In The Moodle Mood?

Effective June 1st, Moodle will be SUNY Cobleskill’s new course management system, replacing the ANGEL system we’ve been using since 2009; both systems will be running throughout the spring semester. While the look and feel of Moodle is different, all of the key functionality is still there: assignment drop boxes, discussion forums/boards, online gradebook, integration with Turnitin, etc. Moodle even has some new features that instructors might like such as the options for regulating a new assignment and learning activity.

Dr. Jiang Tan, Director of CELT (Center for Excellence in Learning & Teaching), did 50+ Moodle training workshops during the fall semester and will offer more throughout the spring. There will be a different topic each week, offered at various times so that you can find one that works with your schedule. Workshop topics go from a simple overview of Moodle to how to use the Turnitin Drop Box to making and using a Discussion Forum. Once the schedule is set, you can sign up online for whichever sessions you want to attend.

Moving your existing courses from Angel to Moodle is easy, mostly because you don’t have to do it yourself. Instructors and site owners just need to login to Moodle (use your normal Coby username/password) and fill out the form to request course migration. That’s it, your part of the process is done. If you don’t get your courses moved over by June 1st, that’s ok, they won’t vanish. Dr. Tan and the rest of the team are planning to do a mass migration later on in the semester.

There’s no need to wait though. You can go into our Moodle site and create a course right now: moodle.cobleskill.edu. As always, if you have any questions Jiang is ready to help at pretty much any time of the day or night (tanj@cobleskill.edu, 255-5869).

Reconfiguring CASE & The Writing Center

In an effort to continue to coordinate and to enhance student support services on campus, Derwin Bennett has taken on the role of Director of Educational Support Services. In this role, Derwin will be providing oversight for the Center for Academic Support and Excellence (CASE), MERITS, and AccessABILITY Resources, and he will continue his service as Director of EOP. Wendi Richards will continue to serve as Assistant Director of CASE, and Michael Cobbins will now serve as the Assistant Director of Educational Support Services. EOP will move downstairs into the CASE area during summer break so that everybody is in one place.

Along with these changes, the Writing Center has moved upstairs to Library 213. This space—one dedicated solely to the Writing Center and its mission—will allow students direct and personal, one-on-one help with their writing from the planning stages right through to those last polishing touches. As always, the Writing Center welcomes all SUNY Cobleskill students, regardless of major or year. For the spring semester, it will be open 12:00pm–7:00pm Mondays–Thursdays, 12:00pm–5:00pm Fridays and 2:00pm–7:00pm on Sundays. Appointments are strongly encouraged, but walk-ins are often available as well. For more info or questions, contact Dr. Matthew Burns, Writing Center Coordinator, at burnsmr@cobleskill.edu or 255-5391.

Connecting Students To Resources With Library Guides

We are pleased to announce the implementation of Library Guides as a new way to organize and showcase Library resources and services available to SUNY Cobleskill faculty and students for research and study.

Library Guides are a content management and information sharing system designed specifically for libraries and allow us to reach users at their point of need. These guides allow for easy navigation through and instruction on recommended databases, journals, books, webpages, tutorials and multimedia targeted for a particular subject field, class, or assignment.

By working with a librarian, you can have a Library Guide created to specifically fit your classes’ research needs. Students can then access the guide via the Library’s website, as a direct link provided to them, or as a widget embedded in your ANGEL or Moodle course.

Feel free to explore our current guides at libraryguides.cobleskill.edu. If you’re interested in having a Library Guide created for a course or embedding an existing guide in your course site, please contact Katie DeRusso (derusske@cobleskill.edu or 255-5858).
A Little More Time On Saturdays

We’re pushing Saturday’s closing time to 6:00pm! Last semester we made a slight tweak to our Saturday hours, opening at Noon and closing at 5:00pm instead of 10:00am–4:00pm. The change was made based on feedback from users telling us that they wanted the Library to be open a little later on Saturdays, and stats showing that very few people were coming in before Noon.

While this has been a popular change for the most part, students who are in both the morning and afternoon classes still can’t get to the Library except during their lunch break. Which is the reason for adding another hour to the Saturday schedule. Luckily, there’s just enough wiggle-room in the budget to make it work.

