Faculty-Student Collaborative Action Seminar in Urban University-Community Relations: Penn and West Philadelphia as a Case Study in Progress

What can Penn do to significantly improve the quality of education in West Philadelphia and simultaneously improve the quality of education of its undergraduates?

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Theresa Simmonds (tesimmonds@verizon.net)

(Provisional syllabus; to be developed by students and faculty as the seminar progresses)

Seminar Goals:

One of the short term goals of the seminar is to help stimulate a radical transformation of the Penn undergraduate experience – a transformation in which undergraduates would, in the first instance, significantly, appropriately, and actively participate in the construction and operation of the seminars and courses in which they are members, and secondarily, in the construction and operation of all aspects of the undergraduate experience. Another goal of the seminar is to help students develop their interactive, democratic, empathetic, and altruistic values.

The main long term goal of the seminar, however, is to significantly contribute to the revolutionary transformation of universities as the primary agents to pragmatically develop participatory democracy in order to help transform American society into a truly collaborative, participatory, and democratic society.

Though the term participatory democracy is frequently used, few students are well acquainted with the term and really understand what the concept and theory mean. To remedy that situation for the members of this seminar, we will spend significant time clarifying the concept of participatory democracy through our readings and seminar discussions.
| **Date/ Time** | **Wednesday, August 28**  
2:00pm-5:00pm |
| **Theme** | Introduction to the Seminar and Its Operation; Introduction to College Access and Career Readiness at Sayre High School and West Philadelphia High School |
| **Seminar Discussion** | • Introductions: who are you and why are you in this seminar? Who are we (Dr. Harkavy, Adam Cohen, and Theresa Simmonds) and why are we here?  
• What is an Academically Based Community Service (ABCS) course?  
  o Logistics of the seminar  
  o Role of community service and mentoring  
• Collaborative Approach and Seminar Operation  
• Discussion Question: What do you think is good about the Penn undergraduate experience? What is bad? Why is it good? Why is it bad?  
• The question to be discussed throughout the remainder of the semester:  
  o What could and should be done to radically improve the Penn undergraduate experience? And what would you do to implement your ideas?  
  o How can Penn effectively mobilize and integrate its resources (e.g. students) to improve the quality of life in West Philadelphia? And what would you do to implement your ideas?  
• Syllabus review  
• In-depth introduction to Sayre, WPHS, and career and college pathways programs at the schools by CACR Liaison Theresa Simmonds  
• PSL Framework distributed |
| **Assignment(Due Monday before next class)** | **Assignment (always due next class by email to Dr. Harkavy and Adam at midnight of the preceding day)**  
In a 2-3 page autobiography / reflection, address and discuss the following:  
• Who are you?  
• How have your experiences in school and at Penn shaped your opinion on what is good and bad about your undergraduate experience?  
Come to class with 1-2 discussion questions based on the readings. |
**Extra Notes:**
- Mentor Training on Tuesday, September 3rd from 2-4pm with Theresa Simmonds—place TBD

**Date/ Time**

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<th>Wednesday, September 4</th>
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**Theme**

University Civic Responsibility and the Development of Democratic Schooling and a Democratic Society: Penn, Sayre, and West Philadelphia High School as a Case Study

**Readings (Done before Class)**

- Penn Compact: [http://www.upenn.edu/president/penn-compact/penn-compact-landing](http://www.upenn.edu/president/penn-compact/penn-compact-landing)
- Coalition for Community Schools video: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4yQS1nflTxg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4yQS1nflTxg)
- Penn Economic Impact Report, FY 2010. [http://www.evp.upenn.edu/initiatives/EconImpact.aspx](http://www.evp.upenn.edu/initiatives/EconImpact.aspx)
Readings added by seminar members:


### Seminar Discussion

- Discussion of autobiographies
  - Have you ever done an assignment like this?
  - Did you find this activity useful?
  - Should the university of Pennsylvania encourage similar reflective learning activities throughout the undergraduate experience? If so, why? If not, why not?
- Discussion on readings and the social responsibility of universities

### Assignment (Due Monday before next class)

- Come prepared with 1-2 discussion questions based on the reading.
- Write a 2-3 page response to the following:
  - What are some of the potential benefits of a college access program?
  - Did who you are shape your college application process? If so, how?
  - What are the benefits you want to receive from 4 years at Penn?
  - Thus far, how has Penn met or failed your expectations?
  - What are your goals for the seminar?

