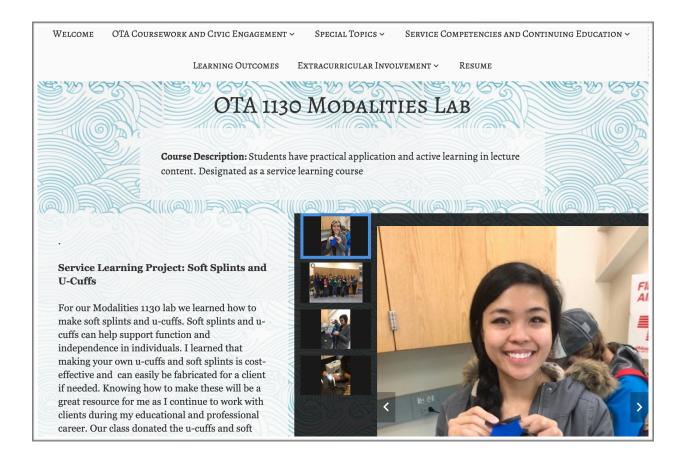# ePortfolio Action Plan

## *Responding to the ePortfolio Program Review*



## Emily Dibble, ePortfolio Coordinator

## David Hubert, Associate Provost

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JASON C. WARHURST

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Jason's ePortfolio SLCC

## Welcome!

Welcome to my ePortfolio, while navigating through this site, you will get to know a little bit about me, my educational goals and my hobbies and interests. You will find samples of my coursework, and what I have improved on through diligent study and practice while studying at Salt Lake Community College. You will be able to review my short term and long term goals, as well as learn a little about me outside of school.  Please feel free to leave feedback and suggestions on how I can improve this site.

# Background

Salt Lake Community College (SLCC) first began piloting ePortfolios in the classroom thanks to a Utah System of Higher Education technology grant secured by Helen Cox in 2005. Faculty in disciplines as varied as Political Science, Math, English, and GeoSciences piloted various ePortfolio platforms and pedagogies in their courses. At around the same time, SLCC was figuring out how to respond to a 2004 Northwest Commission of Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) visit that recommended SLCC integrate and assess its General Education program. The ePortfolio pilot and the response to NWCCU merged in 2008, as faculty in the pilot had conversations with staff and administrators. This convergence was reflected in the November 2, 2008 "Thinking Out Loud" memo, which

> Faculty piloting ePortfolio in the early years included Suzanne Mozdy, Adam Dastrup, Jason Pickavance, David Hubert, Lisa Bickmore, Brenda Lyman, Deidre Tyler, Lois Oestreich, Nathan Cole, Elisa Stone, Laryssa Waldron, Mary Jane Keleher, Jennifer Courtney, and Brittany Stephenson.

contained the first mention of "signature assignments" and clearly stated the primacy of pedagogical benefits of ePortfolios over their assessment uses. The Dean of General and Developmental Education worked with this group to develop two ePortfolio proposals— one making ePortfolio a graduation requirement and one that did not. The latter was originally put forward to the governance committees in March of 2009 and later accompanied by the notorious non-branded presentation. The proposal was fully debated and passed the General Education Committee, the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee, and the Faculty Senate by the spring of 2010. SLCC's ePortfolio requirement in our General Education program went live in the summer of 2010.

SLCC's ePortfolio initiative has become more sophisticated and professionalized in the intervening nine years. At the outset, David Hubert was the sole support person, and he set up informational sites, made tutorials and demo portfolios, talked with departments about implementing the requirement, worked with IT to set up the Banner class roll integration, and secured SLCC's participation in the national Connect to Learning project that studied ePortfolio implementation at 24 colleges and universities around the country. Kati Lewis came on board at the end of the first summer as the our ePortfolio Coordinator. Among other accomplishments, she set up our first ePortfolio support lab,

hired our first part-time lab specialists, and led our 4-year participation in the Connect to Learning project. After 5 years, Lewis secured a tenure-track English faculty position, and Emily Dibble became the second ePortfolio Coordinator. She hired Victoria Harding as a full-time specialist, expanded the ePortfolio labs, and developed what is undoubtedly one of the best ePortfolio support systems in the country.