Will this be adequate time for Saturday students? Will enough people come in to make staying open cost effective? Only time will tell.

And The Winner Is...

The Library’s own Megan Trigg won the Quilt Barn contest! Her design was chosen by Acting President Thatcher and other members of the SUNY Cobleskill administration. Dr. Thatcher said she particularly liked the use of orange in the design. Once painted, the giant quilt block will be mounted on one of the campus barns as part of the Schoharie County Quilt Barn Trail.

What is a Quilt Barn Trail? Basically, large quilt blocks are painted and displayed on barns, and there’s a map available for people to drive around and see them. According to the Trail’s organizers, the “Schoharie County Quilt Barn Trail emerged as an outcome of the floods of August 2011, caused by Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee. It celebrates the unexpectedness of art on a building or wall instead of a gallery.” Quilts are an art form that people recognize and respond to. Putting the designs up in such a public way makes them very accessible. You can actually find barn quilts all over the country— take a look at Barn Quilts and the American Quilt Trail for some really nice examples. Information about the Schoharie County trail is also available via their Facebook page.

Chat Reference Update

The Library has offered reference help via text message for several years; it’s proven useful so we added an online chat option about a year ago. It seemed like now might be a good time to look back and see how chat reference is working out. Are people using it? What are they using it for?

We are pleased to report that chat reference is growing in popularity. During the first semester, there were only 15 chat-specific interactions. It went up to 44 in the second semester, most of them research-related (as opposed to ‘what time does the Library close?’ types of questions). Examples of chat queries from the fall semester include:

- I have to do research on voting rights, not sure where to begin.
- How can I tell if articles are peer reviewed?
- How do I set up an ILL account?
- Did the College have a school paper in 1968?
- Where can I find articles on gender inequality?

Chat reference gives users another way to get help when they need it. The chat widget is right there on the Library’s website (www.cobleskill.edu/library) and it even tells you whether a librarian is ‘available’ to help, or is ‘offline.’ Click, type, send— that’s all there is to it. Give it a try the next time you have a question.
E-Resource Spotlight: ScienceDirect

ScienceDirect is about much more than chemistry and biology. While the so-called ‘hard’ sciences are its focus, it also offers access to quality resources in business, psychology, education and sociology. There are more than 2,500 journals available in ScienceDirect including: Applied and Preventive Psychology, Psychology of Sport and Exercise, Critical Perspectives On Accounting, Agricultural Economics, Journal of Rural Studies, Journal of Corporate Finance, Language & Communication, Early Childhood Research Quarterly, International Journal of Gastronomy and Food Science, Journal of Cultural Heritage—plus most of the world’s top scientific and technical journals. All in all, it contains over 12 million full-text journal articles and book chapters.

Since the scientific and technical fields always change so rapidly, ScienceDirect has built some nice current awareness features into their system to help you keep abreast of current research in your field of interest. Register with ScienceDirect (it’s free) and you’ll be able to keep track of your favorite authors and journals and receive alerts about new articles, among other things.

Search alerts are especially useful since they quickly tell you when new material relevant to a specific subject becomes available. So, if you do a search to find everything ScienceDirect has on tilapia parasites or hydraulic fracturing (a.k.a. fracking) or whatever, you can save that search as an alert and the system will email you whenever new articles on your subject come in. Alternatively, you can set up broader topic alerts to be notified of new materials in a particular field, such as aquatic sciences or fossil fuels. Coming at things from a different angle, there are also citation alerts to let you know when a specific article you’re interested in (perhaps because you wrote it) is cited by newer articles.

Like all of our research databases, ScienceDirect is available 24/7 through the Library’s website (www.cobleskill.edu/library). Please let us know if you have any questions about this database, or any of our other resources (255-5841; Library@cobleskill.edu; or text to 518-444-5485).

AccessABILITY Resources—New Testing Rules!

AccessABILITY Resources recently announced new rules for testing accommodations necessary to help them make the best use of staff resources.

