Faculty Spotlight
Bridging the Gap by Dana Harsell

The Public Administration Seminar course is often considered the gateway course for our MPA program. It is taught in a hybrid model (delivered simultaneously to campus students and to online students via Adobe Connect). Our students come from diverse backgrounds and their experience runs the gamut from those who are fresh out of their undergraduate educations to seasoned public and private sector employees. The course must convey the breadth of the field in a way that challenges experienced students yet doesn’t overwhelm returning students or those without formal academic training in public administration. It must also convey several of the competencies expected by our accrediting body and adequately prepare students for comprehensive exams.

The first time I taught this class, I relied heavily on the traditional lecture format in an attempt to best balance all of these different elements. However, I learned a number of lessons from this first experience. First, a three hour block is a long time to lecture. It is also a long time for students to sit through a lecture! I was bored and I am sure that my students were too. Second, many of my online students expressed a sense of isolation from the class. I had witnessed smaller, spontaneous “learning communities” forming among students in my traditional campus courses and wanted desperately to see the same kinds of interactions in my hybrid

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course, in spite of the distance that separated everyone. Third, I needed to work a lot harder to incorporate my students’ rich and varied experiences into course discussions.

The primary challenge for me was to integrate some of the techniques I used in my traditional classroom courses into a hybrid course environment in order to cut down on lecture time and bridge the distance gap between my campus and distance students. The case method is an accepted technique in public administration because it encourages dialog and provides opportunities for students to bring theoretical concepts to bear on descriptions of practical situations. This also seemed like an ideal approach for those of our campus students who lacked formal practical experiences and those of our distance students who lacked a theoretical background in public administration.

To this end, I assigned a number of group-led, case-study discussions and divided the students into smaller discussion groups by creating “breakout” rooms in Adobe Connect and “virtually” circulating among these groups to help keep the discussions on task. Over the semester, each student was responsible for leading one case discussion for a group of about 6 people. Each week I distributed group assignments over email and each group included 4-5 online students and a small cluster of 2 or 3 campus students (who were given a webcam and a physical room assignment so they could log onto Adobe Connect and interact with their group members in their assigned virtual “breakout” room).

My goal was not to shift the teaching burden to the students; rather, I wanted to act as a facilitator by setting the expectations and discussion parameters, helping discussion leaders to prepare and advancing the discussion, when necessary. Group leaders were encouraged to become “subject matter experts” over these topical discussions and the small groups provided opportunities for students to share their own expertise and real-world experiences. After the small group sessions, we would reconvene as a class and each group leader shared highlights of their group discussion.

The results were much better than I had hoped for. I saw members of the class getting to know one another and even saw a few friendships form across the distances. I also witnessed many examples of students learning from the experiences of other students. For instance, during a case that I had assigned related to the Columbia Accident Investigation Board (CAIB) report, I discovered that one of my students had worked for NASA and another had worked as an electrical engineer. A case study over the Chicago public school system also revealed a couple of students who had first-hand experiences with that school system. I learned through both formal and informal feedback that my students generally appreciated a break from lecture and the expanded opportunities to meet with other students in this small-group format.

CILT Hires New Employee

The Center for Instructional & Learning Technologies recently hired Christopher Remme. Learn more about Chris in our May issue.
Reference Management Tools Useful for Scholarly Research
by Jane Sims

Technology tools are useful for collecting and keeping track of the resources you’ve accessed in your scholarly work. Various applications can store and search for documents that you’ve collected, as well as your annotations. Most of these applications create citations and bibliographies in the format you desire, such as APA or MLA. Imagine never having to manually create a bibliography again! Many of these applications will interface with each other, so if one doesn’t provide all the features you need, another one may supplement it. In addition, you can collaborate with peers by sharing sources.

A review of reference management technologies was presented by UND users at a recent Tech Trends Forum hosted by CILT and Writing Across the Curriculum. An 80-minute recording of the session is available at http://und.edu/cilt/workshops/forums.cfm. Presenters introduced and discussed these applications: Bookends, Endnote, Mendeley, Papers, ReadCube, Ref Works and Zotero.

RefWorks

UND licenses Ref Works for faculty, staff and students, and assistance is available from the Chester Fritz and Harley French libraries. Ref Works is user-friendly and easy to learn in about 15 minutes. You can use the tutorial at http://libguides.und.edu/refworks or contact one of the UND librarians for individual or group training. They are also happy to come to your class to speak with your students. Visit http://library.und.edu/ask-a-librarian/ to contact them.

Please save the date for these upcoming events:
• April 23—Tech Trends Forum on Plagiarism and Papers from 12:30 – 2 pm, Memorial Union River Valley Room
• May 13—Learning with Mobile/Electronic Devices and eBooks from 10 am – 2 pm, Education Building Room 5
What Can Instructional Designers Do for You?

When many people think of CILT, they think of Blackboard, technical help, and computer support. They may be less familiar with another division of CILT: our Instructional and Multimedia Designers. Our designers think beyond specific technology tools in order to focus on how you can best accomplish your teaching and learning goals. We consider learning theories and practices, student engagement strategies, and effective integration of technology tools in both classroom and online environments. We do not promote technology for the sake of technology. We believe that the right technology should solve a concern or problem, not add frustration to your life. Our objective is to help faculty, staff, and students increase their productivity, enrich their courses, and experience greater learning, both in the classroom and in the online environment.

