August 18, 2016

To: All Teachers in the First-Year Composition Program  
From: Michael J. Day, Director of First-Year Composition  
Subject: General Information and Policies

First Week Concerns

1. **Official enrollment and registration:** Please remind all students that they can remain in a section only if they have officially enrolled in it on MyNIU. **There is no other way. Permits are not issued for closed sections.** Students in English 204 must have been placed in the course by Testing Services on the basis of test scores.

   PLEASE CHECK ALL STUDENTS AGAINST OFFICIAL ROLLS AND ADVISE STUDENTS NOT OFFICIALLY ENROLLED THAT THEY MAY NOT REMAIN IN YOUR SECTION UNLESS THEY HAVE A PRINTED COURSE SCHEDULE SHOWING LATE REGISTRATION.

   PLEASE REMIND STUDENTS OF THIS POLICY:

   **Add-drop procedure** (*Undergraduate Catalog*): “For 16-week courses, students may make changes to their schedules during the first week of class through MyNIU. Courses may be dropped during the second week of the term by permission of the student’s major college, or the Academic Advising Center for students with no major college affiliation. Sixteen-week courses which are dropped by the end of the second week of classes will not appear on a student’s record. Beginning with the third week of classes of a fall or spring term, all course load reductions become withdrawals, with the exception of last-half semester courses.” Please also remind students that the deadline for withdrawal without affecting semester or cumulative GPA is the end of the eighth week of classes (Friday, October 14).

2. **Class lists:** Class lists are available at MyNIU.

   - Go to: [http://www.niu.edu/index.shtml](http://www.niu.edu/index.shtml)
   - Click on “A-Z Index”
   - Click on “MyNIU”
   - Enter your faculty user ID and NOVELL password, click “sign in”
   - Click on “Faculty Center”
   - Click on the icon for class roster, which will be in front of the course(s) listed

3. **Teaching schedule changes:** Please check with the director if you have any concerns about your teaching schedule. Up-to-date information will be available at 8 a.m. on Monday, the first day of classes, after necessary schedule changes have been made over the weekend.

4. **First week problems:** Please do not hesitate to talk with me about any problems that may arise.
Semester Concerns

5. **Communication is key; please stay in touch!** Because of our commitment to the university to use technology in our classes, along with our need to save time and energy, teachers in the First-Year Composition Program must have an email account and check it regularly (at least every other day). The English Department and First-Year Composition staff will use email to send important reminders and program information to you; it is your professional responsibility to read this email and respond in a timely fashion when asked. Further, all First-Year Composition teachers need to be subscribed to and be reading the FYCOMP distribution list. Accordingly, please be sure that both Eric Hoffman and the FYComp office support specialist have the email address of the account you check regularly. CHECK YOUR NIU E-MAIL ACCOUNT REGULARLY.

6. **Reporting your absence from class:** Because we are required to notify the university about all absences and their reasons, you must report your personal absences to both the First-Year Composition office support specialist, Maribel Montelongo, 753-1607, and the office administrator, Angie Dybas, 753-0612 or adybas@niu.edu. **This includes instructors and TAs who are teaching in Grant and Neptune Halls, as well as the Stevenson South Writing Center classroom.** I will be notified of the absence and, whenever possible, arrangements will be made for class coverage. **Any arrangements you make for class coverage should be approved by me.** If for any reason you need to change classrooms or ask for additional lab days, please check with the FYComp office support specialist.

   All classes are to be held as scheduled, including those before and after holidays and mid-semester breaks. Please consult the academic calendar, [http://www.niu.edu/u_council/calendars/2016-2017/index.shtml](http://www.niu.edu/u_council/calendars/2016-2017/index.shtml) for further information. Classes must meet during finals week as scheduled by the university. Final exam schedules may be found at [http://www.reg.niu.edu/regrec/dates/finalexam.shtml](http://www.reg.niu.edu/regrec/dates/finalexam.shtml).

