

Advocate

They're Talking on Campus...

... ABOUT THE FUTURE OF HIGHER ED

Alarmed by escalating tuition and class sizes and the increasing exclusion of poor and minority students from higher education, hundreds of faculty from campuses across the country have joined the Campaign for the Future of Higher Education.

What's happening in higher ed is simply bad for students—and America, said organizers. Last year in California, 200,000 students were turned away from community colleges and this year it's likely to be another 400,000, noted Ron Norton Reel, president of the California Community College Association (CCA). "We are dimming the lights of our society," he said.

The campaign, which was started by the California Faculty Association but has come to include faculty and allies in 21 states, is organized around seven principles that broadly espouse greater college affordability and accessibility, increasing public investment in higher education, and shared decision-making by faculty, students, and community members.

"Millions of ordinary Americans know that their children's future—and our future as a society—depends on equal access to higher education, and we believe they are willing to work for that future," said Barbara Bowen, president of the City University of New York's union.

"This is a campaign in their name and in the name of every working person, every person of color, every new immigrant whose life has been transformed by the unmistakable experience of a real college education."

For more information, visit www.futureofhighered.org.

Portfolio Teaching

What can learning portfolios add to what you are already teaching your students? A learning portfolio is a collection of materials selected by a student to tell a coherent story of the student's learning.



It revolves around examples of student work, sometimes referred to as artifacts, but a portfolio is more than a free-standing accumulation of student projects and papers.

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STATE BY STATE

What terror was wreaked by your state legislature?

On the Road

WITH CHRISTINE MAITLAND

Our members in Wisconsin have lost a lot, but they are working hard to win back collective bargaining rights and payroll deductions for unions throughout the state.

Recently I was at the Waukesha County Technical College for two weeks working with NEA affiliates, WCTEA and WCESP, whose leaders Lisa Cobb-Baker and Teresa Grimm are planning to contact all their members, get them signed up for dues payment, and recertify the union.

It was painful to watch as our members realize they are losing all of their contract provisions—leaves, benefits, workload, professional development, pay for developing new courses, prep time, just to name a few. Many of these provisions have a direct impact on the quality of education at the colleges, and these colleges are essential to Wisconsin's economic growth and recovery. Their students are trained well for good jobs in auto, industrial arts, nursing, allied health, fire and police, and more.

I also visited Gateway Technical College, where local president, Pat Smoody, is organizing members to participate in the 100th year anniversary celebration for Wisconsin's technical colleges. This local has actively worked with other campus unions to organize members for the tasks at hand.

Everywhere, I was amazed at the resilience and energy of our members. They turned in force for the demonstrations at the Capitol and are now working hard on July elections to recall hostile lawmakers. At the same time they are deeply concerned about the future of their campuses and the quality of education for their students.

—NEA organizational specialist
Christine Maitland

ACTIONLINE NEA

Celebrate!

NEA salutes its Professors of the Year for their commitment and teamwork.

Delena Norris-Tull's students know to pull on their boots before class. "I warn them from the start that we'll be going outside at random times—and random times often are very cold here. This is Montana!" said Norris-Tull, a University of Montana Western science education professor since 2004.

Every class with Norris-Tull is a memorable one, her students say. And it's that passion for quality instruction and hands-on learning that earned the attention of the Council for Advancement and Support of Education and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, whose peer panel chose her as state Professor of the Year.

She is not the only celebrated NEA member. In Kansas, also chosen was Associate Professor Elyn Mulcahy, who has revitalized the science curriculum at Johnson County Community College, while also educating illiterate Somali refugees about maternal health.

And, in New York, SUNY Buffalo's Distinguished Teaching Professor of Chemistry Kenneth Takeuchi was honored. He told the *University of Buffalo Reporter* that on the night before his first class in 1983, he sat in the back row of his empty classroom and thought, "How can I present this information so that if I were sitting in this chair, it would mean something to me? I had to present the science so as to captivate the students' imagination."

Four full scholarships to the 2011 joint POD/HCBU Network conference will be awarded this summer by NEA, thanks to an exciting new partnership between NEA, POD (the Professional and Organizational Development Network,) and the HCBU Faculty Development Network. Through enhanced collaboration,

NEA's Office of Higher Education will be able to provide more professional development opportunities to its members—starting with this conference, which will take place in Atlanta in October, and offer sessions on best practices, new resources, and innovative approaches. Stay tuned for information on how to apply at www.nea.org/he and www.facebook.com/nehighered.



Professor Delena Norris-Tull
Photo courtesy of UMW

Faculty members must be involved in efforts to measure student learning outcomes, said

Mark Smith, NEA Senior Policy Analyst, in a report authored by NEA, AFT, and AAUP and released by the National Institute for Learning Outcome Assessment. The authors also warned against relying on the harmful standardized tests that have simplified and narrowed curriculum in K-12 settings. "As inappropriate as these proposals are in K-12 education, they are even more inappropriate in higher education situations where the goal is not simply to learn content but also to develop critical thinking and interpretive skills," said Smith. To find the paper, visit www.nea.org/he.

