ePortfolio/FYE Academies

collect　　　select　　　reflect　　　connect

LaGuardia Community College
Poster Session Materials
Carnegie Foundation/AACU ILP Project
Summer 2004 Meeting

Background:　In 2002-3, a dozen LaGuardia faculty in a pilot program tested the viability of Electronic Student Portfolios at LaGuardia.　Over 1,100 students in a range of courses began the process of creating ePortfolios, and their achievements have been exciting.　The creativity and hard work of pilot participants—faculty, staff, and students—has generated crucial insight into this new learning and assessment tool.　These insights guided the College in the process of selecting a new, easy-to-use tool for ePortfolio creation and management.　In addition, they have informed the planning of the next phase of the project, which will lead to broader integration into the LaGuardia student experience.

Bringing together the best of LaGuardia's history—drawing on the college's expertise around learning communities, Basic Skills instruction and First Year Experience—with the promising new practice of ePortfolio Instruction, the First Year Academies began.

In 2003-04, 20 faculty from around the college met to begin planning LaGuardia's new First Year Academies for Business and Technology.　When fully operational the First Year Academies will encompass four thematically linked courses:　New Student Seminar, Fundamentals of Professional Advancement (a Cooperative Education course), a Specialized Basic Skills course, and an Introductory Course in the appropriate major.　Developed by a faculty committee, the Academy structure will provide students with a more cohesive academic experience and will allow basic- skills students to move more quickly toward substantial engagement with content courses.

In the pilot, faculty had the opportunity to work together to create linked courses, with shared assignments and goals across the curriculum.　Faculty also developed co-curricular activities and shared in the development of a new ePortfolio tutoring mechanism called "Studio Hour."

When the program is fully operational, new students will select one of three academies (Technology/Business, Liberal Arts, or Allied Health and Sciences) and take courses designed by faculty to reflect the themes of that Academy.　For example, students in the Business/Technology Academy will take New Student Seminar for Business/Technology in their first semester; in their second semester, they'll take a Fundamentals of Professional Advancement Seminar for Business/Technology students.　If they need basic skills courses, they'll take, for example, an ENG099 specially themed for Business/Technology.　Their Introduction to Computers course or Introduction to Business course will then be able to build on and reinforce the foundation laid in these other Academy courses.

New ePortfolio Software:　We are currently beginning to use a new system (designed by Concord Inc., creators of the Masterfile content management system) that will be easier for students and faculty to learn.　The Concord system interfaces directly with Blackboard, and will

provide a much more robust information management system. This will be crucial as the initiative expands.

ePortfolios in the First Year Experience: ePortfolio is an integral element of the Academy structure. Faculty in each of the four Academy courses require students to deposit a piece of work into their "Collection," a virtual filing cabinet where students collect work over the course of their tenure at the college. They also deposit work in "My Assessments," which will serve, beginning in 2005, as a way for the college to more effectively manage program assessment.

During a "Studio Hour" associated with the Academy, students are trained in how to use the ePortfolio software and get help from ePortfolio Consultants (senior STMs from the Center for Teaching and Learning) as they build their websites. Their websites, differently from their collection areas, bring together personal narrative, reflection, and examples of student work.

Launching the Academies. In 2003-4, a cohort of twenty faculty met for a year long planning and development process culminating in the Spring 2004 pilot of four Academies. These faculty will continue teaching six Academies in Fall 2004. In Fall 2004, a new cohort of twenty faculty will join the faculty development process to begin work on the new Liberal Arts and Allied Health Academies.