Salt Lake Community College

Self-Study: ePortfolio Program

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Emily Dibble, ePortfolio Coordinator and David Hubert, Associate Provost of Learning Advancement

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Executive Summary

Description of the Program and Services

The ePortfolio program assists students narrate their way to degree completion by showcasing signature assignments and reflection in their ePortfolios. It also helps faculty create promotion and tenure portfolios, use ePortfolio pedagogy in the classroom, develop thoughtful reflection prompts, and create meaningful signature assignments. We provide these services to the students and employees at the college via workshops, one-on-one meetings, in our ePortfolio labs, and through online services such as tutorials.

ePortfolio Program Goals

Our primary goal is to create an environment where high-impact ePortfolio pedagogy and practice are expected norms at the college. Our subsidiary goals are to:
- graduate students who are reflective practitioners and who showcase their work in creative and clear ways,
- assist faculty in supporting exemplary ePortfolio use, and
- foster "folio thinking" at Salt Lake Community College (SLCC).[1]

How the ePortfolio Program Supports SLCC's Mission, Vision, and Goals

Part of the mission and vision at SLCC states that "Salt Lake Community College will be a model for inclusive and transformative education, strengthening the communities we serve through the success of our students." It also refers to helping students develop "deeper, more enduring learning".

As a high-impact practice, ePortfolio helps students from a wide variety of backgrounds achieve success in their learning at SLCC. ePortfolio use and practice have been shown to increase student retention and deepen student learning. Additionally, students who use ePortfolios tend to retain what they have learned better (Eynon and Gambino 2017). All students at SLCC participate in this high-impact practice. In addition, high-impact practices in general particularly benefit underrepresented and first-generation students.

SLCC's mission and vision further states that "Salt Lake Community College is your community college. We engage and support students in educational pathways leading to successful transfer and meaningful employment." As students engage in ePortfolio practice, they are better able to meaningfully articulate their learning and thus express and reflect on

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[1] Tracy Penny-Light, Helen Chen, and John Ittelson, *Documenting Learning With ePortfolios: A Guide for College Instructors*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. 2011. Page 86. We follow Penny-Light, Chen, and Ittelson's (2011) definition of folio thinking to mean habits of mind that help students "integrate discrete learning experiences, enhance their self-understanding, promote taking responsibility for their own learning, and support them in developing an intellectual identity."

how their learning will help them in future jobs, and in their lives in general. By learning to represent themselves online in a professional way, students are able to showcase their work and skills as they apply for internships, scholarships, four-year institutions and even employment.

Self-Assessment

Strengths:
- We have been and are currently doing a good job of assessing general education using ePortfolios.
- We are starting to build a culture of ePortfolios at SLCC, where more faculty and students are increasingly seeing ePortfolio as an expectation rather than a hurdle or a burden.
- We have developed a significant and extensive support system with tutorials, specialists (who assist in a variety of languages), labs, trouble-shooting, and informative websites to assist students, faculty and staff across the college.
- Many of our students are doing excellent work and showcasing it on their ePortfolios.
- We collaborate with many diverse programs and departments across the college.
- Many faculty using innovative and creative assignments and thoughtful reflection prompts.
- Faculty use of ePortfolio for rank and tenure is nearly universal.

Areas for Improvement:
- Greater Faculty and student buy-in with ePortfolios in general
- More "folio-thinking" (or increasingly establishing ePortfolio as the expected norm) across the college)
- We have a need for more computer lab access for trainings and tutoring
- Encouraging students to document and add student clubs and organizations
- and other co-curricular activities on their ePortfolios
- More integration with other programs (creating even more program-specific templates, etc.)
- Integrate ePortfolio use more seamlessly into the rank and tenure process.

Opportunities:
- Continued chances for collaboration with individual programs (for example we are currently working with Dental Hygiene, Auto, and Geo-Sciences)
- Would like to work more with Advising (esp. with the new Pathways initiative, which is coming soon)
- Looking to collaborate with staff and create a staff template for staff review
- process and as a place for them to set goals and show achievements

Challenges:
- Fluctuating enrollment of students and students using platforms other than Digication
- Inconsistent funding for PT lab staff and equipment updates- we are constantly having to request additional funding in budget request processes and when that does not come through, have to find ways to make things work. Unfortunately not enough funding has led to a decrease in lab hours and less availability for faculty and students.
- Inconsistent funding for ELC tuition waivers- we would love to have this as a permanent opportunity to reward excellent work using ePortfolios
- Faculty and Student buy-in across the college

Ways the ePortfolio Office Demonstrates SLCC Values

Collaboration: We believe we're better when we work together. ePortfolio collaborates with many areas of the college: faculty, students, staff, library, WAC program, Tutoring and Learning, Professional Development Center, Service-Learning, IR, Assessment, Gen Ed, ADs, non-Gen Ed programs, Career Services, Advising, etc.