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COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY

Follow the Money

As Pell Grants go, so goeth the economy. So how does it make sense for right-wing politicians to cut Pell Grants during this country's financial recession?

Teri Sibenaller, an English and education major at Northern Illinois University, knows she's going to be a great teacher someday—but not if right-wing lawmakers cut short the dreams of millions of Americans who rely on federal Pell Grants to pay tuition.

"It's taken me 10 years to get where I'm at, and there's no way I could be as far as I am without the grant assistance," says Sibenaller, who juggles school, a home-operated business, and the duties of caring for her four children, including an 8-year-old with autism.

But if the U.S. Senate follows the devastating federal budget passed by the House, cutting \$5.6 billion from Pell Grants, lowering the maximum award from \$5,550 to \$3,040, and denying eligibility to 1.4 million current recipients, Sibenaller's dreams would be destroyed.

And it's not just her—that money is a ticket to the middle class for 9.4 million Americans. This is their passage to home ownership, a share in state and federal taxes, and to the skills this country needs to be competitive.

"The sad truth is that this budget proposal is not for the children [or] the working families... It is for the wealthy," wrote NEA's director of government relations, Kim Anderson, in a recent letter to House members.

And it doesn't even make sense.

"It is pennywise and pound-foolish not to support the nearly 10 million Americans who choose to earn their way out of poverty using a Pell Grant to go to college," agreed NEA's part-



Teri Sibenaller and family.

ners at the Student Aid Alliance. Consider that research shows that college graduates are far more likely to earn more money (and pay more taxes) and far less likely to be scrambling for unemployment checks.

Isn't that what this country needs?

Especially during a recession?

"NEA members know the best comprehensive, pro-growth economic strategy is to invest in our students and middle class," Anderson wrote to Senators late last week.

By 2018, the United States will need 22 million new workers with college degrees to meet the burgeoning needs of employers, according to a recent analysis by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce. But it likely will fall short by 3 million—"And that, quite simply, is something we cannot afford," the authors wrote.

New Hope for Dreamers

MARY ANN PACHECO STILL RECALLS

a former student, who had returned to campus after earning a four-year degree in architecture. "I said to her, 'What are your plans for the future?' And she said, 'I don't have a future—because I don't have papers.'"

"Here she is, this beautiful young woman, full of talent and potential. She should be excited to go on and make a difference...and she can't."

These days, Pacheco, a professor at California's Rio Hondo Community College, has new hope for her undocumented students. The DREAM Act, which would provide a path to legal status for college graduates, was reintroduced in Congress in May.

It has the active support of NEA leaders and members who see it as common-sense policy to benefit not just these students but also their country—and this is their country.

"These are students who are going to be making tangible contributions to society," Pacheco said. "We need to exploit that talent potential, and I mean that in the best of ways."

Up to 2.1 million undocumented youth are living in this country but the actual numbers of potential "dreamers" are much smaller—the non-profit Migration Policy Institute estimated last year that about 38 percent of undocumented youth would meet the requirements.

That's because the bill, which also is sponsored by Reps. Howard Berman (D-CA) and Illeana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) in the House, is aimed specifically at students with the greatest potential. To qualify, students must have entered the country when they were 15 or younger, and graduated high school or received a GED. The bill also requires them to complete two years of college or military service, show good moral character, and avoid criminal arrest.

THE 10-MINUTE ACTIVIST

You can help make college affordable—and accessible to all.

Contact your Senator or Representative through the NEA Legislative Action Center.

• To contact your Congressman about DREAM, go here:

<http://capwiz.com/nea/issues/alert/?alertid=33830501>

• To contact your Senator about supporting the middle class, go here:

<http://capwiz.com/nea/issues/alert/?alertid=41929506>

Double Standard

For the second time this year, the National Labor Relations Board has scorned a Catholic college's claims that their religious character should prevent faculty unions.

This time, it took the St. Xavier University Adjunct Faculty Organization just two hours to present its case to NLRB, pointing out that full-time faculty at St. Xavier has been unionized since 1979 without detriment.

The adjuncts' work is clearly "secular," said Tom Suhrbur, an Illinois Education Association organizer who has been working with them.

And NLRB clearly agreed. In its ruling it noted the school's articles of incorporation don't contain any reference to religion, and that none of its funding comes from religious groups. Furthermore, students aren't even required to study Catholicism.

This is really about money, Suhrbur said. Adjuncts haven't received a pay raise since 2006, even as tuition has increased 39 percent during that time. "The sisters of Mercy should have mercy on us!" he said.

Finally!

