



AU undergoes new system upgrade

GRACE SCARBERRY
Opinion Editor

A new software program, Ellucian Self-Service, is being implemented this summer by Ashland University in order to make advising and scheduling easier.

AU currently uses Ellucian WebAdvisor, but according to James Hayes, director of educational technology, that system is outdated and has been in need of an upgrade.

Hayes noted that the software is too old and beginning to reach the end of its lifespan.

"Nobody uses Windows 7 anymore because that operating system has reached the end of its lifespan," he said. "That same thing happened with WebAdvisor, the tool we were previously using for registration. It came to the end of its product lifespan where it was no longer supported."

The university, he added, was forced to make an upgrade so they can continue providing online services and support.

Ellucian Self-Service, however, will bring many advantages that WebAdvisor did not provide, Hayes said.

The program will supply better communication between advisors and students, and will allow advisors to create and share a sample plan to be accessed when scheduling courses.

For reference, Hayes described the previous process as trying to find "X", symbolizing one's degree, on a treasure map. Students had to go semester by semester for registration. Ellucian's course sample would avoid that, and load the plan automatically.

"Ellucian scans into the future and it drops those courses that you're going to need to take into slots for 2021, Fall and Spring of 2022 to Fall and Spring of 2023—it makes it a lot easier for you to then click on a lot of placeholders to register for classes as opposed to having to constantly consult and reference," he said.

The system also warns students if they have planned for a course in a semester that it is not being offered, or if they have selected a course that requires a preliminary they need to take.

A bonus feature has also been added within this program that will allow students to search for a specific course type when making their plan.

Rather than just searching for courses within Biology or Chemistry hoping to find a Natural Science core class, students would specifically be able to search "Core Natural Science" in order to find course types.

In addition to the updated format, Hayes noted Ellucian Self-Service also offers more guidance.

"With WebAdvisor, there was little to no guidance that was provided," he said. "When you go into Ellucian, you're going to see messages from your advisor, you're going to see a plan that's been loaded by your advisor and so there's going to be more help for you as you are using the tool."

For some, this may prove to be a difficult transition. In order to overcome these challenges, Hayes created a training campaign and videos for students and faculty to access.

[Read the rest on AU-Live.com](#)

Mask refusal on campus prompts online instruction

Professor moves courses after COVID-19 policy complaints

EVAN LAUX
News Editor

Dr. David Vanata recently moved all of his courses online following a student complaint about classroom coronavirus policies.

Vanata, a director of the Dietetic Program in Nutrition and Dietetics, and associate professor in the family and consumer sciences department, gave students the option at the beginning of the Fall and Spring semesters to not wear masks in his classroom.

Vanata's classroom policy was found in direct violation of AU's "Stronger Together, Safer Together" COVID-19 response guidelines. He declined to comment on the incident.

"It's always hard to read when there's people who don't agree with a practice or a policy," President Carlos Campo said. "What I would say is that I respect Dr. Vanata's right to be upset; and even to express his chagrin with not aligning with the AU policy. I don't know if he was unaware of the protocol at that time. But we can not allow any single professor to step out of the protocols because there's too much at stake."

Since students returned to campus in August of 2020, AU has required all employees, faculty and students to wear a mask within campus buildings and dorms, unless alone in their personal offices or rooms.

One student, a sophomore who wishes to be kept anonymous, said that only three of the total 16 students in one of his classes wore masks.

Statements and information given by the anonymous source were confirmed by two other students in the class.

"We walked in the first day and he came in without a mask," she said. "Dr. Vanata said that 'if we're going to get sick, we're going to get sick—a mask isn't going to stop it.'"



EVAN LAUX

Students and faculty are required under AU's "Stronger Together. Safer Together." COVID-19 policy to wear masks in all campus buildings, personal offices and rooms.

He said that he doesn't care if other people wear their mask but sort of encouraged people to take them off as it impeded on personal freedoms."

Vanata sent an email to his students on Jan. 30, 2021 explaining that a student of his had informed the College of Nursing & Health Sciences Dean that they had felt uncomfortable in his class. Following this explanation, he proceeded to move his courses online.

