



Kaleidoscope

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News You Can Use.

Spring fever!!

By Kate Forhan, Dean

As I write, outside my window there are: a robin looking for a worm, two geese blocking the automatic door of the Science Building, a pair of starlings collecting materials for a nest, and a weather report predicting two to five inches of snow. It is spring break, and we are ready for spring!

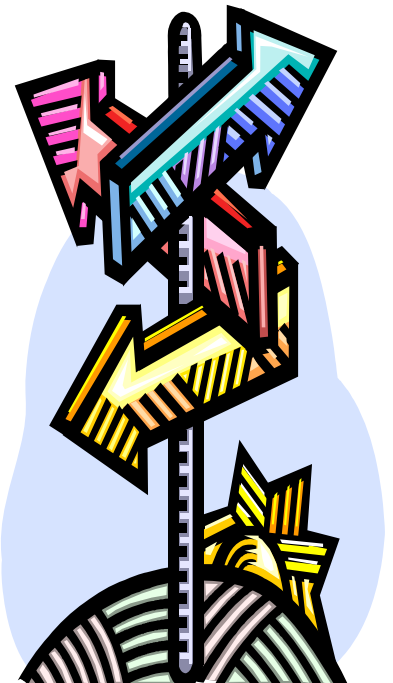
Congratulations to all the departments which have successfully concluded their searches for new tenure line faculty. The hard work of the Search and Screen Committees and the Department Chairs and Coordinators has resulted in a terrific cohort of new faculty who will begin in Fall 08. We are pleased that thirteen new colleagues will join us in August in the departments of Art, Anthropology, Biology, CMT, Earth Science, English, G & ES, Social Work and Sociology. I am especially grateful—as are their colleagues—for the generosity of the “external” members of each search committee. Their ability to ask the “naïve questions” and to provide the perspective of a non-specialist enriches our searches and strengthens our ability to attract new faculty, by allowing them a sense of the College as a whole. Bravo to all!

What's the Next Step?

By Connie Kadow

During my first month of employment at Northeastern, I came in one day to find long lines of students winding every which way. There were arrows pointing in different directions and placards proclaiming that this line is for this or that. I asked at my office what was going on, and was told that students were registering for classes. It reminded me of one of my recurring nightmares, the one where I am going to school, but lost my schedule, can't find my class and end up in the wrong room on the wrong day

TTRS, initiated in Spring 1993, introduced phone registration. This was a big step forward. But now for Summer 2008, students will be able to register and pay on-line. What could be coming next, virtual classes? Wait, we already have some on-line courses and partially on-line courses. I'm asking some of you visionaries out there to write in and let me know what the next step might be. What can we expect the University of the future to look like? I'll share some of your ideas in the next issue. E-mail me at C-Kadow@neiu.edu.



Kaleidoscope will be published Fall, Spring and Summer by the College of Arts & Science. Let us hear from you. Comments, story suggestions and submissions are welcome. Call us at ext 5711 or e-mail C-Kadow@neiu.edu

CAS Website – Where the Information Is

By Cynthia Aguirre

In case you haven't had time to check it out yet, the College of Arts and Sciences has been building our website to be a useful source to both students and faculty and staff alike. Here are just a few pages that might be of help.

Our "Faculty Contact Information" are web pages with office hours and contact hours that you have all provided. Please remember that we, and students, refer to these pages, so make sure to give us updated information.

The "Faculty & Staff Resources" page has several links. Please refer to our "Projects Due" page. We list key due dates of materials to the Deans Office. We keep last years due dates to give a reference points for dates we might not yet have received. See also the Aca-



demie Affairs Committee website. Also included are links to key pages on the university website, such as Academic Affairs, Controller's Service Requests, University Events Room Reservation, as well as Field Trip Documents and a syllabus format.

Don't forget there are a variety of resources for students. From the General Education pages, with a list of Gen Ed Approved courses and a Gen Ed worksheet that can be printed out, to a "Student Resources" page that has a variety of useful links. These include a PDF version of our Merit

Tuition Waiver application and Course Overload Form that can be printed out, plus lists of Majors, Minors, Graduate Degrees, and Grad requirements. Students can find answers to a variety of questions. Don't forget to direct students to Pre-Law and Pre-Health information under the "Pre-Professional Programs" link.

We've recently begun this Newsletter, and the link to it can be found under "College News and Events". "Departments and Programs" will take you to department websites. Remember that our website is always under construction and if you have any suggestions or ideas, feel free to let our office now. Remember that the University website has sections for "Faculty & Staff" and "Current Students" that can be helpful. Happy Surfing!