Remember those East-West University adjuncts? It's been almost a year since the university fired seven of the adjuncts—the ones most active in organizing a new union—and then re-hired them with back pay upon orders of the U.S. Department of Labor.

In May, the NLRB sent out secret ballots for adjuncts to decide whether they will have union representation. Here are two reasons we expect the vote to be counted in June as a resounding yes:

1. While East-West tuition increased 38 percent between 2005 and 2010, adjunct pay was frozen. During the same time, federal tax filings show that the university accumulated a surplus of \$17.5 million.

2. Only 32 percent of incoming freshmen finish the school year, even as the state's average retention rate at not-for-profit colleges is 78 percent. The turnover rate for adjuncts isn't much better. Just 19 of 50 who taught last spring are still there.

Back from the Brink

Faculty at Mount Hood Community College were hours away from the first-ever strike at an Oregon community college when they finally—after more than a year of exhausting negotiations—reached a three-year agreement with college officials in mid-May.

"We...beat back a ferocious assault on the living and teaching standards of our members. Finally we can concentrate on the programs we offer and recruiting new students to MHCC," said Sara Williams, president of the MHCC Faculty Association.

The college had attempted to take away step increases, but lost that battle. The new contract provides for cost-of-living increases and newly enhanced rights on shared governance and job security. In order to maintain programs in the face of cuts to state support, the faculty agreed to greater health insurance costs and new pay rates for summer classes.

The lesson for all in Mount Hood's success is this: Make alliances. The Mount Hood faculty relied on support from OEA, other labor unions in the Multnomah County area, and especially their students. "Without the support of our students and the student government we would not have the contract we have today," Williams said.

Do you have to be rich to go to college in Pennsylvania?



An unbelievable 50 percent overall cut in funds for higher education is what Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Corbett laid on the table this spring. But faculty, staff and students have simply refused to accept it. What would happen to quality of education? How could working families afford it? On March 28 and May 3, Pennsylvanians rallied for a more responsible budget. Days later, House Republicans promised to reduce cuts to 15 percent—but the battle isn't over yet.

Quote of the Month

"You can't solve a problem if one side chooses to impose its position without compromise. That leaves the other party with the sole option of taking its own unilateral action."

—Natasha Zaretsky, history professor at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, where labor leaders filed an intent to strike after months of fruitless negotiations with a contemptuous Board of Trustees.

Thriving in Academe

Teaching Through Portfolios

More than a pile of papers: Portfolios represent reflection

BY WAYNE JACOBSON AND JEAN FLORMAN, UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

What can learning portfolios add to what you already are teaching your students?

A learning portfolio is a collection of materials selected by a student to tell a coherent story of the student's learning. It revolves around examples of student work, sometimes referred to as artifacts, but a portfolio is more than a free-standing accumulation of student projects and papers. Artifacts in a portfolio are purposefully selected and organized to demonstrate achievement of particular learning outcomes, and they are accompanied by student reflection and faculty feedback on the learning that the artifacts represent.

The central focus of a learning portfolio is, as the name suggests, student learning. The portfolio gives faculty members a vehicle for



prompting, guiding, and assessing student learning, and it gives students significant responsibility for identifying and articulating what they have learned. But all this emphasis on learning can make it easy to forget that student learning portfolios are first of all a teaching tool. Without deliberate steps to teach through portfolios, you may find that portfolios quickly become little more than arbitrary collections of student work. As with any other tool, its value depends on its use.

This issue of *Thriving in Academe* explores what you can teach your students through portfolios, and offers steps you can take to begin using learning portfolios to support your teaching.



MEET WAYNE JACOBSON AND JEAN FLORMAN

Wayne Jacobson is Assessment Coordinator at the University of Iowa. Wayne has used portfolios as a means for supporting student learning, developing faculty and graduate student teaching, and assessing academic courses. He holds a Ph.D. in Adult Education from the University of Wisconsin—Madison. **Jean Florman** is Director of the University of Iowa Center for Teaching. Jean collaborates with faculty, staff, and teaching assistants to support teaching excellence throughout the university. Before joining the Center, she was a writer and public radio producer and taught creative nonfiction at Iowa. She has a bachelor's degree in anthropology and art history from Cornell University and a Master's degree in anthropology and a JD degree from the University of Arizona.

Tales from Real Life

LOOKING IN THE MIRROR

RACHEL MARIE-CRANE WILLIAMS

says learning portfolios provide a unique window into student learning. Even more, they serve as a professional development opportunity for instructors, who scaffold new critical thinking assignments and practice new ways to engage in frequent, individualized assessment of student learning.

"As students create their learning portfolios they have to make decisions about what documentation to include," says Williams, an associate professor of art and art history and of education at The University of Iowa. "They also must consciously reflect on the process and scope of their learning across time."