Inclusivity: We seek to cultivate an environment of respect and empathy, advanced by diverse cultures and perspectives. We offer lab support in a variety of languages. The office has a diverse staff of student mentors and employees who work with FYE-type programs to get them on the right track early in their education. We provide many online resources to help reach those who are off-campus.

Learning: We learn as a college by building outstanding educational experiences for students and by supporting faculty and staff in their professional development. ePortfolio emphasizes reflective thinking, which helps deepen and solidify student learning. We provide extensive training for faculty in their professional development. Below are some of the ePortfolio-related trainings we offer:

Innovation: We value fresh thinking and encourage the energy of new ideas and initiatives. We are continuously trying to find new ways to integrate ePortfolio technology and pedagogy across the school.

Trust: We build trust by working together in good faith and goodwill to fulfill the College's mission. We strive to build good relations with various partners as we collaborate on ePortfolio-related goals and projects.

Integrity: We do the right things for the right reasons. We believe integrity is crucial to creating and maintaining partnerships with faculty, staff, students and administrators. The General Education ePortfolio Assessment Report is one way we demonstrate our transparency with what we are doing and the impact of ePortfolios on students and the college as a whole.

Community: We partner with our community in the transformative, public good of educating students. We are using ePortfolios in conjunction with the Service-Learning program and Civically Engaged Scholars programs to help students highlight their work in the community.

Background and Context

Significant Institutional or External Changes that have Impacted Services

Our experience with ePortfolio began in 2005 when we received a small technology grant from the state of Utah to pilot class-level ePortfolios and experiment with different ePortfolio platforms. After four years of piloting ePortfolio by individual faculty in disciplines such as Math, Political Science, and English,--and being inspired by the experiences of faculty at other institutions--we proposed a course-level requirement in general education. After a year and a half of deliberation in the faculty curriculum process, the proposal passed and began in the summer of 2010.

Initially SLCC was using free web 2.0 based programs such as Weebly, Jimdo, and WordPress. In Fall 2016 we made the switch to using a commercial platform and we are currently using Digication. In Fall of 2018 we started using the new editor of Digication and with the help of OIT, created a single sign-on for the ePortfolio platform. Making these changes has led to a more user-friendly experience for students and faculty and has enabled us to create templates for General Education as well as for specific programs and departments. It has also given us the ability to provide users with a greater level of privacy.

Significant Changes within Department in the Past 5 Years

Over the past five years several significant changes have occurred in SLCC's ePortfolio program. In addition to changing the official school ePortfolio platform to Digication, we have also added two ePortfolio labs for in-person support (one on the South City Campus and the other at the West Valley Center). In Spring 2017 we moved the ePortfolio lab on our Taylorsville-Redwood Campus to a much larger lab space, which has been a much-needed improvement. We are now able to accommodate 14-16 students at a time instead of 3-4.

We have also created many online tutorials and revamped our help sites for both faculty and students. A full-time ePortfolio specialist position was created in 2015, which has also been a great help. In the last few years the faculty promotion and tenure portfolio has also become more standardized and is now required for faculty at SLCC.

Description of Program and Services

Clients Served by ePortfolio Office

Students are the ePortfolio office's primary clients--especially those taking general education courses, but also those involved with programs such as OTA, PTA, etc. In the past year, 15,300 student ePortfolios have been created in our system.

Full-time faculty are now using ePortfolios for promotion (rank and tenure). In the past year, 485 faculty ePortfolios have been created in our system. We offer faculty support for their own portfolios, as well as pedagogical support in helping them develop signature assignments and reflection prompts, doing presentations and workshops for classes their classes, and providing professional development opportunities. Last year ePortfolios were also used as part of the application process for those nominated for teaching awards. The ePortfolio has served as a way to showcase their achievements.

Some staff are starting to use ePortfolio for professional portfolios, and we have started making headway with those working in advising, career services, and other full-time staff using it for their GPS evaluation.

