Welcome to the first issue of the Online Learning Update Newsletter! We are excited about keeping the JMU community up to date with the latest online learning news with three to four issues each academic year. Because we appreciate your time and attention, we will keep each issue as brief and useful as possible. Whether you teach online or are just thinking of teaching online, or have some other role to play in managing or supporting online teaching and learning, there will be something in each issue for you. If you have any feedback on any of our newsletters, or wish to suggest content you would like to see included, please let us know by contacting onlinelearning@jmu.edu

Sincerely,
Doug Hearrington
Online Learning Coordinator

Madison Online

Volume I, Issue I
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Inside this Issue:

Take Note

Transition from Blackboard Collaborate to WebEx

Library & Educational Technologies (LET) and IT are working together to integrate the WebEx classroom/meeting tool within Canvas. This will enable you to easily create WebEx sessions from within Canvas and for your students to have full functionality when they participate. Please note that the currently integrated tool, Blackboard Collaborate, will not be available after the integration, which should be complete by May-mester.

Canvas Online Training for Faculty

If you plan to use Canvas for an upcoming online course, you can learn how to get started by taking the 2-week self-paced online training course through Innovation Services (an area of Libraries & Educational Technologies). You may choose to participate in one or more of the following modules: Layout and Personal Settings, Content Management, and Assessment. Sessions begin on June 13, 2017.

Blue Course Evaluation integration with Canvas

The Blue Online Course Evaluation System will be integrated with Canvas this summer. This will enable faculty, unit heads and students to more easily access online evaluations and reports. Keep a look out for more information!

Introducing the Online Learning Council!

We're excited to announce the formation of JMU's first Online Learning Council (OLC)! The OLC was established in the Fall of 2016. The purpose of the OLC is to "provide a formal structure for faculty, staff and administrators across the university to explore, design, recommend, and present to key JMU stake-holders, innovative solutions and recommendations addressing current and future challenges in on-line and hybrid learning" (OLC Charter, 2016). The 33-member Council includes faculty, staff, admin-istrators and students recommended by Academic Council, Administration and Finance, Student Affairs, and others. Vice-Provost of University Programs Linda Halpern serves as an ex-officio member. Dr. Doug Hearrington, Online Learning Coordinator for JMU, chairs the Council.

The Council met for the first time in December and has already been busy conducting a SWOT analysis of the university's existing online learning offerings, "based on the Inter-regional Guidelines for Evaluating Distance Education, JMU strategic planning docu-ments, and research-based best practices in teaching, learning, and administering online and hybrid learn-ing courses and programs." The goal is to use this SWOT analysis to create a strategic plan to advance and improve online learning at JMU.

Attendance at OLC meetings is open to all interested JMU faculty, administrators, and staff. The Council currently meets twice monthly; times and locations vary. If you are interested in participating in these meetings, please contact onlinelearning@jmu.edu for details.

OLC Members:

Linda Cabe Halpern, Vice Provost for University Programs (ex officio)

Doug Hearrington, Online Learning Coordinator, University Programs (Chair)

Sarah Cheverton, Assistant Online Learning Coordinator (Assistant Chair)

Catherine Crummett, Assistant Vice Provost for University Programs

Terry Dean, Associate Dean, Graduate School

Michael Busing, Associate Dean, College of Business

Brad Barnett, Senior Associate Director, Financial Aid and Scholarships

Lindsey Blythe, Graduate Student

Drew Davis, Director of Computing Support, IT-Computing Support

Ozlem Ersin, Associate Dean, College of Health and Behavioral Sciences

Michelle Estes, Associate Professor in Learning, Technology, and Leadership Education

Jared Featherstone, Associate Director for Writing, Learning Centers

Emily Gravett, Associate Director of Center for Faculty Innovation

Dale Hulvey, Assistant Vice President, Infor-mation Technology

Theresa Jennings, Admissions Coordinator, Outreach and Engagement

Liz Johnson, Associate Professor, Geology and Environmental Science

Emily Gravett, Associate Director of Center for Faculty Innovation

Taylor Kahny, Graduate Student

Karina Kline-Gabel, Lecturer, Foreign Language Department

Chandra Lane, Assistant Director Training/ Development, Career and Academic Planning

