

THE  
UNIVERSITY  
OF RHODE ISLAND

GUIDE FOR NEW FACULTY MEMBERS

2012

# 2012

## *GUIDE FOR NEW FACULTY MEMBERS*

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## ***GUIDE FOR NEW FACULTY MEMBERS***

### **Introduction**

This *Guide* is a minor variation of a guide prepared by the College of Human Science and Services for faculty and instructors new to that College. It began as a series of notes for people hired to teach a single course. As it was reviewed and revised, it was expanded to provide information for all that teach in the College. With deep appreciation to Professor Barbara Brittingham, principal developer of the *Guide*, we are sharing it with all faculty who are new to the University. Whether you are an "old hand" at teaching or just preparing for your first semester, we hope you will take the time to look through this *Guide for New Faculty Members*.

Earlier versions of this *Guide* were reviewed by a number of people who provided helpful comments: Tony Allen, Joan Anderson, Laura L. Beauvais, Martin Bide, Diana Brown, Milton Butts, Jr., Phil Clark, Greta Cohen, Billie Connors, Richard Curran, Jack Demitroff, Bette Erickson, Glenn Erickson, Steve Grubman-Black, Lynn Gaulin, Diane Goldsmith, Gene Knott, Yvette Harps-Logan, Blair Lord, Lynn McKinney, John Norris, Leo O'Donnell, John O'Leary, Linda Perry, Pamela Rohland, Jayne Richmond, Deirdre Robinson, Mark Rowinski, Jerry Schaffran, Karen Schroeder, Lanny Soderberg, and Robert Welles. Their careful review and thoughtful suggestions greatly improved the *Guide*.

To all readers of the *Guide*: If you have suggestions about how this manual can be of more help to you—or others who may read it—please forward them to the Provost's Office.



Donald DeHayes  
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

## **THE UNIVERSITY**

### **Colleges at the University**

The University is comprised of nine degree-granting units. They are: the Colleges of Arts and Sciences, Business Administration, Engineering, Environment and Life Sciences, Human Science and Services, Nursing, Pharmacy; the Graduate School of Oceanography (enrolling graduate students only); and the Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Continuing Education (which grants the Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies as an undergraduate degree and schedules courses held at the Providence campus on behalf of the other degree-granting colleges).

The Graduate School of Oceanography (GSO) is located on the Bay Campus in Narragansett; and the Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Continuing Education (ASFCCE) is housed in Providence, but also offers classes in Kingston (and several other locations). All of the other colleges are located in Kingston.

### **When You Need HELP!**

Your department chair is usually your first source of information, help and referral; after all, faculty are hired by departments to teach courses offered by the department. Your academic dean and dean's office is also available to help you. Finally, the Provost's Office is available, at least on academic matters. We are located on the first floor of Green Hall.

## Preparing Your Courses

### Where Do Courses Come From?

Courses at the University are proposed by individual faculty members or small groups of faculty members who, typically acting in concert with others in their program or department, develop a formal proposal to offer a course. Before the course is listed in the *Catalog of the University of Rhode Island*, it must be approved within the department, by the college's curriculum committee, the college faculty, and a committee of the Faculty Senate, the Senate itself and the President.

The annotation in the *Catalog* will tell you much that you need to know about any course: the title; the number of credits; the level of students for whom the course is intended (e.g., freshmen and sophomores; juniors and seniors; or graduate students); the meeting format (e.g., lecture, seminar, laboratory, independent study, online, blended); a brief description of the course's intended goals or content; the semester(s) it is usually offered; and prerequisite requirements which the department thinks students need in order to be successful or which otherwise restrict enrollment.

As you come to understand the course, its intended audience, and its role in the curriculum, you may come to believe it is time to revise some or all of the above aspects of the course. This could well be the case, since courses are living constructions. Your department chair is a good person with whom to discuss your ideas and can tell you how to begin going about getting a course revision approved. (Some routine revisions are fairly easy; others take a little more work.)

Occasionally, you may find a course with an X at the end of the number. The X designates that the course is being offered on an "experimental basis," a designation that allows courses to be offered with a shorter review process, but only for a limited period of time. Generally, X courses are on their way to becoming regular courses; the X provision often gives faculty members the opportunity to offer the course before putting the final touches on its development and continue to offer it while it is proceeding through the review process.

### Information You Will Need about Your Courses

Once you know which courses you will be teaching, you will want to find out three basic kinds of information:

- Who are the students? What is the enrollment status of students likely to be in your class? Are they: lower division students

(freshmen and sophomores)? Upper division students (juniors and seniors)? Graduate students? Matriculated students (i.e., those formally enrolled for a degree program)?

- Why are the students likely to be enrolled?  
Is the course required in their program? Are they exploring a possible major? Does the course count for general education credit? Is the course an elective for some or all of the students?
- What does the department/program see as the goals of the course?  
What are students expected to know and be able to do as a result of successfully completing the course? How does the course fit with other courses offered by the department/in the program? Does this course play a particular role in preparing students for an important next step in their program?

Some courses are offered in multiple sections with several faculty members. In these cases, the department will typically have adopted a common set of expectations and may have a designated list of appropriate texts; the department chair can inform you about these instances.

Resources for helping you understand these matters include:

- The department chair is your best single source of information; and (if it is someone different), the faculty member who directs the program relevant to the courses you will be teaching can also provide you with general contextual information. Among other things, the department chair can tell you what book(s) if any have been ordered for the course, the likely enrollment (size, composition) and any contingencies about canceling the course due to low enrollment.
- The *Catalog* will give you the official annotated description of the course and can also help you see where and for whom this course might be required. Courses numbered from 100 to 499 are generally for undergraduate students (though you may find a few graduate students) and courses at the 500 and 600 levels are graduate courses. These courses are described in the *Catalog of the University of Rhode Island*.
- Other faculty who have taught the course (The department chair can help you find these people.)
- Course syllabi that have been used before
- Textbooks that have been used before
- Disability Services for Students (to help ensure accessibility of your course)

## How Much Can You Expect Students to Work?

General University procedures outline the expectations for the award of course credit. In general, the award of one credit assumes three hours of engaged learning time per week during the semester (plus a final examination during exam week). So, for a three-credit class organized as a lecture, you will generally meet students for three hours (academic hours, like psychiatric hours, are organized on a 50-minute basis; the reasons for the similarity are lost to antiquity) and can expect that students will spend an additional six hours outside of class per week working on your course. On the graduate level, you may expect somewhat more than this. Laboratory and clinical hours are organized differently, with more of the total time being spent in class; but the principle of three hours of engaged time per week per credit still holds.

Will students actually work this much? Not automatically and, in lower division classes (100- and 200-level courses), in which fewer enrollees have learned to be successful college students, not all of them. Research indicates that the average high school senior studies about half an hour per day outside of school and even the best high school students report studying only about one hour per day outside of school. The upshot is clear: most freshmen do not come to college with the out-of-class study habits they will need in order to be successful college students. And many beginning graduate students find, somewhat to their surprise, that the rigors of graduate study represent yet another leap in the quality and amount of independent, out-of-class work they will need to do.

For an undergraduate student, assuming a 15-credit course load and a five-day workweek, we are asking that students spend three hours per day in class—and six hours per day outside of class doing course-related work. While adult students are often more motivated and more focused than students just from high school, their lives are also more complicated. With demands from family and jobs, adult students often need clear expectations and encouragement to carve out sufficient study time for their courses. Many students are unlikely to devote the amount of time to your class that you want them to without careful efforts on your part.

**Encouraging Students to Work in Your Class.** What can you do to increase the probability they will work hard for your class?

- **Frequent assignments and quizzes** will help. Ask students to do something tangible, like prepare a summary of the chapters, prepare a bibliography of related sources, or keep a journal of their interpretations and reactions to the readings.