Decision making and reflection hone students' cognitive thinking skills, and the framework of the learning portfolio brings to light the full scope of their learning. Williams adds that implementing this pedagogical tool also benefits instructors.

"Because learning portfolios grow incrementally and entail continuous feedback, they let me understand all the chords students are able to strike as well as the skills they still need to develop," says Williams, who has been centrally involved in the development of Iowa's electronic learning portfolio system, ifolio. "And because I can better see how my teaching is manifested across the experience of all my students, learning portfolios help my own professional growth."

—Jean Florman
University of Iowa

Teaching Through Portfolios

What can learning portfolios add to what you are already teaching your students?

by Wayne Jacobson

A learning portfolio is a collection of materials selected by a student to tell a coherent story of the student's learning. A student learning portfolio typically contains:

- Artifacts of student learning selected by the student to demonstrate achievement of particular learning outcomes. Possibilities include term papers, design projects, recordings, video clips, or other materials students produce to document their learning.
- Student reflective comments on the artifacts, which might address what an artifact represents, why it was selected for the portfolio, or other questions posed by faculty.
- Faculty input, including responses to students' reflective comments and also feedback students have received on the artifacts they selected.

For students, everything in the portfolio revolves around learning: It brings together evidence of their learning, reflections on what they have learned, and a record of engagement with faculty about their learning. For faculty, however, portfolios are best thought of in terms of what they let you teach. What can learning portfolios add to what you are already teaching your students?

Teaching students to see a bigger picture

It's not uncommon for students to see their college learning experiences as a series of disconnected activities and requirements. Portfolios challenge students to consider how the many diverse parts contribute to a larger whole. In portfolios, students reflect on the work they have done in relation to broader goals for learning, not simply as a means to completing a course requirement or achieving a grade.

When students don't view particular learning experiences in a larger context, they see little reason even to keep copies of their completed work, much less to reflect on what they have learned so they can integrate it into future learning. Completed work becomes disposable, along with any faculty input students have received on it, when it has no apparent bearing on further efforts to learn.

Portfolios can help you teach students to see a bigger picture by providing a structure for collecting student work over time, along

with faculty input they have received, and their own reflections on what they have learned. The goal is not only to maintain a record of what students have accomplished but also to put it in context ("What learning does it represent?") and to set the stage for future learning ("Where to next?"). This structure establishes the expectation that the work students are doing now has value for both the immediate assignment and the larger context of learning across assignments and over time.

Teaching students to tell their own story of learning and change over time

When you ask students to think back on what they learned in a course, many will answer with a course title or list of topics; others may respond by telling you about their grades. Some might just say, "I don't know" or "Not much."

It's possible that these kinds of responses say something about a student's level of engagement or the quality of a course, but they might also reflect the simple fact that we don't give students very much practice thinking about their learning in terms of how it has changed them. It's a rare student who independently develops the frames of reference that make it possible to realize, "This course has opened my mind to..." or "This experience has changed the way I think about..."

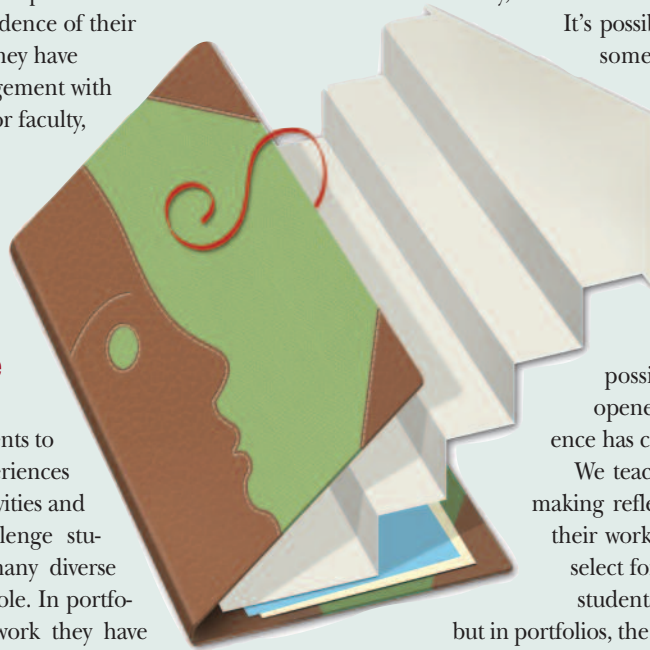
We teach students to tell their own story by making reflection on learning a routine part of their work for a course. Artifacts that students select for their portfolios represent work that students did and outcomes of their learning;

but in portfolios, the artifacts do not speak for themselves. The answer to the question, "What did you learn?," is found in a student's description of what an artifact represents.

Teaching students to critically reflect on their learning

Student reflection and self-assessment play a prominent role in portfolios, but students are not likely to become skillful at these complex meta-cognitive practices simply because the portfolio provides a space for them. Indeed, few things are more challenging for novice learners than judging the quality of their own learning.

