

# Welcome to ICON

## A Comprehensive Platform for Online Coursework

by Ellen Holstein

This fall semester online courses at the UI move to a new home called ICON. ICON replaces WebCT and Blackboard, which online students formerly used to access their course materials.

The initial response from students is very positive: “I love the pager! I can instant message my UI friends and save minutes on my phone time.” “The locker is going to save me—I am always forgetting where I have saved my assignments on my computer—and now I can get to them when I am away from home, too.” “I’m so glad the events on my calendar will pop up as events when I login to my course (I keep forgetting what I have put on my calendar!)” “The fact that ICON Help is available on every page gives a lot of comfort to a non-techy person like me.”

The University of Iowa decided to replace WebCT and Blackboard with a single system called ICON (an acronym for Iowa Courses Online). As was the case with WebCT and Blackboard, ICON allows instructors to post course materials online as well as incorporate discussion boards, chat rooms, online grade reports, and interactive quizzes and surveys if they so choose. New with ICON are such things as a journal, locker space for each user, a pager for instant messaging, easy access to e-mail addresses for all class participants, and space to write comments by each graded assignment, to name a few.

Online courses are not for everyone. Sometimes a slow modem or old computer complicates coursework for students. For others, there is nothing like being able to highlight and take notes in a printed, bound study guide. For students with these restrictions or preferences, print-based materials for Guided Independent Study courses will always be available.

Everyone with a Hawk ID has access to ICON. To begin familiarizing yourself with ICON, even if you are not currently enrolled in any ICON courses, point your browser to <http://icon.uiowa.edu/> and use the login fields on the left side of the page to enter your

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### Read *The Beacon* Online

*The Beacon* is also available online at <http://continuetolearn.uiowa.edu/ccpl/bls/>

## Student Success Story

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# How the BLS Degree Conforms to your Goals

by Beckie Hudson

*Beckie Hudson graduated in May 2005 with a BLS degree, which included a concentration in Spanish Language and Literature. While earning her degree at The University of Iowa, she also was accepted into Kirkwood Community College where she currently is completing an Associates Degree in Nursing.*

*The population of Spanish-speaking patients in America is steadily increasing, and even though speaking Spanish may never become a job requirement, health care workers who choose to learn the language and culture of their Hispanic patients will have an edge. Some facilities offer pay differentials or incentives for bilingual nurses. More importantly, however, Spanish-speaking patients need equal access to quality healthcare.*

I was thrilled when an advisor at The University of Iowa introduced me to the BLS department. It had been years since high school graduation, and I had taken many classes, trying to answer the impossible question, “What did I want to be when I grew up?” Since my answer to that question had changed many times, I ended up getting several different advisors while I was at the University.

One of the advisors asked if I had ever heard of the BLS department. I hadn’t, so I called to schedule an appointment to meet with someone there. I was seen right away. The people there were really friendly. My advisor was incredibly helpful. I expressed my fears that I was continuing to take classes at Iowa that I had already successfully taken at Kirkwood Community College. I was afraid that I was

far from achieving my initial goal, which was to graduate with a degree from The University of Iowa. My advisor sat with me and looked at the classes that I had taken thus far. I was so relieved when she explained to me how I could devise a plan of study in order to obtain my degree.

I further began to understand that a BLS degree was a good option for me, because it was geared for nontraditional students and the goals I had—to pursue an area of study in Spanish while also earning credits toward a Nursing degree at the local community college. This was not the standard plan of study followed by most undergraduates. My advisor made me feel good because she told me that I was well on my way towards completing a BLS degree, and that what I was trying to accomplish between my schooling at Iowa and at Kirkwood made sense. For once, I didn’t feel like I was aimlessly going through school, wasting my time.

This past May, I received my Bachelor of Liberal Studies degree. I owe this to the wonderful opportunity I was offered through the BLS program. My advisor always was willing to meet with me and talk with me over the phone whenever I had a question. She also took her time with me, and made sure that I knew where I was going in my degree plan. Whenever I met with her, she had suggestions for classes she thought might interest me.

I can’t imagine getting through the past school years without the help and the possibilities that I was offered in the Bachelor of Liberal Studies program.

