SPOTLIGHT ON STUDENTS

This issue of the ELI Bulletin Board is primarily devoted to articles written by ELI students. An interesting group of people who lead tremendously varied lives, these students have come to the attention of ELI staff primarily through the recommendations of their professors, Dr. Larry Linville, Ms. Maria Rynn, and Ms. Mary Wise. We hope you enjoy reading what they have to say about life in general and about their own experiences with being ELI students.

June Bailey
Distance BIO 102? Far-Out!

As is true of many experiences in life, often a task we initially dread turns out to be a favorite. So it was with the ELI BIO 102 course I took last semester at NVCC. Being a prime specimen of a bleached-blonde burnout who happily flunked out of college in those crazy-hazy late sixties (and paid for that cavalier attitude for years afterward with a series of menial jobs and mean husbands), I returned to college in 2000 as a last ditch effort to develop a well-paying career I could effect from a chair in honor of my rapidly approaching old age. Surprisingly, it turns out that I am really an A student. (If I’d only known that way back then.) Anyway, it still amazes me that the educational system is generous enough to award credit for the few C’s I squeaked out lo those many years ago, but hey! Who am I to argue?

Thus I found myself qualified to take BIO 102 when as far as I could discern, the facts of BIO 101 were pretty much lost in long-term parking in the outer limits of my brain. (Although I doubt I will ever forget the mental trauma of dissecting a pickled cat that I smuggled home in my guitar case over Christmas break in 1968 in a frantic effort to catch up with my lab work.)

Well, to move along, let me assure you that not only did I manage to do well academically in BIO 102, but I also found the study guide and textbook to be excellent references that filled in plenty of the gaping holes in my memory. Prof. Wise was extremely kind and encouraging, and meeting her for the required double lab appearance made the terror-filled trip to Alexandria aboard my ancient slum-mobile well worth the effort. However, I especially liked the home labs and the freedom to tailor them to my lifestyle. (As we know, one of the unique joys of distance education is that we can spend the day in sweat pants with cookie crumbs and cats on our laps!)

Perhaps my favorite assignment was the lab in which we must observe an animal for at least two hours. Instead of going to the zoo like a normal student for my naturalist observations, I decided to subtly terrorize the local Great Blue Heron. Crocodile Hunter, move over!

Also, being what I refer to as a “Type A” in a “B” body, I really got revved up and dedicated myself to finishing the course ahead of schedule. I made tapes of the material and listened to them while I was doing my cleaning jobs. As I like to say, make the menial meaningful.

So my advice… Try it, you’ll like it! (And if you have any ideas on how to make math more exciting, please let me know.)
Angela Craddock
High Praise for Flexibility

In 1999 I graduated from high school with the desire to work full time in the information systems field. I also wanted to pursue a degree in my field of interest, to improve my skills as well as my opportunities in the work force. I found it almost impossible to work a full-time job and attend regularly scheduled classes. So I did some research and was introduced to ELI.

I started off taking one class at a time. It was extremely easy for me to incorporate the class into my busy schedule because I could do the work whenever I had free time. Once I established a comfortable routine, I expanded my course load and enrolled in ELI full time.

ELI web courses allow busy students to take virtual classes from their own home. These courses have individual materials that enable us to complete the course. There are also easy-to-follow instructions on navigating through the site. If you have any questions or concerns, you can contact the instructors by email or phone for further assistance. Most instructors will respond in a timely manner so you don’t lose precious class time.

Having the ability to take technical courses over the Internet and work full time in a practical environment is an added benefit. There have been many times when something I was working on in one of my classes directly related to something I was using at work, which helped me further my understanding of a particular subject.

I am now both a full-time student and an employee. Within the next year, I will be receiving my Associates in Information Systems degree. More than half of this degree will have been completed through ELI. Due to the flexibility, I will be able to finish a lot faster than if I had been taking on-campus classes. I definitely recommend ELI classes for anyone who does not have time to attend regularly scheduled on-campus classes.

[Editor’s note: We know Angela would remind you to plan on spending at least six hours a week for a 3-credit course, just as you would on campus!]

Marshawn Evans
And Next Year...Law School!

In a sense, I am both a full-time and a part-time student. I am a senior at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, Texas, where I am taking nine hours of course work through research and independent study. At the same time, I am taking six hours from NVCC. In addition to this course [ADJ 100], I am also taking Technical Writing through ELI. This is my first time to take classes online, as I needed both of these classes to graduate in May of 2001.

