, and Argosy University and will continue to carry over her creative and innovative experience here at West Chester University. In addition to designing and developing online courses, she has experience with assisting faculty in the transition of face-to-face courses to online and blended courses. Please join us in welcoming Lindsay to The Office of Distance Education here at West Chester University! If you need assistance please be sure to contact her at lgaughan@wcupa.edu or 610-436-3561.



Recording Booth Coming Soon!

Distance Education is in the process of constructing a sound-proof booth on the 3rd floor of Wayne Hall with all of the equipment needed to make instructional audio and video recordings. Faculty will no longer have to deal with issues like noisy air conditioners, bad lighting, low-budget equipment, and disturbing your officemates. The booth is expected to be ready later this Fall for your use – watch our web site for the official announcement to schedule an appointment.

We Moved!

We have relocated from the Graduate Studies Office to the 3rd floor of Wayne Hall. *Come visit us!*



Look at how much we've grown!

Distance Education Data

Fall 2013

- 46 Online Courses (974 Seats)
- 13 Blended Courses (874 Seats)
- 7 ITV Courses (59 Seats)

Fall 2014

- 78 Online Courses (1747 Seats)
- 18 Blended Courses (905 Seats)
- 5 ITV Courses (52 Seats)

Upcoming Events:



10/24/14: Open House Collaboration with Kutztown

12/16/14: PADLA Conference

Lunch and Learns!

The Office of Distance Education and TLA Center are presenting the Lunch and Learn series again this Fall, with guest lectures and *FREE* lunch! Sessions are offered for both face-to-face and online educators. All sessions are from **11:30am-1:00pm**. Please contact Pat Brander if interested and indicate the date and time of the session you want to join.

11/13/14: The Digital Self: "The Influence of the Internet on the Development and Presentation of Self"; Julie Wiest

12/3/14: Using case based technology in the classroom to enhance learning; Emily Foote

"SHOUT OUT" at the D2L Brightspace Fusion Conference

The Office of Distance Education has its own D2L YouTube Playlist where you and your students can find video tutorials on **Desire2Learn** specific D2L features as well as processes, such as how to use D2L to communicate effectively. At the D2L Fusion conference this past July, the D2L online community managers gave a "shout out" (a thumbs up) to the WCU Office of Distance Education D2L Playlist created by Stephanie Taitano, one of the instructional designers at the office, and recommended the tutorials to conference attendees from around the world.

Subscribe to the WCU Office of Distance Education YouTube Channel Here:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/wcudistanceed/>

To request a new topic for the video tutorial channel, please email pbrander@wcupa.edu. We're adding new tutorials all the time!

Distance Education Scholars Center

The Distance Education Scholars Center has been established to serve as a hub and catalyst for distance education research at WCU and to bring students, faculty, other members of the community together through learning, scholarship and service. An array of faculty have already begun the effort to apply their scholarship skills to gather and share information about distance education culture and effectiveness at WCU. We always welcome more faculty to join us to offer new visions and directions.

See some of our recent publications:

Smidt, E., McDyre, B., Bunk, J., Li, R., & Gatenby, T. (2014) Faculty attitudes about distance education. The IAFOR Journal of Education, 2(2), 181-209. Retrieved from <http://iafor.org/journal%20issues/Journal-of-Education-v2-i2-contents/faculty-attitudes-smidt.pdf>.

Smidt, E., Bunk, J., McGrory, B., Li, R., & Gatenby, T. (2014). Student attitudes about distance education: Focusing on context and effective practices. The IAFOR Journal of Education, 2(1), 40-64. Retrieved from <http://iafor.org/iafor/ije-volume-2-issue-1/>.

Web/Mobile Tools:

Check out some awesome and FREE Web and Mobile Tools!

HaikuDeck: this simple image-driven presentation tool provides a large database of images and templates designed to prevent the "over bulleting" or "cue-carding" in slide presentations.

Padlet: Create and share audio, video, and text "sticky notes" and share them with a url or have students keep Padlet "walls" to document their project processes and/or research materials and/or to communicate with group members on collaborative projects.

For more information on Web Tools visit our website:
www.wcupa.edu/distanceed

Need Assistance?

Contact The Office of Distance of Education:

Pat Brander; pbrander@wcupa.edu, 610-436-2948

Did you know?

- The number of students taking at least one online course increased by over 411,000 to a new total of 7.1 million.
- The proportion of higher education students taking at least one online course is at an all-time high of 33.5%

Based on the Fall 2013 West Chester University's Faculty Survey, approximately 40% of faculty

agree that online instruction has the potential to be just as helpful for students as in-person instruction, despite the fact that the majority of faculty believe current online education to be inferior to in-person instruction.

