



NORBERT O. SCHEDLER
HONORS COLLEGE

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL ARKANSAS

Capstone Project Handbook

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Introduction

This handbook is designed to provide instructors, students, and mentors with resources to guide honors students through the successful completion of an Honors Capstone Project. The Capstone Project is a requirement of all honors students who are completing the honors interdisciplinary studies minor through the Schedler Honors College. Two of the five courses required by the honors minor are dedicated to completion of the Capstone Project. Through the Capstone Project, honors students are challenged to take ownership of their educational experience; communicate logically and effectively; evaluate how content is shaped by the context in which it was created; formulate and develop meaningful claims supported by reason and evidence; and integrate diverse knowledge, perspectives, and skills.

About the Schedler Honors College

Mission

The Norbert O. Schedler Honors College identifies exceptional students, immerses them in a learning community where they can examine who they are and practice who they want to become, provides them with opportunities for growth and transformation, and develops them as citizen-scholars ready to guide socially responsible change.

Vision

The Norbert O. Schedler Honors College seeks to develop public scholars whose values are shaped by inquiry and exploration; whose deliberate actions are grounded in interdisciplinary understanding; and whose skills as leaders empower them to fulfill their potential to guide change within the university, the community, the state, the nation, and the world.

Goals

The Norbert O. Schedler Honors College has these goals for student development:

Self-authorship: **examining and constructing one's own beliefs, values, and internal commitments**, a process that culminates in achieving personal authority;

Scholarship: practicing conversation and interdisciplinary inquiry, a process that culminates in academic research, writing, and oral presentation;

Citizenship: addressing real-world problems and finding ethical solutions, a process that culminates in reflective civic action; and

Leadership: engaging as citizen-scholars exercising informed judgment and an ability to collaborate, a process that culminates in the capacity to guide social change for the common good.

Interdisciplinarity Statement

The Norbert O. Schedler Honors College provides an interdisciplinary forum through which the integration of knowledge allows one to recognize bias, transcend disciplinary borders, and construct meaningful context. Interdisciplinary understanding entails seeing an issue from an array of perspectives and recognizing how alternative approaches influence one another, which leads to a holistic understanding of complex issues.

Capstone Course Requirements

Oxford Tutorial

Oxford Tutorial (HONC 3320) fulfills the first of two required courses for completion of the Honors Capstone Project. It is designed to help students look critically at evidence, understand research ethics, develop research questions, try out arguments, and learn processes of scholarly inquiry. Tutorial should help students to not only synthesize information and respond critically to their sources, but also to master the facts and evidence upon which their responses are based. The course goal is for each student to develop a proposal and plan for her Capstone Project and to complete a substantial portion of the research and/or organization of the project before the end of the term. **By the course's conclusion students will also have identified and contracted with a capstone mentor with whom the student will meet weekly until the project is completed.** The tutorial course is reading- and writing-intensive.

Course objectives

- Investigate procedures for engaging in exemplary or honors work in the **student's major and/or minor departments**
- Demonstrate understanding of research ethics and requirements for human subjects research
- Review pertinent literature or materials that form the scholarly background of the project, as selected in consultation with mentors
- Practice formulating, developing, and assessing claims and learn to properly attribute sources
- Choose an initial research question for a disciplinary or interdisciplinary thesis project through an investigation of alternatives in terms of feasibility and personal significance
- Design and produce a plan for a research or creative project in the appropriate disciplinary or multi-disciplinary context based on the chosen research question
- Forge a relationship with a faculty member who can serve as mentor, guide, and sounding board for the Capstone Project and identify potential second readers
- Support and provide critical feedback to peers as they pursue these same objectives

Grading Criteria

The course grade is based on timely completion of writing and research exercises, as well as successful completion and presentation of a 10-15 page project proposal. The classroom instructor assigns the student a grade for the Oxford Tutorial course, based on his progress and effort in accomplishing research goals. The classroom instructor will incorporate a grade recommendation from the mentor for the Project Proposal, which is worth 40% of the total grade. Throughout the course, students will be expected to complete an annotated bibliography, reading responses, and/or other **short assignments. Failing to meet these requirements will lower the student's overall course grade, regardless of the quality of the final Project Proposal.**