Description of Services

ePortfolio Labs-

ePortfolio labs are a place where students can come to get one-on-one help when they set-up an ePortfolio, add assignments and reflections to their ePortfolios, or need to trouble-shoot. We have computers they are able to use, or they can bring their own laptop. We also have scanners available for their use.

Since Fall of 2015 we have been tracking student and faculty use of the ePortfolio labs by using Excel spreadsheets and giving ePortfolio staff access to those via Office 365. In Fall 2018, with the help of OIT we started using a different software (TutorTrac) to collect additional information to better assist us in assessing the efficacy of ePortfolios.

The following is a summary of the number of visitors to the ePortfolio labs during the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 academic years. (Note: the West Valley Center opened part-way through Fall 2017 the semester and we ended up closing it part-way through Summer semester 2018 for just the summer as summer traditionally has lower enrollment). Also these numbers only include students visiting ePortfolio labs. They do not include students who were present for in-class visits or ePortfolio workshops, which we do for multiple instructors.

Number of Student Visits to ePortfolio Labs 2016-2017

Lab Location	Fall 2016	Spring 2017	Summer 2017
Taylorsville-Redwood	1165	938	485
South City	74	218	100
Jordan	63	106	52

Number of Student Visits to ePortfolio Labs 2017-2018

Lab Location	Fall 2017	Spring 2018	Summer 2018
Taylorsville-Redwood	1400	944	424
South City	262	266	71
Jordan	197	204	47
West Valley Center	26	119	2

Web Resources—We have two primary help sites for faculty and students. Much of our work, including online tutorials, current and past assessment reports, reflection prompts, signature assignment ideas, and rubrics can be found on these sites:

- http://eportresource.weebly.com
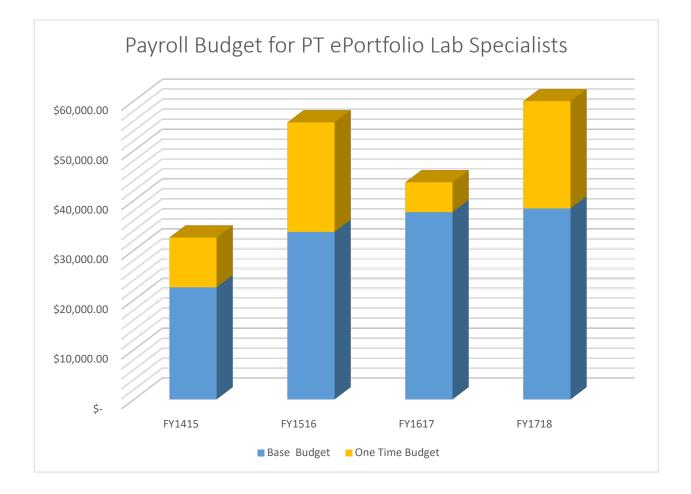- https://facultyeportfolioresource.weebly.com

Faculty Professional Development—We have a number of faculty development workshops, including:
- Creating a promotion and tenure portfolio
- Developing excellent reflection prompts
- Creating signature assignments
- Digication 101 (an overview of the technology of the ePortfolio platform SLCC uses)
- ePortfolio 101 (a completely online training designed to bring anyone at the college up to speed about ePortfolios, how we use them and why we have them)
- ePortfolio Boot Camps (four-hour trainings for faculty between semesters which helps them revamp their ePortfolio curriculum and develop effective reflection prompts and signature assignments)

Review of Resources

Budget Resources:

- Institutional money from the Provost's Office to pay for Digication.
- Current-expense budget used for purchasing supplies for the labs, updating computer equipment, purchasing programs such as data-tracking software (TutorTrac), etc.
- Payroll budget for the full-time ePortfolio Coordinator and the full-time ePortfolio specialists.
- Payroll budget for part-time ePortfolio lab specialists to staff the ePortfolio labs on four campuses.
- One-time money to support part-time ePortfolio lab specialists, which has come through the IBP (informed budget process). In the past, we had to borrow a significant amount of money from the Associate Provost of Learning Advancement's budget to help cover costs to keep the labs staffed in order to meet students' needs.

Payroll Budget for PT ePortfolio Lab Specialists

Bar chart showing Base Budget (blue) and One Time Budget (yellow) across fiscal years FY1415, FY1516, FY1617, and FY1718. Y-axis ranges from $- to $60,000.00.