Diane Lending, Professor, Computer Information Systems

Christie Liu, Senior Instructional Designer, Library and Educational Technologies

Joe Loyacano, Academic Advisor, University Advising

Sarah MacDonald, Director, Outreach and Engagement

Joy McBride, Enrollment Information Systems Analyst, Academic Affairs

Adam Murray, Dean, Library and Educational Technologies

Nena Powell, Coordinator for Online RN and BSN programs, Nursing Department

Jesse Rathgeber, Assistant Professor, School of Music

Valerie Schoolcraft, Director, Office of Disabilities Services

Kristi Shackelford, Assistant Vice Provost, Academic Policy and Curriculum Development

Carrie Szlyk, Graduate Student

Jane Thall, Associate Professor and Department Head for Learning, Technology, and Leadership Education

Michele White, University Registrar, Office of the Registrar

Diane Wilcox, Professor, Learning, Technology, and Leadership Education

Shenghua Zha, Instructional Technologist, Library and Educational Technologies

Take Note

Blue Course Evaluation Dates for Summer School

If you have taught a JMU online course in the past few years, you are probably familiar with the Blue Online Course Evaluation system. Course evaluations for all online courses are administered through Blue. This means that all faculty who teach an online course are invited to add their own evaluation items to the Blue system to supplement the departmental items, and all students who are taking an online course are invited to complete an evaluation for each course. Faculty and academic unit heads can access evaluation reports online at the end of each term. Go to the 2017 Summer Online Course Evaluation Schedule to see evaluation start and end dates for each session. Contact Sarah Cheverton (cheverse@jmu.edu) if you and/or your program coordinator or unit head want to know more about Blue.

JMU Spotlight

JMU's Online Information Security MBA Program Ranks #21 in 2017

U.S. News & World Report has been collecting data from and ranking distance education programs for 6 years. According to their website, they do this because they believe that "online learning is becoming integral to all types of education, including higher education, and that consumers are hungry for information related to online degrees." JMU's Online InfoSec MBA Program ranked #21 in the 2017 results. For more information, visit the U.S. News website.

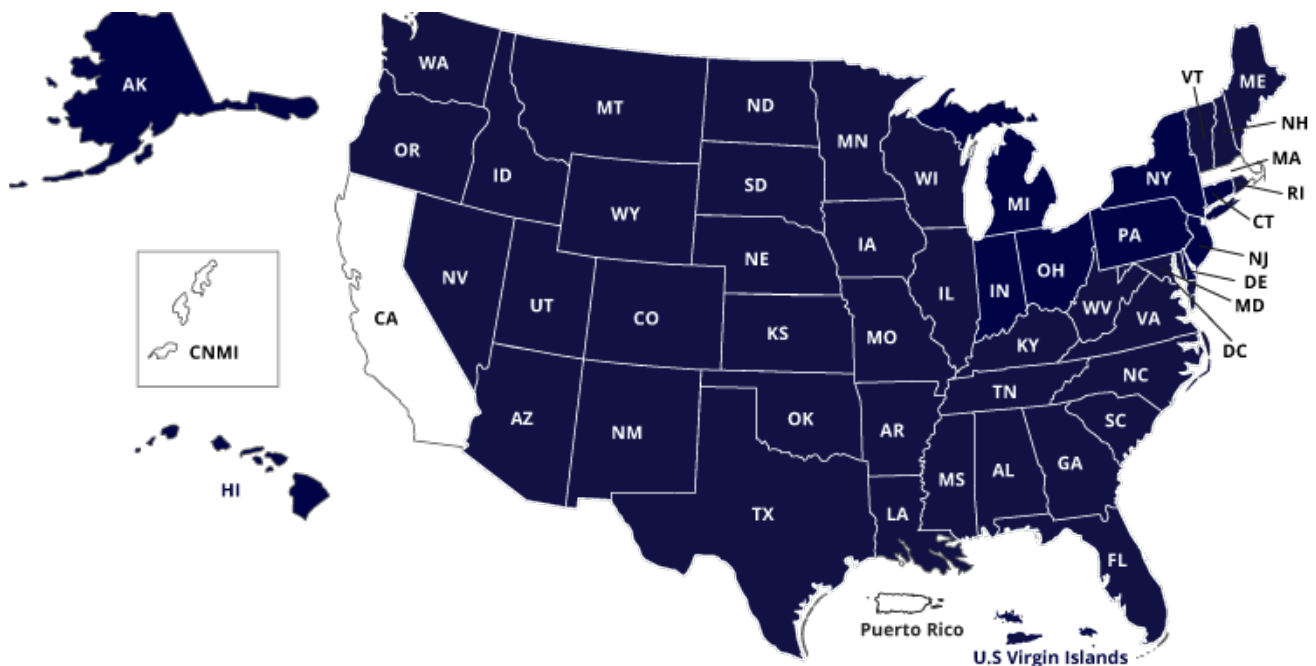Congratulations InfoSec MBA Program!