- **Plan your syllabus** with the principle in mind of communicating your expectations for out-of-class work; think of ways to indicate how much time you think various assignments will take.
- **Find ways to remind students in class how much time you expect** them to take on various assignments (e.g., "I think this reading should take about three hours, and I imagine that the short paper, with revisions, will take another three.") Tasks that call upon students' active involvement (more than reviewing notes and reading the text) increase the likelihood of their spending substantial amounts of out-of-class time on your class.
- **Make good use of the very first class period**—don't just hand out the syllabus and dismiss the class. An effective first class meeting sets an early expectation for students that the class will require their attention. (The Instructional Development Program offers a workshop on this topic before classes begin in the fall.)
- **Your own work on the class demonstrates that you expect to work hard** for the class, just as you expect students to do. Students find detailed course outlines, frequent assignments, individual attention to students, and prompt and explicit feedback as clear messages that you're working hard too.

## Writing Your Syllabus

Once you understand the purpose of your course and the students it serves, you are ready to plan the course and prepare the syllabus. A good syllabus generally will be several pages long; eight to ten pages is not unusual for a really good syllabus. The syllabus represents your most formal communication with your students about your expectations for their learning. A complete syllabus does these things:

- Sets the logistical framework for the course: Course number and title; semester; credits; time; and place. You may want to repeat the *Catalog* description of the course, including a reminder of any prerequisite students may need.
- Lets the students know about you: Your name, and when and how you may be located (address, office location, phone number(s), and convenient and permissible times to contact you). The easier you make it for students to contact you, the greater their responsibility for making sure you and they are on the same wavelength.
- Lets students know what the course is about: The most that many students will know about your course is the annotation in the *Catalog*; some will know only the title and number and that the course is required. Your syllabus can help introduce students to the subject matter and provide them with information on why one would want to study this area. You may want to provide students with information

about why the subject matter is interesting, important and useful. You may also wish to tell students why the course is organized the way it is, why texts were selected, why topics were sequenced as you have chosen.

- Lets students know how the course fits into the curriculum: Related to the above information, you will want your students to understand the role of the course you will be teaching in the curriculum as a whole. Understanding how this course fits in with others can help students take appropriate responsibility for integrating the knowledge and skills from various parts of the curriculum.
- Announces required and optional texts: A full bibliographic citation is appropriate here, since many texts have more than one edition. Besides, giving full bibliographic citations provides a good model for your students to follow in their papers. Please be sure to distinguish between those readings that are *required texts* (everyone should buy them; they are available in the bookstore); and *recommended readings* (please note where and how students can get access to the books). If you include recommended readings, be sure to give students some guidance on your expectations: are these listed as references only? Or are you expecting that students will somehow draw on at least some of the readings for one or more parts of the class?
- Lists and explains objectives for the class: What should students know and be able to do as a function of successfully completing this course? Insofar as possible, state these in terms of student performance. An example might be: describe major categories of assessment devices and apply them to hypothetical situations. Another example might be: use information about diverse clientele to plan a marketing campaign.
- Provides a schedule for the semester: What topics will be covered when? When are assignments due? When will tests and quizzes be given? You are encouraged to include the date and time of the final examination in your syllabus. (More about final examinations later.)
- Tells students how grades will be assigned: Here, you will want to let students know how their work will be evaluated. What assignments, tests, and quizzes will be part of the course? When are assignments due? When will tests and quizzes be given? What type will they be? (Multiple choice? Essay? Testing for memorization? Understanding? Application?) How much will each test or quiz count? How will points be converted to grades? (See the sections below on assessing and grading students.)
- States your expectations: If you require or will grade for attendance, say so in the syllabus. If papers will require multiple revisions, include that in the syllabus. If you accept late papers only under certain

circumstances, let students know what those are (e.g., students must contact you ahead of time and have your express OK.) Need help with this section? See your department chair who can help you walk the balance between being clear and firm with students and allowing for the genuine, unforeseen difficulties students encounter.

**Syllabus statement for students with disabilities.** It is also very helpful and inclusive for your students with disabilities if you make a simple announcement and include a welcoming statement on your syllabus inviting students with documented disabilities to talk with you about their needs. There is a sample statement on the DSS website at <http://www.uri.edu/disability/dss/faculty.html>

A good syllabus is invaluable to you and to your students. It will help you be clear about what you expect and when you expect it. The guidance you give students in your syllabus (and in subsequent handouts explaining requirements for papers or sample examination questions) will go a long way to direct students' learning and help decrease frustration for both you and your students. The Faculty Senate has useful information about creating good syllabi ([http://www.uri.edu/facsen/curricular/syllabus\\_development.html](http://www.uri.edu/facsen/curricular/syllabus_development.html)), as does the Instructional Development Program (<http://www.uri.edu/idp/resources/index.html>).

One way to make sure your students read the syllabus and understand it—and to get them involved early in the class—is to have a “syllabus critique session” the second or third day of class. For more information on this idea, see the Instructional Development Program (more on IDP later).

Your department chair can help with arrangements to have the syllabus copied. Several days' notice is generally needed, so it's best to check early.

**Thematic Areas for Your Consideration.** While the courses that you will teach are offered in discrete units, they are designed to work as portions of a larger whole: students' degree programs. Thus, in addition to covering important skills and concepts, it is important that collectively our courses give appropriate regard to certain thematic areas of skill and understanding for our students. Below are some areas that are generally important in our programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. As you look each over, you may want to discuss with your department chair the extent to which the courses you are teaching can likely help contribute to our overall attention to these areas.

**Writing.** Students need several opportunities throughout their program to practice and gain skill in their writing. While you can generally assume that undergraduate students have had a general composition course (and take comfort in the fact that we have not hired you to teach writing per se), as you know from your own work, the writing that professionals need to do on the job calls for a sophistication of writing style that takes practice—and feedback.

The writing you assign may be informal; you may want to assign logs and observational notebooks that you collect periodically to provide a running commentary for your students on their own observations and reflections. You may wish to have students begin to practice the types of professional writing they will encounter later on: clinical reports, product critiques, or a proposal for staff development sessions. You may prefer more formal academic research papers, up to 20 or so pages.

Here are some guidelines that can help make assigning formal writing a better learning experience for students and less frustrating for you.

- First, **let students know clearly what your expectations are** for the assignment. Be clear about the purpose of the writing and any conventions you want students to follow (e.g., typed papers, APA format for footnotes, length). Be clear that you will not accept papers with a significant number of errors (spelling, punctuation, word choice, etc.). Then don't. Some faculty will not accept papers with any errors other than those that are clearly typographical; others suggest, say no more than one error per page.

Giving a short writing assignment near the beginning of the semester may help make sure you and the students are on the same wavelength. Asking students to complete the assignment in class can give you an early warning if there are students with severe writing problems who need to be referred for help. Whether yours is an in-class or out-of-class assignment, return any unacceptable papers ungraded and let students know how long they have to turn in an acceptable paper. Make sure they know about the help that is available to them (in the Academic Enhancement Center and the Writing Center in Roosevelt).

- Second, **for elaborate assignments or formats new to students, a handout with more detailed instructions** (and perhaps a chance to view a couple of successful examples) can be helpful to students and increase the likelihood you will receive papers that will satisfy your expectations. Designing assignments with multiple submission points (e.g., a proposal, an outline, a partial draft) can also help ensure that papers will be the quality you want. This procedure is also recommended as a way to increase the likelihood that students will submit only their own work and that they will give appropriate attention to planning and revision in their work.

