Applied Inquiry: Neighborhood-Based Student Research

Research to Action Symposium: Sustainable Neighborhoods
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Freshman Inquiry: Portland
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Topics
Students are working in groups to create multi-media projects based on six subtopics in the Lents/Foster-Green EcoDistrict:

• Economic Development
• Watershed
• Food
• Education
• Urban Form/Public Space
• Housing

Multi-Media Project Elements:

Library and Archival Research
Interviews
Observations
Photographs
Maps
Project Outcomes
This project connects to all four University Studies Goals as students practice:

- Developing written, oral, and quantitative **communication** skill. Students will create a narrative or focus for their topics, analyze data on their topics, and present information in a dynamic and engaging format.

- Using **critical thinking** skills. Students will analyze information, make decisions based on evidence, address problems they might face, and synthesize materials for their final projects.

- Encountering a **variety of human experiences and points of view**. Students will develop listening skills and further their appreciation for the complexity of human experience.

- Expanding their understanding of how **collective and individual choices** affect individuals and communities.
Freshman Inquiry: Sustainability
J.R. “Jones” Estes

• Students are working in small groups to create, organize, conduct, and document a culture jam (an activity that disrupts dominant culture norms and assumptions).
• Students try on the role of Activist Scholars.
• Projects are informed by research on their topic as well as research on social activism.
• Example Jam topics include:
  – Faces of homelessness.
  – Natural gas is “clean energy.”
  – Oil company media campaigns.
  – Devaluation of arts education.
This project requires students to:

• Connect and extend knowledge (facts, theories) from class texts to civic engagement and to their participation in civic life.

• Demonstrate their ability and commitment to collaboratively work across and within community contexts and structures to achieve civic aim.

• Provide evidence of their experience in civic-engagement activities and describe what they learned about themselves as it relates to a reinforced and clarified sense of civic identity and continued commitment to public action.

• Demonstrate initiative in team leadership of innovative/creative civic engagement activities, accompanied by reflective insights/analysis about the aims and accomplishments of their actions.

• Actively seek out untested or risky directions/approaches while developing a logical, consistent plan to solve problems, recognize consequences of solution, and articulating reasons for choices.
UNST Goals

Inquiry and Critical Thinking
Students will learn various modes of inquiry through interdisciplinary curricula—problem-posing, investigating, conceptualizing—in order to become active, self-motivated, and empowered learners.

Communication
Students will enhance their capacity to communicate in various ways—writing, graphics, numeracy, and other visual and oral means—to collaborate effectively with others in group work, and to be competent in appropriate communication technologies.

The Diversity of Human Experience
Students will enhance their appreciation for and understanding of the rich complexity of the human experience through the study of differences in ethnic and cultural perspectives, class, race, gender, sexual orientation, and ability.

Ethics and Social Responsibility
Students will expand their understanding of the impact and value of individuals and their choices on society, both intellectually and socially, through group projects and collaboration in learning communities.