Technology Resources

- Digication- our current ePortfolio platform at SLCC.
- Other Web 2.0 platforms (such as Weebly, which currently hosts two of our help sites).
- Office 365 has been used to give access to ePortfolio information for lab specialists.
- Excel- what we used in the past to track data about student and faculty visits to ePortfolio labs.
- Internet browsers.
- Banner – which is where students submit their ePortfolio URLs. This is later used for assessment purposes in on both the classroom and institution-wide level.
- Canvas- for backdoor access to Digication as well as host for assessment information and materials as well as online trainings.
- Computers- both Mac and PC.
- Video/tutorial making programs, such as screen-cast-o-matic.
- Design programs (InDesign, etc.) for marketing and promotional purposes as well as training materials.
- TutorTrac (started in Fall 2018).
- AwardSpring (financial aid).

Assessment of Staff, Work Environment, Physical and Technology Resources

Overall, the quality and capacity of our ePortfolio staff has been very high. We have been able to hire diverse staff with excellent computer and artistic skills. They have assisted us in creating promotional videos, video interview and creative marketing materials. They have great customer service skills even during high-traffic times of the semester and assist patrons in a variety of languages. The work environment is generally positive and helpful, and even at the end of the semester when the labs are flooded with stressed-out students, the staff does a great job of assisting each patron and helping them work through their needs in an efficient and timely manner.

The technology in our ePortfolio labs has been good. We have been able to provide patrons with both thin client PCs and Mac computers for their use as well as access to scanners. It has been a challenge to keep all four labs up-to-date with good equipment, given our limited budget, but we have been fortunate in having others providing us with equipment they are no longer using. We have good, visible spaces for each of our labs, and although each space has its own challenges, we are making the best use of each space that we can. A year ago we moved into a bigger space on our Redwood Campus, which can now accommodate between 15-16 people at a time and has been a great help. We had definitely outgrown our old space, which only fit four to five students comfortably.

Where technology is concerned, making the switch to Digication has been very positive. The ability to use templates and have the majority of SLCC students using the same platform has made the process more student-friendly (especially for many of the non-traditional students who often struggle with technology) and more faculty-friendly (it has become easier for them to navigate the ePortfolios and find where students are putting the work for their courses).

Areas for Improvement in Efficiency or Cost Effectiveness of Services

For the past two to three years we have tried to find better ways to track usage of the ePortfolio labs in order to maximize the days/times we are open given our resources. We started out with Excel sheets and using Office 365 for access, but we were not able to track individual students and look at things such as multiple visits and match their visits to the lab with the quality of their ePortfolios. We hope with the implementation of TutorTrac that this data will be even more effective in helping us know which days/hours/locations are being used the most and where to best use our funds. We are also in the process of trying to provide an internship so that one of our staff positions can will be funded by the college.

Resource Needs for Future Operations (Next Five Years)

As the ePortfolio program moves forward and continues to grow in the next five years, and as increasingly more students, faculty, staff and administration implement and integrate ePortfolios in their teaching and learning, our need for ePortfolio labs is going to grow. One of the biggest needs will be the need for increased funding in the budget to staff our current ePortfolio labs and potentially open additional labs on other campuses (at some point perhaps on the new Westpointe Campus as well as on the future Herriman Campus). Ideally we would like to extend the hours of our busiest labs to accommodate students demands. In order to do this, we will need increased and consistent funding.

Collaboration with Other Functional Units in SLCC

One of our strengths with ePortfolio is that we do a lot of collaboration across the college to advance SLCC's strategic goals. Below is a non-exhaustive list of some of the areas we have worked with recently to help further student inclusivity and success. Over the past few years we have collaborated with the following:

- WAC (Writing Across the College) to develop and implement templates and trainings for faculty
- Professional Development Center (trainings, guest speakers, etc.)
- Library on Information Literacy assessment and other information literacy initiatives
- Multiple departments whose faculty have participated in the assessment of General Education