**Computers.** There are computer labs in Ballentine, Swan Hall, Fine Arts Center, Library, Memorial Union and Quinn.

You can call Media and Technology Services (MTS) (401-URI-HELP) to discuss the types of help the staff there can give you on instructions for students. Also, the computer labs can be scheduled on a limited basis for all-class activities.

Again, contact MTS for specifics.

The Media and Technology Services Department also offers short courses each semester for anyone in the University community—you and your students are eligible. Introductory and intermediate instruction is offered for use of PC's and MAC's, instructional technology, and Sakai (URI's learning management system). The offerings and schedules change each semester.

For more information, free publications are available in the MTS lobby, 217 Chafee Hall or online at <http://web.uri.edu/its/about-its/mts/>.

**Diversity.** Our society is becoming increasingly diverse, and the types of careers our students seek to enter highlight the importance of preparing them to work successfully in ways that are supportive of different cultures, races, types of disability, ethnic groups, gender orientations, and age groups in our increasingly pluralistic society. Many of our students will also work with individuals with physically disabling conditions and families under duress caused by life's difficulties. In addition, changes in technology, increases in travel, and economic circumstances mean that many of our students will need to be more aware of international phenomena that will affect their work as well as their personal lives. These issues have received increasing attention at URI—and at most other colleges and universities—and we can expect that they will continue to do so in the foreseeable future. Preparing our students to live and work successfully in a pluralistic society is a matter of concern for each of us at the University.

We expect that our students will learn about issues of diversity, pluralism and globalization in a variety of ways: through courses in general education and other liberal arts courses; through experience—academic and otherwise; and through special opportunities, such as study abroad. Also, many co-curricular, residential and cultural activities in the University community enrich this aspect of our students' experience.

The specific instructional responsibility in this regard for you depends somewhat on your discipline and college; however, as members of the University, we must collectively ensure that our students receive the appropriate preparation in their coursework to deal successfully with the range of issues and opportunities related to the pluralism of our society. As you plan your syllabus, choose your readings, think about assignments, and consider guest speakers, we hope that you will think about the role that the classes you teach can have in helping prepare our students to work successfully with all people. For more information on the University's diversity efforts, please visit the following website: <http://www.uri.edu/diversity>.

The Africana Studies Program, the Office of International Education and National Student Exchange, the Feinstein Center for Service Learning, and the Gender and Women's Studies Program may also serve as useful resources. Your department chair and the dean's office can also refer you to others on campus with special expertise in this area.

**Disability Accessibility.** Please ensure that all aspects of your course respond to disability related accessibility. In particular, please make sure that you choose only captioned or closed-captioned films. If you create pod-casts or films please ensure that captions and/or transcripts are available for your deaf and/or hard-of-hearing students.

Here are some people who can help you:

- Pamela Rohland, Director of Disability Services for Students, Memorial Union, 4-2098
- Diane Goldsmith, Director of Learning, Assessment and Online Education, 4-4218.
- Melvin Wade, Director, Multicultural Student Services, Lower College Road, 4-2851

**Involvement in Learning.** The classes you teach may call for students to become directly involved in some aspect of their chosen field: practicing clinical skills under supervision or working in a laboratory. Students in these classes are naturally highly involved in their learning. Other classes with didactic components offer opportunities for active involvement as well. Assigning students to teams for projects, asking students to apply what they have learned to real-world problems, organizing student panels, and giving students an opportunity to coach each other and give feedback are all ways to increase the involvement students have in their learning. Recent research indicates that when students work together in study groups, they become more involved in their academic work and they learn more.

If you wish to take students on a field trip, contact your department chair to see how arrangements can be made for a van or bus.

### **Assigning "Experience" as Part of a Class**

In some courses, you may want students to have some contact with the real world, for observation, data gathering, or experience. Such assignments help students develop a "grounded" sense of classroom material and often enhance their learning. Your own background may help provide some contacts; but you may also want others. You can start, of course, in your own department. Your department chair or faculty colleagues may also help make off-campus connections. The Office of Experiential Learning and Community Engagement assists faculty, students, and organizations in developing effective learning experiences (<http://www.uri.edu/internships/>). In addition, there is a campus-wide office, the Clearinghouse for Volunteers (4-2568), in 135 Roosevelt Hall, that serves the campus community as a resource for volunteer experiences in the local community (<http://www.uri.edu/volunteer/>).

# Assessing Performance, Assigning Grades and Academic Integrity

## Assessing Performance

Part of teaching any class is finding appropriate ways to assess students' learning. Assessment serves a variety of functions, and there are several reasons why you will want to provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate to themselves (and to you) what they have learned.

- Well-designed assessment tasks offer students an opportunity to integrate their learning.
- Assessment provides feedback to students about what they have learned.
- Assessment provides feedback to faculty about what students are learning and offers opportunities for "mid-course corrections."
- Since students vary in their learning styles and presentation styles, allowing students a variety of means to demonstrate what they've learned provides them greater opportunities to demonstrate their strengths and provides a richer set of information for faculty.
- Other things being equal, final grades are more reliable when based on multiple points of evidence.
- If a student requests disability accommodations to perform your assessment (documented by a letter from Disability Services) the accommodation should not change the central function of your test or course, but provides equal opportunity for that student to demonstrate learning.

As you plan ways in which students will be asked to show what they've learned, it is important to keep the goals and objectives of your course in mind: what are students supposed to know and be able to do as a result of being in your class? While convention, efficiency, and other factors suggest that students will demonstrate, at least in part, what they know in the form of quizzes and tests, other options are available. In general, at least part of your assessment of students' performance should be as close as possible to the types of skills you are working to help your students develop.

Not all of the things we think students should know and be able to do are easily or even adequately assessed by paper and pencil measures. Here are some types of skills we might identify as important in various programs:

- working as a member of a team to clarify a problem and seek a solution by consensus;
- writing to persuade (e.g., a proposal, a marketing plan);
- summarizing the arguments of experts about a controversial idea, taking a position, and defending it;
- identifying one's own best work and discussing why it was selected;

- identifying “theory in practice” when observing a practitioner;
- developing a plan for teaching a person a new skill important in the professional area;
- identifying, understanding, critiquing, and discussing the implications for practice of research relevant to a problem;
- integrating information from several sources for a case study and planning an appropriate response.

In these examples, and others like them, we know more about student learning—and they get more practice with the types of skills we want them to know—by assessing their performance more directly.

Naturally, some of these more direct types of assessments work better in some classes than in others. For help, you can see your department chair or contact the Instructional Development Program (<http://www.uri.edu/idp/>) and the Office of Student Learning, Outcomes Assessment, and Accreditation (SLOAA, <http://www.uri.edu/assessment/>). The staff in these offices can help you think about varying the ways you assess students and gaining multiple points of feedback even with the largest classes—and all without leaving you feeling as though you are buried in papers.

### **Writing Your Examinations**

Good examinations take a substantial investment of your time to write. For example, you will need enough items to adequately sample the material students are expected to know. Essay items need to focus students properly so that they understand what you are seeking. The stems to multiple-choice items need several plausible distracters without having the item be “tricky.” And, as faculty often find, it is easier to write exam questions that test students’ understanding and memory than it is to write questions that test their ability to apply and integrate material.

By preparing a draft version of your examination early, you’ll have time to ask a colleague or the IDP staff to review it with you before the final version is prepared. The IDP staff or the dean’s office can loan you material on how to write exam items. IDP or Information Technology Services can help you make arrangements to have your objective item machine scored, saving you time and giving you feedback on each item.

Writing an examination can be a good way to focus on what you want students to have learned from the material you’re teaching. Writing an exam early gives you time to help make sure that the emphasis you give material in the exam has been appropriately communicated to students as they prepare.