### Extra Notes:

- Mentor training on Monday, September 9 from 2-4pm with Theresa Simmonds—Netter Center Conference Room

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<td>Theme</td>
<td>Penn-West Philadelphia Relationship</td>
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**Readings (Done before Class)**

- “West Philadelphia Community History Center.” Blackboard.
- Fineberg, Gavriel, Raskas, Etan and Elana Stern. “Toward Advancing Student Awareness Regarding the Penn-West Philadelphia Relationship: Strategies for Better Educating Penn Undergraduates on Historical University-Community Relations and Current Engagement"


**Readings added by seminar members:**


| Date/ Time       | Wednesday, September 18  
2pm-5pm          |
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| Seminar Discussion | • Discussion of readings and written assignment  
• Guest Speaker—Mark Lloyd, Director of the University Archives and Records Center |
| Assignment (Due Monday before next class) | • Come prepared with 1-2 discussion questions based on the reading.  
• Write a 2-3 page response addressing the following:  
  o What are the different benefits Penn would receive from a partnership with the West Philadelphia community and school system?  
  o What are the different benefits that a high school student would receive from a partnership between Penn and his/her school?  
  o What are the different benefits you might receive from a partnership between this seminar and West Philadelphia High School and Sayre High School? |
| Extra Notes: | |

**Readings added by seminar members:**

**Seminar Discussion**
- Discussion on readings and assignments
- Create typology of benefits for Penn, Penn students, and West Philadelphia high school students from a Penn-West Philadelphia partnership

**Assignment (Due Monday before next class)**
- Come prepared with 1-2 questions based on the reading.
- Write a 2-3 page reflection addressing the following question:
  - What are the different resources Penn has to improve the quality of life in West Philadelphia?
  - How should those resources (e.g. undergraduate students)
be effectively mobilized and integrated to improve life in West Philadelphia? To improve public schools in West Philadelphia? To improve college access and career readiness for students in these schools? To improve the Penn undergraduate experience?
  - Other than the economic and academic incentives for attending college, how would you persuade a high school student to go to college? How can you help contribute to their understanding of the benefits of a college education?

- PSL Assignment: In two to three sentences, state what you would like to see change in Penn, in West Philadelphia, or in the Penn-West Philadelphia relationship. What is the current state of the situation you would like to change?

Extra Notes:

**Date/ Time**

**Wednesday, September 25**

2pm-5pm

**Theme**

Current State of West Philadelphia with Guest Speaker Glenn Bryan, the Assistant Vice President of Community Relations in the Office of Government Community Affairs, Director of Community Affairs at the Netter Center for Community Partnerships

**Readings** (Done Before Class)

- Faculty Toolkit for Service-Learning in Higher Education.  
- Benson, Lee and Ira Harkavy. “Saving the Soul of the University: What Is To Be Done.” Blackboard.
  - McBrayer, Gregory A. “Education and the Good Society.” Pg. 44-48  
**Readings Added by seminar members:**

| Seminar Discussion | • Discussion of PSL Assignment  
|                    | • Discussion of weekly assignment and readings |
| Assignment (Due Monday before next class) | • Question 1.1 – 1.3 from the PSL Framework  
|                                                  | • Come prepared with 1-2 discussion questions on the readings  
|                                                  | • Bus Tour Reflection |

| Extra Notes: | |

| Date/ Time | **Wednesday, October 2**  
|            | **2pm-5pm** |
| Theme      | University-Assisted Community School Model and Schools as Social Centers |
Readings

(Done Before Class)

- Watch Netter Center videos: https://www.nettercenter.upenn.edu/videos
- Benson, Harkavy, and Puckett. Dewey’s Dream:
  - ‘The Schooling System as the Strategic Subsystem of Modern Societies,’ 40 – 44 .
- Cohen, Adam, and Alex Dinsmoor. ""Saving the Soul of the University": Toward Effectively Educating Undergraduates through Civic Engagement." N.p., n.d. Web.
- Dukes, Gina, and Mark Harding. Fulfilling the Community School Model: Establishing Adult Programming.

