



“Big Changes in Little Packages”
---Integrating Academic and Student Life Initiatives

~Harriett E. Hayes, Associate Professor of Sociology
~Crystal R. Lynn, Assistant Dean of Students
~Jonathan D. Wiley, Senior—Orientation Leader



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The College Mission

- To Develop the “Whole Person”
- The Liberal Arts
- A Four Year Program

Residential College (20% commuters)

- 1,500 enrollment
- 543 entering students (including transfers) in 2008-09



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The Personal Development Portfolio

- **Personal:** The student is transforming into an adult and moving into the world in unique ways.
- **Development:** The college experience assumes an intellectual journey has begun which will be integrated with growth in co-curricular experiences.
- **Portfolio:** Intentional documentation illustrates the student’s growth and outlines the plan for where he/she intends to go next.



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Applying Critical Reflection to Personal Development

- **PDP 150: The Introduction to the Liberal Arts**
Using critical reflection as the underpinning of a liberal education, a vehicle for lifelong learning, and a pathway to human freedom.
- **Critical Reflection of the Whole Person**
The Four Dimensions of PDP
 - Intellectual Growth and Discovery
 - Citizenship and Community Responsibility
 - Emotional Maturation and Physical Health
 - Ethical and Spiritual Growth

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Freshman to Senior Year

There are several points at which a student's participation in the program receives a grade:

- **PDP 150: Personal Development and the Liberal Arts.** A three credit course (graded A through F) for freshman and transfer students (who are in separate sections).
- **PDP 200/300: Sophomore/Junior Portfolios.** Each is a non-credit experience graded on an S/U basis by the student's advisor. Due to the advisor at the end of each fall semester.
- **PDP 450: Senior Portfolio.** A one credit course graded on an A through F basis by faculty members from outside the student's major department. This is a graduation requirement.

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Transformative Education is the Heart of the Liberal Arts

- PDP is the vehicle for "transformative education."
- Preparation Prepares the student for non-academic as well as academic aspects of college life.
- Reflection is the "tool" for transformative development.
- Integration articulates connections at the curricular and co-curricular levels.
- Planning ensures the student is conscious of their choices.

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Freshman to Senior Year "The Value-Added"

- "Passive consumer" → "Active agent"
- Becoming "fluent" about personal development.


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PDP's History

- The Inception of the PDP Program.
- The Faculty "buy-in"—from transition program to academic course work.
- Loss of Student Life collaboration in program design with the move to a 3-credit course.
- From a "Compliance Model" to a "Reflection Process."


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Tips for Building Bridges

- Academic Affairs & Student life partnership at FYE Conference 2008.
- Finding allies among faculty and athletic staff.
- "The Passport Initiative" and FYE listserv.
- Reallocating (not increasing!) funds.


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Assessing Our Success

- Was the Passport and schedule useful?
87.8% yes.
- Did you attend events you would not have ordinarily attended because of the passport?
93.5% yes.
- Out of 262 responses only six asked to delete the passport from the program.
- Retention rates for first six weeks of classes:
2008-09 (2 students); 2007-08 (8 students).

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Reflection Samples

- “I thought the passport was a good idea because [sic] it helped you get to know new people. It also helped to get to know the campus better. I also thought it was a bad idea because I didn’t get to party as much as I wanted to at [University X] where I would have met many girls.”

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Assignment Responses

- “I thought the passport was a good idea because [sic] it helped you get to know new people. It also helped to get to know the campus better. I also thought it was a bad idea because I didn’t get to party as much as I wanted to at [University X] where I would have met many girls.”

Where? How? When?

To have a good reflection you need to show “process”—such as was, am and will be. You need to support your statements and avoid generalizations.

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Teaching the "Art" of Critical Reflection

- Reflection is a process common to most academic disciplines, though discussed in different ways using different language. In brief, reflection involves these four steps:
 - Explanation** (preliminary examination)
 - Exploration** (pre-assessment or self-assessment)
 - Analysis** (using conjecture, thesis, hypothesis, etc.)
 - Synthesis** (re-examination or post-assessment)


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Where We Note Success

- Attendance at **ALL** events was 500 persons or more (out of an entering class of 543).
- Better acceptance between Orientation Leaders and faculty.
- Clarity of expectations based on partnerships between Academic Affairs and Student Life.
- Full "buy in" from faculty (and coaches) due to "reflection" component as early course assignment.


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Challenges that Remain

- Better "Orientation" & "Passport" system for transfers.
- Sensitivity to commuter's schedules.
- New student requests for "down time."


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