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Northwest joins Missouri's virtual school team

Northwest is playing a key role in efforts to offer virtual classes this fall to thousands of high school students through the Missouri Virtual Education Program, or MoVIP.

Dr. Roger Von Holzen, director of the University's Center for Information Technology in Education, said Northwest is serving as a project manager for the high school portion of the program.

Course content, curriculum development and online administrative tools are being delivered by a team of private vendors that includes distance learning provider eCollege and online curriculum

publisher Virtual Sage.

Von Holzen said Northwest's primary mission is to coordinate implementation of these services while acting as a liaison between the vendors and Missouri's Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Created by legislation passed by the General Assembly last year at the urging of Gov. Matt Blunt, MoVIP will provide free courses taught by state-certified instructors to as many as 6,000 full- and part-time students. If the state-funded slots fill up, additional spaces will be available on a tuition basis.

At the high school level, courses include English, algebra, geometry, biology, chemistry, American and world history, economics, Spanish and Latin. There also will be advanced-placement courses.

Dr. Curt Fuchs, DESE's director of virtual education, said the popularity of virtual schools has blossomed nationwide. He explained that delivering elementary and secondary classes online offers options and flexibility unavailable in a traditional bricks-and-mortar setting.

Small schools, for example, will be able to offer a broader curriculum and advanced-placement classes. In addition, medically homebound students can continue their education online, and pupils who need remedial help can opt for electronic instruction instead of going to summer school. ■

Missouri is joining the ranks of 24 other states that have a statewide virtual school program.

For more information, visit www.dese.mo.gov/movip/ or contact the MoVIP office at (573) 526-4219.



Hubbard directs finale

Northwest President Dr. Dean L. Hubbard was a guest conductor at the Northwest Wind Symphony "pops" concert this spring. Hubbard directed the concert's final selection, John Philip Sousa's "Stars and Stripes Forever." Hubbard, who has a music background, joked that he was "able to stop waving his arms around precisely when the musicians stopped playing." ■



A panel of experts, including (from left) Clarence Green '94, Don Schneider '70, '71 and Dr. Jerry Wilmes '78, answer questions during Northwest's summit on school safety.

Campus celebrates expanded role for Wellness Center

Northwest students, faculty and staff gathered at the newly renamed University Wellness Center in April for a reception marking the facility's expanded role as a provider of services supporting physical health, mental health and healthy lifestyle choices.

Changing the center's name from Health Center to Wellness Center reflects a commitment to an educational environment that fosters a comprehensive approach to sound mental and physical health.

A new addition at the facility was completed in the fall. The added space created room for counseling offices formerly housed in Wells Hall, and means students now have access to clinical, counseling and outreach services at a single location. ■

Northwest conducts safety summit

Northwest recently sponsored a summit on school safety, an event designed to engage area schools in reviewing and refining processes for preventing, responding to and enhancing security systems.

The summit featured Paul Fennewald, Missouri homeland security coordinator, and University officials.

Officials from universities, colleges and P-12 schools participated in the free summit as well as law enforcement and emergency services personnel.

Fennewald, who served as an FBI special agent for more than 20 years, participated in investigations of the terrorist bombings of the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi, Kenya, and the USS Cole in Aden, Yemen. He also was involved in the investigation that followed the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on Sept. 11, 2001.

Rita Hanks, president of the Northwest Board of Regents, chaired the summit. Other presenters were Joe Cornelison, general counsel for the University; Don Schneider '70, '71, University regent and a former member of the U.S. Secret Service; Dr. Jerry Wilmes '78, vice president for student affairs/director of wellness services; Dr. April Haberyan, assistant professor of psychology, sociology and counseling; Clarence Green '94, director of campus safety; and Dr. Jon Rickman, vice president for information systems. ■

New Steinway grand graces Charles Johnson stage

Students, music department faculty and guest recitalists who practice and perform at Northwest's Charles Johnson Theatre have a new "treat."

