By now everyone should be settling in and establishing some routine in your busy academic life. The start of each new semester brings with it an excitement and yet some uncertainty about our classes and our students. There are indications that the newest cadre of students that have been admitted to our University possess greater academic talents than ever before. This pool of academically talented freshmen should provide you with an opportunity to style your teaching in ways different than you have perhaps used in previous semesters. Our newest students possess higher GPAs and ACT scores, higher class rank, and have greater expectations of being challenged in our classrooms and labs. The term frequently used to describe this newest generation of students is "Millennial."

Millennial students have been encouraged to follow the rules and tend to prefer a high level of structure. The trait of confidence is common among Millennial students. Millennials are optimistic about their future. They have been continuously rewarded by authority figures for their positive behaviors. Students from this generation believe they can accomplish whatever tasks are placed in front of them by authority figures, but their own outcomes must also be met (DeBard, 2004).

There are many approaches to teaching Millennial students. Fundamentally, your courses can be qualitatively different than those of previous years. In other words, you should feel free to offer instruction that is more challenging and demanding, not by simply assigning more work, but by mining more educational value from the work that is assigned.

Consider the following suggestions for modifying your instruction that may resonate well with Millennial students:

- approaching material from an interesting or unconventional thematic perspective;
- emphasizing written and oral communication skills;
- promoting learning outside the formal classroom setting (e.g., service projects);
- fostering teamwork and collaboration;
- applying theories and principles learned in class to “real-life” problems and situations;
- exploring connections among various fields of study;
- providing opportunities for independent research;
- incorporating, where possible, opportunities for study away from campus;
- providing opportunities for publication or public presentation of work;
- developing assignments and exercises that require students to reconcile conflicting findings or to synthesize different points of view; and, emphasizing the use of original or primary sources, as opposed to traditional textbooks and secondary readings.

The instruction you provide and the methodology you employ does make a difference in the lives of your students. This belief was solidified for me as I concluded visits to two of our alumnae in the Chicago area this week. The alumnae I visited were from different programs and graduated 30 years apart. Both shared stories with me about favorite places, events and things on campus, but quite independent of one another, told stories about favorite professors and the difference they made in their personal and professional lives. The stories were replete with what you and I would consider inconsequential moments in our classes, but somehow those moments held special and enduring meaning for these women. What we say, how we say it, and what we do in our classes does matter and can greatly impact our students for decades. Keep that in mind when working with our newest group of students and best of luck for a successful academic year!

As of September 1, I assumed duties as Interim Associate Dean in CAST. It has been an interesting and educational transition thus far. Among my portfolio of duties are enrollment management, facilities, and curriculum. Also listed in my job description is the ominous “other duties as assigned”.

In the area of enrollment management, CAST schools and departments will be meeting with members of Admissions and University College to set enrollment targets for next fall. This involves analyzing current enrollments, projecting demand from internal transfers (ISU students) to your programs, and tracking graduate transfers (ISU students) to your projects. We are also working to increase enrollments in the future in targeted areas.

In the facilities area, I am on a planning committee for the proposed Student Recreation Center. The University has hired an architect and consultant for this project. There should be planning meetings (called charettes) held this fall and spring to discuss this building. The site for the building is where currently Dunn, Barton, and Walker dormitories are located in addition to the McCormick Hall site. All of these buildings are scheduled for demolition in summer, 2008. We are also in the midst of planning for the Stevenson-Turner project and hopeful of moving forward on the Horticulture Center project in the near future. The Town of Normal is working now on preparing extension of Constitution Trail though Fairview Park that will pass through this site.

The College Curriculum Committee (CCC) has had its initial meeting and will be meeting on a weekly basis to review proposals throughout the fall. Our goal is to send forward proposals to the University Curriculum Committee or the Graduate Curriculum Committee that will be well received and approved smoothly. If you have any questions about this process, check with your CCC representative.

In the “other duties as assigned” area, there have not been too many surprises so far, but I realize it is still early. I did get the responsibility of putting the “Toilet Talk” flyers in the men’s restrooms in Turner. I can report with confidence that I carried out that duty quite efficiently and very successfully.

I appreciate the many greetings and kind words that I have received since starting this position. Please know that it is my goal to serve the faculty in CAST to hopefully facilitate your efforts to teach effectively, be productive in the scholarship area, and make service contributions. Best wishes on a successful 2006-2007 academic year.

Sincerely, Alan

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CAST Research Office

CAST Outstanding Graduate Student Researcher Award Recipient
A graduate of the master’s degree program offered by the Department of Criminal Justice Sciences has been selected by the CAST Research Committee to receive the 2006-07 CAST Outstanding Graduate Student Researcher Award. Christopher L. Miller’s exemplary thesis research was conducted under the supervision of Dr. Beverly A. Smith. Drs. David Falcone and Ed Wells also served on his thesis committee. The thesis, entitled “The USA Patriot Act of 2001: An Historical Examination of U.S. National Security Legislation and Actions (1798-2005),” has been forwarded to the University Research Council for consideration for the university-wide James L. Fisher Thesis Competition. Results of that competition will be announced at a luncheon ceremony in early December. Miller will receive a monetary award and a plaque for his own keeping which will acknowledge this award. His name will also be inscribed upon a permanent plaque recognizing this award that is on display in the office of the Dean. Miller and his thesis chairperson will be invited to attend the CAST Spring Faculty Meeting next April.