If you would like to learn more about instructional design, or find out how an instructional designer can assist you, please contact CILT. We would love to meet with you! Our instructional designers are Adrienne Salentiny, Jane Sims, Kristi Swartz, and Elizabeth Becker (instructional multimedia designer). Our offices are located at CILT in Robertson-Sayre Hall.

Instructional designers are also committed to educating you about the various technology tools available, empowering you to determine whether a tool is right for your needs. With this in mind, CILT offers several technology workshops each month, many of which are taught by instructional designers. You may additionally be interested in the Tech Trend Forums we organize several times each semester. Once each fall and spring semester, there is also a Faculty Teaching Showcase. This is a great opportunity for you to see what other UND faculty have accomplished in their courses with the help of instructional designers. And for faculty looking for a more intensive educational technology seminar, CILT offers Teaching with Technology, a multi-day workshop held twice each summer. It is led by our instructional designers, CILT technical support staff and UND faculty experts. For more information about any of these educational opportunities, please visit the CILT website or give us a call at 777-2129.

UND App Provides Access to Schedules, Scores, and more

“Surprise! UND has a mobile app!” someone blurted out right next to my ear.

Nearly falling off my chair in shock, I looked up to find a smiling face holding an iPad with the UND mobile app front and center. I politely say, “Excuse me?”. “Sorry if I scared you. I am Delilah and I am working to help promote the UND mobile app. Do you have a smart phone because I would love to show you some of its features?”

I looked down at my two-year old Android phone, picked it up and said, “Sometimes I wonder how smart it is, but yes, I have an Android.” The joke was not lost on Delilah who was struggling to keep laughter back.

“The good news is we support just about all Android phones, even older models. Have you ever heard of the app?”

“No,” she says, “but if you get enough people to ask for that feature they might add it! UND is always looking for good suggestions!”

“Can I download the app from my phone’s app store?” I ask.

“Yes, or you can download it by visiting mobile.und.edu. That site is great because it lists additional information about all the different things the UND app can do.”

We said goodbye and Delilah went on to the other people in the Union. I did download the App and it really is helpful. You never know when you could use it because it has so many features. I highly recommend it!
Support Report: Introducing a few Tech Support Staff

Tyler Ingham
I’ve been working for the Center for Instructional & Learning Technologies at UND for a little over a year. I am originally from central Washington State and attended Eastern Washington University. Before moving to Grand Forks, I was living in the Austin, TX area working tech support/quality assurance for a web hosting company. In the afternoons I assist faculty and staff with PC and Mac issues. In the evenings I work at the Tech Support Help Desk. We troubleshoot a wide range of issues such as Blackboard and email problems. In the evenings I also work with Classroom Services to help troubleshoot problems that may occur in classrooms around campus.

Catherine Olson
I have been part of the Technical Support team for four years. In addition to tending to general technical support needs, I am the lead account manager for Adobe Connect and oversee our technical support student employees. I love our tech support team and how well we work together. In four years our scope of coverage has changed quite a bit, but our commitment to quality customer service remains steadfast.

I graduated from UND with a degree in business education. My husband is currently working towards his degree at UND. We live in East Grand Forks with our three children: Michael (5), Ali (3), and Abby (8 months). In my free time I enjoy decorating cakes and working with the North Dakota Girls State program.

Lucas Aaker
I have been working at UND for 8 years. I started out supporting the Distance Engineering Degree Program technology enhanced classrooms and recording class lectures. Since then, my position has grown to also include providing technical support for UND students, faculty, and staff as well as assisting with classroom technologies at CILT. My specialties include Tegrity lecture capture software, Citrix remote software, classroom computer updates and Crestron control system programming.

I graduated from UND with a degree in information systems. I have lived in Grand Forks my entire life and enjoy traveling and spending time at the lake.

Tech Tid-bitz: Using Netstorage to Access Your Files Remotely
by Ted Storkson

If you are like me then you regularly use a flash drive to cart around your files between work and home machines. And if you are really like me, then you have lost or forgotten that flash drive about as often as you have slipped on the ice this winter (this long, long winter). Well, I would like to take this opportunity to inform you about our remote file storage system, Netstorage. Some of you may know or remember it by another name, the U drive. This is a great tool to free yourself from the shackles of your flash drive.

Below are some of the perks to using Netstorage, a service provided to students, faculty, and staff at no cost to the user.

• Students get a respectable amount of space, one gigabyte of storage capacity. This is more than enough space for all of those docx and pptx files you need for that presentation next week, and plenty of extra space for those funny pictures you found on the Internet during your study breaks.

• Faculty and staff members receive an additional ten gigabytes of storage for their private drive and department sharing of folders.

• Did I mention it was free? Yes, you can use this digital “flash drive” without charge. I am sure that you can agree that free is definitely the best price, or at least the fan favorite.

If you would like to know more about Netstorage and how to access it, you can check out our Tech Support page for tips, tricks, and tutorials on how to make the most out of Netstorage. Students can take a peek here: http://und.edu/tech-support/students/filestorage.cfm, while faculty and staff members can take a look here: http://und.edu/tech-support/faculty-staff/filestorage.cfm.