**A New Penn State Society for Engaged Students**

A new engagement society will recognize student achievement in all areas of engagement. The society should be named with input from students and reflect the history and/or values of the University. This engaged student society will play an important role in educating students about pathways and opportunities for student engagement and will provide important motivational incentives to encourage continued and amplified involvement in student engagement activities.

A critical component of the society’s evaluation and assessment of student achievement will involve requiring students to document their activities and to demonstrate (through reflective writing) how they have constructed meaning from their experiences. Those who provide staff support for the society will play an important role in both tracking and recognizing student achievement.

To support these efforts, a steering committee will be created to provide University-wide oversight and coordination of the initiative, to continue the development and enhancement of the program, and to provide advocacy for student engagement. The committee will be convened by the vice presidents from Outreach and Online Education, Undergraduate Education, and Student Affairs (or their designees), and its membership should include academic, administrative, campus, and student representatives. (Its suggested composition is two deans; three faculty members (one from a campus); representatives from Undergraduate Education, Outreach and Online Education, the Commonwealth Campuses Office, and Student Affairs; three Chancellors; and students from UPUA and CCSG.)

**Defining Student Engagement**

At Penn State, student engagement includes both curricular and co-curricular activities that contribute to students’ intellectual, personal, and social development, foster integration into university life, add distinction and value to a Penn State undergraduate experience, and contribute to the continued success of Penn State graduates as citizens and leaders across the state, the nation, and the world.

**Engagement Framework**

Penn State’s domains for student engagement include curricular and co-curricular opportunities in five areas of involvement: global, University, community, creative expression and, experiential learning. Examples of each domain are provided on the following chart. It is important to note that opportunities for engagement need to be available for *all* of Penn State’s students, regardless of a student’s geographic location, enrollment status (i.e., full- or part-time), life/work commitments, or financial situation.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Domains of Involvement** | **Curricular Examples** | **Cocurricular Examples** |
| **Global** | Study abroad, study away, embedded course, language proficiency | Attendance at cultural events or programs, cultural immersion experience, conversation partner, alternative spring break |
| **University** | Academic committees, faculty senate, campus lectures, communications media | Student government, journalism, student clubs, Science Lion Pride |
| **Community** | Service learning, tutoring, Collegiate 4-H, community-based research | Volunteerism, philanthropy, political involvement |
| **Creative Expression** | Performing arts field trips, elective courses in performing and visual arts; developing museum exhibits; engineering and architectural design | Attendance at theatre, recital, etc.; participation in a performing arts club; directing a performance; spoken word |
| **Experiential Learning** | Internship, co-op, practicum, research, entrepreneurship | RA, peer mentor, orientation leader, related work experience |

**Requirements Society Membership**

To become a member of the engagement honor society at Penn State, the student must satisfy each of the areas of achievement described below (Activities, Reflection, and Transcript).

1. ACTIVITIES  
  
The student must complete a minimum of eight *unique, post-high school* activities that show a balance across the five engagement domains (i.e., at least 1 activity from each domain): global, University, community, creative expression, and experiential learning.

2. REFLECTION  
  
The student must produce an ePortfolio that contains evidence of reflection across the activities that have participated in, describing the personal how these activities demonstrate **IMPACT** on other stakeholders (e.g., human health and happiness, environmental quality, economic well-being for current and future generations), , **INNOVATION** in engaging in the activity so that it optimizes impact on all stakeholders, and **PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION** (e.g., going out of one’s comfort zone, gaining a broader perspective, questioning one’s assumptions and values) with regard to the following four engagement outcomes:

* 1. **Multicultural Awareness/Diversity**
     1. Students will demonstrate sensitivity toward human differences and apply diverse perspectives to complex subjects.
  2. **Civic Responsibility**
     1. Students will identify and describe their personal civic identity.
     2. Students will demonstrate an ability to work collaboratively and effectively within community contexts and structures to achieve a civic aim.
  3. **Ethical Behavior**
     1. Students will be able to apply knowledge and abilities to solve societal problems in ethical ways.
     2. Students will develop a sense of personal integrity and clarify their personal values.
  4. **Systems Thinking**
     1. Students will use a variety of inquiry strategies incorporating multiple views to make value judgments, solve problems, answer questions, and generate new understandings.
     2. Students will demonstrate the ability to analyze and synthesize ideas, apply theories, and evaluate information to solve problems.

In addition, the ePortfolio must also contain a final synthesis statement that explains how their experiences meet the requirements of the engagement honor society, across all activities and learning outcomes, and how they will sustain their engagement beyond their undergraduate career.

3. TRANSCRIPT  
  
The student must have achieved a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5 at the time they submit their ePortfolio for engagement honor society membership consideration.

**Society Implementation**

1. The University-wide Steering Committee will name a coordinating council to oversee the engagement honor society. This coordinating council will
   1. Provide oversight and coordination of the society
   2. Continue to develop and enhance the program, working with domain-specific experts to determine criteria and examples of activities that meet the criteria for each of the five domains.
   3. Serve as a resource for society academic advisors who seek clarification or otherwise have questions about what activities might “count” for a given domain.
   4. Market the program to students and faculty
   5. Consult with specially-designated academic advisors who work in support of the society
2. All Penn State academic advisers will be given the opportunity to become trained and to serve as engagement honor society academic advisers. These individuals will serve as the primary point of contact between students and the society, helping students reach their goal of becoming engagement honor society members.
3. Pathway to society membership:  
   1. Students would be introduced to the engagement honor society as soon as they arrive (orientation, FYS, etc.) and can opt in at any time prior to their final semester (last 12 credits) before graduation by filing an *Intent to Participate* to an engagement honor society advisor. This society will initially focus on degree-seeking, undergraduate students only.
   2. Students who complete the *Intent to Participate* will be considered society “aspirants.” These students will be identified publicly and provided special access to Society alumni and special events, added to a Society mailing list for news and announcements, etc. They will also be assigned to an engagement honor society academic advisor who will serve as a guide and resource throughout the student’s engagement pathway.
   3. Via an ePortfolio tool/template created for the engagement honor society, interested students will provide documentation and reflection of each applicable domain activity they complete. This tool will help students track their progress toward society requirements. Many curricular activities, such as completion of specially designated courses, would ideally be automatically populated in a student’s portfolio through integration with LionPATH.
   4. Students aspiring to be Society members will submit their e-portfolio and a copy of their current transcript to an engagement honor society academic advisor no sooner than their last semester of study prior to graduation (or last 12 credits for part-time students). The advisor will then review the student’s submission to make sure all requirements have been met and will inform the applicant of his/her status no later than four weeks prior to commencement.
4. Society membership will be noted on the academic transcript and acknowledged at graduation.
5. Society alumni will be encouraged to continue an active relationship with the Society beyond graduation. Opportunities will be available to interact with current aspiring students, engaging in activities, communicate through a LinkedIn group and/or a group within the Alumni Society, etc.