**Associate Dean’s Corner**

*with Dr. Jason Huett*

When I accepted this position last June, a colleague who works in a similar position told me a joke:

“How many professors does it take to change a light bulb?”

“Change! Change? Who said anything about change!?!?”

It was his way of humorously reminding me that any discussion of change can be a touchy one with faculty and that innovation in higher education means not only asking faculty to adapt to new ways of doing things but also working within the system to transform an entrenched set of expectations at all levels regarding what higher education “is” and “always should be.” It is not just about accepting change, it is about accepting the need for change. You may be passionately attached to the ways of the past, but, if we are going to thrive, we have to be careful that such passions do not translate into inertia. Rail against it as you will, but we cannot escape the need for change.

I can hear some of you out there saying to your monitors, “I know where you are going with this Huett. You are trying to turn us into the University of Phoenix!” I get that a lot. And, nothing could be further from the truth. I do not think any rational person who walks this campus and sees all the dynamism and growth with a new stadium, fraternity and sorority houses, new buildings, coffee shops, bagel joints, new student housing, and countless other renovations, would think becoming more like U of Phoenix realistically factors into anyone’s strategic planning. On the contrary, places like Phoenix are trying to become more like us by building campuses and incorporating more residencies, internships, and other face-to-face components into their business and education models. They understand the power and allure of geography, and the necessity to feel
connected outside of the virtual space. The truth is that I think the for-profit model is ultimately unsustainable. If we can successfully reinvent ourselves (maybe I should say “when?”), we will run them out of business and not vice versa.

So, fear not; no one is trying to turn UWG into a virtual campus on a Second Life island. And, though this may come as a shock to some of you, I actually LOVE being on a college campus. Though I am certainly a “techie,” and an online educator, I am also an ardent supporter of the arts and humanities, a fan of the physical classroom, and I often miss teaching face-to-face. My son, Caleb, recently started college to pursue a degree in theater, and I certainly would not have wanted him to get his undergraduate degree online in my basement. I don’t think it would even be possible.

I am a true-believer in the formative and foundational experience that is a traditional university education and will always fight to preserve it. Additionally, I also believe we should broaden access and opportunity, where we are able to sensibly do so, for all the other Calebs out there who cannot, for whatever reason, take advantage of a more traditional campus-based experience. We have reached a point where we have to creatively pair our reverence for tradition with revolutionary approaches to instructional delivery. If we do not, we are in real trouble.

While many cling to our current model of education, the US continues to slide downward in comparison to much of the rest of the world. Currently, the US ranks 11th among OECD nations in the percentage of adults with high school diplomas, 20th in overall high school completion rate, 16th for college completion, 27th for college students receiving undergraduate science and engineering degrees, and 48th in overall quality of math and science education. On the technology front, the US rates 22nd for high speed internet access, 72nd for mobile internet/telephone access, and 40th in innovative change over the past decade. Within the 50 states, Georgia comes in at 39th in overall percentage of students at or above proficient in math; 47th in the percentage of the population enrolled in degree granting schools; 32nd in science and engineering degrees granted, and 46th in overall employment competitiveness ranking. We face these challenges amid sweeping cuts in funding for education, and continuing signals that the best we can seemingly hope for in the future is that our funding remains stable.

For students, the only thing evolving rapidly in higher education seems to be tuition costs: costs have risen almost 440% since the 1980s—placing a college education ever more out of the reach of many. We are also forced to defend ourselves against legislative bodies and a growing public that questions the purpose and value of institutions of higher learning. We face a changing student demographic with very different expectations regarding what higher education “is” and “should be,” and a highly mutable modern workplace, along with dynamic, digital-age systems that call for
learning experiences that are more technology enhanced, more flexible, more accessible, more student and peer-driven, more mobile, more collaborative, and more open. We are beginning to see the accreditation process bend to accommodate this new paradigm, and alternative credentialing models, such as “badges” and open-source learning networks, are gaining momentum and serve to redefine what it means to be “educated” and call into question the necessity of our current approach to more formalized learning. What happens when competency-based credentials complete with traditional degrees in the marketplace? The one thing we cannot do is ignore the change around us; the one thing we cannot become is intransigent.

