



## All Online Students Experience New Classroom

With the start of 2014, all classrooms at AIU Online were upgraded and enhanced to provide students with the best possible in-class experience. Students who piloted the new classroom before January completed a survey to share their thoughts on the upgrade.

- 85% of one of the pilot groups agreed, “The virtual classroom provides all the tools I need to be a successful student.”
- When asked to provide thoughts or comments about the new classroom, here are what a few students had to say:
  - ◊ “This has been the best update yet!!! ... This has been a great advancement. The easiness of finding things all in one area is great!! Even the site is a little faster.” —Jessica
  - ◊ Love the new site! It is quicker and much easier to manger.—Liza



## Join the AIU Community!

You may be studying online, but that doesn't mean you're alone!

AIU has a Community located in the Virtual Campus where students can:

- Ask questions (And read answers to questions already asked!)
- Propose ideas
- Give praise to fellow students, staff, or instructors
- Mention problems
- Be in the know for AIU events and announcements

Have a question? AIU staff can provide the answer. Are you a new student? We have tips and FAQs for you. Join the AIU Community and be one of the 35,000 people already benefitting from it!

**Visit the Community Now:** Log into the Virtual Campus and click the icon shown to the right, and you'll be directed to a hub of information!



### Message from President Dr. George Miller

Dear Students,

2014 was an eventful year for AIU. Among the many exciting accomplishments were the following:

- The Illinois Board of Higher Education approved the launch of AIU's Bachelor of Healthcare Management degree program
- New math classes were created to better support students across our diverse programs.
- AIU Online launched it's **intellipath™** MBA—the first MBA program in the U.S. driven by adaptive learning technology.
- Our Career Services department launched a new **jobs portal** powered by the well-known CareerBuilder®.
- We upgraded the virtual classroom to include faster navigations, easier navigation, a refreshed look, and many new features.
- AIU was accepted for membership in the American College of Healthcare Executives' Higher Education Network. This does *not* confer programmatic accreditation of AIU's healthcare programs, but is a great accomplishment.
- 3,020 degrees were conferred across all of AIU's campuses from January through November 2014.

The faculty and staff of the University look forward to implementing additional improvements and programs in 2015 to better serve you. As always, thank you for choosing AIU. It's our pleasure to partner with you in the realization of your educational goals.

Best regards,  
George P. Miller, Ed.D.  
President and Chancellor



### This issue's Cover Photo Artist:

Kirk Sturgulewski, AIU Online BFA



## Looking to Improve Your Writing Skills? Visit the Learning Center!

These days, many of us are accustomed to informal written communication. Text messages and social media status updates have made abbreviations and incomplete sentences the norm. Leaving many out of practice with formal writing.

In higher education and in most workplaces, you are expected to write at a more advanced level. If you need help brushing up on your writing skills or have questions about the writing process, we have three different writing labs:

- The **Academic Writing and APA Lab** is designed to familiarize **undergraduate students** with common writing mistakes and introduce students to APA formatting. The lab facilitator conducts live chats and provides resources to help students learn more about common grammatical mistakes. This lab also covers APA basics and is designed for all Associate and Bachelor students.
- The **Graduate Writing and APA Lab** covers the expectations of graduate-level writing and how to incorporate APA into the composition of your papers. The lab facilitator holds live chats and provides resources to help **graduate students** better understand the writing process. This lab is designed for students in the MEd, MIT, and MBA programs.
- The **Student Writing Center** is a resource for **all students**. It's great if you would like one-on-one help with your writing. While the facilitators of the labs listed above are available to answer questions or provide resources, the Student Writing Center provides you with an opportunity to spend more individualized time on a particular topic or concept.

With all the labs listed above, the intent is to help you better understand and become more comfortable with academic writing. While lab facilitators do not review entire papers, they can answer specific questions you have about your writing. They can also help you practice a particular skill—for example, making sure you do not have any fragments or run-on sentences.

To find a lab, visit the AIU Online Learning Center, click Learning Labs, then look for the name of the lab in the **Recommended Labs** area. We hope to see you!

## AIU Online's Career Services Gives to Those in Need

At the end of 2014, the AIU Online Career Services team supported both Toys for Tots and Feed My Starving Children (FMSC).

The staff participated in its second annual volunteer event at FMSC, a nonprofit organization working to eliminate starvation in children throughout the world. Hair nets and food safety gloves were donned, while staff assembled food packets designed for simple preparation and maximum nutrition. Combined with other volunteers, a total of 22,464 meals were ready to be shipped.