Portfolios offer two kinds of opportunities for you to teach students to critically reflect: First, as students select artifacts to



include in a portfolio, you can guide their reflections on the artifacts by having them respond to specific questions about what an artifact represents—directing them to articulate, for example, what they learned as they worked on it, why they have selected it to demonstrate achievement of a particular learning goal, or how they think it will contribute to their ongoing learning. Students can be asked to reflect in these ways even without a portfolio, but the structure of a portfolio provides a natural opportunity to facilitate student reflection as one component of the assignment itself.

Second, the interaction you have with students through the portfolio communicates both your feedback on the quality of student work and your perspective on students' reflective comments. Left to themselves, students are not necessarily insightful in all their reflections; student self-assessments are not necessarily accurate or even realistic. As you respond to students in their portfolios and raise questions that prompt them to think further, you are modeling your own expert judgment and you are mentoring students in the ability to view their work with a critical eye so that they can learn to recognize areas for further learning.

Teaching students to see their part in the teaching and learning process

Through portfolios, students become partners in documenting, assessing, and improving their own learning. Faculty remain

the expert partners, to be sure—providing expertise in the knowledge and skills of the discipline, and also the feedback and mentoring that teach students how well they are learning and what they can do to improve. But no one wants students to think that faculty expertise alone determines what students learn.

Portfolios help us teach students to recognize that they need to be active participants in their learning, not simply passive recipients of knowledge distributed by faculty members. When we give students an explicit structure and specific tasks that ask them to account for their learning, we are challenging them not to depend solely on us (or, to be more precise, the grades they earn from us) to tell them if they learned something or not. Portfolios confront students with the responsibility of identifying and explaining the quality of learning that they see in their work.

In many of our courses, we hope that students are acquiring both a body of knowledge and the capacity to become lifelong, independent learners and thinkers. However, we are usually much more intentional about teaching students the body of knowledge. Development of capacity for learning and thinking is often incidental, at best. Portfolios provide an opportunity to make the learning and thinking processes more explicit as well—both to us and to the students—so that these capacities can also be subject to review, feedback, and further development as students continue to learn.

“In portfolios we ask students to reflect, to make connections, to take ownership, and to be articulate about their own learning.”

BEST PRACTICES

Prompting Meaningful Reflections

by **Jean Florman** One way instructors can prompt more meaningful reflections is to introduce reflective processes in the classroom. Through explicit class discussion and modeling of reflective practices, students see that reflections must connect course content to insights about their own learning.

One faculty member helps students understand reflection exercises by inviting students to respond to a reflection she has written. The discussion helps them understand that reflection requires careful thought and that responses to it are part of a dialogic process, not simply a confirmation that reflections are “right” or “wrong.”

Reflections are necessarily personal and may venture beyond the assigned task. Well-phrased reflection questions can help students focus on academic material, but their reflections still may veer off-topic. Even instructors who embrace creative or emotional reflections may struggle to respond. One experienced instructor encourages his peers to briefly acknowledge that emotional content, but, focus on elements of the reflection where they can challenge students to think more deeply about their learning process, the broader context of their learning, or



future implications of their learning. The journalist’s “W questions” serve well: “What have you learned, how have you learned it, and why does it matter?”

Finally, like the learning it represents, the learning portfolio is a work-in-progress. As they leave the classroom for the last time, students should receive a question that challenges them to think about where their learning can take them next: “What did you learn through your portfolio that will help you continue learning in the future?”

Resources

For a comprehensive overview of learning portfolios numerous case studies, and a wealth of practical materials, see:

Zubizarreta, J. (2009). *The Learning Portfolio: Reflective Practice for Improving Student Learning* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Additional recommended resources on teaching through portfolios include:

Association for Authentic, Experiential, and Evidence Based-Learning (AAEBL) www.aaebl.org/ (retrieved Jan. 12, 2011).

Chen, H. L., & Light, T. P. (2010). *Electronic portfolios and student success: Effectiveness, efficiency, and learning*. Washington DC: American Association of Colleges and Universities.

Labissiere, Y., & Reynolds, C. (2004). Using electronic portfolios as a pedagogical practice to enhance student learning. *Inventio* 2(6).

http://doit.gmu.edu/inventio/issues/Fall_2004/Reynolds_1.html (retrieved Jan. 12, 2011).

Miller, R., & Morgaine, W. (2009). The benefits of e-portfolios for students and faculty in their own words. *Peer Review*, 11(1).

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Science Education Resource Center, Carleton College. Assessment by Portfolio. <http://serc.carleton.edu/NAGTWorkshops/assess/portfolios.html> (retrieved Jan. 12, 2011).