- Engaged Learning Department is using ePortfolios to showcase service-learning and planning and executing the Engaged Learning Celebration, which recognizes students with outstanding ePortfolios
- General Education Committee as courses come up for their five-year curricular review approval process, members of the committee discuss signature assignments and reflections being used in each course.
- OIT to create SSO, Banner integration of URLs for assessment, adding students to the Digication system, and setting up TutorTrac to collect better data about ePortfolio lab usage.
- eLearning has helped created "backdoor" access to ePortfolios via Canvas, and has assisted us in creating online Canvas courses to train faculty on ePortfolios)
- Universal Access initiatives to make sure platforms are accessible.
- Financial Aid for the Engaged Celebration Tuition waiver for ePortfolios and Service-Learning
- CES (Civically Engaged Scholars) to help students in this program document their coursework and community service on their ePortfolios
- Career Services to develop an internship with the ePortfolio program (as a way to combine two HIPs: ePortfolio and Internships)
- Advising to orient them to student ePortfolios and how they can use them to assist students when providing advising services. Also created a template for advisors to use to track their professional development and staff goals.
- Honors Program- is currently being developed and we have been working with those who are creating it to include ePortfolio as a major component in what a student will do to demonstrate their learning and accomplishments in this program

Peer and Best Practice Comparisons

While SLCC is currently the only institution in Utah with a college-wide implementation of ePortfolio in the General Education program, there are a few institutions in-state such as the University of Utah and Utah Valley University who use ePortfolios programmatically. Nationally there are many colleges using ePortfolios in robust and innovative ways. Some of those schools are Clemson University, La Guardia Community College, University of Notre Dame, IUPUI, Three Rivers Community College, Gutman Community College, and University of Alaska Anchorage.

LaGuardia Community College makes for an interesting comparison institution, especially since SLCC learned so much from LaGuardia in developing its ePortfolio program. LaGuardia has been using ePortfolios for many years to help scaffold and document student learning. They have implemented a school-wide ePortfolio program like SLCC, however, most of their student ePortfolios are centered in programs of study. Students at LaGuardia are encouraged to use ePortfolio in all of their courses whereas at SLCC most students use them primarily to showcase their work from general education classes. LaGuardia has created a robust support

system for faculty and students at their college similar to SLCC. They have help sites and example ePortfolios as well as tutorials, ePortfolio labs, and other forms of support. In addition they have also implemented a tracking system for students who are visiting their labs.

Both colleges do a showcase for outstanding student ePortfolios, but SLCC's showcase is focused on only a few students and is more formal, whereas LaGuardia's is more of an informal open-house style. In addition, both institutions stress the usefulness of ePortfolios in the assessment process and the need for faculty to "walk the walk" by creating their own ePortfolios.

Two other areas where LaGuardia excels are in using peer mentors and incorporating ePortfolios into their First Year Experience Program. SLCC has started using peer mentors and part-time student employees (or employees who were former students at SLCC) but having peer mentors who are current students at the college is an area we would like to look into developing more. SLCC does not have a formal First Year Experience program that incorporates ePortfolio use, but we do have several courses that many first year students take where we frequently conduct ePortfolio workshops to assist students in getting an early start with creating their ePortfolios. Both IUPUI and LaGuardia have successful FYE-type programs in place, which are showing promising results in increasing student success.[2]

IUPUI is another national leader who has been using ePortfolio pedagogy for many years. Like SLCC they have done much work using ePortfolios in their assessment process. They have also excelled in the areas of faculty development and combining ePortfolios with internships.[3] IUPUI uses ePortfolio as a tool where students showcase and reflect on the work done in their service-learning courses.[4] SLCC has been working on incorporating service-learning in ePortfolios as well. Over the past few years we have incentivized this by offering tuition waivers specifically for students who have done an outstanding job of showcasing their service-learning on their ePortfolio. Our Engaged Learning Coordinator has done much to move this incentive forward at SLCC. Additionally IUPUI also use ePortfolios longitudinally as a tool in advising and helping students develop a clearer sense of purpose and identity.[5] Gutman Community College has used ePortfolio in their advising process as well, only they have actually linked student ePortfolios to Starfish[6] (a student tracking and success tool, which SLCC also uses). This is something we have thought about at SLCC, but have not yet implemented.

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[2] Bret Eynon and Laura M. Gambino, *High Impact ePortfolio Practice,* 144, 196.

[3] Ibid, 201.
[4] Ibid, 49-50.
[5] Ibid, 56-57, 218.
[6] Ibid

[Three Rivers Community College](#) uses the same platform we do (Digication) and has done an excellent job of integrating ePortfolio use in the curriculum and assessment of their nursing program.[7] This is something that SLCC would like to emulate with our nursing program. We have had discussions with nursing faculty about using a program-based ePortfolio, but have not yet been able to gain much traction with this idea. We hope to move forward with this at some point in the future. Three Rivers also has a reputation of showcasing nursing internships using the ePortfolio.[8] As previously mentioned, using ePortfolios to document internship experiences is something we are trying to do more with at SLCC.

