Using ePortfolios to Develop a Mentor Network for First Year Students

EPORFTOLIOS AND THE AMERICAN DREAM:
Empowering Students to Take Ownership of Their Futures
Saturday, January 27, 2018
Where We’re Going

1. ePortfolios at Muhlenberg
2. Mentor Network Initiative
3. Professional Identity Course
4. Career Pathway ePortfolio Assignment
5. Assessment Summary & Lessons Learned
6. Collective Reflection
ePortfolios at Muhlenberg

Capstone Senior Experiences
- Student Teaching, Education
- Business Program
- Media & Communication
- Studio Art Senior Seminar
- Dance

First-Year Seminars

Student-Faculty Research Partnerships

Learning Communities
- Linked Courses in General Education

Service Learning Courses
- Psychology & Honors Program

Undergraduate Research
- Neuroscience Research Lab
Muhlenberg Network Initiative

- ePortfolios at Muhlenberg
- Mentor Network Initiative & Professional Identity Course
- Career Pathway ePortfolio assignment
- Assessment Summary & Lessons Learned
Professional Identity & Networking

Advances the mission of the College by supporting first-year students as they:

• **Reflect** on personal strengths, goals, and areas for improvement.

• **Develop** their emerging professional identities through experiential learning, research, and opportunities to learn from other professional experiences and journeys.

• **Build and sustain** meaningful connections with alumni, parents, faculty and staff.

• **Deepen** their understanding of themselves as liberal arts and lifelong learners.
Course Framework

Student Interest & Course Application

Experiential & Interconnection Course Design

Personal & Professional Development

Career Pathway ePortfolio Project
Course Focus

Identify personal strengths, passions, and areas for growth and improvement

Reflect on how skills, interests, and passions align with a variety of academic majors, minors, and career fields

Develop understanding and awareness of professional presence, social media responsibility, and strategies for leveraging online platforms for professional growth

Learn how to navigate networking conversations with peers, alumni, and external professionals
The Career Pathways ePortfolio project is the culminating piece of the course, as well as the starting point for students to begin making their accomplishments, educational studies, and professional journey visible. The purpose of this project is both to allow students to see their own progress and share it with others, but also reflect on steps to be taken throughout the rest of their time at Muhlenberg.

The Career Pathway ePortfolio contains these core areas:

- **About Me/Career Autobiography**
- **Resume & LinkedIn**
- **Career Interests & Research**
- **Informational Interviews**
- **Experience & Community Service**
- **Action Plan & Future Goals**
RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Student Achievement Freddy Award

As a senior at Northampton Area High School I won a Freddy Award for Student Achievement from The Express-Times, Lehigh Valley Live. I was eligible for this award due to my participation in my high school's musical as a member of the pit band and the materials I sent in when applying. This included responses to questions from The Express-Times, Lehigh Valley Live, a list of extracurricular activities and community service, a copy of my transcript, and samples of my writings for my high school newspaper. The award included a summer internship at The Express-Times, Lehigh Valley Live where I worked as a reporter. I wrote over 30 articles during this time, all of which were published on lehighvalleylive.com and many of which were also published in The Express-Times. In gathering information and following up on sources I spoke to state and local officials, police
Student Assessment Results

Response Rate: 74%

98% Agree that through participation in this course they have a better understanding of their own professional strengths and passions

95% Agree that this course has helped them have a clearer understanding of areas for professional improvement and growth

94% Agree this course helped them reflect on how skills, interests, and passions align with specific career fields

97% Agree taking this course led to more confidence in ability to network & communicate with professionals in my field of interest

93% Agree participation in this course they are more prepared to take advantage of future professional opportunities
"I found the whole process of creating an ePortfolio extremely helpful with other tasks I may have to accomplish in the future. Also, the creation of a LinkedIn and The Muhlenberg Network account will become extremely crucial in the future."

"I think the informational interviews were extremely beneficial because I was able to connect with alumni in my field. This is something I would have been too shy to try before, so I'm glad I had the opportunity to get out of my comfort zone."

"I loved how we actually got the ability to create a website that has everything that a potential employer can use to know more about me. In addition, I was glad that I was introduced to the Muhlenberg Network and other excellent resources."

"I thought this course was so useful for any questions I had about finding internships and how to do any of that resume and cover letter professional stuff. I think this class was the best decision I made for my first semester at Muhlenberg."
Lessons Learned

ePortfolio assignment is driving students to both deeply understand and make visible their personal and professional strengths, successes, and future goals.

Helping students understand connection between their own personal values and the values held within their fields of interest.

High expectations creates momentum
• Internships and additional connections

Self-authorship and agency
Looking Forward

On your campus where could ePortfolios be integrated into first-year experiences to support self-reflection and professional development?
Thank You & Questions