The research efforts of two other CAST graduate students were considered for this award by the CAST Research Committee. Both students’ theses were viewed to be of high quality. Lindsay E. Klinefelter, School of Kinesiology and Recreation, completed a thesis entitled “Perceived Motivational Climate and Self-Determined Motivation in Female High School Athletes.” Dr. Anthony Amorose chaired her thesis committee. Nida Kazim, Department of Technology, undertook thesis work entitled “Perceptions and Experiences that Influence a Pakistani Woman’s Decision to Pursue a Teaching Career in Computer-Related Technology.” Dr. Klaus Schmidt served as the thesis chairperson. CAST faculty and staff can be very proud of the scholarly accomplishments of these former students, now graduates of our programs.

CAST to hopefully facilitate your efforts to teach effectively, be productive in the scholarship area, and make service contributions. Best wishes on a successful 2006-2007 academic year.

Sincerely, Alan

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Workshop Opportunity
A workshop entitled “Guiding and Directing Theses and Dissertations: Procedures and Best Practices” is scheduled to occur on Monday, October 9th from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. in Stevenson 401. This event is co-sponsored by the Graduate School, CTLT, and CAST. Faculty from all across campus are invited to attend, though faculty new to campus and the role of thesis/dissertation chair or committee member are specially encouraged to attend. There is no advance registration needed. However, if those planning to attend can conveniently let Associate Dean Gentry know they hope to be there, it would be appreciated. Questions can be directed to Kimberly Nance, Graduate School; Claire Lamonica, CTLT, and Deb Gentry, CAST Dean’s Office.

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Department of Family and Consumer Sciences

Drs. Julianne Trautmann, Stephanie Rau, Mardell Wilson and Connor Walters will have the manuscript “Vegetarian Students in Their First Year of College: Are they at Risk for Restrictive or Disordered Eating Behaviors?” published in ‘College Student Journal.’

Connie Dyar and Emily Carlson presented “Nightclubs: Examining Means of Egress to Determine Life Safety Code Compliance in a Case Study” at the Americas’ Fire and Safety Expo held in Miami Beach, Florida, in July.
School of Kinesiology and Recreation

Drs. Jennie Gilbert and Elizabeth (Beth) Verner recently received notification from the Physical Education Program Grant that their project working with the DuPage County Schools was funded for the 2006-2007 academic year. The grant will fund training for teachers to learn how to properly administer Fitnessgram or the President's Challenge fitness tests, and how to monitor children's physical activity using pedometers and accelerometers using a new on-line data management system. Results of physical activity monitoring and fitness testing will provide teachers with information to facilitate curricular change to improve children's physical activity and fitness. This project is a small part of the Illinois Statewide Health Fitness Project sponsored by the Illinois Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance. The state of Illinois has no system to document the incidence of obesity, health related fitness, activity level or behavior among youth. The purpose of this project is to develop an on-line, school-based, data management and tracking system to closely monitor these variables. The development of such a system should improve the health of Illinois children by promoting active lifestyles; enhance the state and schools' ability to deal with the current obesity epidemic; close the data surveillance gaps that exist in current obesity epidemic; close the data surveillance gaps that exist in parameters of school age youth; minimize the gaps in the Illinois Learning Standards for Physical Development and Health; and establish a consistent health related fitness database to be used as one benchmark for assessing physical education waiver requests.

Department of Technology

Dr. Mohamed El-Gafy and Keith Rahn were selected to be recipients of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education Small Grant ($5000) for their research project entitled “Exploring the Effect of Team Leaders who are Autonomous Learners in Enhancing Team Learning within Construction Management Classes.”

Dr. Anu Gokhale presented a workshop on Student Branch Management at the Region 8 Student Congress, held in Paris, September 1-3. As a Region 4 Student Activities Chair, she also attended the IEEE Region 1-10 Student Activities Committee meeting in Paris, August 28-30.

Dr. Chris Merrill recently served as a curriculum review member for the International Technology Education Association's Center to Advance the Teaching of Technology and Science.

School of Information Technology

Drs. David Wallace and James Wolf have written an article entitled, “Teaching Tip: Incorporating ASP.NET in an Information Systems Curriculum,” that has been accepted for publication in the Journal of Information Systems Education (JISE).

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The College of Applied Science and Technology, through its teaching, research, and service programs, will be a leader in preparing broadly educated, technologically competent professionals who can solve real-world problems in a workforce that builds economic viability and better communities in the State of Illinois and beyond.

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