Over the years, we have been able to publish a number of works about our ePortfolio initiative. These include:

- Deidre Tyler and Emily Dibble, "Authentic Assessment: Mining ePortfolio Assessment at Salt Lake Community College," *What Works in Assessment*. Forthcoming summer of 2019 by New Directions for Community Colleges.
- David Hubert and Emily Dibble, "ePortfolio as a Capstone-in-Progress: Reflective Pedagogy, Faculty-Centric Processes, and Evidence of Impact," in Bret Eynon and Laura Gambino, *Catalyst in Action. Case Studies in High-Impact ePortfolio Practice*. Stylus, 2018. Here.
- Kati Lewis, "Collaborative Self-Authorship in Sophomore Writing Classes," in Bret Eynon and Laura Gambino, *High-Impact ePortfolio Practice. A Catalyst for Student, Faculty, and Institutional Learning*. Stylus, 2017. Here.
- David Hubert, Jason Pickavance, and Amanda Hyberger, "Reflective E-portfolios: One HIP to Rule Them All?" *Peer Review*. 17(4) 2015. Here.
- David Hubert and Kati Lewis, "(Re)inventing Education: ePortfolio as a General Education Requirement at Salt Lake Community College," in *Learning by Doing*. Abu Dhabi: HCT Press.
- David Hubert and Kati Lewis, "A Framework for General Education Assessment: Assessing Information Literacy and Quantitative Literacy with ePortfolios," *International Journal of ePortfolio*. 4(1): 2014. Here.
- David Hubert "E-Portfolios in Student Roadmaps at Salt Lake Community College," *Peer Review*. Spring 2013. 25-26. Here.

Because of these publications and numerous presentations at national conferences and institutes, we receive about one request per month for phone or in-person consultation with other institutions that either have, or are planning to have, ePortfolio initiatives. We have been happy to share all of our support materials freely with other institutions.

Here we are, nine years after SLCC started ePortfolios in General Education, and fully 14 years after we stared piloting ePortfolios at the college. We are proud to say that, to our knowledge, SLCC is the first college or university to conduct a formal program review of its ePortfolio initiative. Doing so reflects

our commitment to evidence-based practice as well as our philosophy of implementing good ideas and incrementally improving them over time rather than waiting in vain for the perfect solution to emerge before implementation. To that end, Emily Dibble invited the following three reviewers to examine our ePortfolio program in the Fall of 2018:

- **G. Alex Ambrose**, Director of the ePortfolio Program and the Kaneb Center for Teaching and Learning at the University of Notre Dame, a school that uses Digication.
- **Paul Wasko**, ePortfolio Coordinator at the University of Alaska Anchorage, a school that uses Digication.
- **Robyn Thompson**, Assistant Professor and Program Director, Occupational Therapy Assistant Program, Salt Lake Community College, a program at SLCC that uses Digication.

As indicated in the schedule in the reviewers' report, they were on campus for two days and interviewed students, faculty, staff, and administrators. We are grateful for their time, effort, and dedication to helping us improve.

# Goals

Within the next 5 years, we would like to be able to say the following with a high degree of confidence:

1. ePortfolio is a True High-Impact Practice for the Majority of Students in General Education.
2. Twenty Academic Programs Have Designed and Implemented ePortfolio in High-Impact Ways.

## MEGAN'S EPORTFOLIO

WELCOME    GOALS AND OUTCOMES    COURSEWORK    LEARNING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

# Action Items

**1. Create a Holistic Rubric Allowing Us to Define a High-Impact General Education ePortfolio**--The reviewers noted that students could use more clarity on the expectations regarding their General Education ePortfolios. Now that the Association of American Colleges and Universities has officially recognized ePortfolio as a High-Impact Practice (HIP), we will develop a holistic rubric that will announce to students and faculty alike what a graduating student's ePortfolio should look like in order for us to be confident that it was a HIP. We would accompany the rubric with a student-facing document.

* Timeline: Develop and publish the rubric by August 15, 2019.
* Cost: $0
* Other Considerations: We want a simple, easily understood, but effective rubric.

**2. Create a Focused Strategic Plan for Signature Assignments and Reflections in General Education**—In conversations with the external reviewers, faculty said they wanted clearer expectations and guidance around signature assignments, students said there is currently confusion and redundancy with respect to signature assignments, and administrators wanted more evidence of actionable assessment data resulting from ePortfolio. We think we can respond to all of those comments while also advancing ePortfolio's utility. We recommend that SLCC develop a plan for making more focused use of signature assignments and reflection in general education courses, while respecting academic freedom and the ability of faculty to design assignments and reflection prompts within the constraints of the plan. The overall goal of the plan would be to help ePortfolio better meet its goal of integrating our menu-driven General Education program in a High-Impact fashion. A secondary positive effect of more focused assignments and reflections would be more usable assessment data. This plan would also point the way for other academic programs that use ePortfolio to more effectively design and deploy signature assignments and reflection in their programs.