Readings added by seminar members:

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| | • Blackboard.

**Seminar Discussion**
- Discuss Readings
- In-Depth Introduction to PSL’s
- Guest Speaker-Corey Bowman, Associate Director of the Netter Center for Community Partnerships
- Guest Speaker-Anand Muthusamy from SCUE

**Assignment (Due Monday before next class)**
- Come prepared with 1-2 discussion questions based on the readings
- PSL Question 1 (Parts 1.1-1.7 of PSL outline) and Question 2

**Extra Notes:**


Hebert, Brad. "Engaging Locally: Increasing the Sustainability of the Fellowship for Building Intercultural Communities at the University of Pennsylvania."


Perna, Laura W. “Differences in the Decision to Attend College Among African Americans, Hispanics, and Whites.” Blackboard.

**Readings added by seminar members:**


**Seminar Discussion**

- Discussion of PSLs
- Discussion of Readings
- Guest Speaker—Dr. Laura Perna, Graduate School of Education
- West Philadelphia Bus Tour
| Assignment (Due Monday before next class) | • Come prepared with 1-2 discussion questions based on the reading.  
• Questions 1 – 4 of PSL Framework |
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<http://www.upenn.edu/almanac/volumes/v52/n31/tatl.html>.  
| Readings Added by Seminar Members: | |


**Seminar Discussion**
- Discussion of the Readings
- Discuss PSL ideas thus far
- Discuss further PSL steps
- Design syllabus for remainder of semester
Assignment (Due Monday before next class)

- Write a detailed response to questions 1 – 6 of the PSL Framework
- Come prepared with ideas for syllabus planning.
- Discussion questions on readings

Extra Notes:

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Theme

(Student-Designed)

Readings


Readings Added by Seminar Members:

slavery-helped-universities-grow.html>.


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| Assignment (Due Monday before next class) | - Write a detailed response to 1 - 8 of PSL framework.  
- Come prepared with 1-2 discussion questions based on the reading. |

| Extra Notes: | |

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| Date/ Time | Wednesday, October 30  
2pm-5pm |
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Readings Added by Seminar Members:


| Seminar Discussion | - Student-Designed  
- Guest Speaker Dr. James Lytle  
- Finish Midterm Course Evaluation  
- PSL and Readings |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Assignment (Due Monday before next class) | - 1-2 discussion questions based on reading.  
- Write a detailed response to 1 – 10 of the PSL Framework |
| Extra Notes: | |

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**Assignment (Due Monday before next class)**

- Updated Questions 1 – 10 of the PSL Framework
- Come prepared with 1-2 discussion questions based on the reading.

**Extra Notes:**

**Date/ Time**

**Wednesday, November 13**

2:00pm-5:00pm

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<th>Assignment (Due Monday before next class)</th>
<th>Update Questions 1 – 10 of the PSL Framework and submit whatever work you have done thus far.</th>
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| Assignment (Due Monday before next class) | - PSL framework – continue to revise, update, research and edit  
- Come prepared with 1-2 discussion questions based on the reading.  
- Reflection Exercise: Please answer the following questions – Have you realized you goals(s) for the semester? If so, why, if not, why not? Did your goal(s) change over the course of the semester? If so, how did they change and why did they change? What could you have done to have better realized your goals? What could seminar have done to help you better realize your goals?  
- Reflection Exercise: What was the connection (if any) between the seminar (including the PSL) and the work at West Philadelphia High School? What should/could be done to strengthen the connection between the seminar and the work at West Philadelphia High School?  
- What still remains to be done to complete your PSL research paper? How will the steps get done (including who will do them)? When will the steps get done? |

| Extra Notes: | |

| Date/ Time | **Wednesday, December 4**  
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| | **Seminar Discussion** | - Deep Reflection on Course  
- Course Evaluation and reflection on syllabus |
| Assignment (Due Monday before next class) | - Come prepared with 1-2 discussion questions based on the reading.  
- Submit progress on PSL paper  
- Final PSL paper due December 20 |
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