

Learning at a Distance



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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Online Master of Criminal Justice Enrollments On The Rise!

The Online Master of Criminal Justice program, introduced in the summer of 2002, has increased enrollments by 77% this year. The program, which initially began with 48 students, now has a roster of close to 300.

Online enrollments are also high in two new programs introduced this fall. The Master of Science in Insurance Management degree is expected to have an enrollment of 80 students, while the Transitional Doctorate in Physical Therapy will begin with a roster of 32 students.

This growth in online registrations has been attributed to the appeal of online programs for working professionals, extensive marketing, and the national reputation of Boston University.

Susan M. Kryczka

Director, Distance Education

WHAT'S NEW



Two New Online Programs:

Master of Science in Insurance Management & Transitional Doctorate in Physical Therapy

The Master of Science in Insurance Management and Transitional Doctorate of Physical Therapy online programs were launched in Fall 2003.

Online learning has been the answer for many working professionals who want to continue their education and remain working. The Master of Science in Insurance Management program is offered completely online. The Transitional Doctorate of Physical Therapy program, however, has a 4 day on campus component toward the end of the program.

Master of Science in Insurance Management

This Master of Science in Insurance Management degree has been designed specifically for working professionals. This innovative, highly interactive multimedia e-learning program gives you access anywhere, anytime to the finest insurance management curriculum available.

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FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Judith Schickedanz



Dr. Schickedanz's scholarly work has been in the areas of child development, early literacy, and preschool education. Her book, "Much More than the ABC's: The Early Stages of Reading and Writing" has been translated into both Korean and Chinese, and is used widely in the United States.

Dr. Schickedanz has taught preschool children, and served as the director of two university preschools, one at the University of New Hampshire, and one at Boston University. She has also served as the Coordinator of the Early Childhood Program in the School of Education at Boston University, and taught a wide range of undergraduate, masters, and doctoral courses including online. She has been active in the International Reading Association, has served on various early childhood committees, and in 2002-2003 served as President of the IRA Literacy Development in Young Children special interest group.

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DISTANCE EDUCATION NEWS

Finding the Right Development Partner

In the summer 2003 issue of our newsletter, we talked about how Boston University creates online courses. In this winter 2004 issue, we discuss partnerships to help develop and market online courses as well as how we work with faculty.

Our development plan consists of a partnership of instructional designers, a learning management system, a marketing and hosting company, as well as subject matter experts (faculty) to work as a team to create courses solely for online delivery to the adult student. Our goal is to incorporate as much adult learning theory in the development of our courses as possible. Understanding that adult students learn by reading, listening, and doing, we try to make our courses interactive. We feel that when students acquire knowledge, they then must use it in some capacity within the online course environment for it to be effective.

The team approach has specific roles for each partner in developing the final product:

- The Instructional design group works with individual faculty in course development. Their technical expertise is required for developing multi-media content such as graphics, animation, and video.
- The course management system provides the technical framework in which the courses exist. Besides ease of use, the system supports audio/video, equation building, and other elements that may be required.
- A hosting partner and marketing group helps us design and market our courseware.
- The faculty member or subject matter expert works with the instructional designers to define course objectives, goals, and the pedagogy of the course. We strive for a level of rigor and quality within the specific certificate/degree programs consistent with departmental and college objectives.

The content of the course and the development process that the faculty member goes through is crucial to the success of the course. Without content there is nothing. Faculty are identified and go through an orientation with the manager of online programs, who is also the senior instructional designer. An extensive guide to building courses online is given to the instructor and examples of other courses are shown.

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Two New Online Programs, Cont. Master of Science in Insurance Management

This program has been structured to accommodate the working schedules and lifestyles of working insurance professionals. You can determine your study plan. In other words, learning is asynchronous—you will not be limited by scheduled class times. Learning takes place anywhere, and at anytime.

For more information visit www.msimdegree.com.

Doctorate of Physical Therapy

The transitional Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) degree from Boston University is now offered in an e-Learning format. You currently have the opportunity to earn your DPT degree from a top-ranked Physical Therapy program.