This spring, the department uncrated a new Steinway Model D concert grand piano. For more than a century this has been the instrument of choice for an overwhelming number of the world's best performing artists.

Dr. Ernest Kramer, professor of music, and Dr. Anthony Olson, assistant professor of music, journeyed to the Steinway & Sons factory in Long Island City, N.Y., and selected the piano from five on display in a showroom at the historic "Steinway Village" facility.

"I think it's the care and the craftsmanship that make Steinway special," Olson said. "They are all hand-crafted, and there is a rigorous selection process used just in picking the right woods."

Though the University frequently hosts noted performing artists who expect to play on a professional instrument, Olson said Northwest student musicians will benefit most from access to a world-class concert piano.



Katherine Valuck, a vocal music education major from Hannibal, plays Northwest's new Model D Steinway concert grand piano onstage at Charles Johnson Theatre.

"There are certain techniques that are much easier to do and much easier to hear on a quality instrument," he said. "The responsiveness of the Steinway makes a big difference." ■

Students learn risks, rewards of peacekeeping

In the war-torn nation of Atlantica, a nervous team of negotiators seeks to secure safe passage for personnel and supplies while attempting to inspect a detention camp for rebel prisoners.

The atmosphere is tense and suspicious. Uniformed soldiers cradle assault weapons while the negotiators try to strike a bargain with the tough-as-nails Atlantican commander.

A new eruption of violence in the Balkans? Well, not quite. Two of the negotiators were Northwest students, and the scene occurred during a two-day international disaster relief/emergency preparedness exercise in Florida.

Seven Northwest students participated in the simulation this spring, which Dr. Mark Corson, associate professor of geography, described as “extremely authentic.”

Corson would know. A colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve, he has seen combat in Iraq and served as a peacekeeper in Kosovo in 2001.

In addition to negotiation training, those participating in the exercise took part in a mass casualty evacuation and situations involving displaced persons and detainees. They also endured a “very authentic” mortar attack.

“The exercise was a great opportunity to see the challenges of providing humanitarian aid and disaster relief,” said Karen Beard, a Northwest student from Hannibal. “It was realistic all the way down to the explosions, gunfire and sleep deprivation. We learned a lot about negotiation and compromise in order to accomplish the ultimate goal of providing help to those who needed it.”

Corson said the Northwest students participated as part of an interdisciplinary pilot program designed by the Department of Geology and Geography and the Department of History, Humanities, Philosophy and Political Science. The idea is to expose students to academic and field experiences that will prepare them for careers in humanitarian aid, peacekeeping and international relations. ■



A team of negotiators, including Northwest students Megan Jamison (seated right) and Ben Karney (seated next to Jamison), bargain with Dr. Mark Corson, associate professor of geography, over transportation of personnel and supplies inside the war-torn country of “Atlantica.” Corson, a U.S. Army Reserve colonel who served in Kosovo, was playing the part of the Atlantican military commander.

Residence halls await record number of freshmen

This fall, the new and improved Hudson and Perrin residence halls will be greeted by their first residents: 450 eager Bearcat freshmen who will never know what it was like to “rough it” in an outdated dorm with no air conditioning and paper-thin walls.

Two years ago the original buildings were demolished and construction began on the new complex. Final construction was completed this summer, and new furniture is being installed, just in time for the incoming freshmen.

The timing of the residence halls’ completion couldn’t be better. Northwest will have a near-record number of freshmen in the fall – about 1,400.

The new modified suites, designed to enhance the freshman living experience, consist of a commons building, large and small gathering spaces and exterior gathering and green spaces all with different degrees of privacy. Each wing has about 10 rooms to house 20 students. The rooms are a pod concept featuring five-room neighborhoods with a semi-private restroom. ■



Education Expo unites students, school districts

Schools from Maryville to as far away as Guam sent representatives to meet with Northwest’s teachers-in-training during the Education Expo in April. The fair, hosted by the Office of Career Services, is designed to match education majors with school districts where they will begin their careers. ■