7. **Drug and alcohol policy:** Please remember that “NIU’s policies prohibit the possession, manufacture, use or sale of illegal drugs, narcotics or controlled substances. NIU’s Department of Public Safety is a member of the North Central Narcotics Task Force, which is designed to create a system that effectively fights the use and abuse of drugs in the community and the NIU campus. **NIU is a drug-free and alcohol-free workplace.**” (go to: [http://www.niu.edu/wellness/audience/parents/atod.shtml](http://www.niu.edu/wellness/audience/parents/atod.shtml))

8. **Grade reporting system:** You must post your final grades on the MyNIU system. All First-Year Composition faculty will also be required to turn in a printout of the grades to Maribel Montelongo. As always, remember, DO NOT POST grades in any public place, or you will be violating FERPA regulations. Guidelines for determining grades, including the point/percentage scale for the new plus/minus system, can be found on the Grading handout in the Faculty Resources folder. Observe the deadline for submitting your final grades; failure to do so will cause you and your students considerable inconvenience. The absolute deadline for fall 2016 grades is Monday, December 12, 4:30 PM.

9. **Plagiarism statement:** The First-Year Composition Program’s **official policy** on plagiarism is contained in the “Statement on Plagiarism”, also found at [http://www.engl.niu.edu/composition/plag.shtml](http://www.engl.niu.edu/composition/plag.shtml).

   This policy statement clarifies our program mission to teach research and documentation skills. It recognizes (1) our programmatic responsibility to teach appropriate uses of resource materials in all classes; (2) our desire to incorporate into English 203 and 204 more organized instruction in appropriate quotation, paraphrase, and documentation; and (3) our students’ need to understand what constitutes academic integrity (see also the section on “Academic Integrity” in the online
During the first week or so of classes, please be sure to go through the plagiarism statement with your students. You may include it in your syllabus, electronic and/or paper, or have copies of the green handout made to distribute in class. Stress to students that they need to know what plagiarism is and be aware of its consequences.

If you have a student who you think may have plagiarized, follow the Guidelines for Plagiarism, which can be found at http://www.engl.niu.edu/composition/faculty_resources.shtml. If you and I agree that a student has plagiarized, you should fill out the Academic Misconduct Incident Report form that is available online at https://publicdocs.maxient.com/incidentreport.php?NorthernIllinoisUniv.

10. Submission of course syllabi: Submit an electronic copy of each syllabus that you are using during the semester to Maribel Montelongo in the English office no later than August 26, 2016. Be sure to include all the required information (listed on the “Syllabus Requirements” handout) in your syllabus. Note: If you submit your syllabus for copying electronically, the electronic copy will be forwarded to Maribel for inclusion in our syllabus file. Teaching assistants in ENGL 600 will have this step taken care of for them.

11. Student folders: All students are required to keep a folder of their major writing that you can review at any time during the semester. For purposes of program assessment and the unlikely event of a grade appeal, student file folders are kept by instructors in their offices until after the fourth week of the subsequent semester (excluding the summer session), at which time students may retrieve them. Please label these stacks of folders clearly with your name, the semester, the class number, and the section number. After the twelfth week of the semester, we will provide for secure removal of remaining folders from your office. Please remind your students to keep everything!

12. Awards, events, and the English major: Familiarize yourself with the wide array of awards and events sponsored by the FYComp program at http://www.engl.niu.edu/composition/events.shtml. Take time at the beginning of class or lab to project the URL and remind students of the multiple opportunities to gain recognition, celebrate writing, and share their achievements publicly. Encourage students who show promise in their writing, research, and critical thinking skills to consider the English major.

13. Duplication of teaching materials: Forms for requesting duplication of syllabi, exams, and quizzes are available in the English office, and jobs for duplication other than exams and quizzes should be deposited in the tray there. Because the tray and mailboxes are so public, exams and quizzes should be dropped off in Angie Dybas’s office for duplication. Black on white originals produce the best copies and should be submitted at least twenty-four hours in advance of need (2-3 work days during peak periods or for larger projects, please). Avoid using compressed letter fonts; they do not reproduce well. Also, please avoid pictures or busy graphics; they waste both space and ink. Syllabi will be duplicated on a first-come, first-served basis according to the requested date (give both date and time of day needed) as rapidly as student help can do the work. All equipment in Reavis 214-217 is to be used by office staff only.

Note: We are very concerned with ways to conserve paper. We strongly urge you to scan or request us to scan for you any handouts other than syllabi and exams. Please see the Copying and Scanning Options handout in the Faculty Resources section of the web page.

14. Library research orientations: All sections of ENGL 203 and 204 are required to have library
orientation/research sessions. If you are teaching either of these classes, you will receive a “Library Instruction” memo with more information on procedures for ENGL 203/204 in your department mailbox. For more information about optional ENGL 103 library activities, please contact Karen Hovde, (815) 753-1770 or khovde@niu.edu.