All students registered for the course must complete the project during the semester in which they are enrolled in the class. Project Proposals must be submitted through the student portal at <http://www.honors.uca.edu/student>. Guidelines for the final Capstone Project Proposal are in Appendix A and are due the Monday of Dead Week. Any student submitting a Project Proposal after this time may be required to write an exception request for the continuance of her scholarship, complete with a personal statement and two letters of support from faculty.

Expectations of Mentors and Students

During the Tutorial semester, the student will identify a proposed topic and mentor. The student should prepare a list of readings in consultation with their mentor as soon as possible, so that preliminary research can begin. The reading list should function as a guide for the student and mentor; as the student explores the subject, however, she may find the need to make changes to the reading list to incorporate new angles. The student is responsible for his own discoveries and for making choices regarding materials necessary for the research.

Advising is generally a two- or three-semester commitment. The Honors Capstone Project may take many different forms (see types of Capstone Projects section for more information). The student will not complete the Capstone Project during the Tutorial semester, but will complete a Project Proposal and timeline for the remaining work. As the student moves into the advanced research and writing stages, the student should expect to retain the mentor as a primary advisor for the Capstone Project.

During this time, the mentor **is the student's sounding board** and is expected to ask questions, guide the student, and push the student to do her best to uncover the relevant material. The **mentor's** essential role throughout the tutorial experience is to act as a pedagogue—to **"walk with" the student by providing an example of how to** ask insightful questions.

The mentor need not necessarily be a subject matter expert but should have some knowledge of the field and the kinds of questions and answers that are appropriate. Mentors may find that they learn a great deal from their students. Students may be encouraged to take research courses in their own departments and/or apply for undergraduate research and experiential learning grants, as applicable.

The student and mentor should work out any scheduled meetings or deadlines set for future semesters and sign the Capstone Mentorship Contract that specifies whether they will meet weekly or bi-weekly (see sample in Appendix B). Progress reports will be requested by the Schedler Honors College administration on a periodic basis. After mentoring 3 students through the entirety of 3 capstone projects, the mentor is entitled to \$300 in travel funds and should contact the Associate Dean to arrange a transfer when they are interested in using these funds.

Honors Capstone

The Honors Capstone course is designed to support students as they develop, write, and present the Honors Capstone Project. Its most important function is to ensure that each student contributes new knowledge through completion of the project. The heart of the course will be the workshop, which will consist of writing, sharing, reading, and commenting on one another's work.

Course objectives

- Integrate knowledge to express insight and originality through disciplinary or multidisciplinary methodologies
- Analyze new problems and situations to arrive at informed opinions and conclusions
- Construct a knowledge base to ask more informed questions and learn more complex concepts
- Utilize appropriate conventions and strategies in written communication for various audiences and purposes
- Develop and communicate ideas logically and effectively in order to enhance communication
- Participate with a community of scholars in the process of writing, reflecting, and revising

Grading Criteria

Grading for the class is based on the quality of the students written drafts and final projects, their practice and final presentations, attendance and participation in the Honors Capstone Course, and regular attendance at meetings with mentors. Capstone mentors (first and second readers) and the course instructor will determine whether the project satisfies requirements of an Honors Capstone. The final Capstone Project makes up 60% of the total grade for the course, and the grade for the final project is recommended by the capstone mentor.

All students registered for the course must complete the project during the semester enrolled. Throughout the semester each student will be expected to complete a draft of the project, revise it, and do a practice presentation. Failing to meet these requirements will **lower the student's grade, regardless of the quality of the final project.**

Any project submitted after Study Day will be considered late. Any graduating student submitting the Honors Capstone Project after finals week may need to reapply for a later graduation. Any returning student submitting the project after finals week may be required to write an exception request for the continuance of his scholarship, complete with a personal statement and two letters of support from faculty.

