

first contact with the department, biology majors will be encouraged to demonstrate their growth and accomplishments by accumulating materials appropriate for a portfolio. Aware of the portfolio as a repository of work that will be useful in achieving their goals, students may be more attentive to the self-reinforcing behaviors that contribute to effective learning and to polished portfolios. The locus of control and critique of learning will shift from faculty to the student, as the student takes charge of creating his best portfolio. We believe that the portfolio's usefulness to indi-

viduals will be reinforced among biology majors, as they see their diverse experiences connected by the theme of personal development and by the document's tangible reality. We expect to see greater quality and quantity in future portfolios, once this initiative becomes part of the common culture of biology majors at KSU. In a competitive world, where tangible output is the criterion of success, we believe the portfolio initiative will connect the disparate parts of our students' educational experience in a way that encourages commitment to growth and ensures their success.

Student Learning Outside the Classroom: Transcending Artificial Boundaries

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Plagued by meager budgets, limited resources, and a decrease in state and federal expenditures allocated to colleges and universities, institutions of higher learning are now faced with the grim reality of a depressed economy. To further complicate matters, at a time when colleges and universities should be focusing their efforts on preparing students to compete in the global marketplace, institutions are being watched by "people [who] want evidence that higher education makes a difference." As a result, demands for institutional accountability and positive learning outcomes for students are being scrutinized more than ever.

In ASIE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 8, 1994, *Student Learning Outside the Classroom*, authors Kuh, Douglas, Lund, and Ramin-Gyurnek offer plausible evidence as to why colleges and universities should not despair—that is, if institutions follow the key tasks for success. For example, the authors generally recommend that institutions develop a common view of "what matters" in undergraduate education, cultivate an ethos of learning throughout the institution, and address the importance of out-of-class experiences explicitly in the institution's mission.

Wingspread Group (1993) cited in Kuh, Douglas, Lund, and Ramin-Gyurnek suggests that "colleges and universities can become more productive by making better use of existing resources so that students learn more without institutions spending more." (p. 3). To accomplish this task, the authors indicate that students' learning can be enhanced by actively engaging them in educationally purposeful activities outside the classroom.

Educationally purposeful activities as defined by the authors: "Include all activities in which students engage during undergraduate study that are either directly or indirectly related to their learning and performance and occur beyond the formal classroom, studio, or laboratory setting." (p.9).

Authors Kuh, Douglas, Lund, and Ramin-Gyurnek provide an elaborate, yet exhaustive litany of conditions based on the literature researched that characterizes ideal out-of-class environments. Such environments, state the authors, encourage students to integrate what they are learning through their out-of-class experiences with their academic studies, and vice versa. To address the importance of out-of-class experiences and the development of a common desired goal, the authors organized five clusters: (1) cognitive complexity, (2) knowledge acquisition and application, (3) humanitarianism, (4) interpersonal and intrapersonal competence, and (5) practical competence.

In the arguments of the authors emphasizing the applications of learning outside the classroom, the authors have failed to recognize the benefits of formal classroom experiences that promote higher order thinking, cooperative learning, communications skills, and active learning. Unlike the out-of-class experiences that are sometimes vague, unorthodox, and haphazard, these "teachable moments" outside the classroom are not beneficial. Structured learning environments, however, offer accommodations for different learning styles, diverse capabilities, and a greater appreciation of ethnic and cultural background in the classrooms.

In the classroom, Kuh, Douglas, Lund, and Ramin-Gyurnek admit that additional research is needed to discover the contributions of out-of-class experiences to student learning and personal development. Yet the authors provide sizeable evidence to support the need for out-of-class experiences that are certain to become a valuable asset in the future. Readers are, therefore, advised to heed the call of the authors to transcend the artificial boundaries that bind us and view the applications of learning as a "seamless web of opportunities."

Student Learning Outside the Classroom is highly recommended reading for faculty, administrators, and staff who wish to transcend artificial boundaries.