What is SARA?

You might have heard someone mention "SARA" in relation to online learning and wondered, "Who is SARA?" SARA stands for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement, an agreement among member states, districts and territories that establishes comparable national standards for interstate offering of postsecondary distance education courses and programs. SARA is coordinated by the National Council for SARA or NC-SARA.

All U.S. states, territories and districts are invited to become SARA members; institutions within member states can then be approved to participate as long as they agree to comply with a standard set of guidelines. JMU's newly formed Online Learning Council is working to ensure that the university's online offerings comply with these guidelines (see story above). SARA enables participating institutions to enroll students from other member states in online courses and programs without having to obtain permission from those states (unless the course or program require certain types of "physical presence" activities).

Virginia is a SARA member and JMU is a participating institution. JMU's Online Learning Coordination Team and other administrative offices are together responsible for ensuring that JMU is in compliance. While much of this work has been completed, the team will be working with academic units to identify and develop a way to track the "certain types of physical presence activities" mentioned above.

If you or your academic unit would like to know more about SARA and how it might impact your programs, contact Sarah Cheverton, Assistant Online Learning Coordinator at onlinelearning@jmu.edu. For more information about SARA, visit http://nc-sara.org.

Why I Teach Online

By Devoney Looser for *the Chronicle*
March 20, 2017

"I might never have sought an online teaching assignment if my husband hadn't been diagnosed with cancer……. I certainly never expected to love it, let alone come to believe in it as a matter of social justice and feminist practice. Yet much to my surprise, I do."
Continue reading at http://bit.ly/article-whyiteachonline

Babson Report Shows Increase in Distance Learning

The 2015 Babson report, Online Report Card: Tracking Online Education in the United States (results published in 2016), indicates that "more than one in four (28%) students now take at least one distance education course," a 3.9% increase from the previous year.   The report, based on the Babson Survey Research Group's 13th and final annual Survey of Online Learning states that "[d]istance education enrollments continue to grow, even in the face of declining overall higher education enrollments." Furthermore, they grew in the non-profit sector, while they declined in the for-profit sector. Interestingly, despite the overall upward trend, faculty remain skeptical and academic administrators are slightly less enthusiastic than in years past.

The research group decided to end the long-term survey project after the 2015 survey as distance learning education has matured and annual data are available through multiple outlets. For example, institutions now report their distance education statistics through the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data Systems (IPEDS). After all, "[w]hen more than one-quarter of higher education students are taking a course online, distance education is clearly mainstream."

You can find the full report at http://bit.ly/babson-report

*All quotations are from the report

Online Learning works in conjunction with these partners:

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY
OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

jmu.edu/outreach

Office of Disability Services
jmu.edu/ods

James Madison University Libraries & Educational Technologies
connecting people and ideas

jmu.edu/let

Information Technology

jmu.edu/computing

Academic Policy and Curriculum Development

jmu.edu/catalog

Meet the Online Learning Team

The Online Learning team, located within University Programs, serves as a central point of coordination for strategic planning, policy and standards, issues of online learning quality, support for students and faculty, state authorization, and related matters concerning online learning at JMU. Our team consists of Doug Hearrington, Online Learning Coordinator; Sarah Cheverton, Assistant Online Learning Coordinator; and Leanne Shenk, Administrative Assistant.

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