* Timeline: Undetermined, because we would need to build a consensus among faculty.
* Cost: $0
* Other Considerations: We hope the General Education Committee will endorse the plan.

**3. Consolidate ePortfolio's Web Presence**—The reviewers recommended that we consolidate the range of ePortfolio websites into "one cohesive and streamlined site," and we are currently addressing that recommendation. At ePortfolio's inception we allowed students to use a variety of Web 2.0 technologies to create their ePortfolios, and we then created support sites using those platforms in order to show students what could be done with them. Now that we use Digication, it makes sense to consolidate ePortfolio's web presence, which will help students and faculty find the information they need right on the College's website.

- Timeline: Our goal is to finish this project by August 15, 2019.
- Cost: $0
- Other Considerations: We often need to make immediate changes to tutorials or to the information we provide students, so it is imperative that Institutional Marketing be responsive to the ePortfolio Office's requests to update web content.

**4. Record ePortfolio Trainings for Faculty**—Currently the only online ePortfolio training offered is the ePortfolio 101 Canvas course. The reviewers suggested that one way we could improve on-boarding of faculty is to make key ePortfolio-related trainings accessible to more faculty by recording and distributing (perhaps through the ePortfolio help site) these trainings. This could include trainings on assignment design, reflection, assessment, technology, and specifically how to create a faculty portfolio for the promotion and tenure process. The ePortfolio program has already been talking with WAC (Writing Across the College) to begin this process.

- Timeline: We would like to have at least the promotion and tenure training ready by mid-August 2019 for Fall semester and then add additional trainings throughout the year.
- Cost: $0
- Other Considerations: We would need to find a central and easy to find location to house these trainings for faculty. Discussions would also need to be held with faculty development about the possibility of registering faculty for these trainings and if/how the badging process might need to be adjusted to accommodate this.

**5. Incorporate Research Questions into General Education Assessment**—We have been using student ePortfolios to assess General Education at SLCC since 2012. However, in their meeting with SLCC administrators, the review team was told that

administrators wanted "more evidence of ePortfolio assessment data use in making conclusions and improvements to the Gen Ed program." They went on to suggest that they would like to have a bigger voice in "crafting assessment research questions that could be answered with ePortfolio data." We are moving towards this already, and have started looking into the logistics of utilizing this starting Summer 2019.

- Timeline: We would like to start this process Summer 2019.
- Cost: $0
- Other Considerations: So far this has been harder to implement than we initially thought. It has been difficult to find a consensus amongst key stakeholders about whether or not using the ePortfolio's birds-eye view is an effective means of assessing particular questions we had wanted to consider.

**6. Stabilize ePortfolio Lab Support**—ePortfolio use at the college has been growing over the past decade. As ePortfolio culture gets stronger each year, we see increased demand from faculty, staff and students on our lab infrastructure. More students are being asked to utilize ePortfolios in their classrooms, and faculty are now using them for the promotion and tenure process. Because of this we have seen a large increase in the use of all of our ePortfolio labs and an increase in the demands placed on the time of ePortfolio employees in general. In Fall 2016 we had 1305 total visits to ePortfolio labs, while in the Fall of 2017 the number of visits increased to 1889. During Fall 2018 we had over 1,620 visits. In order to staff these labs, we need additional funding, especially if more programs adopt ePortfolio. In years past we were fortunate enough to get a one-time request, which has helped us to pay for part-time staff to work more hours and offer more help in our labs. However, one-time funding is not sustainable. In the review of the ePortfolio program, the review team recognized the heavy load ePortfolio staff is presently shouldering. They recommended additional funds be provided to hire an additional 1-2 part-time ePortfolio staff in an attempt to alleviate the heavy workload. In order to successfully continue serving our students and faculty with this vital service, sustaining this ongoing funding is crucial.

- Timeline: As soon as possible.
- Cost: an additional $25,000 (plus benefits) added to the base budget for the ePortfolio program.
- Other Considerations: We have hired an intern through the College Internship Program (CIP), which has helped somewhat. Unfortunately, we do not know if this

program will be sustained and how long we will be able to continue to receive funding for a student intern.

