

Creating Your Final Portfolio Presentation

Successful completion of your Final Portfolio Presentation is a requirement of the graduate school.

The Student Affairs in Higher Education (SAHE) Master's degree portfolio is both a product and a process. It serves as the culminating academic work demonstrating your development as a practitioner-scholar. Additionally, the process of creating the portfolio is an opportunity to cultivate a reflective practice (Kline, 2015; Schön, 1983) as a professional in the field. Reflective practice is a learning orientation emphasizing:

...the process of thinking analytically about what we are doing, thinking, and/or feeling, both as we are doing it and later in review from an observer perspective that allows us to include ourselves and the wider value-laden context in the frame, and which may lead to changes in or consolidation of our practice. (Scaife, 2010, p.4)

The portfolio process requires you to reflect *on* action as a way to develop the professional skill of being able to reflect *in* action (Schön, 1983).

As a student in the residential program, you are responsible for the following steps in scheduling, presenting, and documenting your Final Portfolio Presentation:

1. The Final Portfolio Presentation occurs during a two-week time period after Spring Break in your final semester of the SAHE program. Talk with your advisor about their preferences for how much time to schedule. You are responsible for working with your committee to set a specific date and time.
2. Once a date and time are agreed upon, secure a location for the Final Portfolio Presentation and convey this information to your advisor and committee members. Consider technical needs as well as who else you may wish to invite when selecting a space.
3. Provide **ALL** portfolio components (*listed below*) **to your advisor for review/approval prior to distributing to committee members**. Your advisor will tell you when your portfolio is ready to be shared with the rest of your committee.
4. **Your writing deadline is 3-4 weeks PRIOR to your scheduled final presentation.** To allow for advisor approval and time for your committee to read your portfolio, your materials are due to your advisor 3-4 weeks before your presentation date. Negotiate this date with your advisor, who will need 1-2 weeks to review your materials and will approve the next step of sending materials to the rest of your committee. **Do not send your materials to your full committee without your advisor's okay.** Your committee should have at least two weeks (including two weekends) to review all your materials prior to your presentation date.
5. At the final presentation, you are responsible for bringing the *GS24 Report of Final Examination Results* form for faculty to sign. You can find the form here: <http://graduateschool.colostate.edu/policies-and-procedures/forms/> To be safe, bring 2-3 copies, just in case an error is made, such as someone signing on the wrong line.
6. Engage your committee over the course of your second year (*where possible*) to stay connected and keep them involved in your process.

Your Final Portfolio Checklist

Refer to handouts from class for descriptors and guidelines of required portfolio components listed below:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Table of Contents | <input type="checkbox"/> Overall SAHE Emersion Reflection |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resume | <input type="checkbox"/> Each semesters Reflections (1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal/Professional Statement | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Development Plan |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10 Competency Reflections | <input type="checkbox"/> Reference List |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 SAHE Immersion Reflections | <input type="checkbox"/> Appendix of Artifacts Related to Competency Reflections |

Your final portfolio must follow APA formatting and be given to your committee as a Microsoft Word document for them to print and/or use review features to prepare for your final presentation.

Preparing for Your Presentation

Your Final Portfolio Presentation should **tell the story of your development as a practitioner-scholar** in student affairs **and present analysis of overarching themes** within and across your reflections related to the research question: *How does a graduate student in a preparatory master's program make meaning of their development towards competency as a practitioner-scholar in student affairs?*, as well as your sub questions related to your specific experience. Consider the following:

- How you frame the work and your “why” for pursuing student affairs.
- Who you are and how you see yourself in practice, in relationship to students, within organizations, and as a part of the larger field of student affairs and higher education
- Learning moments and major take-aways from the program that have had an impact on who you are (and are becoming) as a scholar-practitioner and how you do the work.
- Future goals, both in terms of career path as well as ongoing development.

The Final Portfolio Presentation traditionally begins with a presentation and ends in dialogue between you and your committee. As with your portfolio, you are asked to **ground your presentation in social, historical, and theoretical frameworks**. Additionally, you are encouraged to examine the full range of your identities as a lens for analyzing your experiences (Collins, 1993) and your environment (Museus, 2014) as a way to **present counter-narratives** (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002) to those frameworks and **honor your own ways of knowing, doing and being** as a scholar-practitioner (Espino et al., 2012).

Exploring and Identifying Overarching Themes

Review ALL components of your portfolio to identify the themes, patterns and major takeaways (learning moments) in your development towards overall competency as a professional. What you discover should be specific to your experience and learning, therefore, there is not a single format or set of learning moments and themes you should expect to have. Some approaches to identifying themes are outlined below.

Wordles

Think about creating Wordles (<http://www.wordle.net/create>) for your (1) all of your Professional-Based Reflections, (2) all of your Knowledge-Based Reflections and (3) all of your Semester Reflections. Lastly, (4) a combination of all the documents within your portfolio could be used to create a final Wordle of overarching themes. Identify the largest words that show up, review for the words/phrases that show up multiple times and across all four Wordles.