Expectations of Mentors and Students

Before enrolling in the Honors Capstone Course, a student should have nearly completed the Capstone Project. Work will need to be done during the semesters

between the Oxford Tutorial and Honors Capstone Course in order for the student to be prepared to enroll in the Capstone Course. During the Honors Capstone semester, the student must document results of the Capstone experience as is appropriate for the specific project type. Within the first month of the Capstone course, the student must submit their final Capstone Project title and choose an objective second reader for the Capstone Project, who may or may not represent another discipline.

During the Honors Capstone semester, the mentor serves primarily as reader and consultant. The mentor and student should agree on regular meeting times throughout the semester. If the student or mentor encounters a problem in satisfying any requirement including meetings, writing, attendance, etc., they should communicate the problem to the other parties immediately. If the interested parties are unable to resolve the issue after further discussion, then the Honors administration should be notified. Failure to resolve a problem could result in an X grade for the student, which could, in turn, result in loss of a scholarship. Changing mentors requires a meeting with the honors administration (see Appendix C for Common Problems/Solutions).

Each student must hand in a polished draft of the project at the midterm break to the mentor, second reader, and instructor; at which time they will read and make recommendations for revisions. The mentor and second reader are responsible for returning comments to the student in a timely manner. The student should hand in a final draft of the project to the mentor, second reader, and instructor no later than a month before Study Day. If revisions are required, revisions are due to the mentor and second reader no less than two weeks prior to Study Day, allowing both the mentor and second reader time to give any additional feedback that may be needed to finalize the project. On or before Study Day, the student must submit to the Schedler Honors College an electronic submission of the final Capstone Project through the student portal.

The final Capstone Presentation **will take place on UCA's official Study Day, which is** the last business day before finals week. The Capstone Presentation generally lasts half an hour, with twenty minutes for the presentation and ten minutes for questions. A representative from the Schedler Honors College serves as the presentation moderator. The capstone project mentor and second reader **must be present at the student's** final presentation. If not present, the student will be asked to repeat or cancel the presentation.

An assessment of the final project and a grade recommendation will be due from the mentor the week following the Capstone Presentation (see criteria in Appendix D). If the Capstone Presentation and Capstone Project meet with the **mentors'** approval, the mentor and second reader will electronically sign off on the Capstone Project through an email they will **receive upon the student's electronic submission**. After mentoring 3 students through the entirety of 3 capstone projects, the mentor is entitled to \$300 in travel funds and should contact the Associate Dean to arrange a transfer when they are interested in using these funds.

Types of Capstone Projects

The Honors Capstone Project may take many different forms. It can be interdisciplinary research in the form of a traditional thesis, but it could also be creative writing, fundamental research, an innovative curriculum, a performance, an artistic creation, or a substantive service project. Regardless of the type of project, the student must provide both a written and oral presentation. The types of activity that can satisfy the Honors Capstone Project requirement are listed next.

Traditional Honors College Thesis Project

This type is often called the “classic” Honors Interdisciplinary thesis. A thesis of this nature generally consists of five parts: (1) an introduction to the topic, (2) a review of relevant literature, (3) the proposed methodology or design of the project, (4) the results, and (5) the analysis, explanations, and relevance of assertions being made about the topic. Because the traditional Honors College thesis is interdisciplinary, the project must integrate diverse knowledge, perspectives, and skills into arguments and strategies.

Departmental Thesis Project

A student may opt to follow her own major department protocols in partial fulfillment of the Honors Capstone Project. Students will carefully investigate options in Oxford Tutorial before deciding to undertake a Departmental Thesis Project. That decision should include consulting with the department’s chair and faculty members. Note that some departments do not currently have Honors in the Majors protocols for undergraduate thesis writers.

Students choosing this option are still required to take and fulfill requirements of the Honors Capstone Course, but Honors College requirements will not impinge on the rules required by the student’s home department. Whatever classes or protocols are required for completion of the departmental thesis will automatically be accepted by the Schedler Honors College in partial fulfillment of the Honors Capstone Project requirements.