15. **Early Alert/Student Success Program:** This fall, all sections of ENGL 103 will again participate in a program with the Office of Student Academic Success (OSAS). Teachers of ENGL 103 will receive class lists for each 103 section during the fourth week of class. They will indicate any students not attending class or underperforming; sheets must be returned within a week. Indicated students will receive a personalized letter with suggestions about support services, followed by a telephone call. Please contact Dana Gautcher, (815) 753-5721 or dana@niu.edu, if you have questions.

16. **Absence Intervention Program:** The Office of the Provost is conducting an intervention program to try to reduce student failure due to absences in ENGL 103. Report to Tony Calderala, Student Success Specialist for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at (815) 753-5725 or tcalderala@niu.edu, the names of all students who appear on your class roster but have not attended after teaching your first class of the second week. Absence tracking is targeted for the first few weeks of a semester only, not throughout the semester as it's an intervention tool. If there are some ongoing issues with a particular student, then faculty may submit a referral through the OSAS website, [http://www.niu.edu/osas/](http://www.niu.edu/osas/).

17. **MAP Works:** As an outcome of our January 8, 2014 FYComp Retention Summit, most of us are using MAP Works to keep track of our students and their self-reported sense of success and well-being at NIU. If you have not yet received training to use MAP Works, we strongly encourage you to do so, and to use MAP Works with your classes. It’s as easy as setting aside 20 minutes on a lab day for students to fill out the survey, and periodically checking on the students in your classes. The Fall Transition Survey is September 10th-October 3rd and the Spring Transition Survey is February 4th to February 27th. See [http://www.niu.edu/osas/MAPWorks/index.shtml](http://www.niu.edu/osas/MAPWorks/index.shtml) for more information.

18. **Individual conferences:** Research suggests that individual conferences make a big difference in students’ feelings of engagement in college. I encourage you to have two or three individual conferences with your students, but I suggest that you make these conferences mandatory and substantial if you plan to cancel classes. You may replace no more than three weeks of classes with individual conferences. If you need a quiet place to hold conferences, please contact the FYComp office support specialist.

19. **Using films in FYComp classes:** You may use films in your classes to stimulate student writing, but please use common sense about using multiple class periods to show feature-length films. When possible, arrange for showings of required films outside class time, and use class time for discussion with video clips from the films.

20. **Course evaluations:** The FYComp office support specialist and staff will prepare your packets and notify you when they are ready. Be sure pick these up in a timely fashion and to administer them in your classes BEFORE finals week. You may not be present in the room during evaluations.

21. **Goals, outcomes, and technology guidelines:** The First-Year Composition Committee (FYCC) has adopted a set of outcomes and technology guidelines for the FYComp Program. We ask that you review these goals each semester for your use in shaping your pedagogical approaches to the classes you teach. These are meant to be descriptive, not prescriptive documents. That is, they
codify what all of us want our students to be able to DO at the end of 103, 203, and 204. You may want to go through them with your students to show them the rationale for many of our activities in First-Year Composition classes, and you may also use them to guide your assessment of student work at the end of the semester. For your convenience, these goals, guidelines, and outcomes are available online at http://www.engl.niu.edu/composition/outcomes.shtml.

22. **Reflective electronic portfolio assessment:** As part of our ongoing commitment to best practices in the assessment of student writing, students in all FYComp classes are required to submit reflective electronic portfolios for individual and program assessment. Accordingly, you should adjust your syllabus, curriculum, and assignments to incorporate student reflection and portfolio preparation starting fairly early in the semester, and devote at least two lab periods to portfolio assembly. For a rationale and overview of electronic portfolio pedagogy and assessment at NIU, please see the Portfolio Manifesto in the Faculty Resources section of the FYComp website.

23. **Shared office guidelines:** The FYCC has adopted a set of guidelines and posted them in each shared office to help insure that all FYComp teachers will be able to do their work in a safe, respectful atmosphere with a minimum of interruptions. Please read and follow these guidelines. If you cannot locate your office’s copy or if it is in need of replacement, please notify Michael.

24. **Residence hall instructor classrooms:** For your convenience, an information sheet about the Neptune and Grant South residence hall labs and smart classrooms is available in the Faculty Resources section of the FYComp website. If you teach in Grant South, you will need to have an NIU proximity OneCard (your photo should be on the left side of the card). If you need to exchange your current OneCard for a proximity card, you will need to take your old card to the NIU OneCard office in the lower level of the HSC, adjacent to TCF Bank.

