Learning From Each Other: A Discussion About Building Effective Experiential Programming Into The Curriculum

24TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE

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Learning From Each Other: A Discussion About Building Effective Experiential Programming Into The Curriculum

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To achieve a major goal of SUU’s new Academic Road Map, the committee’s charge is to design and implement an Experiential Education Requirement (EER) to partially fulfill the desired outcomes of Strategic Initiative #3, *Develop High Impact Educational Programs and Practices*
EE Committee Goals

- Create EE program for implementation in Fall 2011
- Accommodate a wide range of programs and students while not adding time to graduation
- Aim for student initiated, faculty supported learning opportunities
- Promote existing experiential education programs so they become more visible and interconnected
- Develop more opportunities for experiential learning
- Highlight experiential learning as a defining feature of an SUU education
After an extensive search of experiential programs in higher education, the following program models and standards of practice had the largest impact on our development:

- **Elon University**:
- **University of Cincinnati’s Honor’s Program**:
- **Purdue University Calumet**:
## Best Practices and Guiding Theory

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<tr>
<th>NSEE Standards of Practice</th>
<th>SUU’s EER Adoption of Standards for Practice</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Intention</strong>: Learning experiences must be intentional on the part of the learner and the facilitator</td>
<td>Pre-enrollment efforts, UNIV 1010 will be designed to create an intentional EER process.</td>
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<td><strong>Preparedness and Planning</strong>: Students must plan and prepare their experiences to reach a higher level</td>
<td>UNIV 3925 guides students to plan and prepare for their experiences.</td>
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<td><strong>Authenticity</strong>: Experiences must be authentic, meaning a real world context</td>
<td>Experiences must take place in a real world context.</td>
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<td><strong>Reflection</strong>: Taking the time to reflect transforms simple experience to a learning experience</td>
<td>UNIV 4925 is designed to guide students through a formal and rigorous reflection process.</td>
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<td><strong>Orientation and Training</strong>: Students and facilitators must be prepared for the experience and must have the training and skills to be successful in the experience’s context.</td>
<td>Again, the context for the experience and its role in an SUU experience will be given in pre-enrollment efforts, UNIV 1010, and UNIV 3925.</td>
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<td><strong>Monitoring and Continuous Improvement</strong>: A feedback loop is necessary for the student and their facilitator to ensure the experience provides a rich learning opportunity</td>
<td>Students will work with faculty, center staff, other university staff, and approved community mentors for feedback.</td>
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<td><strong>Assessment and Evaluation</strong>: Outcomes and processes should be systematically documented with regard to initial intentions and quality outcomes.</td>
<td>UNIV 4925 is designed to tie experience outcomes back to initial intentions. Students will be evaluated.</td>
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<td><strong>Acknowledgment</strong>: Culminating documentation and celebration of learning and impact help provide closure and sustainability to the experience</td>
<td>Center forums will offer students acknowledgement in a celebration of learning ending in an e portfolio and a public presentation of experiences.</td>
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Best Practices and Guiding Theory

- Kolb’s Experiential Education Learning Cycle & SUU’s EER

Adapted from Uptown, 2010
Top 10 Reasons to Build an EER @ SUU

1. SUU students will enjoy deeper learning experiences and broader exposure to all that SUU offers, and they will have an advantage over other students in getting jobs, being accepted to graduate schools, and fulfilling their roles as citizens.

2. Many SUU faculty, staff, and students want to work at a "better" university; we have now moved to Tier 1 of Western public comprehensive institutions (U.S. News) and we need to build and maintain high-quality programs.

3. Combined with the Academic Roadmap, the EER program will garner positive attention and help in raising funds, which could lead to enhanced academic budgets.
4. The EER will bring coherence, visibility, and intentionality to many things that SUU students, staff, and faculty already do (e.g., service, service-learning, research, study abroad, outdoor programs, creative work, leadership). The EER will showcase SUU’s strengths and create stronger connections on, across, and off campus.

5. The EER will enhance student learning without extending time toward graduation.

6. The 120 credit hour framework has the flexibility to include the EER program.
7. The five Engagement Centers/Tracks will assume the workload of overseeing the EER program while working closely with cooperative departments and colleagues.

8. The five Engagement Centers/Tracks will promote inter- and multi-disciplinary approaches that break down staid curricula and disciplinary boundaries.