What's in a Name? The Best Customer Service Seminar I Ever Attended

The best customer service seminar I ever attended was deceptively simple in its approach.

The seminar topic was about providing excellent customer service. The President of the company I was working for had asked both the Sales Manager and me, the Customer Service Manager, to attend the seminar. At the break time, the Sales Manager told me that the seminar seemed very elementary to him. I replied something like, "Yes, it is elementary. But I think that is the point."

What the seminar emphasized again and again was what might be called "the personal touch." Be personable. Smile. Use the customer's name if possible. Yes, it is elementary. But some-

times we forget how powerful it can be—and maybe get a little lax in providing this kind of service.

The seminar was filled with anecdotes about how effective this personal touch can be. The one I remember most was about getting gasoline in the city that the presenter traveled to several times a year.

He always went to one particular gas station, because they always addressed him by name. "How are you today, Mr. Daniels?" How did they know his name? They read it off his credit card (I guess this was before gas station self-service!). He

even knew that this is how they



got his name. But it still was nice to be addressed by name. It made him feel they really did want to assist him.

I can contrast this with a company I deal with a lot these days. Every time I call and talk to the receptionist and say my name, she acts as if she has never heard of me. I have called two days in a row, and she still acts as if she does not know me or why I am calling. If there was an alternative company I could use, I would use it!

CAP® and CPS®

By Leotis Dunn Jr.

What is an International Association of Administrative Professional (IAAP) CAP® and CPS® certification? The IAAP certifications are recognized as the highest professional certification for administrative professionals. There are two types of certification that IAAP offers Certified Professional Secretary® (CPS®) and Certified Administrative Professional® (CAP®).

The exam consists of three sections for the CPS and CAP exams and an additional section for the CAP exam. The required knowledge for the certification are:

- Part 1 Office Systems and Technology
- Part 2 Office Administration
- Part 3 Management
- Part 4 Advanced Organizational Management

The International Association of Administrative Professional (IAAP) CAP® and CPS® certifications are used by several corporations world wide which verify professional proficiency in four fields that distinguish an administrative and secretary profession. Many individuals take the exam to prove to themselves that they are competitive and have the self-esteem and confidence to test their professional skills.

In 2007, 1,129 out of 2,153 passed the CPS and 685 out of 991 passed the CAP

Only you can decide if the effort of obtaining a professional certificate is important to you.

Source: IAAP-HQ.org

Thinking of an Independent Study?

By Marlene Evans

An Independent Study is a great way for a student to move forward in their area of study, only after the required prerequisites have been met. One must make the request in their major, and there should not be any traditional courses offered that would substantiate the requirements.

After discussion in the Dean's Council, the CAS recently changed the process for submitting an Independent Study request. We are requiring the student to attach a brief, one to two paragraph, proposal and a

short explanation of why they are requesting the Independent Study and how it will move them toward graduation. If the student is self-motivated, disciplined, responsible and has a unique project specific to the program, this could be a great opportunity. With the consent of the Instructor, Department Chairperson and the College Dean; the student can gain experience and/or complete a

The Deadline for Fall submission is Monday, September 25, 2008. Mark your calendars!!!

research project. Independent Studies are usually only offered to



undergraduates or graduates in in a degree program..

Students at large are not approved unless by exception which includes an interview with the Dean.

Also, be aware that Independent Studies are not normally offered in the summer. The deadline listed in the schedule is for Enrollment Services, the Dean's office deadline is one week prior to that deadline; therefore early planning is a must!

The Dean's Team: Working the Front Desk

By Mark Sherkow

For the previous issue of this newsletter, I listed the nine full-time people who work in the Dean's office and summarized the activities of each. For this article, I would like to review a function shared by several in the office: working the front desk.

I am the main person responsible for this activity, but others in our department sit at the front desk when I am absent or at a meeting, etc.. Connie Kadow, who sits in the office immediately next to mine, also shares these activities every day when the office becomes crowded or the phone starts "ringing off the hook."

The main function of the front desk person might be called "meet and greet"--to greet people who come to the office, to answer the phone, and to answer e-mail responses to the website mailbox. Here, our job is to help the person if we can, or to direct the person to someone who can help them.

About a year ago we redesigned our office so that the front desk is right near the door and the front desk person is facing visitors when they come in.

