Bracken Business Communications Clinic

PUNCTUATION

THE SEMI-COLON (;)

The semi-colon consists of a comma and a period *;* . Therefore, the semi-colon indicates a full stop and, at the same time, a connection to what follows. The semi-colon connects elements that have equal grammatical status.

A semi-colon signals the end of an independent clause (a clause that stands on its own) and links it to what follows. The semi-colon indicates the writer will add to or support his or her statement by linking it to what follows.

Use a semi-colon

- to link items in a series or phrases in a series, especially if the phrases contain internal punctuation, such as a comma.
  e.g., Maria made a peanut butter sandwich; packed it in her lunchbox; and ate it later at school during her lunchtime, which was at noon.

- to connect <u>related </u>independent clauses that are <u>not</u> joined by a conjunction (*and, but, or*, *nor, yet, so*, *for*). If the clauses are not closely related, use a period and make two sentences.
  e.g., The BBCC is a valuable resource for the College of Business; the coaches there help students with writing, presentations, and resumes.

- to link two independent clauses when a transitional expression or a conjunctive adverb (*for example; in fact; on the contrary*; *in addition; however; therefore;* etc.) introduces the second clause.
  e.g., The BBCC in the College of Business offers valuable services; for example, it helps students with brainstorming, organizing ideas, and writing strong papers.

Do <u>not</u> use a semi-colon

- to introduce a list of items.
  e.g., The ingredients for the soup included; tomatoes, celery, carrots,
      and zucchini. <<u>Incorrect</u>
      The ingredients for the soup included tomatoes, celery, carrots,
      and zucchini. <<u>Correct</u>

- to link a dependent clause (a clause that cannot stand on its own) and its main clause.
  e.g., No one ate the rich dessert; even though it looked delicious. < <u>Incorrect</u>
  No one ate the rich dessert, even though it looked delicious. < <u>Correct</u>