

November 7, 2007

TO: News Room: ATTN: Schools Section
Peninsula Clarion <safe:morris>

FROM: Suzie Kendrick
Kenai Peninsula College

RE: Weekly Schools Column (published Tuesday, November 13, 2007)

Distance education brings the world closer to KPC

What do two soldiers serving in Iraq, a young Alaskan woman visiting Germany, a person living in Montana, another in Louisiana working on an oil platform, a woman working on a fishing boat, at least one resident from Kodiak, Emmonak, Nome, Aniak, Juneau, and Sitka and several North Slope and Cook Inlet platform employees have in common? They have all taken KPC's online chemistry class co-taught by adjunct professors Bob Amundson and Susan Mircovich and KRC full-time professor Andy Veh.

Distance delivered classes are becoming more and more common and Kenai Peninsula College has stayed on the forefront within the University of Alaska system to create and deliver distance courses that are unique in the system.

"We refer to these as our 'far-flung' students. It is interesting that the soldiers in Iraq get their exams proctored by their commanding officers and the lady who works on the fishing boat arranged to have her exams proctored when the boat pulled into port," said Bob Amundson.

Amundson says that it has been very satisfying putting together the curriculum for the *Survey of Chemistry* course and lab. Students asked for the next level of the discipline, *General Chemistry*, to be adapted to the distance delivery format. Amundson says that when he brought the case forward to the KPC administration he was encouraged to proceed.

"Susan Mircovich, who lives in the Mat-Su Valley, and I developed the class and she will be teaching it in the spring," said Amundson.

How does a chemistry student experience laboratory experiments online? According to the course description, aside from virtual experiments, the online lab section requires

students to attend a 6 hour lab session to be completed at either a KPC campus or in the Anchorage/MatSu area or it is set up by the individual student at a facility close to them (e.g. high school or local college chemistry lab and the lab instructor provides the lab descriptions.)

In addition to the online chemistry class, Amundson has also adapted *Intermediate Algebra* to online delivery. The web-based course is set-up as pre-recorded online sessions that students can access and proceed at their own pace. Amundson offers virtual office hours when students know he will be available to give immediate feedback to their questions, as well as being available daily via email.

It's not just chemistry and math that Amundson has a passion for. He is well known on the Kenai River Campus for teaching the humanities course, *Film as Literature: Film Noir*.

“The traditional *Film Noir* class has been going strong for the past seven years and has been popular with KPC students and especially our JumpStart students (high school seniors who can take KPC classes at \$35 per credit.) As a result of the class, together with a former student of mine, Clyde Folley—who incidentally is at film school at Vassar—we made a public presentation on *film noir* at KPC in February of 2004. I also did presentations in Homer, Seward, and two at the Anchorage Museum of History and Art and one at UAA. And as a result of those presentations, I was invited to speak on *Film Noir and French New Wave Cinema* at the Dallas Arm Museum/Nasher Sculpture Center during their closing events for the *Matisse, Painter Sculptor Exhibit* in late April 2007. These presentations sparked interest in the topic and the new online class is a result of that interest, since students anywhere can enroll.”

Innovative ceramic artist opens exhibit

The Kenai River Campus will be welcoming Gina Hollomon, one of Alaska's most inventive ceramics artists, during an opening reception & slide presentation/lecture from 3-5 p.m., Sunday, November 18 in the G.L. Freeburg Gallery at KRC in Soldotna.

Hollomon's exhibition, *Fur Feathers Fins Fire*, will run November 18 through December 14.

For more information, contact Celia Anderson at 262-0361.

KPC Alumni Association meeting

Over 600 letters were sent out to local graduates of KPC inviting them to the first meeting of the newly resurrected KPC Alumni Association. Anyone who has completed a 3-credit class at any KPC site is cordially invited to the meeting that is scheduled for 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, November 20 in the conference room of the Mining and Petroleum Training Service located at the Kenai River Campus in Soldotna.

The goal of the organizational meeting will be to serve as a mixer for alumnus and to identify members who want to serve as volunteers for the association. Light refreshments will be provided.

For more information about the event, contact Bill Howell at 262-0314 or email inwh@uaa.alaska.edu .