

Social Sciences and Career Option Programs

Five-Year Vision

The Department of Social Sciences and Career Option Programs is a nexus of transfer disciplines and programs. The Social Sciences at Kirkwood include: Psychology, Sociology, Geography, Political Science, Economics, Interdisciplinary Studies, and History. The Career Option Programs include: Communication Media/Public Relations, Criminal Justice (both Law Enforcement and Corrections), Disabilities Services Careers, Early Childhood Education, Education Careers, Human Services, Legal Assistant/Paralegal, and Sign Language Interpreter Training. The Department also houses the Kirkwood Community College student newspaper, the Communiqué, Kirkwood Student Productions, the Educational Resource Center, and Kirkwood Kids, the campus child care center.

Shared Vision

By fostering critical and ethical thinking grounded in a solid knowledge base and practical skills, we challenge and inspire students and ourselves to be life-long learners and active citizens who use an understanding of the Social Sciences and Career Option Program experiences to enrich all of our lives and the communities in which we live.

Major Initiatives

- **Strengthening the Liberal Arts Core, General Education Competencies, and Preparation for Careers or Transfer through developing new courses and programs to meet the needs of the 21st Century, building upon the results of the Five Year Department Review from 2005-2006.**

Accomplishments:

- Increased the minimum department writing requirements for students
- Imbedded technology assignments policy requirement for students
- New courses piloted: Majority /Minority Group Relations,; World Regional Geography; Topics in Education such as “Differentiated Instruction” and “Civility”; Infant/Toddler Care and Education; Health and Psychosocial Rehabilitation, a linked course experiment precursor to Learning Communities (Social Problems and Comp II); Introduction to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Studies; Real to Reel;
- Redesigned courses: Tools for College Success to Tools for Life Seminar
- Constitution Day organized by our Department

- **Expanding global and cultural understanding and appreciation of diversity**

Accomplishments:

- New diversity courses: Majority/Minority Group Relations; Introduction to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Studies; World Regional Geography;

- U of I speaker shared with Kirkwood – Juan Cole on Middle East
- Boxhill Institute, Australia faculty and student exchange; Kirkwood to Boxhill Australia faculty exchange as part of Global Education Network (GEN)
- HIV/AIDS Peer education
- Online blog – students in LA county Cerritos Community College with Sociology and Composition II linked course students at Kirkwood
- Revamped Advanced TV & PR to include Russian Media “Comparative Government”
- New paralegal textbook about other cultures’ legal systems
- Kirkwood Democrats’ club sponsored by faculty
- Holocaust speaker
- **Expanding experiential learning for students, faculty and staff through service learning, faculty and staff professional development, intensive and continuous technology training, and partnering with agencies, schools and businesses**

Accomplishments:

- IT training for faculty
- WebCT course offerings
- Team teach: Linked courses (shared student cohort)
- Learning Communities proposals
- Guest Speakers on the issues of mental illness and retirement
- Constitution Day
- Sign Choir
- Telelink training, WebCT/CE6 training
- Boxhill Institute, Melbourne Australia faculty and Dean professional development trips (GEN)
- **Developing and connecting faculty and staff, full and part-time, throughout all centers and Iowa City, and across delivery systems institutionalizing what we began during the Department’s Five Year Review.**

Accomplishments:

- Development of generic syllabi, updating and placing on J Drive
- Coordinators meeting with adjunct faculty
- KCELT Programs (taken and taught), KQIP, KFI, CAT
- Teaching squares and circles
- Update and dissemination of Department Handbook
- Teaching over the Kirkwood Television System and at county sites regularly
- **Incorporating and assessing computer literacy, benchmarks for learning outcomes and workplace skills, and student success initiatives throughout all courses and programs**

Accomplishments:

- Use of portable computer lab: 40 laptops on carts available for check out in Benton Hall classrooms as measured by the number of faculty who use them in class
- Imbedded technology assignments policy requirement for students: adding and refining internet assignments
- More instructors utilizing blogs and online resources in classroom
- Website courses for students
- Newspaper courses – past news stories: www.kirkwoodstudentmedia.com
- **Expanding the Kirkwood Kids programming and services to children and to students in Instructional programs and maintaining NAEYC national accreditation, and beginning work on Quality Rating Systems in accordance with State of Iowa initiatives. Infant/Toddler Environmental Rating Scale (ITERS), Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS).**

Accomplishments:

- Policies in Parent and Staff Handbooks revised
- Financial policies revised and implemented
- Received accreditation in 2006: strategic planning to meet new accreditation requirements for staffing and programming for 2010 initiated
- Staff training on ITERS, ECERS, Quality Rating Systems
- Variety Club grant proposal submitted on prewriting skill-building
- **Expanding the facilities, equipment and program offerings in Communications/Media/PR Program in the re-design of Linn Hall and in Sign Language Interpreter Training Program in Benton Hall**

Accomplishments:

- Facilities upgrades on hold during planning phase for Linn Hall renovation and building of new academic building east of Cedar/Benton Hall complex
- Programming in Sign Language: ASL workshop/partnering with local interpreting agency, Registry of Interpreters of the Deaf (RID) approved; CEUs offered by Kirkwood
- Pilot the Real to Reel project in the community of Vinton, a Grow Iowa Values Fund Project

Capacity

- Technology and Technology Support
- Facilities Expansion
- Personnel Support: additional full-time Faculty and Support Staff
- Additional Faculty Support

- Professional Development Resources –Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching
- Student Support Initiatives

Ownership /Support

The Department of Social Sciences and Career Option Programs fully supports these initiatives and pledges to act upon them wholeheartedly as supported by the college and directed by our Dean.

Dashboard Indicators
