



Quinsigamond Community College

Bill McCarthy, Ph.D., Professor of Criminal Justice

PEARSON
PROFILES:
ONLINE
LEARNING

It all goes back to the student. This is a good match for them. If they do the work, they pass. It's that simple.

*Bill McCarthy, Ph.D.
Professor of Criminal Justice
Quinsigamond Community
College*

Quinsigamond Community College (QCC) was established in 1963 to provide a first-rate education for residents of central Massachusetts, whether preparing them for entry into the workforce, for transfer to four-year colleges and universities, or for personal enrichment. Since the early 1960s, enrollment has grown from 300 to more than 13,000 full- and part-time day and evening students served in more than 70 associate degree and career certificate options. The college also offers a variety of noncredit courses, workshops, and seminars, as well as 300 noncredit and nearly 35 credit courses online.

QCC is committed to providing its students with as many learning opportunities as possible. By offering an online alternative to the Criminal Justice program, the school is able to meet the needs of those students who must juggle their educational goals with the cost of gasoline and transportation, work schedules, and family demands. Bill McCarthy, professor of criminal justice at QCC, chose Pearson's CourseConnect to help make it happen.

"Rather than trying to reinvent the wheel, I sought an online learning package that had already been tested and developed by instructional designers and that included proven content from specialists in the fields of criminal investigation, constitutional law, and evidence," says McCarthy. "That's why we went with Pearson. Pearson was the only publisher that could offer us high-end instructional learning aspects and first-rate content. They're simply very ahead of the others."

In addition, McCarthy needed a product that wouldn't pose an intimidating learning curve for staff and adjuncts who hadn't previously taught online. "We were growing quickly and needed something good—something scalable, intuitive, and that included proven-effective tools," says McCarthy. "CourseConnect has everything we need: syllabus, objectives for each module, discussion questions, and tests that match the questions and objectives. It includes quizzes that reinforce information from the online modules and the textbook. And it has great graphics, videos, and links to outside resources. Literally everything is in there."

Pearson created a custom portal for McCarthy's course. Prospective students use the portal to learn what will be expected of them and to communicate their needs. This

ensures that students are clear about expectations, and it enables McCarthy to better guide course activities according to student learning needs.

Because Pearson takes care of all of the instructional design and technical support concerns, McCarthy is free to devote more time to students. "I load it in, and I'm ready. All I do is point and click," he says. "This is a lifesaver. Course enrollment has jumped from 250 students to 430 during the last two years, and I'm teaching seven and eight courses a semester—yet I still have time to get into discussions with my students. I have the time to really teach and advise them."

Student surveys indicate that McCarthy's students not only like the product but also prefer it to the more static presentations of material that were used in the past.

Most important, McCarthy's students are benefiting. "I and another instructor give a test at the end of every semester," he says. "We have found that students who are taking the course online usually score four to six points higher than those taking the course face-to-face. I attribute it to the increased number of activities they are required to do. That alone has the power to raise a B/C student to an A/B student."

"Sometimes I feel guilty," says McCarthy. "I wonder what I did to deserve this great treatment!" From increased access to content to responsive technical support, to collaborative implementation, Pearson meets McCarthy's goals.

McCarthy plans to adopt the CourseConnect for Homeland Security due out in fall 2009. "I'm looking forward to seeing this new offering," says McCarthy. "Everything that they've done so far has been great."

PEARSON

Pearson Learning Solutions Education That Works

www.pearsonlearningsolutions.com