Giving students sample examination questions ahead of time is often helpful. Students feel they have a better idea about how to prepare for the test; they may understand, for example, that you will be asking them to apply material, not just



memorize what's in the text. For essay examinations, a sample question ahead of time can help give students ideas about how to prepare and integrate the material from the text with material from class, particularly if you can discuss with them what you would be looking for in grading that sample item. With large classes or for examinations given in crowded rooms, you will want to make alternate versions of the same exam (see the section below on "Cheating: And How to Avoid It in Your Class").

Should you return examinations to students? Going over the exam with students and giving them the feedback of knowing what the correct answers were to the examination is an important part of using the exam as a tool for learning. With essay exams, sharing samples of excellent responses can help students understand their own performance and think about how to prepare for the next test. But should students be allowed to keep the exam? That depends. Students keep exam files in study groups, residence halls, fraternities, and sororities. Generally, once you return exams to students and let them keep the exam, you should assume that you cannot use those exam questions again. And even if you keep your examinations, you would be well advised to regularly renew your stock of examination questions so that some students are not unequally advantaged by having found a way to have access to old tests.

## **Grades at URI**

Classes involve the necessity of grades, grades that you must assign. Despite what students generally believe, grading is often as traumatic for the professors as for the students. We hope this section makes things a little easier.

At URI, students may earn the following grades: A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, and F. Some courses are graded on the basis of Satisfactory (S) or Unsatisfactory (U) performance. You can also give Incompletes (I) for cases in which students have legitimate excuses why the work is not done and plans that are satisfactory to you—and your department chair. (More about this topic, below.)

There are no magic answers in assigning grades; while there is some science involved, there is also art. Some people approach the assignment of grades as a way of dividing up the normal curve: so many A's, so many B's, etc. An argument against this approach suggests that our real concern ought to be with students achieving a predetermined standard of satisfactory (to excellent) performance—and that with effective teaching and motivated students, the proportion with high grades might be quite high. Others approach grading from the assumption that since students in our courses are mainly students pursuing their chosen major and thus are more likely to have matched their own talents with those required by the course then grades will naturally be quite high. An argument against this approach is that it often tends to result in overly high average grades, with few explicit standards for high performance.

What to do? If this is your first time teaching at URI or your assignment this

semester is substantially different than it has been, it's a good idea to have an early meeting with your department chair to discuss general expectations. Beyond that, while there are no perfect answers, some general guidelines may be helpful.

- Hard work on the part of students aimed at appropriate expectations and hard work on the part of the faculty aimed at helping students attain the expectations and providing them frequent, timely feedback along the way will tend to result in higher than average grades.
- For a number of reasons, it is important to give multiple chances for students to earn intermediate grades in a course. That will give you several chances to provide feedback and get your own sense of an appropriate standard for students.
- Some faculty use "formative quizzes" which do not count on the semester grade for this purpose. With only a test or two and a final examination, faculty may find great pressure at the end of the semester to assign grades that are higher than they should be.
- Having students undertake the kinds of "real" tasks discussed earlier may be easier in some ways to grade than the conventional test or research paper since the standards of successful beginning practice may be easier to think about.
- Remember that students generally understand and respect critical feedback. The message that more work is needed if it is delivered thoughtfully and early enough in the semester to make a difference is helpful. When you give low grades during the semester, provide explicit opportunities for students to talk with you about what they need to do in order to improve their grades. In lower division courses, required conferences are often helpful. Even in graduate courses, it is important to find time for you and the student having difficulty to have a private conference. (See the section below on "office hours.")

When in doubt about whether your expectations and your grades are in line with what the department expects, see your department chair—as early in the semester as possible.

For general normative information, here are the average grades, University-wide for courses at various levels (Fall 2008), expressed as averages on a 4.0 system, where 4.0 = A; 3.0 = B, etc.:

Undergraduate courses:	3.00 (B)
Graduate courses:	3.58 (Between A- and B+)

At the undergraduate level, grades tend to be somewhat lower in lower division courses (100 and 200 level), and somewhat higher in upper division courses (300 and 400 level).

**The Incomplete.** The *University Manual* (8.53.20) states that faculty may assign a grade of Incomplete when "work has been passing up until the time of a

documented precipitating incident, but has not been completed because of illness or another reason which in the opinion of the instructors justifies the report." Accompanying paperwork must be filled out and forwarded to the dean's office for each Incomplete grade assigned.

Undergraduates have until mid-term of the following semester and graduate students have a year to complete the work and remove the Incomplete. For details, including information on how to extend the time period, see section 8.53.21 of the *University Manual* ([http://www.uri.edu/facsen/MANUAL\\_09.html](http://www.uri.edu/facsen/MANUAL_09.html)).

**Maintaining a Satisfactory QPA.** Undergraduate students must maintain a 2.00 (C average) to remain in good standing. Thus a student who earns only grades of C- (assigned a value of 1.7 on a 4.0 scale) will be put on scholastic probation.

At the graduate level, students must maintain a B average (3.00) in order to remain in good standing. Grades of C+ or lower in courses below the 500 level are considered failing for a graduate student; these courses must be repeated or another satisfactory arrangement must be made. Grades of C-, D, and F are failing grades in 500 and 600 level courses; when a student receives one of these grades, it will be cause for immediate review of the student's status.

**Keeping Your Records.** Finally, you should be aware of the University Manual provision (Section 8.52.20), Instructor's Records: "Instructors shall keep accurate records of all marks which are used in determining a student's grade and shall retain such records for at least two semesters from the date on which the grade was submitted. Instructors, teaching assistants, etc., who are going on leave or who are leaving the employ of the University shall deposit copies of such grading records in departmental (or college) offices."

### When Students Need Help

The University provides several types of support services for students who need them. Below is a brief description of each office (based on the University College *Handbook for Academic Advisors*, (with location and campus phone number):

- **Academic Enhancement Center** offers general help so students can be academically successful, including tutoring, workshops, and organized help in "high risk courses." (University College, Roosevelt Hall, 4-2367, <http://www.uri.edu/aec/>).
- **Speech and Hearing Center** is operated by the Department of Communicative Disorders, the center offers a broad range of speech-language and hearing services to clients of all ages. Modest fees for clinical services are generally reduced for members of the URI Community and are adjusted for others consistent with ability to pay. (Independence Square, 4-5969, <http://www.uri.edu/hss/cmd/centers.html>).

- **Writing Center** provides assistance in fundamental skills of writing including spelling, grammar and problems in composition. Refer students here if, after feedback from you, their writing skills do not meet your expectations. (4<sup>th</sup> Floor Roosevelt, 4-2367, <http://www.uri.edu/artsci/writing/center/index.shtml>).
- **Counseling Center** provides short-term individual counseling to students on issues such as improving communication and problem-solving skills, coping with stress, depression, building satisfying relationships, adjusting to university life, and planning for graduate school or a career. Students who require long-term counseling are usually referred to public and private services in the community. (217 Roosevelt Hall, 4-2288, <http://www.uri.edu/counseling/>).
- **Disability Services for Students** provides academic support and accommodation recommendations for students with documented disabilities. They are a good resource if your student mentions a disability or would like more information (4-2098, <http://www.uri.edu/disability/dss/index.html>)

### Help for Students with Disabilities—and Their Faculty

URI is enrolling an increasing number of students with physical, learning, or psychological conditions that may affect their learning or learning styles significantly. These students met all URI admission requirements and they may be some of your most high-functioning students; but they may also have particular needs for accommodation in meeting your requirements. If you have a student in class who has a disabling condition—including a learning disability—make sure that the student is working with the Disability Services for Students (302 Memorial Union, 4-2098).

Students who are registered with Disability Services for Students will present a letter from the DSS Office that recommends the accommodations for which they are eligible. However, no accommodation should alter an essential function of your course or curriculum. (i.e. the most common request is a 50% time extension on a test).