Zubizarreta, J. (2008). IDEA Paper #44: The Learning Portfolio: A Powerful Idea for Significant Learning. Manhattan, KS: The IDEA Center. www.theideacenter.org/IDEAPaper44 (retrieved Jan. 12, 2011).

ISSUES TO CONSIDER

Learning Portfolios

Anyone who is teaching through portfolios for the first time should allow some margin for adjusting to the new opportunities and challenges that portfolios bring.

by *Wayne Jacobson*

Learning (About Learning) Curve

Portfolios require students to think differently about learning. Many are used to thinking of college as a set of unrelated experiences and assignments that they have to complete, usually in order to meet someone else's expectations. In portfolios we ask them to reflect, to make connections, to take ownership, and to be articulate about their own learning and development.

These are all skills that need to be learned. Most undergraduates are relatively inexperienced at thinking about their learning in these ways, and they won't necessarily be good at it or see the value right away. Many will need feedback, coaching, and practice on this dimension of the portfolio in addition to your input on the artifacts they include.

Where to Start

Portfolios may require some learning and practice for faculty as well. For faculty members who are new to teaching through portfolios, it may take some time to adapt assignments, develop reflective writing prompts, and devise ways of responding to student work that take best advantage of what portfolios can offer.

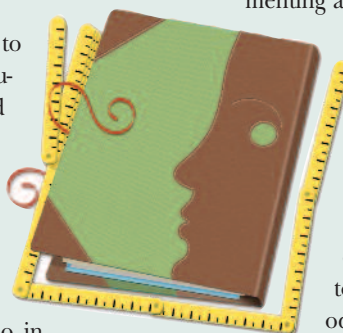
John Zubizarreta recommends starting

small: Pilot portfolio projects around specific assignments before you try to redesign an entire course around portfolios. Make portfolios one portion of a course grade rather than the sole basis for student evaluation. Design rubrics that facilitate responding to student portfolios by giving you a common frame of reference for looking at each student's portfolio entries. (For more suggestions on implementing and managing learning portfolios, see Zubizarreta and other materials cited in the Resources.)

Costs and Benefits

Portfolios create opportunities for engaging with students in ways that are difficult to sustain through other methods for identifying student learning (such as objective exams, single-draft term papers, or stand-alone projects that are independent of other student coursework).

Portfolios use your time differently, and also set the stage for achieving different types of goals with your students. If your goals include helping students become reflective, independent learners who can take part in examining the quality of their learning and selecting next steps for further development, then learning portfolios may be one of the most effective, efficient teaching strategies available.



THRIVING IN ACADEME

Thriving in Academe is a joint project of the National Education Association and the Professional and Organizational Development Network www.podnetwork.org in Higher Education. This section is intended to promote ever more effective teaching and learning in higher education through dialogue among colleagues. The opinions of this feature are solely the authors' and do not reflect the views of either organization. For more information contact the editor, Douglas Robertson, (drobert@fiu.edu) at Florida International University or Mary Ellen Flannery (MFlannery@nea.org) at NEA.

Say What You Like!

In an important ruling for academic freedom, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit has asserted the free-speech rights of faculty at public institutions and cleared up lingering questions from the landmark case, *Garcetti v. Ceballos*.

In that previous case, the U.S. Supreme Court held that a public employee speaking “pursuant to [his] professional duties,” is entitled to no First Amendment protection. But it left open the question whether the Constitution protects college professors when they are engaged in “scholarship or teaching.”

In this new case, which involved a prominent conservative commentator denied tenure because of his writings (*Adams v. Trustees of the University of North Carolina–Wilmington*), the appeals court held that the university had acted wrongly.

“Applying *Garcetti* to the academic work of a public-university faculty member...could place beyond the reach of First Amendment protection many forms of public speech or service,” the appellate panel’s unanimous decision says. “That would not appear to be what *Garcetti* intended, nor is it consistent with our long-standing recognition that no individual loses his ability to speak as a private citizen by virtue of public employment.”

The Billionaire Effect

What’s the price of academic freedom? At Florida State University, it looks like \$1.5 million—or the amount donated by a right-wing billionaire who, in return, gets a final say in faculty hiring.

The contract between the Charles G. Koch Charitable Foundation – and yes, that is the same Koch who bankrolled the anti-union agenda in Wisconsin – calls for two endowed positions to “promote political economy and the free enterprise” in the FSU economics department. And, according to the *St. Petersburg Times*, the agreement gives Koch’s representatives the power to reject candidates that a faculty panel has recommended.

“This is an egregious example of a public university being willing to sell itself for next to nothing,” said Jennifer Washburn, author of the book *University Inc.*, who has received dozens of similar contracts, to *The Times*.

But it’s not the only example. Over the past two years, state higher education funding decreased in 35 states. Forced to cut majors, programs, and full-time faculty positions, an increasing number of institutions are willing to meet on the crossroads with politically motivated donors, who clearly hope their money will buy influence in a university’s classrooms and curriculum.