In December, the staff also took part in a Secret Snowflake event, where a total of 14 toys were donated to Toys for Tots, pushing the team to the successful donation of its 100<sup>th</sup> toy!



## Meet the Faculty



For business faculty member Carol Sagers, her 35 years of experience is woven not only into her consulting firm, but into the courses she teaches. "I really think students need to understand how businesses operate from people who've actually worked in business," she said.

Sagers, who holds an MBA from Washington University in St. Louis and a B.S. in Advertising from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, also feels it's important to include your family in your passions. "My two sons ... ate whatever I was marketing and used whatever I was marketing."

Luckily for her students and sons, Sagers has served companies such as McDonald's, Kraft Foods, and L'Oreal's Soft Sheen Products. This experience brings a level of familiarity into her classes. "When I give examples from my work with McDonald's, (students) get it. When I mention brands like Oscar Meyer and Nabisco, they get it."

Sagers teaches part-time, as her full-time job is CHS Marketing Consultants, the firm she started in 1996. "My clients, with few exceptions, have all been people I've worked with. ... I don't market my company; I build relationships."

To provide balance to her career, she began teaching the introductory and marketing courses at AIU Online in 2003. She brings the lessons into her students' worlds by talking about their workplaces. "It's like I say in my marketing course, 'Same zoo, different animals.' The same skills and tools apply across all products and services."

Sagers' dedication to her firm, courses, and family earned her the privilege of being named a Working Mother of the Year by *Working Mother Magazine* in 2007. "There is a lot of serendipity in success, but you have to be open to receive it and flexible to look for opportunities."

She's been happily married to her college sweetheart for more than 31 years.

## Meet the Staff: Student Management



Your first class is a crucial time. You're kicking off your educational journey, and you want to do it with confidence. AIU

Online's Student Management Specialists are here to help you through your first course.

Stephen Spera is one of those specialists, and he has been with AIU since January 2006. He started as an Admissions Advisor, worked on many different teams, and then moved into his current role as Student Management Specialist for Masters students.

"My favorite part is working with the students. It's just amazing to watch them grow," he says. "Watch their confidence grow, their knowledge grow—it's great to see."

Stephen especially appreciates the updates he gets from former students of his who call to let him know how they're doing and what they're up to.

His advice for students is simple: "Ask, ask, ask," he says. "There are no bad questions."

Stephen majored in History at Elmhurst College, and then went on to law school at the University of Illinois. After he practiced law for 12 years, he decided it wasn't for him.

Today, he enjoys his job helping students. In his spare time, he reads a lot of history books and teaches the history of Christianity at his church for those going through confirmation. "I pack 2,000 years in 4 hours," he says. Any other free time is spent with his family and nieces and nephews.

### Show Your Artistic Talent!

Interested in designing the cover image for the next "Serious U News?" Submit your 8" wide x 1.75" tall JPEG file for consideration by **April 2** to [SeriousUNews@aiuonline.edu](mailto:SeriousUNews@aiuonline.edu)!

## First 2015 Start Date Announced for Serious Advantage Career Series

The first 2015 Serious Advantage Career Series start date is **February 9!**

**Think effective career searching involves little more than a resume and a job search engine? Think again!**

While those items certainly are integral to a career search, they only begin to scratch the surface of an effective search strategy. The Serious Advantage Career Series can help you piece together the rest through four progressive online courses, each lasting five weeks and covering a new set of topics.

We will walk you through each stage of your career search—from identifying the *right* career path based on your interests and needs to maintaining and developing strategies for long term success in an established career.

**Here is a brief overview of what you will learn in each course:**

- Course 1: Career Management Planning: Preparing for Your Career Search
- Course 2: Employers and Your Industry
- Course 3: Your Brand
- Course 4: Your Personal Career Development

If you are interested in participating or if you have questions, please send an email to [careerservices@aiuonline.edu](mailto:careerservices@aiuonline.edu) by Friday, February 6.

Please include your full name, student ID, degree program, phone number, and email address in your email to register.



## 6 Time Management Tips from Student Advising



Time management is often discussed as a skill that helps students be successful. But, what does it really mean? Time management looks different for everyone. It's about finding strategies that work for you and using a mix of them to help you be successful. Here are six tips to help you handle your personal time management.