The Dean wanted this done to emphasize that this "meet and greet" function is the primary one for the person at this desk.

A second function relates to various aspects of Management of the Office: receiving mail and arranging delivery of hand-carried mail; making sure equipment, such as the printer, is working and stocked with paper; dealing with building problems and lost items; and keeping a schedule for use of the CAS conference room.

A third function is to keep the Dean's calendar and schedule appointments for her. This function is actually handled only by myself, or Connie in my absence.

Finally, I am responsible for several reports and for the scheduling and paperwork distribution related to several processes: the faculty evaluation and promotion process; the interviewing of candidates for new tenure-track positions; update each term of faculty office hours; the Dean's List; and the Annual Report. So the job is really a combination of four main things: meet and greet, office management, Dean's calendar, and reports and processes.

Two Reasons to be Paranoid: A Rogue Flash Drive and “Junior”

By Leotis Dunn Jr.

Not many people consider the biggest security flaw on their PC or Mac their USB drive. With a flash drive, a person can download almost all of your confidential material, personal information within seconds.

The sad part about this “horrific” act is that the owner of the computer might not even know that it happen until it is too late. Also, let us not forget that junior is a



smart kid too and can sneak around any parental lock with a well-coded program on his flash drive.

Outside of removing their USB the only choice a person has is to lock down their computer or place an “USB Security Lock” on it.

Both methods are affordable but the downside is that if you lose the key – your \$2,500 laptop may be the most expensive cup coaster that you have ever purchased.

The locks can be found at places like ThinkGeek.com for \$8 to \$60. Even though they are promoting the system lock down for kids, it is also a great item for those laptop people who use them in public places.

Check it out!

By Connie Kadow

There are some Summer course offerings that you need to check out!

How about Calculus (MATH 187) and Precalculus (MATH 185), totally online. If you are not quite ready for that, there's MATH 113, Quantitative Reasoning in session 1A. This one's a hybrid course, some

sessions on-line, and some on campus. For those who want to study for seven weeks, TR 9-4:30pm, 7/8/07 to 8/24/07, there's ESCI 123-04, Geology, Resources & Environment, a General Education course.

If you like a tighter schedule, sign up for PSYC 360-01, Social Psychology. This course meets every day for two weeks from 8-

12:30pm starting Friday, May 16. Linguistics Graduate students can take LING 410-01, Techniques of Teaching English as a second Language, meeting for 5 days a week, June 16-July 3.

If you would like to start a petition for an innovative course offering for next summer, Let me know. I will print some of your suggestions in an upcoming Newsletter.

Keeping Cool...

By Cynthia Aguirre

Working at a University as a staff member, we encounter a variety of people and situations. Sometimes it can be hard to keep our cool under tight deadlines, multitudes of visitors and phone calls, and all our other duties. Here are some tips that might be helpful. First of all, streamline your efforts. You know best what information students repeatedly ask. Why not put this info on flyers on bulletin boards near your office door? How about putting it on your office phone

mail message and your department website (forms can be placed on the website also)? This will help students get answers quickly and conveniently, sometimes without even having to call or visit your office!

You may also get the random calls asking for someone's phone or office number, and they may not even be in your department. We usually keep

the “Faculty & Staff Directory” from the main University website on hand to help these “lost” students, who may have already been transferred who knows how many times. Remember, a “heard it a thousand times” question or story to you, may be the first time for our students. They usually just need someone to listen to them, empathize with them, help them (if possible), or send them to someone who can.

Step Right Up 16th Annual Student Symposium

by Sargon Al-Bazi

The Symposium is a day-long celebration of NEIU's students and their accomplishments in all fields. This activity has become the highlight of the Spring Semester and a jewel of Northeastern Illinois University. This year's symposium is sponsored by the College of Arts and Sciences and will be held on Friday, April 18.

Students gather to perform or present their work for consideration by the student body and campus community. It is a learning process that every student at Northeastern Illinois University should practice before graduation. It teaches students how to prepare abstracts for submission, and how to present their research work or creative activity in 20 minutes duration for an audience that is different than a regular class.

Last year, over 200 students shared 140 different presentations, performances, and posters that showcased a wide variety of presentations. All students, both graduate and undergraduate, from the Colleges of Arts & Sciences, Business & Management, Education, and the University Honors Program are in-

vited to submit research and creative activities proposals.

Themes include anything in the areas of research including

Social Science
Humanities
Natural and
Applied Science.