By the Numbers

69

That’s the percentage of college presidents who told the Pew Research Center that they would prefer a majority of their faculty be adjunct or short-term contractors. Just a quarter said they would prefer full-time, tenured faculty.

Interestingly, support for tenure or long-term contracts was highest among college leaders who had previously served as faculty. No doubt that’s because they understand the real costs of contingency: the loss of academic freedom and a living wage.

The survey results, which were commissioned in part by *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, point to the increased need for adjunct faculty to organize in unions and collectively demand the kind of working conditions that also would benefit their students.

Should we continue
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with tax breaks
that needlessly cost
billions of dollars
each year...



Oil & Gas Tax Breaks

...or enrich
the minds
of all of our students
by ensuring
they have
what they need
to learn?

Financial Aid for Students in Need

here is the average increase in Federal Pell Grants if the \$3.5 billion in unnecessary tax breaks was invested in students instead**...

State	\$66.6 million
Institution	\$655,000
Student	\$360



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The State of Higher Education

Between budget cuts and partisan blows to union rights, higher education took a few hits in recent state legislative sessions. But well-organized lobbying efforts by thousands of NEA members also triumphed over some of the worst. Here are just a few things you should know:

California. One bright spot is the passage of a state DREAM act, which would allow undocumented California students to apply for college financial aid. But the big story in California is the budget, as always. More than \$20 billion has been cut from education in the past three years and more is likely on its way. Fight back at www.castateofemergency.com.

Florida. A potentially devastating bill that would have automatically decertified all faculty unions without 50 percent membership by July 1, failed, as did another anti-union bill to prohibit automatic dues deduction. (Kudos to the hard work by United Faculty of Florida!) But legislators did strike a deal on pensions—demanding that educators cut their take-home pay by 3 percent to fund the state retirement system.

Illinois. Last year, the legislature asked the Illinois Board of Higher Education to study financing and performance pay issues. Fortunately, an Illinois Education Association member served on that special commission and advocated powerfully that performance measures be tailored to the mission of each university and include retention and not just graduation rates. Now, with the legislature's recent approval of that report, those measures will be developed with all interested groups, including IEA.

Michigan. Several dangerous bills, some already passed by the state House, would gut collective bargaining rights. Another, pending on the Senate floor at press time, would require public employees to pay a whopping 20 percent of health insurance costs. And that 15 percent budget cut? Outrageous. (To learn more and take action, visit the "bill tracker" at www.mea.org.)

New York. New York's governor has cut the budget for the State University of New York six times over the past two years. Now, he wants another \$100 million, which would bring total cuts to nearly a third of the operating budget. What do you think that means for class sizes, programs, and majors? Ask legislators to stop the cuts at www.uupinfo.org/take_action.html.

Ohio. Where to begin? Oh, Ohio.... Read more on page 12.

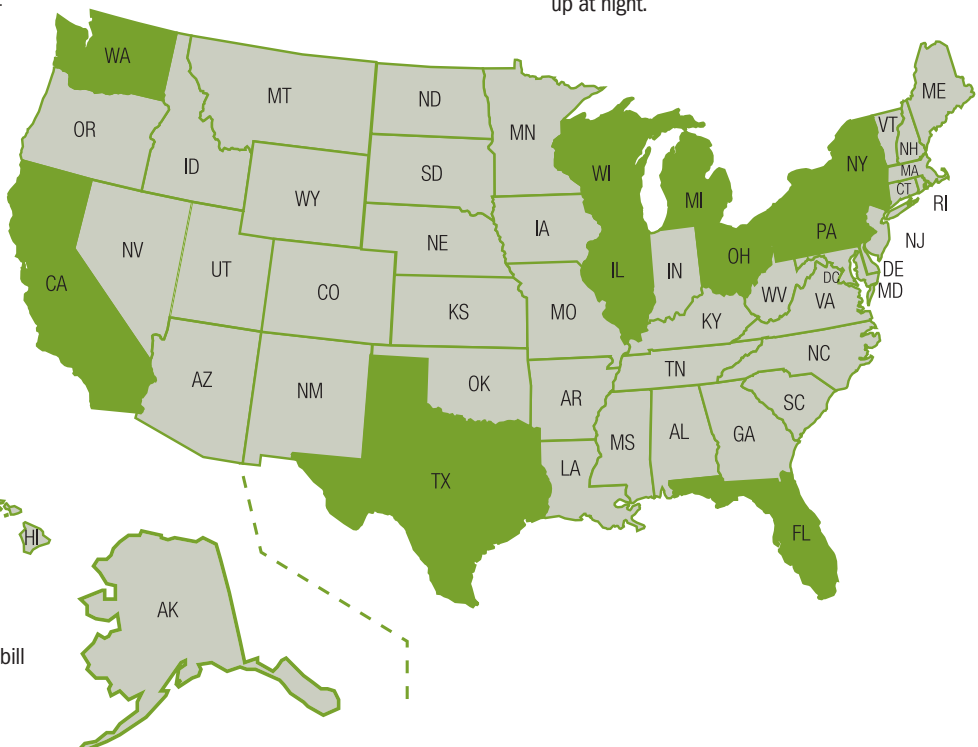
Pennsylvania. That 50 percent budget cut proposed by Gov. Tom Corbett would be sheer devastation to community colleges and four-year campuses. While the House Republicans are looking at smaller (but still sizable) cuts, the budget hasn't yet been passed.