However, the future is not bleak. Along with this seemingly endless list of “threats” to the old ways, there are also countless potential opportunities. Our faculty, administration, and staff are a hard-working and inventive bunch. Ideas abound and innovation is not in short supply. This was made very clear to me over the past year while working on the white paper and over this past month as our first cohort of faculty being trained to become online instructional designers and teachers met for the last time.

This group reaffirmed my faith in the American university. I watched them bond and embrace the need for change and not fear it. I saw them take charge of the process and work together to move UWG forward; to change—one light bulb at a time.

This will be our last newsletter of the semester. Look for us to return over the summer. In the meantime, enjoy this newsletter where we meet Heather McMillan—mom, Girl Scout Troup leader, and online student working toward her B.A. in English. Our resident Renaissance man and graduate student assistant Jared Pogue is profiled in our “Meet the Staff” section, and we hear from the one-and-only Tami Ogletree in our “Online Faculty Spotlight.”

Thank you for a great year and for all the support you have shown me and the members of my team as we strive to better serve our faculty and build new bridges to a brighter future. It has been a real pleasure working with all of you. I wish you a safe and happy summer.

Cheers!

Jason
I have worked for the past 22 years as a secretary/clerk/office manager mostly in manufacturing environments, but currently for a school system. I attended North Georgia College & State University full-time, while living on campus when I was 25 years old for one year. Then I attended Strayer University online from 2003-2008 on a part-time basis. This past fall (2011), I transferred to the University of West Georgia as a non-traditional student. I am working to complete my first undergraduate degree. I am pursuing a B.A. in English, and I will return immediately to obtain a Master of Arts in Teaching.

I am a non-traditional student; I work full-time in addition to taking undergraduate courses full-time. On top of all of that, I am a Girl Scout troop leader for my 11-year old daughter's troop, and I am a Girl Scout Service Unit Registrar helping new or returning girls and adults in my area register each year. I also still manage to find time for my hobbies, such as playing with my dogs, an American Pit Bull Terrier and a 13" Tri-Color Beagle, gardening, watching Harry Potter movies and re-reading the books, as well as advocating for the Georgia SPCA and Atlanta Beagle Rescue groups. Yes, I do have time to sleep! It's all about efficient time management and scheduling. Eating, however, is often on the go.

I was complaining to some of my fellow employees at the elementary school where I work that the university I attended prior to UWG was too expensive; I felt as if I was not receiving the level of instruction that I needed. Most often, I felt like I was teaching myself instead of having a professor at all. I didn’t realize local colleges offered hybrid and completely online courses until one of my co-workers informed me that she knew that UWG did. So, I researched the UWG website and was delighted to find it was true! Because I work full-time (and do all those other things) and live about 50 minutes away from the Carrollton campus, I knew some of my courses would have to be taken online simply for the sake of time. Weekends are my biggest homework/schoolwork time, and it is very difficult, if not impossible, to find classes on the weekends.
So far (1 1/2 semesters into my experience at UWG), I feel that the online program at UWG is much more together than that of my previous experience with online education. The professors are very involved with the students and I don't feel like I'm stuck out on a remote island somewhere trying to teach myself a subject. I also like how the various personalities of the professors shine through the curriculum within my online courses.

I would definitely like to see more upper level English courses offered online. I've talked to several non-traditional adult students in my classes, and it seems we all agree that it would be wonderful if all required courses were offered in all formats for all types of students.

My experiences with UWG are going to help me reach my goal of becoming a secondary English teacher. It took me until I was almost 40 years old to figure out what I wanted to be “when I grew up”, and now that I know, I still have to grow up; it’s a process. Within the classroom, I hope to pass on my passion for English, the importance of communication, and the need for continual education and self-improvement to my students.

I am West Georgia, and I am an online student.
Meet the Staff

Jared Pogue
Graduate Assistant

I received a high school degree from Etowah High School in Woodstock, Georgia and received a B.S. in Psychology at Kennesaw State University. I am currently finishing up my second semester here at UWG towards an M.Ed. in Community Counseling.

I have held a variety of jobs in my life. I have been a cook, a camp counselor, a private music teacher, a resident assistant, an assistant manager at a golf course, and many other things in-between. Currently, I still work at a golf course as well as in the Faculty Development Center on campus. At the Faculty Development Center, (located under the old gym), I do a hodgepodge of tasks including but not limited to: shoot and edit videos, explore new educational software, handle various CourseDen technical issues, teach professors and students how to implement new technology in order to facilitate more in-depth learning experiences, produce and post podcasts for UWG, and help faculty and students with Wimba tools.