If you have a student in your class with a disabling condition and you'd like help understanding what to do—and what not to do—call Pamela Rohland (4-2098) who directs the office. Her help has been valuable on a number of occasions to faculty and programs.

At the beginning of the semester, it is very helpful and inclusive for your students if you make an announcement and include a welcoming statement on your syllabus inviting students with documented disabilities to talk with you about their needs. A sample statement is on the DSS website at <http://www.uri.edu/disability/dss/faculty.html>

Again, please note that students must provide the Disability Services Office with evidence of need for each accommodation requested. DSS counselors evaluate each request and the student will bring you a letter - on letterhead - with all legitimate accommodations listed.

Students with disabilities are subject to the same conduct codes as all other students.

### **Other Offices and Groups to Help Students**

URI has offices that help and support students from various groups: International Student Affairs, Older Student Services, Special Program for Talent Development, the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (GLBT) Center, Multicultural Student Affairs, Commuters' Association, Women's Center, the Work-Life Committee, etc. While it is beyond the scope of the *Guide* to discuss these services in detail, you should know that they are there to help your students. They are also generally available to help faculty who have questions about any of the groups these offices are especially designed to serve. For further information, call the Office of Student Life (4-2101) and the Office of Community, Equity, and Diversity (4-7077).

### **Cheating: And How to Avoid It in Your Class**

Research estimates indicate that half or more students cheat on a test, quiz, paper, or assignment while in college. There is no good reason to believe that the figures at URI are different. While there is no guarantee you can avoid cheating in your class, there are some things you can do to reduce its likelihood.

Your first line of defense is making sure that students understand: a) what you consider cheating; and b) that you do not find cheating acceptable and you will take appropriate steps if you find it in your class. With respect to the first point, it is worth your while to make sure that students understand the correct and appropriate ways to cite sources for their papers. Students may also need help identifying when to cite a source and how to differentiate between citing an idea and quoting from a source.

With papers and other written assignments, ask students to make multiple submissions. If you check and provide feedback on a proposal, an outline, and a partial draft, there is a greatly reduced likelihood that you are receiving someone else's paper or a paper prepared for another class. If you teach the same classes regularly, change the assignments periodically so that you don't invite students to use old papers.

For quizzes or tests, use multiple forms if you cannot sufficiently separate students physically from each other. Avoid re-using old examinations unless you are sure copies have been kept secure. Remain in the room while students are taking the test, and walk around from time to time.

When you do detect cheating, act promptly. Solicit the assistance of your department chair in making sure you understand the appropriate steps you can take and for guidance in confronting students.

In general, it is a good idea to ask a faculty colleague to join you when confronting a student suspected of cheating. Basically, faculty who determine that a student has cheated have the right to fail the student on the assignment or test and report the circumstances to the dean. If the faculty member believes that more serious action is warranted, s/he may so recommend to the dean. Incidents of cheating should also be reported to the Office of Student Life, which keeps a cumulative record.

You should also know that the Office of Student Life keeps a file of students who have been reported for cheating in classes. When you are convinced that a student has cheated, you may call the Office of Student Life to see if the student has previously been reported for such an offense. Reporting your case may also be of help to another faculty member in the future.

## **The Calendar and Attendance Issues**

### **Observing the Academic Calendar**

The academic calendar is proposed by a committee of the faculty and approved by the Faculty Senate and the President; the calendar for each year is published in the *Catalog* and posted on the web at <http://www.uri.edu/es/menus/acadcal.html>. Here are some things you need to know about observing the academic calendar.

**Religious Holidays.** Some religious holidays will be noted in the official University calendar found in the *Catalog*. Another list well worth your attention is compiled and published each year by the University chaplains. Get a copy from your department chair and use it in helping to plan your course schedule. For example, avoid giving a test on days when students may be observing a significant religious holiday, or offer an alternative day on which students may take the test. In cases of question, consult your department chair.

**Snow Days and Weather Emergencies.** Rhode Island winters can produce snowstorms of a magnitude that can cause you to wonder about whether class will be held.

University policy specifies that class cancellation is a function of a designated officer of the University (not of individual faculty members, departments, or colleges). For official information you should call 874-**SNOW** or listen to a radio or television station that makes cancellation announcements on behalf of the University. Many stations do this; if you are in doubt about whether the one you are hearing is official, seek confirmation on another station.

Listen carefully to the announcement. Announcements may cancel classes after a certain time period only (e. g., "Classes after 4:00 are cancelled."). In decreasing order of probability, cancellations are made for ASFCCE classes (many students drive in); all classes; and "The University is closed." Unless you hear the announcement that the University is closed, you may expect that offices will be open.

**Final Examination Schedule.** The schedule for each semester includes a period of final examinations, preceded by reading days after the last day of class. In general, you should plan a cumulative examination of some sort during the final examination period for your class. One function of the final examination is to extend students' learning throughout the entire period of the term. Not having a final examination—even if you use the time for another purpose such as continuing "oral reports" by students—shortens the period of learning for the scheduled semester. When individual students feel they are no longer responsible for material presented in class, they tend to "check out" once their presentations are made. Not having a final examination also deprives you and your students an important opportunity for them to integrate their learning at the end of the term.

Before the beginning of each semester, Enrollment Services will publish a schedule of final examination periods. In general, you can assume that if you teach a class that begins between 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., your final examination will be scheduled for three hours during the period of the final examination week in the place but not at the time your class normally meets. If your class begins at 4:00 or later and runs for three hours, your final examination will be scheduled for the same time of the week (and in the same room) as your class.

It is generally a good idea to let students know in your syllabus when the final examination will be given. This gives them the chance to plan ahead and should help avoid, for example, students approaching you at the last minute saying their parents have bought them tickets to the Bahamas for December 19.

If you believe that your class does not lend itself to a final examination and you wish to be exempted from the expectation of giving one, check with your department chair. The *University Manual* provides that, by vote of the department, a final examination may be omitted for a particular semester.

Your grades will be due at the Enrollment Services' office 48 hours after the final exam period. You are expected to enter grades on the e-Campus system and will be prompted to do so at the appropriate time.

**If You Need to Miss a Class.** Occasionally, you may need to miss a class. If you know ahead of time, so should your department chair. If you know before the semester starts, you can plan your course outline with your absence in mind. If something unexpected arises after the beginning of the semester but with some notice, consult with your department chair. In general, you will want to plan some alternate way to engage your students while you must be gone.

A colleague proctoring a test and a trusted guest speaker are two possibilities. Obviously, if you are teaching a class that meets only once per week, the effect of missing one class is much greater.

If illness or other emergency keeps you from class at the last minute, please call the department office and ask the chair (or department secretary if the chair is unavailable) to notify students by posting a notice. Faculty who teach courses for Alan Shawn Feinstein CCE or other arrangements involving students driving in for class should work out a notification plan with the class early in the semester.

### **When Students Miss Class**

You may need to deal with students missing class for: a) religious holidays that traditionally preclude secular activity; b) University-sanctioned events; and c) serious illness, accident, personal tragedy, or other serious matters. Obviously, the obligation of the student to make prior arrangements with you varies by the circumstance of the absence.

The *University Manual* (Sections 8.51.11-.13) provides that in the above circumstances, faculty shall make one of the following options available to students:

- a. the same quiz, test or examination to be administered either before or after the normally scheduled time;
- b. a comparable alternative quiz, test, or examination to be administered either before or after the scheduled time;
- c. an alternative weighting of the remaining evaluative components of the course that is mutually acceptable to the student and instructor(s).

Some student athletes are on teams that have heavy travel schedules. They should know their schedule at the beginning of the semester, and they should bring an excuse card to you before each trip. It's a good idea, particularly in lower division courses, large classes, or classes in which scheduling is very important to seek out student athletes at the beginning of the semester to make sure there are no surprises later in the term.