Texas. Gov. Rick Perry wants his state universities to offer a \$10,000 degree—but would it be worth the paper it's printed on? At the same time, his

budget proposal would cut nearly \$100 million from each of the state's two flagship universities, close four community colleges, and cut state financial aid dramatically. But, as of press time, a deal hadn't yet been struck.

Washington. Is three years as good as four? A newly signed law, which goes into effect in July, authorizes Washington's colleges to create three-year baccalaureate degrees. The challenge, as one United Faculty of Washington State blogger points out, is that the point of the law "is not [to] improv[e] the quality of higher education, but simply mak[e] it easier for qualified students to obtain degrees more quickly."

Wisconsin. Gov. Scott Walker and his partisan posse have proved over and over again that they simply don't care about working families. Without the need-based grants that Walker is cutting, many middle-class students will be cut out of college. But don't imagine that keeps him up at night.



Opinion

Letters

FEAR AND (SELF) LOATHING IN ACADEMIA

As I read in the February 2011 issue of *The Advocate*, I was struck by the juxtaposition of two pieces. While Tom Auxter discussed the threats faced by teachers' unions (and by extension teachers themselves,) Maria Neuda discussed methods for teaching adult students, saying she worries about teachers creating a "hierarchy" in the classroom that "reinforces our students' feelings of incompetence."

While I agree that students should feel safe in a classroom and that learning should be interesting, I am afraid that the trend toward downplaying teacher expertise and authority has led to the kinds of threats that Auxter discussed. If we describe our own education and expertise as "parad[ing] our knowledge," why should people outside the profession respect us?

As we explore the best ways to help students learn, I would recommend that we do so in a manner that does not denigrate teaching.

In a classroom, I have the most knowledge of the subject, the most experience presenting it, and the most passion for it. I recognize and, yes, even take pride in those factors. I am not the naked emperor to which Neuda alludes.

—Susan Todd
Jefferson College
Hillsboro, Missouri



NEA's Office of Higher Education is now on Facebook. To keep up with current news and discuss events with your colleagues, find us at www.facebook.com/nehighered.

SPEAKING OUT

The War on Higher Ed in Ohio

The conservative attack on public sector workers and their unions is a national effort, but in Ohio, Senate Bill 5 (SB5) targets higher education faculty in particular.

Along with limiting the bargaining rights of teachers, firefighters, police officers, and public health workers, SB5 includes language that makes faculty ineligible to be part of a bargaining unit. It states: "any faculty who, individually or through a faculty senate or like organization, participate in the governance of the institution, are involved in personnel decisions... and determination of educational policies related to admissions, curriculum, subject matter, and methods of instruction and research are management level employees." This would, in effect, end collective bargaining for faculty across the state.

At the same time, Gov. John Kasich has proposed a plan to establish "charter universities," which would receive less state support and be exempt from some state higher education regulations. While it's unclear exactly how this would affect faculty and students, university leaders and the new Chancellor of Ohio's higher education system, Jim Petro, tout the increased flexibility the charter model would provide. As we

noted when we testified against SB5 in February, "flexibility" often means the ability to rely more heavily on part-time and contingent workers resulting in a lower comment to the institution and to its students. The term can also provide cover for arbitrary, capricious, and discriminatory behavior by administrators.

If SB5 has a positive side, it's this: it has led many faculty to become more active than ever, both in the fight against the bill and in their unions. At Youngstown State University, where we teach, more YSU-OEA members are attending union meetings, and 75 faculty from across campus are collecting signatures to put a referendum to overturn SB5 on the ballot in November. Faculty have also attended and spoken at local rallies against the bill. By motivating us to stand up for our rights, the attack on public sector unions may inadvertently strengthen the higher education labor movement here.

If SB5 has a positive side, it's this: it has led many faculty to become more active than ever.



John Russo is Labor Studies Professor and former president and chief negotiator of YSU-OEA. Both gave formal testimony opposing Ohio SB5 of the OEA's higher education units.

Sherry Linkon is a professor in the English Department at Youngstown State University and 2003 Ohio Professor of the Year.