I find that one of the most helpful resources for students is Sliderocket. While essentially an online presentation tool, it has a number of features that make it much more practical within online learning environments, especially for group presentations. Sliderocket keeps track of all work within the ‘cloud’, so you do not have to continue e-mailing and attaching various copies of what is essentially the same presentation as you often do with other tools. The interface is incredibly user friendly, logical, and exactly the same for each person using it. Groups can meet-up online, chat, and simultaneously update and edit presentations. Sliderocket is a free tool.

While I would like to eventually end up working for myself within the field of counseling, I find the role that technology plays in the counseling field interesting. I would love to set up online systems for counseling and set-up/administer one-on-one online counseling sessions via the internet. But, there is always the side of me that will always want to be a traveling musician and producer...

When not at school or working, I enjoy spending time with my wife, composing music, cooking delicious meals, blogging, watching Parks and Recreation, 30 Rock, and Batman the Animated Series. I also enjoy playing ultimate frisbee and soccer.
**School of Nursing**

Dr. Beheruz Sethna announced UWG’s latest academic achievement with the approval by SACS, of the Nursing doctoral program. UWG’s newly offered EdD in Nursing Education has been approved effective this Fall semester, August 20, 2012. This approval marks a significant milestone in our history as UWG has now been recognized as a Level VI institution which is the highest level of SACS classification. Congratulations to all faculty, staff, students, and supporters of UWG. Kudos to Dean Kathryn Grams, the Nursing faculty, Dr. Jon Anderson, our SACS liaison, and all those who helped make this possible.

UWG's online EdD in Nursing Education is designed to prepare nurse educators for the 21st century. The School of Nursing and the College of Education have collaborated to develop the joint curriculum. The 100% online program will enable students to earn a doctorate degree that will prepare them to train future nurses, helping address a critical shortage in the state, region and nation. This is one of only four such programs in the nation!

Through structured activities and facilitator-guided dialogue, learners will gain an understanding of the doctoral program goals, structure, and culture. Students will develop strategies for successfully engaging in doctoral learning and building an effective doctoral community. Classroom instruction will be delivered primarily through asynchronous and synchronous communication. Communication between the professor and students will be promoted within the university’s course management system.

The major objectives of this doctoral program are to:

- Demonstrate advanced nurse educator competencies to enact increasingly complex faculty and leadership roles.
- Facilitate curriculum design, development of courses, and evaluation of program and learner outcomes using evidence-based strategies.
- Function as a change agent, innovator, and leader with the continuous pursuit of quality improvement in the nurse educator role.
- Advance the scholarship of nursing education.
- Conduct, evaluate, and synthesize theoretically guided research to further pedagogical knowledge in nursing education.

[Department Website]
Online Teaching Tools

**Schmoop (Lighten Up the Load!)**
Schmoop, a fun and free resource, strives to make learning and writing delightful for the full range of contemporary students, from novice 18-year-olds to third generation non-traditionals. Schmoop pumps up information and content relevancy with a focus on implications for today’s learners and a multimedia take on delivery. Share Schmoop with your students and check out teacher resources on-site. Take the Tour de Schmoop now!

**Blogger (Shout from the Rooftops!)**
Encourage students to share their thoughts regarding educational content, as well as to interact through discussions via Blogger, a free, Google powered tool that easily incorporates various forms of media, including social media and audio-visual powered content. Build communication and student-led empowerment and responsibility with Blogger. Check out this video to get started now!

**Fur.ly (The Power of Consolidation!)**
Need to share a ton of great and essential resources found on the web with your students? Use Fur.ly to combine multiple URLs into one. It’s free, simple, and fast; check out how to use this tool now.

Media Plugs of the Month

**Student Perspective Plug: A Look at “Rock-o-nomix” & Why the Assignment Works!**
An interview with undergraduate students reveals what works in online education. We look specifically at UWG’s Professor Kim Holder’s assignment dubbed “Rock-o-nomix”, a creative and multimedia-driven assignment within an online-supplemented course. Kim Holder is a professor within the department of Economics.