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## Early Registration Begins November 14

Please note that early registration for winter and spring semester-based courses begins the week of November 14. Contact your advisor at least two weeks prior to that date for your registration number. Course listings for Saturday & Evening and daytime classes for the Winter Session 2005 and Spring 2006 semester are tentatively scheduled to be available for viewing in mid-October. Students may view the courses on ISIS at: <http://isis.uiowa.edu/>

You do not need to enter a registration number to view the course schedules. Just select *Courses* located on the top navigation bar. On the *Search Course List* page, be sure to select the correct session to view.

Students interested in enrolling in Distance Education courses for Winter Session 2005 and Spring 2006 should begin to check for listings early in November at the Distance Education website: <http://continuetolearn.uiowa.edu/ccpl/del/deoppor.htm>

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Hawk ID and password. That will bring you to My Home. If you are enrolled in ICON courses, they will be grouped by session in the center of the page under “My ICON Courses” (GIS courses are in the Ongoing Session). Otherwise, that area will be empty, but you will still have access to such things as the calendar, your locker, e-mail, and the pager.

You can even create a buddy list so that you can page anyone with a Hawk ID. Keep in mind, however, that not everyone answers pages! So explore the site and make yourself at home in ICON!

More information:

- Flash-based online tutorial for ICON:  
<http://www.uiowa.edu/~online/tutorials/tutorial.html>
- Student Guide to ICON:  
<http://icon.uiowa.edu/onlinehelp/students/guide/>

## Federally Sponsored Financial Aid for GIS Enrollment--Please Remember ...

Please remember that financial aid for GIS courses covers only tuition, fees, and books and, that regardless of whether or not financial aid is awarded, full payment is due at the time of registration. You may not apply for financial aid after you have already enrolled in a course. Students should talk to a Financial Aid Counselor about the specific rules that apply to GIS completion time.

For more information concerning the use of federal financial aid for GIS courses, University of Iowa degree-seeking students should contact the [Office of Student Financial Aid](#) (319.335.1450) or visit their Web site at:

<http://www.uiowa.edu/financial-aid/gis/>

## New Bachelor of Applied Studies Degree Approved by Board of Regents

Applications are being taken for the recently approved Bachelor of Applied Studies (BAS) degree. The degree is designed for working AAS or AS graduates who wish to complete a bachelor's degree without coming to campus. For information, phone the Center for Credit Programs at 800.272.6430 or 319.335.2575.

# T.ICON Tips

**Create an e-mail signature** in ICON by going to *My Settings: My Preferences* on the ICON *My Home* page. Then select the *Email* tab and type in a signature that will get stamped on the bottom of all e-mails you send from ICON. Please include your Hawk ID in your signature to help the GIS office identify you when logging in your assignments.



**For your protection**, always copy yourself when you send an e-mail from ICON. ICON does not save copies of any sent e-mails.



**Set up your pager preferences** (you can turn off incoming pages and change ring tones) by going to *My Settings: My Preferences* on the ICON *My Home* page. Select the *Pager* tab.

## A Reminder on E-Mail Civility

Anne W. Zalenski, PhD, Associate Director  
The Center for Credit Programs

I would like to take this opportunity to provide a brief reminder to BLS students about the content of e-mail messages. Electronic communication is no substitute for the subtle and nuanced effect of spoken language; therefore, it is important to maintain civility and to limit the use of language that might be perceived as vituperative or insulting even when you are upset, angry, or frustrated. We have a very good link on our ICON Web site that describes e-mail etiquette. If you have concerns about what is considered appropriate, I urge you to review the material at:

<http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>



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## Significant Dates for Fall 2005

- October 18 Deadline for degree applicants for December graduation.
- October 31 Last date for undergraduates to drop individual semester-length courses for fall session.
- November 14 Last date for undergraduates to withdraw entire registration of semester-based Saturday & Evening and Distance Education courses.
- Winter Session 2005/Spring 2006 semester early registration begins.
- December 1 Last date to file for Center for Credit Programs scholarship for spring term.
- December 7 GIS course work due for Fall 2005 semester graduates.

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If you have questions or would like more information about any of the items you see in *The Beacon*, phone the Center for Credit Programs, toll-free, at 800.272.6430 or direct at 319.335.2575.