The final two lines of his email sparked criticism from students. It reads as follows:

"My goal while at AU has been to encourage you to think, and I cannot enforce a policy that removes your choices and individual freedoms. I may one day return to face to face teaching, when the university allows choice and liberties, and we replace Cowards with Patriots."

"I definitely think he made it seem politically rooted with the use of 'freedom,' 'cowards,' and 'patriots,'" the anonymous source said. "I really looked at it and thought it seemed extremely childlike, especially since the class is structured around body image and helping to

feel comfortable with yourself... and then to basically shame people who are feeling uncomfortable in the class by calling them cowards. It was in very poor taste."

According to Campo, this incident is an isolated event and no records of other faculty being insubordinate to COVID-19 guidelines has been recorded.

"I do know that as a community, we have made a commitment to individual freedom," Campo said. "But when your individual freedom begins to impinge on someone's safety, that's when you have to relinquish that freedom for the good of the community. That's what we're doing with these masks."

Despite Vanata having to move his courses to online learning, it is unknown whether he was penalized in any way for disregarding COVID-19 guidelines.

AU's Provost, Dr. Amiel Jarstfer, echoed the same sentiments as President Campo, that "from the beginning faculty had the choice on how they would do their courses," but that he would not want to comment on a specific faculty member's decisions.

"I think it ultimately can be a dog

whistle to other people that believe that wearing a mask is some form of an attack on personal liberties when it's really just a way to be courteous to those around us," the anonymous source said. "It can definitely encourage other people to start ignoring these guidelines that AU has set up."

Vanata teaches three classes within the Schar College of Nursing and Health Sciences, "Society's Influence on Body Image and Eating," "Nutrition Counseling Skills" and "Advanced Human Nutrition."

Another student, who also wishes to be left anonymous for fear of athletic punishment, agreed with Vanata's policy.

"He said on day one, if you do not agree with him allowing us to choose whether or not to wear a mask then to just drop the class and pick it up at a later date," the source said. "No one was forced to do anything. It should be a choice, AU's motto is that they teach us how to think and not what to think."

AU's pandemic guidelines can be found on their COVID-19 Dashboard, as well as up-to-date infection numbers and statistics.

Coburn Gallery's latest exhibition depicts human emotion



HANNAH WITTEMAN

Barbie Waters' "Spectrum" on display in the Coburn Art Gallery

HANNAH WITTEMAN
Reporter

From Feb. 12 to Feb. 21, the Coburn Gallery is hosting the Senior Art and Design Exhibition showcasing the work of recent graduate Barbie Waters.

Waters' work showcases the emotions of people and how everyone goes through similar feelings.

"What I was trying to express was that we all portray emotions externally... The external has an internal trigger or an internal memory," Waters said.

Some of the work produced by Waters depicts pieces coming out of the painting.

The piece called "Wonder" shows a young boy looking up with his mouth open and airplanes above him. To any onlooker, it looks as if he is surprised by the flying objects above him.

"That [the airplanes] was the trigger for that wonder... Those airplanes in the sky were surprising and wonderful to him," Waters said.

Another piece that is in the showcase signifies something different. Waters' piece "Grateful" shows a young girl smiling.

A piece which looks just like ordinary food on a plate represents a young Indian girl who was grateful for that plate of food.

"I had been to India five years ago and worked with an orphanage there," Waters said. "We gave out food to lepers and to kids and orphans and they were just so grateful."

When the coronavirus hit the United States, Waters was forced to bring her artwork home with her to finish for the rest of the semester, but art was there to help her get through the change.

"My home became my painting studio which was hard because I have four kids and two dogs—it was hard to focus," Waters said. "We were all grieving the things we lost. We were feeling so many things together... I was able to

work through a lot of stuff while painting."

During this show, Waters wants people to be able to see a little slice of how we share emotions no matter what is going on in the world or what others have going on in their personal lives.

Whether it was wonder, gratitude, or frustration, the human emotion is the theme of Waters' works and each illustration captures different outlooks.

"I think what I was trying to capture was just moments of emotional expression, Waters said. "Hopefully people can look at it and share that emotion."

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