**Preparing Students to Learn Without Us**
For K-12 educators, educators-in-training, and any of us concerned with differentiation and the contemporary and inevitable incorporation of technology within all levels of education, see what we can do to facilitate self-responsibility and passion in learning.

**Rethinking Learning with Salman Khan**
The Mastery in Communication Initiative and the Stanford GSB Education Club hosted Salman Khan, who spoke about the history and evolution of the Khan Academy and how it is reshaping the way people learn today.
Online Learning Factoid of the Month:
“The world's higher education system must accommodate nearly 80 million more students by 2025….this would require building three campuses for 30,000 students every week for the next 13 years. Since this is unlikely to happen, other ways to provide education have to be found.” – The Guardian

If you only Try One Thing this month, try this, from Dr. Huett:
Lazarus Form Recovery— “I have been using this plugin and love it. I can’t count the number of times I have typed a long email, form, or announcement only to have the browser crash, page freeze, or CourseDen kick me out. When that happens, you can use this plugin to recover what you just typed. It should work in both Firefox and Google Chrome. If you spend a lot of time typing online, you need this.”

If you are Adventurous check out:
crocodoc—View PDFs, Microsoft Office documents, and images as they were meant to be seen on your computer, regardless of unique system configurations. Crocodoc, a free tool, allows you to view, add comments, and markups, as well as share and embed anywhere, supporting and facilitating instructor and peer review flow and feedback within an online educational environment.

Walk the Line: Finding Balance in Our Use of Technology and Social Media
Thursday, April 26, 12:00-1:30 p.m.
This webinar explores the intersection between students’ use of technology and social media and indicators of psychosocial well-being and sense of community in university life, rooted in a conceptual framework that incorporates Erik Erikson’s theory of psychosocial development, the development of mature interpersonal relationships espoused by Arthur Chickering and Linda Reisser, the concept of social integration (or social belonging) advanced by Vincent Tinto, and work by Marcia Baxter Magolda and Robert Kegan who highlight the central importance of the interpersonal stages of student and adult development. Register.

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy:
Shifts and Instructional Implications
Wednesday, May 2, 3:00-4:00 p.m.
During this session, participants will learn about the overarching priorities of the Common Core State Standards for English language arts and literacy. Sandra Alberti will discuss the major instructional shifts required by the standards, including the evidence behind the shifts. Additionally, Alberti will present a few recommendations regarding how to introduce changes in a thoughtful, concrete way to prepare both teachers and students for full implementation of the standards. Register.
UWG ONLINE: Happenings, etc.

Training & Workshops

The following events are scheduled drop-in sessions to be held at the Faculty Development Center Conference Room:

Directions to FDC

For more information contact Debra Robinson @ debrar@westga.edu or Matias Marabotto @ mmarabot@westga.edu

Getting Ready for Maymester

May 1st-4th: 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

End of May Term & Gearing up for June

May 21st-25th: 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

For an extensive day-to-day account of upcoming available Training Sessions & Workshops offered by UWG ONLINE click here and select UWG ONLINE from the category list.

Online Faculty Kudos

We would like to commend the following faculty on their efforts and achievements!

Chris Geller, PhD: Instructor, Economics
Professor Gellar utilizes core tools such as CourseDen, university email, Camtasia Relay, Word, PowerPoint, audio recordings, SnagIt, and related AV editing tools to supplement BUSA-1900, a basic computer class, and several introductory Economics courses. Regarding fully online sections of BUSA-1900, Professor Geller reports: “...my concern is not so much with what I do but what I would like to do. With thousands of homework assignments to grade, I want to automate much of the process. SAS may be suitable. Perhaps a dedicated website would ease teaching and evaluation of bias, fact, and accuracy. I am looking forward to D2L. I checked their website and all their demonstration videos. It seems to have much of what I want.” Kudos to Professor Geller for looking towards the future as we transition to D2L!

Mark Parrish, PhD: Assistant Professor, Collaborative Support & Intervention
Professor Parrish incorporates synchronous online class meetings, live online student group presentations, asynchronous delivery of narrated presentations, and online assessments within counselor educator fully online courses. Professor Parrish also facilitates the online delivery of ‘advisory board meetings’, as well as ‘continuing education’ training for professional advisors from the community. Kudos to Professor Parrish for a diverse methodology of providing online instruction and professional development services!
Tamra Ogletree, PhD

Associate Professor &
Director of the Cherokee Rose Writing Project

I am an Associate Professor of Reading in the Collaborative Support and Intervention Department in the College of Education. I have been teaching at UWG since 1996 and have seen the campus grow from a commuter college to a University. I received my PhD in Language and Literacy from the University of Georgia along with an Interdisciplinary Certificate in Qualitative Research. While obtaining my PhD I was simultaneously conducting an ethnographic research study with Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation with the Snowbird Cherokee. This eventually led to my dissertation topic and other areas of research interests.