25. **Contact me:** I am always available to discuss any aspect of your teaching in the First-Year Composition Program. Do not hesitate to drop by my office or send me an email at any time to consult about concerns, problems, or questions that arise during the year. Additionally, for purposes of recommendation, I am happy to observe your teaching at any time you request.

**FYComp Resources**

26. **University Writing Center (UWC):** Under the direction of Gail Jacky, the UWC (Stevenson Towers South, lower level; Founders’ Memorial Library 260; and McMurry 106), provides full-time professional staff, TAs, and peer tutors who are trained to help all students in your courses on all phases of their writing. Encourage your students to visit http://www.niu.edu/uwc to check hours or schedule an appointment, or call 753-6636 for information. The senior staff can inform you of your students' progress if you call for the information.

You can also contact Gail Jacky at 753-6636 to arrange for a 15-minute presentation to your students on the UWC's services. For further information, please see the UWC web site at http://www.niu.edu/uwc.

27. **ESL Center:** We will staff the ESL Center (Reavis 306B) again this year under the coordination of Professor Doris Macdonald. The consultants will tutor students whose native language is not English in all phases of their writing. The ESL Center offers specialized support in the areas of reading, speaking, and listening comprehension for non-native English-speaking students. Early in the semester, preferably during the first week or so, please try to identify students whose native language is not English who may have enrolled in your regular 103, 203, or 204 classes and refer
them to the ESL center, 753-6637 or niu.esl.center@gmail.com. In some cases, if space permits early in the semester, a student with ESL-related challenges may be able to switch to an ESL section of 103 (fall) or 203 (spring), but we cannot make switches after the third week of classes. For hours and further information, please see the ESL Center web site at http://www.engl.niu.edu/esl/.

Computers and Composition

1. Computers for First-Year Composition faculty:
   a. Every faculty teaching ENGL 102, 103, 203, 204, 451, 452 and 453 will have a laptop available to them for the duration on the semester. Faculty who choose to use these laptops must sign a standard equipment release form prior to their receipt of the equipment, and must promptly return equipment (or sign a new equipment release form) at the conclusion of the semester. Laptops will be jointly supported by the NWR and by the CLAS IT staff. Each laptop will come with a standard set of software preinstalled sufficient for normal use (including Microsoft Office, IE, Chrome, and Skype) and users will have limited ability to add new software as needed.
   b. In addition to laptops, you may also use the computers located in the University Writing Center and the Networked Writing and Research (NWR) office (Reavis 308) during their regular office hours.

2. Printing: Faculty have access network printers in RH208, RH224, and ZU 1012. These printers should be used for printing related to teaching only, and should not be used to create multiple copies: mass duplication should normally be handled through the main department office. In addition, some faculty offices may have printers available.

3. Staff support for computer-mediated instruction: NWR has a staff of associates who are trained to serve as the liaison to each of the computer labs in which we teach. You should get to know your lab liaison and report to him/her any difficulty you experience with the operation of your lab. These staff members are also available to help you with any concern you have about setting up your course web site, using programmatic software, or conducting your lab day. Please feel free to call on them.

4. Composition computer labs: We teach in a variety of different computer labs, all of which use Windows 2007, Office 2010, Internet Explorer, Firefox, and Chrome. No eating or drinking is allowed by students or teachers in the labs. Under no circumstances should you interrupt a colleague who is teaching in a lab, for printing or any other reason. Other lab policies are posted in each lab, and, upon request, a lab attendant will review them as well as log-on procedures during your first lab day. Please familiarize yourself with these policies. Remind students to save work frequently to USB flash drives and/or their network drive spaces. Student network drives have been enhanced: they will now have 5G of storage (up from 200M), and will support remote connectivity via https://anywherefiles.niu.edu as well as a mobile app.

Please remember that we are assigned and allowed to use computer labs for a good reason: NIU expects that students will have hands-on experiences in the technologies of writing, including networked discussion and writing for the web. It is a general expectation of the program that you
will use the lab for most, if not all, of the assigned lab days. If you need help planning and executing lab days, please see Eric or one of the NWR staff. If you do not intend to use the lab on a specific lab day, you must let the lab attendant and Maribel know beforehand. If you need a lab on a day you are not scheduled to be in lab (including final exams), contact Maribel well in advance of the day you plan to use the lab.

Have a good year!