Enhancing and Integrating Whole Student Learning and Engagement Through a Comprehensive Student Portfolio Program

A Proposed QEP Topic
Huston-Tillotson University
A Comprehensive Student Portfolio

- Directly contributes to student learning,
  - defined here broadly as growth in skills, critical thinking and knowledge that the university’s academic and student life curricula aim to foster, within the context of an individual student’s whole experience, interests and life goals;
  - Begins with first enrollment and continues to graduation (and possibly beyond);
  - Encourages students to be active learners
A Comprehensive Student Portfolio

Addresses the University’s strategic plan:

- **Goal IV:** The University will create and maintain innovative student programs to foster development of the whole person to prepare students for positions of leadership in the community, the workplace, and the world.
A Comprehensive Student Portfolio

- Supports the institution’s historic mission and current mission statement
  - Values the student as a whole person
  - Enhances student learning
  - Integrates student learning with professional development
A Comprehensive Student Portfolio

- Addresses student retention, learning & engagement

- 52% of HT students drop out after the 1st year
- 4% of HT students graduate in 4 years (2005)
The red bar is HT, the green bars are other Texas HBCU’s

HBCU’s Graduation Rates

http://www.blackexcel.org/grad-rts.htm
A Comprehensive Student Portfolio

- Documents student learning
- a formative and summative assessment

- Contributes to a “culture of evidence”
  - Collects evidence of student learning
    - Collects evidence of teaching and curriculum effectiveness
  - Collects evidence of student experience
    - Collects evidence of campus life, mentoring, counseling and advising effectiveness
  - Collects evidence of student engagement
    - Collects evidence of institutional effectiveness
A Comprehensive Student Portfolio

- Focuses and facilitates student interaction with faculty, staff and administration, and all in support of student learning:
  - Requires students and teachers to interact in its development;
  - Requires student and staff to interact in its development;
  - Requires students to use critical thinking in its development;
  - Requires students to reflect on their own learning;
  - Requires the institution to support student learning with effective and efficient technology, facilities, activities and other resources.
A Comprehensive Student Portfolio

- Acculturates to college-life, provides strategies for academic and professional success, and creates community for students
  - Who are first generation
  - Who are non-traditional (over half)
  - Who enter academically challenged
  - Who live off-campus
  - Who are enrolled in an academic program (100%)
  - Who need self-marketing strategies and materials (100%)
What information is missing?
A Comprehensive Student Portfolio

- Is a campus-wide initiative
- Involves students
- Involves faculty
- Involves staff
  - Student support staff
  - Technology staff
  - Facilities staff
  - Administrative staff
A Comprehensive Student Portfolio

- Facilitates COMMUNICATION between students, faculty and staff

- Centralizes the collection of non-confidential student profile information

- Student portfolio development requires communication among and is helpful to all offices serving students
A Comprehensive Student Portfolio

- Facilitates STUDENT ENGAGEMENT in their own learning experiences
  - Students evaluate and select evidence from their learning experiences
  - Students reflect consciously on their own learning and make connections among experiences and fields of knowledge
  - Students are made aware of their progress, development, strengths and needs
Student Engagement indicated by Student Desires

Criteria to Show Student Involvement in Their Education, 2006 and 2007

Categories from Senior Survey
A Comprehensive Student Portfolio

- Facilitates EFFECTIVE TEACHING
  - Encourages instructors to recognize evidence of learning in a variety of forms
  - Encourages instructors to engage actively with students on course assignments
  - Encourages academic support staff to engage actively with students on course assignments
  - Encourages faculty and staff to refresh knowledge in current teaching strategies and assessments.
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- Facilitates STUDENT MENTORING, TUTORING and INTERVENTION
- Provides samples of student work from a variety of courses, giving a fuller picture
- Provides a sampling of student work and interests that can be accessed at multiple points in the student’s program
- Profiles the student as a whole person.
A Comprehensive Student Portfolio

- Supports STUDENT GRADUATE, CAREER AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
  - Facilitates the creation of showcase portfolios
  - Facilitates the creation of resumes
  - Facilitates the composition of personal statements
  - Encourages students to connect academic and other learning experiences as professional development
Focuses INSTITUTIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE on student learning support

- Requires cross-campus support and communication
- Requires technology support
  - Classrooms with appropriate technology
  - Instruction using and on using technology
  - Technology resources for portfolio maintenance
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Impacts STUDENT RETENTION

- By increasing student engagement
- By enhancing student learning
- By supporting faculty and staff mentoring, advising and instruction
- By building a community that acknowledges each individual student
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- Builds on current HT initiatives
- Courses at HT use portfolios
- Majors at HT use portfolios
- Current initiative to portfolio assessment of the core curriculum and of student writing
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- Is a demonstrated model for improving student learning, engagement and retention
  - HT Survey Results on Portfolio-use
    - Students pro-portfolio
    - Faculty pro-portfolio
    - Student support staff pro-portfolio
  - Existing models in higher education
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- Is a demonstrated model for student, program, and institutional assessment

- Portland State University Portfolio Project
- Spelman College-wide SpEL.Folio
- Florida State University Career Portfolio
- Bowling Green State University - retention rise to 79.9%
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- Is a demonstrated model for student, program, and institutional marketing and advancement, and so presents
  - Opportunities to increase community interaction
  - Opportunities to increase funding and other resources
  - Opportunities to promote and present HT strengths
  - Opportunities to recruit students to HT programs

What interests students? Student stories.
CSP as a QEP Topic

- Focuses on Student Learning
- Fosters campus-wide involvement & communication
- Responds to demonstrated needs
- Corresponds to HT’s Mission
- Addresses HT’s Strategic Plan Goals
- Builds on current initiatives and interests
- Can be implemented over 10 years
- Based in current research and demonstrated models for student success
- Uses and focuses current resources
- Requires reasonable financial outlay
CSP Topic Team

- Dr. Katherine Durham Oldmixon, topic team leader
  - Associate Professor of English and Director of the Writing Program
- Dr. Kathy Schwab
  - Professor of Biology
- Dr. Paul Anaejionu
  - Professor of Political Science
- Mr. Paul Leverington
  - Director of Graduate, Career and Professional Development
- Ms. Marie Harris
  - Coordinator of Supplemental Instruction and Student Advising
A Comprehensive Student Portfolio

- Includes life learning experiences
  - Family life
  - Religious life
  - Hobbies and special interests
  - Art and culture
    - Favorite books, movies, music, art
  - Work life
A Comprehensive Student Portfolio

- Includes samples of academic work of different types and from a wide variety of courses, such as
  - Writing
  - Research findings
  - Critical inquiry and problem solving
  - Performance
  - Presentations
  - Teamwork
  - Exams
  - Use of Technology
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- Includes extracurricular learning experiences
  - Campus leadership roles
  - Participation in campus organizations
  - Athletics
  - Community service
  - Civic engagement