**7. Seek Greater Prominence for the Redwood ePortfolio Lab**—We are of two minds with respect to the Redwood ePortfolio Lab's current location in the basement of the Markosian Library. The size of the space is good, but it is tucked in a fairly out-of-the-way place that is not conducive to pulling in students who need assistance. We are also worried about the possibility that Testing Services will move to the Library basement and push the ePortfolio Lab to someplace really obscure like the basement of the CT building. If Testing Services moves to the basement of the Library and doesn't displace the ePortfolio Lab, the Lab might benefit from the traffic of students coming in for proctored self-placement, but we are not sure how long self-placement will actually be proctored, since some envision students being able to do that on their phones. In any case, we recommend that the Redwood ePortfolio Lab gain a more prominent location. As our self-study indicates, Fall 2016 to Fall 2017 usage at the Redwood Lab increased by 20%. In the past year, over 17,500 new Digication ePortfolios have been created, and a more prominent lab at Redwood would be a great service to students and faculty--especially if more academic programs adopt ePortfolio. A public space in the AAB is our first choice, but we would welcome other prominent locations with foot traffic.
- Timeline: We hope that if Testing Services moves to the Library basement, we could make this move at the same time.
- Cost: Depends on the location and how much renovation it needs.
- Other Considerations: None.


**8. Broaden Who Works on Gen Ed Assessment**—The faculty focus group that met with the reviewers felt it would be highly beneficial to have as many faculty as possible participate as reviewers in the annual ePortfolio General Education assessment. Faculty feel that by doing this it would increase "overall faculty buy-in by giving them a 'behind the scenes' and campus-wide perspective on learning." Over the past few years we have been trying to recruit new faculty and rotate faculty from a variety of disciplines in an effort to make this process as transparent as possible. It is our hope that as a variety of faculty from multiple disciplines takes part in the process, they will continue to see the value of ePortfolio practice done well in the classroom and will learn from and inspire each other. We also hope they will continue to take their experience in this process and

bring discussions about ePortfolio to their departments, programs, and the faculty governing bodies of which they are a part. We believe this will provide opportunities for and continue to foster the cross-campus conversations that faculty desire. This year the Associate Dean of General Education has asked Associate Deans to recommend faculty from their respective areas, which we think will help us continue to broaden the pool of faculty assessors.

- Timeline: We have already started to implement this and hope to continue to do so from here on out.
- Cost: No additional funds. We have been paying faculty an hourly rate for their work. Typically this has come from the existing General Education budget.
- Other Considerations: There have been discussions about whether or not this should be considered service or if this is "above and beyond" their assigned job duties. There has also been consideration given to whether or not they should be paid an hourly rate or a lump sum for their work. The RFP process has been discussed as well.

**9. Expand the Number of Programs That Require ePortfolio**—In the meeting with the review committee and the Deans and ADs, they discussed the potential for using a "department-level bottom-up effort" to provide an opportunity for individual departments to "tailor the ePortfolio application to meet their individual needs and goals." The only programs at SLCC that are using ePortfolios extensively right now are Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) and Dental Hygiene. We are currently working with the Interior Design, Fashion, and Criminal Justice programs to design templates for their students. The ePortfolio Coordinator will approach several more programs over the course of the next year about implementing ePortfolio in their respective areas. Senior Leadership at SLCC should encourage Areas of Study design teams to consider adopting ePortfolio in at least some of their programs.

- Timeline: We would like to continue to focus on expanding this with as many programs as would like to, as soon as they would like to.
- Cost: $0
- Other Considerations: The programs who have started using ePortfolios have seen some great success so far. We have talked with a few who are considering it, but have not yet committed to implementing program ePortfolios. There are several programs we are working with right now and their templates are being created and should be ready for student use by Fall 2019. Additionally, having more programs use ePortfolios

could benefit them as they are assessing those programs. By using ePortfolios they have access to student signature assignments, which can then be used to assess various program learning outcomes.

**10. Create a Second Banner ePortfolio Portal**—This is a straightforward change that we should make. If more programs require students to use ePortfolio, more students will have two ePortfolios: one for General Education and one for their major. We should have two clearly labeled portals in MySLCC for students to put the URLs for those two ePortfolios.

- Timeline: We'd like to put this on the IT calendar now and have it in place by August of 2019.
- Cost: $0
- Other Considerations: We'll need to update tutorials and show students where to put their Gen Ed and program ePortfolio URLs.