I live on a 200 acre farm on Oak Mountain in Carrollton with my husband of 35 years, Robert, a Materials Engineer who decided to venture back into the family business and is now a cowboy with Ogletree Cattle Company. We have one son, Thomas, who is 22 years old and a lineman for the Greystone Power Company.

My first experience with online teaching happened this past fall when I was asked to teach a Dissertation Mentoring class with a focus on Qualitative Research for the EdD. in School Improvement. Being a “traditional” face-to-face teacher, this fully online class was very intimidating to me because I did not think I could effectively communicate methodologies and the nuances of Qualitative Research if I could not see my students face-to-face. Research is a difficult class to teach in the first place but teaching it online was way out of my comfort zone. I was also hesitant because I did not think I could get to know my online students as well as I could my face-to-face students. However, being a person who loves both challenges and new learning opportunities, I decided to face my fears, take the plunge, and see where I landed. Distance Education gave me a vast amount of support and my mentors, Debra Robinson and David Lloyd, have been wonderful throughout this process. We designed the course during the fall semester and it is being implemented this semester. I am also in the process of designing two courses that I will teach this fall online: Reading Theory, Development, and Practices and Trends in Reading Education.

Tools and software I find helpful in an online educational environment include: Camtasia, Podcasting, Skype, as well as Apple’s iPad and Flip camera.
I really like Camtasia. When I first placed my lecture videos into CourseDen, the files were so large the screens would freeze. By downloading the videos into Camtasia before placing it into the podcasting channel, it would shrink the file so the computer would not freeze.

My main goal throughout this process was to retain the integrity of my teaching philosophy which is derived from Freire’s theory of engaged pedagogy. I never have been comfortable being a “sage on the stage” type of instructor so I use hands-on experiences and collaborative group work to enhance instruction. I also was determined to keep my teaching personality intact as I ventured into online education. When I videoed podcasts to post, I did not edit or “re-do” the taping over and over. In face to face classes there is no such thing as a “re-do” so I decided that would be my methodology in online as well. I don’t recommend my technique for everyone. It is painful to watch myself on video so I stopped looking after the first module.

I think online learning has tremendous growth potential for UWG and it is my professional goal to grow with it.

I was pleasantly surprised that not only am I able to teach a Research class fully online but I am able to know my online students better than I ever had in face to face classes. The conversations are richer, the hands-on lessons are easily executed, and the collaborative work has far exceeded my expectations. I am overwhelmed by the success of this class. My fears were unfounded and in the process, I have learned a tremendous amount about me as an educator while obtaining experience with many new teaching tools and techniques.

I want to thank everyone on campus involved in distance education for their tremendous support. Not once when I have asked for help (even on the tiniest issues) have I been turned down. The collegiality with distance education faculty and staff has exceeded my greatest expectations. You guys ROCK!!
Questions & Submissions

For questions, suggestions, or items to include in the next newsletter such as:

*Upcoming Events, Workshops, & Trainings
*Publications & Other Achievements
*Online Teaching/Learning News & Insights

Please contact Rhea Wojcik:
rheaw@westga.edu

We look forward to learning about and sharing your experiences and achievements.
Thank you for your contributions!

Check it out: UWG Online Newsletter Archives

UWG ONLINE CHALLENGE

The first person to email the correct answers to the following questions will win the Spring Semester Grand Prize!

1. What would Mrs. McMillan like to see more of within online education at UWG?
2. What plugin for your browser does Dr. Huett say you really need if you spend time typing online?
3. What does Dr. Geller state as a primary concern as he instructs within an online environment?

Please email rheaw@westga.edu: list your full name, contact information and your department. All questions must be answered correctly. For the semester grand prize, previous “non-grand-prize” winners are eligible. Items awarded are for faculty use and will be transferred to department inventory.
Thank you!