Creative activities may include

Painting
Sculpture
Photography
Music
Theater
Dance
Poetry
Creative Writing
Film
Video

or any other artistic work that merits creative performance.

For more information, please contact a member of the Symposium Steering Committee.

The members are;

This year's symposium is sponsored by the College of Arts and Sciences and will be held on Friday, April 18.



Rachel Adeodu (College of Education, ext. 5369, CLS-3018),

John Albazi (College of Arts and Sciences, ext. 5681, SCI-218G),

Kathleen Kardaras (University Honors Program, ext. 6045, B-141),

Mary Kimble for the Graduate College (Ext 5727, SCI-352F),

David Rutschman (College of Arts and Sciences, ext. 5714, College of Arts & Sciences),

Kimberly Sanborn (McNair Scholars Program, Ext. 4253, B-141),

Rose Sperrazza, (Creative Activities, Ext. 5902, FA-115), and

D.S. Sundaram (College of Business & Management, ext. 6135, CLS-0030).

Tips for Writing Letters of Recommendation

by David Nissim-Sabat, Coordinator of Student Services

More and more students are becoming interested in going to graduate school. One of the usual requirements is letters of recommendation from undergraduate faculty. But this letter isn't for a faculty member to merely "vouch" for a student. Its purpose is to give an admissions committee a strong sense not only the student's academic and intellectual abilities, but of the student's personality and professional goals. This kind of information is not obtained by faculty from student attendance and grades alone. Here are some suggestions for faculty to put together a strong letter of reference for their students, especially if the faculty member doesn't know the student that well.

1. Ask the student for more information – Ask the student to provide you with some of the following information; the purpose of the letter, the focus of the letter (student abilities in research, writing, technical, inter-personal, etc.), related involvement (work, volunteer, school clubs, etc.), courses taken with faculty member with grades and papers, why are they interested in the field of study and graduate program, resume, transcript(s), and recommendation form that may come with graduate college admissions materials. This form may also include guidelines for the letter.

2. Interview the student – Once the student has provided additional information and needed documents, it would be a good idea to have an open discussion with the student about their current standing and career goals. This will foster, or create, a stronger relationship with the student. Bonding with the student will make writing a good letter much easier.

3. Reflect – Think about the information the student provided, the interview, and your class experiences with the stu-

dent.

4. Don't be afraid to say "No" – If you really don't know the student well enough and don't believe that you will be able to write a strong letter, it is in the student's best interest for you to politely decline writing a reference.

5. Letter Structure

a. Begin the letter by identifying the student, how you know the student, and for how long. Indicate what the reference is for.

b. Be objective and realistic in citing the student's academic strengths, intellectual ability, capacity for independent and original thought, knowledge of the field, as well as attitude and motivation. Give your professional opinion of the potential for success of the candidate. Provide specific examples if possible to support your statements about the student.

c. Discuss the student's character by highlighting individual traits and providing examples.

d. Conclude by reiterating your overall recommendation.

e. The letter should be one to two pages in length.

Explain weaknesses – Only if appropriate, a letter can be used to explain weakness or ambiguity in a student's record. Consult the student if you plan to mention something personal like a family illness or financial hardship.

Avoid clichés - They are generally not helpful. Your letter can only be effective if it contains substantive information about the student's qualifications.

Be careful - Do not include information that might indicate the in-

dividual's ethnic background, religion, nationality, age, any disability, citizenship status, sex, marital or parental status, or political point of view.

Protect yourself – You may consider stating in the letter, "This information is confidential and is provided at the request of (name of student), who has asked me to serve as a reference."

10. Presentation and timeliness - Please be sure that the letter is typed. Proofread it carefully and send it by the deadline. The appearance and timeliness of letter is a reflection on both you and the candidate, and it can also determine whether or not it will be read.

11. Signing the letter - Be sure that your professional affiliation is clear. Provide contact information including address, phone number and e-mail.

12. Attributes - The following is a list of attributes that schools are looking for. These are excellent points to address in your letter:

- a. willingness to accept responsibility
- b. honesty and integrity
- c. interpersonal skills & sociability
- d. sincerity, genuineness
- e. critical thinking & logic skills
- f. self-esteem & self-confidence
- g. problem-solving abilities
- h. oral communication & verbal skills
- i. decision making skills
- j. flexibility & adaptability to new circumstances
- k. initiative and leadership
- l. direction, motivation, and dedication
- m. imagination, creative thinking
- n. intelligence

CAS Kaleidoscope



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