The transitional DPT program bridges the gap between BS/MS degree entry-level practitioners and the current DPT entry-level graduate. The transitional DPT offers an opportunity to complement current knowledge and skills with advanced content designed to promote a high level of competence and autonomy.

For more information visit, www.dptdegree.com.

Faculty Spotlight, Cont.

She currently serves on the Early Literacy Commission for the International Reading Association, and one of ten teams revising the accreditation standards for the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Dr. Schickedanz recently finished a book on writing in young children. The book is part of a series on literacy development in young children that will be published by the International Reading Association. Dr. Schickedanz is currently writing a Comprehensive Early Literacy Curriculum for preschool with David Dickinson of Boston College.

Creating an on-line course requires very thorough planning, and attention to every single detail. Although I always planned carefully for face-to-face courses, and created a fairly detailed syllabus for each one, I never planned absolutely everything before a course started. Exams and quizzes usually were prepared during the semester, as needed, and many lectures were fine-tuned the night before class. Some were not tuned as finely as they probably should have been, given that live delivery lends itself to revision on the spot. The requirement of having to write lectures for an on-line course forces one to think more carefully about what to "say." Moreover, the need to create all material long before a course is offered leads to more careful consideration of how all of the lectures in the course work together.

As I worked on the on-line course, it occurred to me that perhaps everyone should do an on-line course as a first teaching experience. Preparing an on-line course requires a person to pay attention to his or her teaching in ways that differ from face-to-face courses.

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Finding the Right Development Partner, Cont.

A schedule is given to the instructor which outlines when each week of material is due to the instructional designer. After the content is received, the multimedia elements are discussed with the instructor. A final review is also conducted before the course is uploaded so all changes can be made. Course development takes 3-6 months, longer if the course is particularly complicated. The rule of thumb is, the more time the better.

The final course that students see is a product that had no fewer than 5 people involved and more likely 10. Despite this level of work, we still feel our course development process can be improved. We continue to work on ways to make it easier and more efficient. We hope that the hard work of the team pays off with an excellent educational experience for both the student and faculty members.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Spring 2004 Course Schedule



| | |
|---|---------------------------|
| Classes Begin..... | January 12 |
| Registration Deadline for Continuing, New, and Transfer Students (Non-MET only) | January 20 |
| Registration Deadline for MET..... | January 26 |
| Last Day to DROP (without a 'W')..... | February 17 |
| Last Day to Change from Credit to Audit | October 3 |
| Holiday, University Closed..... | January 19 February 16 |
| Last Day to DROP Classes (with a 'W')..... | March 5 |

<http://www.bu.edu/reg/dtsprg04.htm>

Note: These dates are based on a 14 week semester.

UPCOMING TOPICS

Spring 2004 Edition

Online Master of Criminal Justice Graduation

STUDENT CORNER

Student Voice from Catherine Burdt



Why did you choose to further your education using online courses?

a. I am in the Ed.M program for Educational Media and Technology, which is a natural match for online courses. I'm married with 2 children and the flexibility of online courses enables me to further my education while working with my family's schedule.

b. I also like the online course format. Online courses often feature videos, chat sessions and links to interesting material which adds variability to the class. In two of my online classes, the professors recorded overviews of upcoming lessons, which I like because it lets me put a face to a name. I can work on the material at my own pace at any time, whether it be late in the evening or during the day when I have a few minutes to spare. Some professors arrange chat sessions or group projects which help you discuss course material and allow you to get to know the other students in the class.

c. The course covers the same material as in the face-to-face class, but is arranged for the online format. In one instance I've had the same professor for both an online class (Spring semester) and a face-to-face class (Fall semester). I like that.

What were the benefits of taking online classes for you? Would you recommend these classes to anyone else and why?

Time management and the flexibility of choosing when to 'attend' class is something I greatly value about the online environment. I would recommend these classes for students who can use the computer to relate well to other people and for people who need or want flexibility in their schedules.

Compared to other programs you have heard about or classes you have taken, why did you choose Boston University? How do the other classes compare?

I chose Boston University's Master's program in Educational Media and Technology because it had a well-respected reputation, as well as the mix of courses offered. The online classes (I've taken 3 so far) are a bonus because I can study the same material with the same professors in a more flexible format.

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