Summary Analysis and Action Items Going Forward

The overall conclusion we have come to is that as a whole SLCC's ePortfolio program is doing a good job of serving the students, faculty and staff at the college. We offer good resources and support, our work aligns well with the mission and vision of the college, and we do a great job of collaborating with other areas in our institution. Our program is in line with other colleges across the county using ePortfolios and we are implementing many of the national best practices.

We still have a fair amount of challenges and room to improve, especially when it comes to the attitude some faculty and students still have towards ePortfolio. While we have made progress over the last eight years, we still have some who are resistant. We would also like to see more programs using ePortfolios to showcase their coursework, internships, etc..

Action Items

The following are some of the main things that could be done to ensure ePortfolio can continue to function smoothly across the college

- Increase the funding for part-time ePortfolio lab specialist.

  There is a direct correlation with having longer hours and more days when we are open and having more students visit the labs. We also have a need for more computer lab access for trainings and tutoring. Currently many faculty would like to have ePortfolio workshops for their classes, but finding a time and space that is big enough and has computers is a real challenge.

- Increase "folio thinking" (or having students and faculty view ePortfolio practice as an accepted norm) across the institution.

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[7] Ibid, 102, 106-107.
[8] Ibid, 201.

In a faculty survey that was done at SLCC in May 2015, (five years after implementing ePortfolio as a requirement for general education courses) we found that "…a majority (62%)of respondents believe that ePortfolio has had a positive impact on General Education, while 8% thought that it has had a negative impact."[9] Furthermore 44% of those who responded said they thought "ePortfolio has had a positive impact on their teaching."[10] This study showed us that we have many faculty who see the value in ePortfolios and are active in using ePortfolio pedagogy. However, there is still a small group who actively oppose ePortfolio use. Since this survey, we have made some significant strides in faculty attitudes about ePortfolio and although we still do not have all faculty using ePortfolio or integrating them willingly, we have seen a positive trend in this direction.

One way we are working on increasing faculty "buy-in" is by trying to get new faculty on board early and involving them in ePortfolio trainings and the General Education assessment process quickly. When faculty see the importance of ePortfolio and become ambassadors, they pass that attitude on to their students in a tangible way. We are also constantly bringing ePortfolio practice and pedagogy into conversations during the curricular review processes. This will continue to encourage faculty to make ePortfolio a priority in their courses and to implement them well.

We are reaching out to students at more orientations, planning workshops with a variety of campus programs and departments, and working on increasing the availability of help in ePortfolio labs and online. By having faculty create their own ePortfolio for promotion and tenure, we hope this will help them understand the technology as well as the ways ePortfolio practice (and particularly reflection) can benefit them and their students.

- Work with ADs and academic programs to increase the number of programs using ePortfolios.

We are currently starting this process with Dental Hygiene, Criminal Justice, and Geosciences and are encouraging other areas such as Nursing, Accounting to do the same.

- Collect better, more usable data.

Now that we have implemented a new system, we hope this will assist us in gathering better student information so we can conduct better research on the impact of ePortfolio on student learning.

- Continue to use ePortfolios to increase inclusivity.

[9] David Hubert and Kati Lewis, "Faculty Survey on ePortfolios in General Education", 21 May 2015.
[10] Ibid

ePortfolio becomes a place for students to tell their stories. This is increasingly important for first generation, non-traditional and minority students.

ePortfolio will continue to innovate and find new and even better ways to encourage students to reflect on their work and make connections with their learning. We hope this will lead to increased student retention and success at SLCC. The assessment of general education via ePortfolios will also help us see a clearer picture of whether or not we are achieving this.

Appendix 1

EPORTFOLIO ORG CHART

Deneece Huftalin
President of SLCC

Clifton Sanders
Provost

David Hubert
Associate Provost of Learning Advancement

Emily Dibble
ePortfolio Coordinator

Victoria Harding
Specialist 1
ePortfolio

Jacob Erickson
ePortfolio Lab Specialist

Patricia Gamarra Vargas
ePortfolio Lab Specialist

Keith McDonald
ePortfolio Lab Specialist

Samuel Kalubi
ePortfolio Lab Specialist

Medha Mayawala
ePortfolio Lab Specialist