I came to the Washington, D.C., area because of an internship at the Office of the Corporation Counsel, which is the prosecutor’s office, working as an aid in the juvenile section. Later, I received an opportunity to do a year-long fellowship with the National Crime Prevention Council, and I was fortunate that my home university granted me special permission to complete my entire senior year while off campus. Thus, in addition to being a “partly full-time” student, I am also working full-time at NCPC as the assistant coordinator for the National Youth Network.

Both professionally and academically, I am very interested in the fields of law, public policy, and criminal justice. I will graduate this May from TCU with a Bachelor of Science in Political Science and a minor in Criminal Justice. In the fall, I plan to go to law school. Thus far, I have been accepted at Northwestern and Georgetown, and I plan to pursue a career in public service. For several years, I have been extremely involved in youth crime prevention, and I founded a youth crime/violence prevention program through a leadership development program entitled America CAN! (America’s Children Achieving Now!). As a result, I have the opportunity to work with young people who are both perpetrators and victims of crime. Thus, I am looking forward to learning about the various reasons why individuals make certain decisions to commit crimes and behave the way in which they do.
I’m twenty years old, and you can probably tell by my name that I’m not from the States. I’m from Sweden and I’m here working as an au pair (nanny, kind of) for a year. I have been here for almost nine months now, and I like it a lot.

Three weeks after my graduation from high school (July 2000), I left everything at home – family, friends and boyfriend – to come here. I live with a family that I had only talked with over the phone before I came. I had never been away from home before, so it was a little bit scary, but at the same time very exciting. A big reason for deciding to go abroad for a year was that I didn’t know what I wanted to do after high school. I also wanted to get to know a new country and its culture and learn English better.

I will never regret coming here. I have new values in life and I feel that I have developed a lot during my time here. I have better self-confidence and I have become more independent, mature and outgoing. Also, my English has improved a lot (even though I still can’t express myself in the way I wish I could, which is very frustrating).

I take care of an eleven-year-old boy in the mornings and afternoons, and during the day I help out at my host dad’s office. My host family is great; they are a big reason why I’m enjoying my time here so much. They really make me feel like one of the family. I’m a little bit worried about the day I will have to leave them.

I’m also taking two college courses: psychology and criminology. They are a real challenge since English isn’t my first language. The criminology course is an ELI course. I haven’t been doing much distance learning before. I find it very practical since I can work on the course whenever I want to. Even so, I like classroom courses better because I like to meet the teacher and the classmates face-to-face.

I want to end this story about me by killing some prejudices about Swedes and Sweden: We are not all blond and blue eyed, we don’t drink vodka as you drink beer, and we don’t have polar bears in Sweden!
I am a part-time student taking three courses this semester. After having earned an Associate of Arts in 1977 in California, I returned to college in the Fall 2000 semester. My long-term goals are fluid, meaning that I haven't decided what my major is. :) Two possibilities are nursing or psychology. Before returning to school I was a full-time mother of two for 17 years, and I have recently taken a very part-time job as a receptionist for a large veterinary clinic.

This semester I am taking 7 credits from ELI: three credits for IST 117, three credits for ENG 295, American Cinema, and one credit for LBR 105 to help me research more effectively. IST 117 is helping me to use computers and computer programs, especially Word 2000, more fully, to upgrade the marketability of my computer skills, to be better able to help my daughters with their computer needs, and to also fulfill the requirement for an Associate of Science degree, if that is the course I choose to pursue.

If a class instructor would like a memorable statement about me, I often say “I have had 20 babies, but only kept two.” Yep, when I put it that way it usually gets someone’s attention! The story behind that is that I have two daughters of my own and I’ve been a foster mother for 18 newborns right out of the hospital. Our family has been fostering infants for 10 years. We love them and care for them an average of 5 to 8 weeks until they go back to their birth mother or on to their adoptive family. We generally have them because their birth mother needs time to make sure the decision to place for adoption is the right one for her and her baby, or there is legal paperwork which needs to be taken care of. And yes, we do get very attached—that’s what we’re here for. We treat them just like they’re a part of our family and cry every time one of them goes. All of our babies take a piece of our hearts with them when they leave.

One funny part about being a foster mom of infants at my present age: I’m old enough that people sometimes think the foster babies are my daughters’ babies, and I am asked occasionally if the babies are my grandbabies!