- What do you notice from the selection of words/phrases that have been identified?
- When reviewing the Wordles, what comes up for you related to your experiences, learning moments, and your development during your time in the SAHE program?
- How might these themes inform your approach to setting up your agenda and the main topics of discussion for your Final Portfolio Presentation?

- How do these themes represent, inform, influence and shape your practice as a student affairs practitioner?

Review Your Portfolio

As strange as it sounds, it is important to not assume you know what is in your portfolio. Read and reread your portfolio components several times. Themes in your development you have not consciously considered may emerge from your portfolio. Also, consider sharing your portfolio with trusted peers or mentors and asking them to review it and identify themes in your learning.

As you review your portfolio continue to reflect and consider these specific areas:

Your "Why"

- Why student affairs? What brought you to the SAHE program? To the field?
- What is "the work" of student affairs from your perspective, based on your experience in the program?
- How has your view of the field developed since you began the program? Why? What experiences and learning led to these changes?
- What has shifted, become more solidified, or continues to evolve for you in relation to your practice of, approach to and understanding of student affairs?

Learning Moments – Major Takeaways

- What top 3-5 learning moments stand out for you, in and out of the classroom? Consider challenges as well as successes; knowledge, skills, and disposition. For each moment you identify, consider:
 - Why these moments?
 - What connections exist between and across what you have identified? Are there any patterns or themes?
 - What do these moments and/or the themes they represent mean for you and your practice? How have they informed your approach to working with students, and
 - What questions might these moments raise for you to continue to explore as you progress in your career?

Theoretical Frameworks and Concepts

- What theories, concepts, and models have you found yourself returning to in your practice? Why?
- How has the literature informed your decision-making and your approach to the work you do? How do your functional areas of interest, institution types, and your own identities influence the literature that is salient for you?
- What experiences (from your portfolio/time in SAHE), demonstrate your understanding of the theories, concepts and models? How do you see yourself using what you have learned in your daily practice in the future?

Strengths and Areas for Growth

- What are your strengths and talents as a practitioner-scholar? How did you arrive at this assessment?
- What struggles, challenges, or limitations—internal and external—did you confront during your experience in the program? What impact did these struggles and limitations have on your development this year?
- What are accomplishments you are proud of?
- What have you learned about yourself through experiencing these moments and how have they influenced your development and approach to doing the work in student affairs?
- How do you continue to use your learning about what you experienced and accomplished as a foundation to inform your practice and further develop a sense of self as a student affairs practitioner?

Future Plans – Looking Ahead

- What path or goals have you set for yourself as you are emerging from the program?
- What do you see as the next steps of your journey as both a scholar (what you need to focus on to continue learning about yourself and the field) and practitioner (what are you looking for in your next role and why)?
- What might you share with your committee that encapsulates how you are emerging into the field and what kind of professional you have become?

Develop Your Presentation

Draft an **outline** and design a presentation that covers the areas outlined above and feels authentic to you. Consider:

- Based upon your Wordles, review of your portfolio components, and additional reflection, what are the consistent themes that emerge throughout that highlight your experience?
- How do you want to tell your story (Chronological? Based on themes? By topic?)
- Will you utilize technology (PowerPoint, Prezi, other, nothing?)
- What sort of print materials will you provide, if any? (General agenda for the meeting? Your full or adapted presentation outline? Other?)
- How will you engage your committee and create time for comments and questions? (Throughout your presentation? At the end? When invited by you? As questions arise organically?)

Meet With Your Advisor

A discussion with your advisor should take place at least a week prior to your Final Portfolio Presentation that addresses the following:

- Review the outline of what you hope to cover in your presentation and discuss suggestions, edits, and additions from your advisor.
- Discuss expectation for the day of your presentation. Will you or your advisor call the meeting “to order”? Do introductions? How do you want time kept?
- Discuss how you would like questions and dialogue about your materials to manifest during your Final Portfolio Presentation, e.g., presentation first and then a Q & A time, dialogue throughout your presentation, something else?
- Some students bring coffee and snacks for their committee. This is **NOT** an expectation.

Lastly, complete your agenda with any suggestions and edits from meeting with your advisor. Create any visual aids, note cards or supplemental documents, materials that you need to in order to be prepared. On the day of, arrive early enough to arrange the space the way you want it and test any technology you plan to use.

References

Collins, P. H. (1993). Toward a new vision: Race, class, and gender as categories of analysis and connection. *Race, Sex, & Class*, 1(1), 25-55.

Kline, K. A. (Ed.). (2014). *Reflection in action: A guidebook for student affairs professionals and teaching faculty*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.

Museus, S. D. (2014). The culturally engaging campus environments (CECE) model: A new theory of success among racially diverse college student populations. In M.B. Paulsen (Ed.), *Higher education: Handbook of theory and research* (Vol.29, pp. 189-227). Berlin: Springer Science+Business.

Scaife, J. (2010). *Supervising the reflective practitioner: An essential guide to theory and practice*. New York: Routledge.

Schön, D. A. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. New York: Harper Collins.

Solórzano, D. G., & Yosso, T. J. (2002). Critical race methodology: Counter-storytelling as an analytical framework for education research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8(1), 23–44.