

February 1, 2007

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

FROM: Suzie Kendrick
Kenai Peninsula College

RE: Weekly Schools Column (published Wednesday, February 7, 2007)

Illuminate Live classes get high marks from instructors and students

After five class meetings, Web Design instructor Mark Jensen thinks he and his students have gotten the hang of the real-time, online classroom.

“I have ten students and they say class time flies by. The feedback I am getting is positive and no one has missed any classes,” said Jensen.

This is the first semester Kenai Peninsula College has offered classes using the Illuminate Live (ELive) format. Jensen is one of four instructors using the new technology this semester. He says the experience is distinctly different than teaching students face to face.

“When they’re sitting in class, student body language clues me into how they are interpreting the material. I can look in their eyes and see if they understand what I am trying to teach them. Using ELive, I have to look for their electronic feedback prompts. A happy face means they get it; a confused face or thumbs down signals me that don’t understand. It is an interesting experience,” he said. “In a lot of ways, it’s like running a radio show. You have to manage break-out rooms, instant messaging, and keep track of the material you’re trying to teach and keep the show going.”

One of Jensen’s students in the Web Design class is Bettie Wallace, an assistant professor of Mathematics at the Kenai River Campus. Wallace has a unique perspective as she has taken the same class before in the “face to face” format and is now enrolled in the ELive class.

“I like the ELive class. There are less distractions and I am not finding myself missing things because I am helping someone else in the class. I do miss being able to easily point to something on the board and get the instructor feedback right away,” Wallace said.

Wallace said she signed up for the class so she could experience ELive from a student perspective.

“I don’t know if I will use ELive to teach Math, but as a division chair, I need to know how the system works. I would definitely take another ELive class,” said Wallace.

Jensen says only one student has dropped in to talk about class in-person and two others telephoned questions to him.

“I have students accessing the class on their laptops on the campus wireless system, some come into the computer lab and others access the system from home. One student uses a slow dial-up internet connection and has had no problems with the format,” he said.

Doctoral research project brings Alaskan home

Azure Kraxberger, born and raised in Soldotna, graduated from Skyview High School and then attended University of Alaska Fairbanks for one year. She transferred to Flagstaff, Arizona and got her bachelors degree in Psychology and a minor in Human Resource Management. It was there that she developed her interest in the psychology of work and decided that she would like to help people develop better work environments.

Kraxberger is now a graduate student at Alliant International University in San Francisco, California where she is focusing her doctoral research on social responsibility in the work place.

The study of social responsibility in small business practices has brought Kraxberger home to the Kenai Peninsula to conduct her research. Her goal is to conduct focus groups and/or individual interviews with small business owners employing between 8 and 100 people.

Kraxberger would like small business owners to attend a focus group session. The sessions will last 2 hours and will include a survey. Sessions are scheduled to be held at the Kenai River Campus on February 13, 6-8 p.m. in room 115 and February 17, 2-4 p.m. in room 109.

Kraxberger said, “To my knowledge, there has been no research done on this topic in the U. S. The European Union and Canada have done just a few studies with the finding that more research needs to be done to determine what the needs are for small businesses and social responsibility.”

To contact Kraxberger, call 262-9186 or email akraxberger@alliant.edu .

Alaska College Goal Sunday reminder

Alaska College Goal Sunday will take place at 2 p.m., February 11 at the Kenai River Campus in Soldotna in rooms 107, 108, and 109 in the Ward Building.

The event is a community service to help students and their families with the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the universally required financial aid application. The FAFSA is the basis that almost all financial aid evaluations are based on. The information presented is applicable to all colleges and universities, not just KPC and the University of Alaska.

For more information about the event, contact KPC financial aid coordinator, Carrie Burford, at 262-0331.