9. SUU’s EER plan draws upon a body of research and established “best practices”.

10. The EER fulfills the Academic Roadmap 2010-2013, which upholds our institutional mission, vision, and values and was approved by the Trustees.
The Experiential Education Program enhances personal, academic, and professional growth by promoting opportunities for engaged and active learning. Experiential learning is a student-centered process that is relevant, authentic, and potentially transformative. These deliberate learning opportunities will be facilitated through SUU’s five Engagement Centers: Community, Creativity and Innovation, Global, Leadership, & Outdoor.
Southern Utah University, as our founders envisioned, is a vibrant teaching and learning community inspired by its unique natural surroundings. At Utah’s designated public liberal arts and sciences university, high-achieving students engage in a personalized and rigorous experiential education empowering them to be productive citizens, socially responsible leaders and lifelong learners.

*Pending Board of Trustee Approval
EER Learning Outcomes

The EER program provides academic fidelity to the Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP) “Essential Learning Outcomes” as articulated by the Association of American Colleges and Universities. Students completing the EER should gain:

• Focused engagement with human cultures and the physical and natural world
• Practiced intellectual and physical skills
• Anchored personal and social responsibility
• Demonstrated integrative and applied learning
Visual of EE at SUU
EER Delivery & Completion Phases

- Phase 1 – Exploration and Fact Finding
  - **UNIV 1010, Introduction to Experiential Education (P/F)**
    - Designed to inform and excite students about integrating learning with real-world experiences
    - University College and Engagement Centers to provide assistance, including online instruction and other materials
    - Utilizes Canvas LMS and Optimal Resume Electronic Portfolios

- Phase 2 – Organizing and Preparing
  - **UNIV 3925, EER Proposal (P/F, Prerequisite: UNIV 1010)**
    - Guides students through process of creating a proposal
    - Completion of workshop leads to declaration of EER track
    - Subject to approval by at least one Engagement Center
    - Utilizes Canvas LMS and Optimal Resume Electronic Portfolios
### EER Delivery & Completion Phases

- **Phase 3 – Formal Engagement**
  - Credit or non-credit bearing activity as approved by at least one Engagement Center
  - May be done any time between completing proposal phase and enrolling in final phase
  - Remember: “Student initiated, faculty supported”

- **Phase 4 – Post-Activity Work**
  - UNIV 4925, *Reflection & Synthesis* (P/F, Prerequisite: UNIV 3925)
    - National best practices evidence indicates that this component is necessary for effective experiential education programming
    - Engagement Centers will publicize and celebrate students’ work
    - Students will effectively document and reflect upon their learning
    - Utilizes Canvas LMS and Optimal Resume Electronic Portfolios

- **Sequential courses can be completed any time prior to graduation**
EER Key Performance Indicators

- Students successfully navigate each of the three EER courses with a high pass rate
- Students produce high-quality proposals and reflection documents that meet established academic rigor
- Students participate in experiences that are products of their proposals, planning, and execution and meet established standards for completion
- Note: suggestions welcome about improving the KPI’s and strengthening the program
Timeline for EER Implementation

- Fall 2009 – SWOT Analysis
- Spring 2010 – Academic Planning Steering Committee
- Spring 2010 – Experiential Education Task Force (White Paper)
- Summer 2010 – Organized Experiential Education Committee
- Summer 2010 – Created five EE centers
- Fall 2010 – Curriculum and program development
- Spring 2011 – Unveiled to campus administrative units
- Spring – Developed marketing plan
- Spring – Began meeting with academic departments and other campus constituents
- Spring – Hired first full-time director for EE Center
- Summer 2011 – Launched/Piloted curriculum
- Fall 2011 – Start 1500 students in program
Timeline for EE Implementation

- **Summer 2011:**
  - Pilot UNIV 1010 with Canvas and Optimal Resume
  - Provide ample EER information for all new students
- **Fall 2011:**
  - Begin UNIV 1010 with all new students
  - Complete course development for UNIV 3925
  - Meet with all departments & programs; host open forums
- **Spring 2012:**
  - Allow registration in UNIV 3925
  - Complete course development for UNIV 4925
  - Host open forums and seek other feedback
Selected References

Round Table Discussion

- Initial Thoughts about SUU’s model?
- Does your institution promote experiential learning and is it valued on campus?
- How have you seen Experiential Education enhance learning on your campuses?
- What resources are needed to build a program on your campus?
- What expertise do you have with Experiential Learning?
- What would you like to learn from each other?