1. **Use a calendar/organizer:** Being able to track and stay on top of everything in your life is a fundamental step in managing your time. Use something that you can take with you no matter where you go and will check every day. Consider a daily planner or a calendar/task list app on your smart phone.
2. **Be mindful:** Be aware of how much time are you spending on a task. Knowing this will help you determine if more efficient methods are needed and how much time you may need in the future when allocating your time.
3. **Ask for help:** You don't have to figure it out on your own. Contact your instructor or student advisor for tips, advice, and/or support.
4. **Be proactive:** Mark deadlines in your calendar/organizer at the start of class. Try to get work done early. Don't procrastinate—you never know what will come up tomorrow; life is full of surprises.
5. **Prioritize and learn to say no:** Balancing all your tasks is a constant struggle. Plan out when you will do everything that needs to get done by level of importance. Don't take on more than you can handle; eliminate, delegate, or delay things that are not as important.
6. **Search the internet:** Many tips are out there; find what meets your needs.

Do not delay developing your time management skills! **Make time now.**

**Questions or Comments?** [Click here to email us!](#)



## Conquer Your Goals in 2015 with Resolutions!

2015 is a fresh start! Consider some of these New Year's resolutions to help you get ahead with your goals:

**"I hope that in this year to come, you make mistakes. Because if you are making mistakes, then you are making new things, trying new things, learning, living, pushing yourself, changing yourself, changing your world. You're doing things you've never done before, and more importantly, you're doing something."**

NEIL GAIMAN, AUTHOR



### For your education

- Turn in homework one day before it's due.
- Volunteer to be the leader of a group project in at least half of my classes.
- Get more final grades of A's in my classes than last year.

### For your career

- Keep my resume fresh
- Be more active on LinkedIn
- Contact Career Services
- Get and stay educated on my industry
- More career resolutions!

Read more on [creating New Year's resolutions!](#)

## Meet AIU Students & Alumni



After attending the 2014 AIU Online graduation, three-time AIU alumnus David Gilligan shared this story of thanks, inspiration, and advice.

Hello, I would like to share my story of success with the help and professionalism of AIU. I'm currently 35, and I started my journey with AIU back in 2004 by obtaining my associate degree in business administration. I then moved on to the Bachelor of Business Administration in 2006, and finally, finished with my Master of Information Technology with a specialization in project management in 2013. I graduated with a 3.88 GPA and as a member of the Delta Delta Chapter of Epsilon Pi Tau IT honor society. Because of AIU, I'm now working as an IT Project Manager earning more than I was in my previous role. All these degrees kept me on the competitive edge in technology, business, and even leadership. All three of these programs were not easy and were very challenging but carried many rewards after completing each one. While in these programs, you must stay motivated at all times and read and research everything. It's all about what you put into your education as to what you will get out of it. I firmly believe AIU helped me achieve all my dreams and milestones. I have gained a lot of real-world working skills from AIU, from project management to Java programming to working on real-life projects with people from all over the United States; it's because of this that I'm now seeing career success. Obviously, I had to put in the work and studies, but it's because of AIU's curriculum that I received the knowledge that is highly sought in today's working world. If you put in 100% as I did, you too will walk that stage and experience AIU's commencement like I had the luxury of experiencing. The 2014 Chicago Navy Pier commencement was truly amazing! It was so surreal and yes, I even cried. My family, friends and children got to experience this as well. In the end, never say never and never give up, and you will be able to overcome anything the world throws at you. Thank you, AIU!

## Motivation Corner

Get an extra dose of motivation with this story from [AIU Graduate Adelia Davis](#), who completed her Master of Business Administration while continuing to run her own business!



## Be in the Know: Drug & Alcohol Abuse Prevention

Drug abuse can affect one's physical and emotional health and social life. If you or someone you know has the following warning signs, seek help right away. Students seeking treatment for a substance abuse problem may contact the Campus President's Office. Confidentiality will be maintained.

Students may also contact the following national organizations:

- The Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Hotline: 1-800-ALCOHOL (1-800-252-6465)
- National Drug Abuse Helpline: 1-866-874-4553
- The National Institute on Drug Abuse Treatment Referral Hotline: 1-800-662-HELP (4357)
- AI-Anon for Families of Alcoholics: 1-800-344-2666



**Find more information:** On the Virtual Campus, under the "Resources" tab, under "Policies & Procedures," click the "Drug & Alcohol Prevention" link.

AIU cannot guarantee employment or salary. Not all programs are available to residents of all states. Find employment rates, financial obligations and other disclosures at [www.aiuniv.edu/disclosures](http://www.aiuniv.edu/disclosures)