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NEWSLETTER

# Collaboration With Library to Offer New Resources to Online Students

An exciting and useful resource for SHSU's online students is on its way to Blackboard in the fall. As a result of a collaboration between the Newton Gresham Library and SHSU Online, students will soon find a new addition at the top of the page when they log in to Blackboard—a tab that will bring them to a Library Community Page. On the page, students will have access to a wealth of valuable information, including research guides which are custom-tailored to their major.

Blackboard already identifies students by major when they sign in, and this new project aims to take advantage of that capability to empower students with the tools they need to succeed. The new page will enable SHSU Online to take the library's research guides, which are thoughtfully constructed by individual subject librarians in coordination with faculty, and deliver them directly into the hands of the students who need them the most. The guides contain important reference works, explain how to go about finding other books in the library, and have links to the databases that are most useful for finding journal articles pertinent to each student's interests.

Erin Cassidy, the Newton Gresham Library's Web Services Librarian, has noticed that professors who have already incorporated these resources into their online courses continually request them semester after semester. Cassidy, who is collaborating closely with SHSU Online to bring the Library Community Page to

fruition, says the best thing about the new page is that it will meet online students at their point of need by having these resources featured prominently on Blackboard. She explains, "It's a one-stop-shop that will show students the Library's hours of operation, explain how to get in touch with the library with any questions they might have, and provide them with invaluable research guides."

Ruth Cubas, Director of Online Course Development at SHSU Online, says the project is a part of SHSU Online's larger commitment to providing students with the immediate, online availability of academic resources they can use to support their learning experience. Cubas notes, "We believe that by providing seamless access to academic resources, such as historical or literary documents, maps, case studies, photos, etc., we can support the wonderful academic efforts our professors engage in when working dedicatedly to create efficacious online learning environments."

Project designer Jay Wilson, an Instructional Designer at SHSU Online with a background in Library Science herself, is also passionate about the project. "We want to give the library more of a presence on Blackboard, and this Community Page will do that." Wilson's coworker and fellow Instructional Designer Ray Scheel agrees, and he has already been incorporating research guides into individual online courses, most recently for the new College of Health Sciences. Scheel says the feedback has been extremely positive.

Ruth Cubas says the collaboration with the library just makes sense, and she is looking forward to rolling the project out in the fall. "We couldn't be more pleased to partner with the Newton Gresham Library to create an intuitive point of access for our learners within Blackboard, a place they already frequent as part of their academic process." Students can look for the new Library Community Page to arrive on Blackboard in Fall 2014.

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