I was somewhat afraid to restart college for two reasons. One was that I had been out of school so long. The other was that on Christmas Eve, 1994, an aneurysm ruptured in my brain. Surgery for the aneurysm followed, and I have done well since then with few long-term after-effects. For about two years after the rupture it was very hard for me to read and retain the material I had read, even though reading had been one of my favorite things to do before the rupture. After two years of not being able to read and retain material well, the ability came back to me at almost full capacity over the following 6-month period. I was a little afraid to start school in the Fall Semester of 2000 for fear I wouldn’t be able to learn at the level required, but so far, so good!

The decision to return to school was definitely a great one for me, and I am so glad that I made it.

Laura Zych
Mother of 20!

Reminders

- Registration for ELI’s Summer Term began on April 16. You can register via NOVA.net, the telephone registration system, on any campus during on-campus registration, by mail, or in person through the ELI office in Springfield.

- If you plan to graduate in May, make sure your professor knows of your plans and arrange to complete your work in time.

- If you are planning to graduate at the end of Summer Term, you must meet with your faculty advisor no later than May 18, 2001, to review your academic record. Then you must submit your application for graduation to your home campus Admissions and Records Office no later than May 25, 2001.

- If you need to transfer Summer credits to another college for Fall, plan to finish your ELI course early.

Clarification: LRC Services at Manassas

The last issue of the ELI Bulletin Board incorrectly identified some Learning Resource Services (LRS) at Manassas. Please note that at the Manassas Campus, the Writing Center activities are actually within the Learning Lab (MH 112). The Writing Center provides faculty and peer tutors for one-on-one assistance with student writing. Other services are listed on its web page, http://www.nv.cc.va.us/manassas/lrs/LL/LLrwrite.htm. Please check out the excellent services available to you at the Manassas Campus.
Guide to Online Research from Home or Office

Need to do research for your classes? Want to find great articles using your computer at home? Start at the NVCC Library home page – www.nv.cc.va.us/library.

Using our online Magazine and Newspaper databases, you can access articles and citations on a wide range of topics from thousands of magazines, journals, and newspapers. You can’t get to this stuff by searching the Internet! Before you can get into these databases from home, though, you will need to set up your computer for remote access. Carefully follow the “Set up Access from Off Campus” directions, available off of the library home page. (Printing out a copy of the directions makes it easier to follow.) Plan to spend about 20-30 minutes on this initial set-up. We think the time investment is worth it, though – once you’re set up, you’ll have 24/7 access to thousands of articles and citations!

Once you’re set up, go back to the Library home page and click on Magazine & Newspaper Articles; the databases in the yellow box, such as Expanded Academic and ProQuest, will get you to articles on a wide range of subjects, including literature, science, current events, and social, political, and economic issues. The databases found in the dropdown menu on the right side of the screen are more specialized and include CINAHL (nursing), PsychINFO, Sociological Abstracts, Health Reference Center, and General Business File. When you’re searching in these databases, one of the most important things you can do to help yourself get good results is to use good search terms. Here are some search tips:

- Type only the most relevant terms in the search box. For example, if your topic is "What are the causes of air pollution?" you could type in "air pollution" AND causes
- Don’t use prepositions! (e.g., in, of, with)
- Put quotation marks around terms that need to appear next to each other: "gun control"

- Put an AND between words that you want to appear anywhere in the same article, but that don’t necessarily need to be next to each other: environment AND pollution
- If you don’t get good results, try doing a search using other words related to your topic, such as synonyms. If you get too many results, try to be more specific. If you get no results, or not enough results, try terms that are more general. When you find an article that looks good, view the article and look at the "Topics" or "Subject" list. The terms in this list may give you ideas for other words to use in your search.

Frequently the complete text of the articles will be available in the online database. Look for words or symbols indicating "text" or "full text". If the article you want is not available full text, try these options: On the Magazine and Newspaper Articles page, scroll down and click on Find Full Text Magazine and Newspaper Titles Online. Type in the title of the magazine, journal, or newspaper that you’re looking for. This will tell you if the title is available full-text on our other databases. Also, on the main library home page (www.nv.cc.va.us/library) search the Library Catalog for the title of the magazine, journal, or newspaper that your article is in. This will tell you whether any of the campus libraries owns a paper or microfilm copy of that periodical.

Got questions? On the library home page (www.nv.cc.va.us/library) you can Ask for Help Online. Click on that link, tell us what you need to know, and a librarian will get back to you within 48 business hours. We also invite you to visit the Campus Libraries – a librarian will be happy to assist you with your research!