Some students with disabilities have conditions that may require occasional missed classes; these students may bring accommodation request letters in advance of this need. Students with disabilities are responsible to notify faculty in advance of an absence and remain responsible for any missed work. If you have questions please contact Disability Services for Students at 874-2098.

Students attending a field trip are responsible to let other faculty know. If the trip is yours, you should register it as a "University sanctioned event" with the Provost's Office. Then remind students of their responsibilities to their other faculty.



## Registration, Office Hours and Advising

### How Do Students Get Into and Out of Your Class?

**Online Registration.** Students may register online by accessing the URI homepage ([www.uri.edu](http://www.uri.edu)) and selecting “e-Campus.” The student will be prompted for information needed to complete the registration process.

**Limits.** The computer may have been given instructions about who may be admitted (e.g., majors only; or majors only until [a specified date]). The computer will also have been given a limit on the number of students. In some cases, this number is absolute, as in laboratory courses where there are a definite number of stations. In other cases, the limit is somewhat more arbitrary, a generally agreeable number of students for the type of course and instruction that is planned. Sometimes the limit is raised gradually during the registration period, to allow some seniors, some juniors, and some sophomores to register.

**Prerequisites.** Although the *Catalog* may list prerequisite coursework that students need in order to enroll in a particular course, the computer does not check transcripts for these classes. Thus, if prerequisites are essential for your class, you should confirm at the first meeting of the class that all students have met them. (Some prerequisites are considered essential, while others are considered strong advice; when in doubt, consult with your department chair.)

**Dropping, Adding and Permission Numbers.** When the semester starts, students may add your course (if there is room and if they fit the description the computer is looking for) or they may drop it. If students want to add your course, but cannot get in, they may ask you for a permission number, which will permit a student to enroll in your class.

Should you give the student a permission number? Many of our classes are in high demand, and in cases where accommodating a few extra students will greatly reduce their burden, we hope you will do so. Sometimes students can be greatly assisted by your permission to enroll in your class even though it has reached its announced “limit.” On the other hand, you are under no obligation to admit a student who seeks your class as an elective if the limit has been reached. Questions? See (guess who?) your department chair.

**Course Drop Policy.** Each semester has a drop deadline after which students may not drop courses without the permission of the faculty member and dean. While institutions have varying philosophies about when students should be able to drop classes, it is important that you understand URI’s philosophy has been developed by a committee of the Faculty Senate.

Setting the drop deadline several weeks into the course is designed to give students ample time to decide if they like the course and if they have the

prerequisite skills and available time to be successful in the class. Their knowing this is dependent in some part on faculty providing them clear feedback before the drop deadline on how well they are doing—what grade they are likely to achieve if all continues as it is going.

The University's drop policy states that a course may be dropped by official procedures determined by the Office of Enrollment Services (e-Campus) on or before the end of the third week of classes (Drop Period) with no mark on a student's transcript. Courses may be dropped through e-Campus between the fourth and the end of the sixth week of classes (Withdrawal Period) and will be recognized on a student's transcript with a "W." After the end of the sixth week (Late Withdrawal Period), a student may drop a course only in exceptional circumstances and only with authorization of the dean of the college in which the student is enrolled. Such drops will also be recognized on a student's transcript with a "W." If the student has not dropped a course by the end of the withdrawal period the instructor must submit a grade.

Permission to drop after the drop deadline is given at URI only when something has changed in the student's life that was unexpected at the time the semester started, or indeed, at the time of the drop deadline. Serious illness, a death in the family, suddenly increased family responsibilities, or otherwise significantly different circumstances are legitimate reasons supporting a late drop. Simply not doing well in the class is not, assuming of course that the student had feedback on how well s/he was doing before the deadline.

### **Office Hours**

Office hours serve the purpose of helping to ensure that faculty are available to students for help, information and advice about academic matters. Including your office hours in your syllabus, letting the department secretary know when they are, and posting them outside your office are all ways to help students know when they can expect to find you. You should also make sure students know how to make an appointment to see you if your office hours and their schedules are not compatible.

How many office hours are enough? That depends. Faculty who teach more, who advise more students in their department (as opposed to University College) generally need more posted office hours than do other faculty. In addition, departments sometimes set their own expectations on how many hours are appropriate.

### **Rescheduling Class, Your Meeting Room and the Final Examination**

The classes you will teach have been scheduled for a particular time in a designated room. Enrollment Services will schedule your class for a final examination (see elsewhere in this *Guide*). Do not change the time the class meets on a regular basis or the room location without consulting your

department chair.

Rescheduling the regular meeting time of the class is done under only the most unusual circumstances, as you can imagine; the enrolled students may have chosen your class based in part on when it is offered.

If, because of your absence or extraordinary circumstances like cancellation due to weather, you need to schedule make-up sessions, consult carefully with the class in picking a time that suits everyone best.

If you wish to reschedule your class to another room, again consult your department chair who can check with Enrollment Services to see if there is a room that meets the needs of your class. Please do not reschedule the time of your final examination. The examination schedule is devised by Enrollment Services in an attempt to be fair to all. Enrollment Services works to distribute final examination times so that students do not have too many examinations too close together.

If your final examination is scheduled late in the period or at an inconvenient time, students may suggest that you change the time; resist the impulse. Even when a class "votes" to change the time, resist the impulse to go along. Students frequently complain to administrative offices that they felt under pressure to go along with the suggestion of the faculty member or other students.

### **Advising, Advice and Encouragement**

Every matriculated student at URI has a faculty advisor. Freshmen and sophomores see their advisors at University College in Roosevelt Hall. Advisors from every academic program on campus are available there by appointment; there are also advisors for students who are currently undecided about their major as well as staff who work with students with specialized questions or issues. Juniors and seniors have advisors in the department. Graduate students are assigned advisors when they are admitted to graduate school.

If you are a tenured or tenure-track advisor, chances are you advise students. If not, you will not generally be asked to serve as an official or formal advisor to students. However, your general advice to them can be very important. While avoiding the obligation to provide formal advice about degree matters, you can still provide good general advice to students who seek to enter your professional field—or wonder if they should. As a faculty member, you will also encounter numerous opportunities to provide encouragement and a boost to students, to help them aim higher and work harder than they had planned. We hope you will enjoy your opportunities to provide this type of advice to students.

### **Special Opportunities for Students**

One role all that teach can play is encouraging students to take advantage of the

many special academic opportunities available to students at URI. Indeed, a student who only completes the coursework required for a degree can easily miss 50% of what students can gain from their academic experiences. While it is beyond the scope of this *Guide* to outline all of the special academic opportunities available to students, here are a few:

**Honors Program.** The Honors Program offers special courses designed for students at various points in their undergraduate years (but often open to students in other years): special general education courses (aimed at freshmen); a colloquium (designed principally for sophomores); small sections of special classes (especially for juniors); and a senior project. Details? See the Honors Center, 4-2303, 300 Lippitt Hall, <http://www.uri.edu/hpr/index.html>.

**Study Abroad and International Internships.** Last year, a number of our graduating seniors reported they studied in another country while at URI. While most students go to England and European countries, URI also has an exchange programs with institutions in various countries and can place students in established programs throughout the world. Increasingly, internships are also available through this office. For more information, see the Office of International Education and National Student Exchange, 4-5546, 37 Lower College Road, International Center, <http://www.uri.edu/international/aboutioe>.

**Research Projects.** Support is available for students to engage in original research projects working in conjunction with a faculty sponsor. Students write proposals that are reviewed by a committee of faculty members and are eligible for small grants. For further information, link to the UURI's Undergraduate Research Initiative: <http://www.uri.edu/research/tro/funding/undgradprojects/index.html>.