**11. Explore Better Use of ePortfolio by Advising**—The report noted that during the course of meetings Advising frequently requested expanded collaboration with ePortfolio. Additionally, the Deans and ADs expressed interest in the "idea of advisors...playing a greater cross-campus role in deepening the institutionalization of ePortfolio culture." As SLCC transitions to the Pathways model we should encourage a partnership between ePortfolio and Advising. As advisors review student ePortfolios it could be mutually beneficial. It would benefit the students to have additional peer review and feedback on their sites and provide motivation for continued use and improvement. In turn, by looking at a student's ePortfolio prior to an advising session, advisors can gain a greater understanding of who the student is, what their goals are, and where they are in their academic journey. Michael Purles is currently piloting reviewing the ePortfolios in the Business department before meeting with them. We plan to follow-up with him in May 2019 and discuss recommendations for moving forward.

- Timeline: We would like to roll it out in concert with Pathways.
- Cost: $0
- Other Considerations: We realize that this could be an added time constraint on already overloaded advisors who seriously take the time to review student ePortfolios before they meet with them. However, most advisors we have talked with feel that the benefits are worth the extra effort.

# Recommendations Not Acted Upon

**1. Use LTI to Integrate Digication with Canvas**—The external review team recommended that we use LTI to more tightly integrate Digication into our Canvas learning management system, and we are not planning to act on this recommendation. Several years ago we piloted such a tight integration of a different commercial ePortfolio (not Digication) with Canvas, and we were not happy with the results. Two aspects of tight integration give us pause: First, students and faculty tend not to know at any given time whether they are operating in the LMS or in the ePortfolio, which causes confusion. Second, and perhaps more important, ePortfolio tightly integrated with the LMS turns the ePortfolio into a "one-click" operation, which defeats our goal to have students intentionally create, curate, and reflect in their ePortfolios.

**2. Set an Assessment Schedule**—Academic administrators at SLCC suggested to the external reviewers that they would like to see a schedule of assessment so that they know ahead of time what learning outcomes are going to be assessed in a particular year. This request evinces a fundamental misunderstanding of how the ePortfolio assessment of General Education works. Each year we pull random samples of graduating student ePortfolios to examine whether they have gotten enough practice to reasonably achieve our learning outcomes and the extent to which the artifacts in their ePortfolios indicate that they have done so. There is no way to plan out this kind of assessment, because students take General Education courses in essentially random order, and because faculty have freedom to have their signature assignments address any two General Education learning outcomes. Thus, we are retrospectively reconstructing student attainment of learning outcomes rather than creating prospective situations in which we study the issue. The good news is that the assessment work that Tom Zane's office does with departments follows the model that ADs and Deans were recommending, so SLCC approaches the issue of assessment via two complementary methods.

**3. Create Signature Assignment Completion Window**—The review committee suggested that in order to "better pool and concentrate resources" we "contain the ePortfolio signature assignment submission to a 2-3 week window". We do not plan to implement this recommendation for a few reasons. First, we feel this would run counter to efforts we have made (and are currently working towards) to encourage faculty to more

thoroughly integrate ePortfolio into their courses throughout the course of the semester. We have seen that students who are required to interact with their ePortfolio frequently during the semester remember the technology better and are more engaged with the ePortfolio process in general. Having everything due on the ePortfolio within a 2-3 week window would not promote this. Second, staffing ePortfolio labs for only a 2-3 week period of time would be difficult. Not only would it be tricky to find staff willing to work for such a short amount of time, but it would also be problematic to try and train them and keep them up-to-date on technology, etc. in such a short timeframe.

**4. Determine Signature Assignment Weight in Each Course**—The review committee recommended that we provide more structured guidance for faculty regarding how much to weigh the signature assignment in their courses. We have decided not to put this suggestion into practice as we feel this would impinge on the academic freedom of faculty to determine and dictate this on their own. We will continue to reiterate a few key suggestions in this regard: A) The ePortfolio should have some weight in the course's final grade (not extra credit) and that for most courses, it tends to be between 2-10%, B) One way to do this is to have the signature assignment graded separately, and then have a second, smaller, assignment asking students to showcase the signature assignment with the reflection in the ePortfolio, C) Another way to go is for the faculty to only accept that the signature assignment is "turned in" if it is showcased with reflection in the ePortfolio, and D) Another possibility is to design a signature assignment such that building an informative ePortfolio page with reflection is the signature assignment itself.

**5. Collaborate with Career Services**—The external reviewers heard from students that they would like to see a closer connection between ePortfolio and Career Services. We need to tread carefully here. We have never talked about the Gen Ed ePortfolio as a job-hunting tool, and we have no intention of starting. However, we would like to see more Certificate and AAS programs use ePortfolio, and those portfolios might indeed serve students well in their search for employment. We prefer to bring this possibility up with interested departments, and have them work with Career Services on this connection, rather than setting up an overarching tie between Career Services and the ePortfolio Office.