[Editor’s note: Special thanks to AL librarian Anne Anderson for putting these directions together especially for ELI students.]
NEW COURSES FOR SUMMER, 2001

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<td>ADJ 237</td>
<td>Advanced Criminal Investigation</td>
<td>ADJ 237 is a 3-credit course on the World Wide Web. It introduces you to specialized tools and scientific aids used in criminal investigation. You will learn how to apply investigative techniques to specific situations and how to prepare trial evidence. Prerequisite: ADJ 236</td>
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<tr>
<td>TRV100</td>
<td>Introduction to the Travel Industry</td>
<td>TRV 100 is a 3-credit course on the World Wide Web. It presents an overview of the structure and scope of the travel industry with an emphasis on job categories, introduces the basic vocabulary of the field, and covers information displays of the airline computer reservation system.</td>
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NVCC Ranked #3 in the Country

Northern Virginia Community College has been ranked as the third largest community college in the country by Community College Week, based on the total of full-time and part-time student enrollment. The Houston Community College System received the number two spot by a little more than 1,200 enrollments.

NVCC’s total enrollment was 36,655. The Houston Community College system had 37,882 students. The number one community college in the country remains Miami-Dade Community College in Florida, with 47,152 students.

The results were published in the December 25 issue of Community College Week.

Reprinted, with permission, from NVCC Intercom, January 26, 2001.

“Northern Virginia Community College has been ranked as the third largest community college in the country by Community College Week.”

Student Health Insurance Plan

The Virginia Community College System now has a Student Sickness and Injury Insurance Plan. As a student enrolled at NVCC, you are eligible to apply for this insurance coverage. For information, call an agent at ABCO 100 at 1-800-222-5780 from 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, or visit the Web site at http://www.abco100.com. Click on “students,” then “schools,” and choose “Virginia Community College System.”
TESTING LAB HOURS FOR SUMMER, 2001

Please call for confirmation of lab hours, and note that certain labs have specific policies concerning closing time. All labs close on time, so if you think you might need more time than the suggested time limit, you will need to arrive earlier. ALWAYS call to verify the hours of operation; sometimes there are last-minute changes. Also, remember that when the College closes for holidays or weather conditions, this includes the testing labs.

Alexandria (703-845-6035), Room AA 332. Hours may vary. Call before you come in.

Monday-Thursday, 9:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m.
Friday, 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
Saturday, CLOSED

Note: **Lab opens at 10:30 a.m. on the first Monday of each month.** Lab collects all exams 15 minutes before closing time, and no exams are given out within one hour of closing time. No placement exams are given within two hours of closing.

Annandale (703-323-3149), Room CG 404.

Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.-9:30 p.m.
Saturday, CLOSED

Note: Lab collects exams 15 minutes before closing time, and no ELI exams are given out within one hour of closing time. No placement tests are given within two hours of closing.

Loudoun (703-450-2508), Room LC 251.

Monday-Thursday, 8:00 a.m.-7:30 p.m.
Friday, 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.
Saturday, CLOSED

Manassas (703-257-6645), Room MH 112.

Monday-Thursday, 8:30 a.m.-8:00 p.m.
Friday, 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.
Saturday, CLOSED

Note: Lab collects exams 15 minutes before closing time.

Woodbridge (703-878-5616), Room WC 418.

Monday-Thursday, 8:30 a.m.-10:00 p.m.
No online exams given after 8:00 p.m.; No paper exams given after 9:00 p.m.; All exams collected at 9:45 p.m.
Friday, 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.
No online exams given after 3:00 p.m.; No paper exams given after 4:00 p.m.; All exams collected at 4:45 p.m.
Saturday, CLOSED

Please Note Testing Center Guidelines

- Do not bring children with you when you arrive to take your exams. This is an issue of liability; the staff is not permitted to administer your exam if you have a child with you.
- Because all ELI exams are untimed, you need to arrive early to take your exams. Please observe the rules of each individual lab and respect the staff’s need to close on time. Please do not take more than one exam per day.
- You must have your picture identification and exam pass with you to take an exam. If you forget your pass, go to available computers on campus and print out the correct one.
- Write your name and social security number on your exam pass; it will speed up the sign-in process.
- Do not wait until the last minute to take your exams. Holiday schedules may vary by campuses.
### ELI FACULTY MAILBOXES - SUMMER, 2001

*Directions: dial 703-323-3713. Select option 2 (visit other mailboxes). Enter a mailbox number when prompted.*

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