1. Alternate testing will now be available from 10:00am–4:00pm, Monday–Friday ONLY. The latest start time for a test will be 2:30pm. Students must always be ensured their extended time as indicated on their accommodations sheet, and it should not interfere with other classes. Faculty members have the option to offer the accommodations. If you do so, please be sure to honor the student’s need for extended time and/or distraction free location, and assistive technology such as reader software, when making these arrangements.

2. ALL tests/exams must either be sent in electronically to dss@cobleskill.edu (e-mailed, or scanned and attached to an e-mail), or be available to the student via ANGEL or Moodle. All tests will also be returned to faculty in this manner. There will no longer be a paper drop-off/pick-up area for tests.

3. There is a space on the request form to add the best phone number at which to contact you during the test time. If you would prefer to keep the number private, add it to your cover e-mail instead. The contact number is needed as legal precedent has determined that students who use an alternate testing area are entitled to ask questions of the faculty member for clarification, just as any other student would.

4. Please be sure to put a full heading on all exams, including your name, course number and test number/test date if appropriate. Any special directions may be added as part of a cover e-mail. Allowed materials should be noted on the request form itself.

5. As usual, all students must submit a completed request form at least one workday prior to the test/exam and each test/exam requires a separate form. The new request form, reflecting all of the above rules, is available via Sharepoint.

If there are any questions about these changes, if you’re not completely sure how they will impact you and your students, please contact AccessABILITY Resources Coordinator Betsy Briggs sooner rather than later— you really do not want to wait until the day before the test (briggsese@cobleskill.edu, 255-5282).

EOP Community Service Event

Several EOP students participated in the “Breakfast with Santa” family event sponsored by the Cobleskill Rotary Club on December 8th at the Cobleskill-Richmondville High School. The students spent several hours hosting a very busy craft table and face painting station for the visiting families to enjoy.
From The Dean

With its 40th anniversary, it is interesting to consider the role of the Van Wagenen Library then and now. Just 20 years ago, a majority of sources were in print format, supplemented with back issues on microform, and then enhanced by a few newly developing research databases—mostly on CD-ROM. It was essential for students to visit the Library to complete their research and seek research help. Today, the Library continues to provide information in print, continues to be the place to study, collaborate, seek academic help, and meet with friends. While our print offerings still get used, we now provide students remote access to a rich collection of online full-text research databases, supplemented by freely available Internet resources, and they have the ability to receive research help via texting, email, and real time chat.

To get a visual perspective of the Van Wagenen Library then and now, take a moment and check out our historical display curated by Katherine Brent from material in our archive—there are wonderful photos of the move into this building using a human book-moving chain and librarian fashions of the 70s and 80s.

As we continue to grow, we will do so in an informed strategic manner to best serve the campus. This semester we will conduct an informal series of web-based, very short feedback surveys. Last year we gathered feedback in this manner and found it to be effective. We synthesized the data and turned it into action by sanctioning quiet study areas and modifying our Saturday hours.

The Van Wagenen Library is looking forward to a productive, busy, and happy semester and we wish you the same. Happy New Year!

Staff News

Brendan Aucoin will present a collaborative project with digital artist Joseph Von Stengel called “Iconography of the Modern Classic” at the 2014 Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association National Conference in Chicago this April.

Marilyn Barnes retired in December after many years of dedicated service to the Center for Academic Support & Excellence (CASE) and to SUNY Cobleskill in general. We hope she enjoys a healthy and productive retirement.

Derwin Bennett is now the Director of Educational Support Services. (See p. 1 for more information.)

Michael Cobbins is still part of the CASE staff but his job has changed somewhat—now he’ll be running the MERITS Program.

Katherine Brent, April Davies and Katie DeRusso all headed to Albany in early December to participate in a one-day summit focused on clarifying the goals of SUNY Libraries related to the OpenSUNY initiative. The summit included librarians and library administrators from all across SUNY, as well as representatives from SUNY System Administration.

Katie DeRusso will travel to Geneseo in March to attend the annual 3Ts conference. The theme for 2014: At the Core of Teaching, Technology and Transliteracy.

Meghan Tracy-Zarecki started this fall as CASE’s new Keyboard Specialist I. She has her MS degree in Reading and has been a wonderful asset to CASE.