**Graduate Assistantships.** In addition to working directly in labs and clinics, there are special opportunities for graduate students as well. Many of these involve graduate assistantships, a limited number of which are available in each department. Some departments have additional assistantships, funded through grants and contracts, which give students active practice opportunities to develop special skills.

Many other opportunities are available. Consult your dean's office for more information. The role of faculty in encouraging students to take advantage of these and other special opportunities is a powerful one.

## Help for Faculty

### Feedback on Your Teaching

As with all of life's endeavors, getting feedback on your teaching is important for improvement. There are several ways you can get this feedback at URI, one of which is formally expected for most classes you will teach.

**The IDEA Student Ratings of Instruction (SRI).** The IDEA-SRI is a teaching evaluation system developed at The IDEA Center, a not-for-profit which originated at Kansas State University (<http://www.theideacenter.org/services/student-ratings>). The IDEA-SRI system solicits students' feedback on their own learning progress, effort, and motivation, as well as their perceptions of the instructor's use of 20 instructional strategies and teaching methods. In addition, the system surveys instructors regarding their overall goals and highlights for them in the analysis and report. The evaluation system factors out extraneous circumstances and focuses on student learning on 12 specific objectives. The IDEA Center develops an individualized report for each faculty for each course, tailoring it to fit the instructor's selected learning objectives. In addition, it offers recommendations for improvement based on the Center's vast national database. In essence, IDEA builds in objectivity — while accommodating the differences among courses in learning objectives and pedagogical methods. The extensive feedback that results from this system provides instructors with an understanding of how their courses are meeting objectives and how they might modify both pedagogy and content to assist students in their learning.

The Joint AAUP-Board of Governors Committee on Student Evaluation of Teaching oversees the administration of the IDEA-SRI. The University expects that you will give the IDEA-SRI in all courses that you teach except: courses which enroll fewer than five students; some special and in-service courses taught through Alan Shawn Feinstein CCE (though regular courses at Alan Shawn Feinstein CCE do use the IDEA-SRI); and summer session courses. If you feel that you are teaching a course for which the IDEA-SRI is not an appropriate way to gather feedback from students, see your department chair about an exemption. Gaining an exemption requires the permission of the Provost, requested by the department chair.

**The Instructional Development Program.** You can also work with IDP (<http://www.uri.edu/idp>) to get feedback on your courses—from them and feedback they gather from students. The IDP feedback goes only to you, unless, of course, you choose to share it with others. In addition to rating items, students are asked to respond to more open-ended items (giving information on why they rated the course as highly as they did and what prevented them from giving it a higher rating). Feedback of this sort gathered by IDP is particularly valuable since: a) it is confidential to you; b) it is gathered mid-stream, leaving you time to use the feedback you get with a particular group of students and monitor the effect; and c) because the IDP staff have several years of URI experience with this instrument, they can provide you with useful interpretive information.

**Feedback from Peers.** Feedback from peers can come about in at least two ways. First, it may be useful to you to have someone visit your class and share their observations with you. Some departments have policies where this occurs regularly. Feedback from someone who has taught a particular class can be of obvious value. Not so obvious, perhaps, is the value of feedback from someone who is not an expert in your field (who may be better at letting you know what the class may look like to students); or someone who is particularly talented at a teaching skill on which you would like to work.

The second kind of useful feedback you can get from peers is their review of your teaching materials (e.g., course outlines, tests). While this happens naturally in the course of annual review, you may find it helpful to get mid-course feedback as you prepare materials or work through how to design a syllabus or structure an assignment or examination.

**Other Feedback from Students.** While the IDEA-SRI provides an official way to gather this feedback and IDP provides another formal way, you may want to design and use some informal devices of your own. Getting mid-course feedback from students may be particularly helpful to you (and your students); since it has the potential at least of letting you make some changes that can make the course work better for all concerned.

One way to get mid-course feedback is to design short questionnaires or ask students to write short paragraphs of feedback. In these cases it's important to design your methods to help students be confident that their feedback is genuinely wanted—and cannot be used against them if it's negative.

Another way to get mid-course correction is to find short ways to monitor what students are learning. Asking students to write a two-sentence summary of the main points of the class or asking them to write one question remaining in their mind at the end of class can give you clues as to how well the class is going in terms of student learning.

### **Instructional Development Program**

URI's Instructional Development Program (IDP) is considered by many to be a genuine strength of the institution. Begun a number of years ago with outside support from the Lilly Endowment, the IDP has grown into URI's clearest statement that everyone who teaches can continue to improve and that the best faculty are often those who work systematically and with others to continue that improvement. Many of the teaching ideas throughout this *Guide* are presented or reinforced in IDP programs or from faculty who have participated in their programs.

The IDP provides a range of support that can be helpful to faculty, including:

- **Half-day Workshops.** The week before classes start in the fall, half-day workshops are held on topics such as syllabus construction, designing and using tests, and how to make the first class count. Open to anyone who teaches at URI, these workshops are highly rated. Many sessions are conducted by URI faculty.
- **The Fellows Program.** Teaching fellows are selected from a group of faculty who indicate their interest in the program. Typically constructed as a diverse group of 20 or so faculty members, the fellows meet biweekly at the end of the day in a semi-structured program organized around teaching. Dinner is included, providing an additional way to get to know colleagues from around the campus. Faculty in virtually every department have participated in this program and found it very worthwhile.
- **Individual Consultation.** Bette Erickson, IDP Director, is available to work with individual faculty members on teaching issues important to them. Any teaching challenge you face is fair game to present to Bette to seek her support and advice; and since the point of your teaching is students' learning, any challenge you face with regard to your students' learning is fair game as well. (Also, see above section on the help IDP can provide you in getting feedback from your students).

### **Lecture Aids**

You will note that this *Guide* assumes that much or most of your teaching will involve activities other than lecturing—a view heavily promoted at URI by the Instructional Development Program. However, most faculty lecture at least some of the time, and when you do so, you'll want to make that time as efficient and effective as possible.

Students are helped in a lecture by visual aids. Computer generated media and paper handouts give students something to look at as well as something to listen to while you talk. Computer generated media can be used to outline the material that you are presenting, as well as display graphs and charts to help students understand numerical analyses. Handouts can give students copies of complex material they can take with them and save you the time of transmitting it to them orally. Handouts can also give students the written material you are discussing with them, so they can focus on listening to you rather than deciding what they should write down. Visual aids can help you progress efficiently through your lecture material and give you class time for discussion, group work and other activities.

## Offices that Can Help Faculty

Office	Address, Phone	Contact For:
Your Dept. Office	_____ _____	Your first source of support and help; your "first line of defense"; start here with most questions.
Enrollment Services (Registrar functions)	Green Hall, lower level, 4-4480 or 4-9500 <a href="http://www.uri.edu/es/">http://www.uri.edu/es/</a>	Information about classrooms and scheduling of courses and exams  General information about registration; questions about grade rosters, transcripts, other official student records
Your Dean's Office Undergraduate Students	_____	College procedures; traffic control (Can't figure whom to ask? Start here, after your department office.) Questions about undergraduate requirements, graduation procedures, transcript evaluation
The Graduate School Dean's Office Graduate Students	201 Quinn, 4-2262 <a href="http://www.uri.edu/gsad/mis/">http://www.uri.edu/gsad/mis/</a>	Questions about graduate students: matriculation status, program of studies
Bookstore	Memorial Union 4-2722 <a href="http://www.bookstore.uri.edu/king/home.aspx">http://www.bookstore.uri.edu/king/home.aspx</a>	Ordering textbook questions
Rhode Island Book Company	Kingston Emporium, 789-8530 <a href="http://ribooks.com/">http://ribooks.com/</a>	Also orders texts for faculty
Instructional Development Program	201 Chafee, 4-4293 <a href="http://www.uri.edu/idp/">http://www.uri.edu/idp/</a>	Workshops on course planning, teaching, syllabus writing, grading; confidential consultation on teaching matters; mid-semester teaching evaluations



Office	Address, Phone	Contact For:
Library Media Resource Center and Reserve Desk	Media room 4-4266 <a href="http://uri.libguides.com/media">http://uri.libguides.com/media</a>  Reserve desk, 4-5855 <a href="http://www.uri.edu/library/reserves/reserves.html">http://www.uri.edu/library/reserves/reserves.html</a>	Media room can let you know what films and videos are available; reserve desk can help you put materials on reserve in the Library for your students to read.

### Grants for Faculty

There are public and private sources of support for teaching-related projects. The URI Research Office can help identify federal sources and help you with the proposal process; the Development Office in Davis Hall can help identify possible sources of corporate and foundation support for your ideas.

### Other Issues, Other Resources

#### Privacy: The Buckley Amendment

By federal law, students have the right to expect that much of their academic record will be kept confidential, except for officials who "need to know." Information that may be public [unless a student officially requests otherwise] includes the following: a student's name; campus and home addresses and telephone numbers; major; most recent institution attended; degrees and awards received; and whether or not they are enrolled for a particular semester.

What does this mean for faculty? Three things, most saliently:

- First, you should not plan to post grades (for courses or exams) in a way that identifies or can identify students; this includes not posting grades in an alphabetically-based listing of social security numbers, even with names omitted.
- Second, once a student is 18, it is the student, not the parent, who has the right to access the student's records (unless the parent gets permission of the student or goes through an elaborate procedure to prove that the student is a dependent). Naturally, this sometimes comes as a surprise to parents who pay tuition bills. However, should you be contacted by a parent (it happens!) who wants information about a son's or daughter's achievement, you ordinarily cannot legally give them that information without the permission of the student.

- Third, you may occasionally want to know information from a student's record. Please contact your department chair who can help you through the "need to know" questions and, if appropriate, help you get the information you seek.

## **Emergencies**

For emergencies on the Kingston campus, including DEATH, SUICIDE ATTEMPTS, MAJOR FIRES, BOMB THREATS, RAPES, RAPE ATTEMPTS, EMERGENCIES REQUIRING POLICE ASSISTANCE:

1. Immediately call the Campus Police (874-2121) to report the incident.
2. Immediately notify your department chair.
3. For student emergencies, call Tom Dougan (Office: 874-2427; or Home: 783-3987).

If you need to call an AMBULANCE in Kingston, call the CAMPUS POLICE at 4-2121. They will call the ambulance. (Do not use 911 from a Kingston campus phone; it will delay the response.)

### **For Your Reading**

*Teaching College Freshmen* is a good text on teaching in higher education written by local authors, Bette Erickson (Director, Instructional Development Program) and Diane Strommer (Dean Emerita of University College and Special Academic Programs). The value of the book is broader than the title suggests; while not all ideas apply beyond the freshman year, many good ideas can be found on teaching students through graduate school.

Your department chair, the dean's office, or the IDP can refer you to additional reading material that addresses a special teaching interest you may have.

### **Other URI Teaching-Related Documents You Can Consult**

In addition to this *Guide*, URI produces many other documents that may be of interest to you; the ones listed here have particular importance to people teaching classes. If one of these looks like something you should have, but don't, see your department chair about getting a copy.

- ***University of Rhode Island Faculty, Staff, and Student Directory*** (<http://www.uri.edu/home/dir/>). The *Directory* includes what you'd expect: phone numbers of all faculty and staff (including many home phone numbers), phone numbers of students. It also includes lots of things you might not expect, for example: a copy of the URI calendar; campus map; FAX listings; sports, music, and theatre schedules; and a listing of the Board of Governors members. Many other useful items are included.

- ***Catalog of the University of Rhode Island*** (<http://www.uri.edu/catalog/>) As you would expect, this lists the undergraduate and graduate courses available, program requirements, information on policies governing admissions, and basic information about the faculty and staff. Faculty will also find other useful information here about grading policies, admissions requirements, leaves, and special opportunities for students.
- ***Graduate Student Manual*** ([http://www.uri.edu/gsadmis/graduate\\_manual/index.html](http://www.uri.edu/gsadmis/graduate_manual/index.html)) Produced by the Graduate School with help from the faculty, the *Manual* is written from the point of view of the graduate student. Outlining the specifics of enrollment and progress toward a degree, including things such as procedures for thesis and dissertation work, the *Manual* also provides much useful information for faculty who teach graduate students.
- ***University Manual*** ([http://www.uri.edu/facsen/MANUAL\\_09.html](http://www.uri.edu/facsen/MANUAL_09.html)). This is the official policy document that governs academic matters at the University—and many related matters as well. A product of the Faculty Senate’s committees, and approved by the Senate and the President, the *University Manual* will provide official answers to your questions about the organization of the University, the campus committee structure (at least for those committees which grow from the Senate), degree requirements, and issues relating to enrollment, tuition and graduation. Many of the policies detailed in the *University Manual* are repeated or summarized in the *Catalog*.

## Questions and Answers

**Question:**     **How do I get copying done for my classes?**

**Answer:**       This varies by department, so it’s a good idea to check early with your department chair. Depending on the size and location of the department, policies vary about which type of copying is done for what function and how much advance notice may be needed.

Printing services are available in Administrative Services Building, the Union, and the Emporium (shopping area east of campus). Check with your department chair first if you are interested in having the University pay; you will need prior approval of some sort.

**Question:**     **Is there help for my students learning to use the Library?**

**Answer:**       Indeed there is, both all-class and individual help. If your course requires students to use library resources in your field and you feel that students could benefit from a general introduction,

contact the faculty librarian in your field (call 4-2666 if you're not sure who this is, [http://www.uri.edu/library/instruction\\_services/instruction.html](http://www.uri.edu/library/instruction_services/instruction.html)) and ask to arrange a class session on bibliographic instruction. Because the URI Library has faculty librarians assigned to broad subject matter fields, the instruction will be provided by someone who is a specialist in the sources in your field. You can talk with the person ahead of time to tailor the presentation to your class. Your attendance at the session—which will be held in the Library—will make the presentation even more vivid, detailed and helpful to your students.

Individual help is available to students from the librarian on staff at the Reference Desk (<http://www.uri.edu/library/reference/reference.html>). For available hours, contact the Library.

**Question:** When are buildings open? When can I have access to my office?

**Answer:** Some buildings are open different hours than others, depending in large part on whether off-hours access is needed for facilities such as computer laboratories. In general, you should have access to your office whenever the building is open. For access to the building, see your department chair to discuss getting a key.

**Question:** Can students appeal a grade?

**Answer:** At URI, students can appeal just about anything. However, in the case of grades, the appeal must be made to the faculty member. The *University Manual* (8.56.10) stipulates, "No grade shall be changed after it has been reported to and recorded by the Office of Enrollment Services except upon written request by the instructor to the dean of the instructor's college and approval by the dean." The department chair is available to help faculty consider appeals of students.

**Question:** When a student with a disability needs accommodations on a course assessment or test who is responsible for that accommodation?

**Answer:** At URI, faculty provide disability accommodations for their tests (i.e. extended time for tests and separate testing space if it is necessary for equal opportunity in testing). Please contact your chairperson and/or your dean's office for assistance if necessary. For an average size class there are usually 0-2 students per semester who need test/exam accommodations. The DSS office at URI does not proctor tests but in an unusual situation may be able to provide guidance or assistance.