Creative Project

Some Schedler Honors College students select creative projects to fulfill the capstone requirements. Creative projects may include producing an original literary or musical composition, painting, film, sculpture, photography exhibit and photo essay, or other art form. Like the Traditional Honors College Thesis Project or the Departmental Thesis Project, creative projects require long-range planning and careful adherence to deadlines. They also require carefully researched proposals written in the tutorial semester that situate them alongside other creative projects of similar dimension or scope. The form or medium of the creative project must be acceptable to the mentor and relevant disciplines from which it is drawn.

Preliminary research may explore the relevant influence or influences on the work at hand, common themes inherent in similar projects, or the treatment of historical periods to which the project relates. Although the project is creative, original work, the student should display mastery of existing, applicable scholarship or practice in the field or fields under investigation (See Appendix E for additional guidelines).

Experiential Project

Some Schedler Honors College students select experiential projects to fulfill the capstone requirements. Experiential projects may include developing a business plan, founding a student organization, developing a curriculum, or fulfilling a community need. Like with other Capstone projects, long-range planning and careful adherence to deadlines is required. Experiential projects will require carefully researched proposals written in the tutorial semester that situate them alongside other experiential projects of similar dimension or scope. The form or medium of the project must be acceptable to the mentor and relevant disciplines from which it is drawn.

Preliminary research may explore the relevant influence or influences on the work at hand, common themes inherent in similar projects, or the pedagogical focus or tools through which the original idea came into being. Although the project is an original work, the student is expected to display mastery of existing, applicable scholarship or practice in the field or fields under investigation (See Appendix F for additional guidelines).

Honors Dual Capstone/Thesis Projects

If a Schedler Honors College student chooses to do a Departmental Thesis Project in addition to the Honors Capstone Project, the two projects must be different. While the Schedler Honors College accepts Capstone Projects that rely on the same body of **research as the student's** Departmental Thesis Project, the two projects must have different frameworks that place the subject matter in significantly different interpretive contexts. While they may share primary sources and literature reviews, the two projects may not share the same purpose nor borrow from one another word for word.

Students planning to use the same body of research for Honors Dual Capstone/Thesis Projects must make sure to understand Departmental regulations concerning dual theses. Best practices are to arrange a meeting at the outset of the project between the interested Departmental faculty and the Schedler Honors College administration. In that discussion, questions can be explored about whether and how the two projects can meet specification for both the Schedler Honors College and the Department.

Appendices

Appendix A: Guidelines for Final Capstone Project Proposal

By the Monday of Dead Week you will need to upload your Final Capstone Project Proposal into the student portal at <http://honors.uca.edu/student>. A link to your project proposal will then be sent to your mentor for his or her approval. The final capstone project proposal should be 10-15 pages in length and should contain the following items:

- 1) Cover Sheet: include the provisional title of your capstone project, your **name, mentor's name, and an abstract of no more than 100 words** summarizing your project
- 2) Narrative: Background, Context, and Statement of Question or Project identification of primary and secondary disciplines, along with potential approaches, techniques, and methods (in some sections of Tutorial this is called the Targeting Your Research essay)
- 3) Literature Review: a review of relevant literature in your area, sensibly organized
- 4) Gantt Chart: a Gantt chart or other timeline with specific deadlines and deliverables for the project lifespan (1-3 semesters, through presentation of the final project)
- 5) Research Compliance: CITI Training and IRB proposal, if necessary
- 6) TAG/URGE/ELF/SURF: Any plans to apply for funding to support your capstone project
- 7) Additional Coursework: a list of additional coursework, if needed
- 8) A complete bibliography, set forth according to the documentation style appropriate to your field (many if not all of these items may show up in your literature review as well; this is just a list, with no narrative or annotations included)

Appendix B: Sample Capstone Mentorship Contract

HONORS CAPSTONE MENTORSHIP CONTRACT (A NEW CONTRACT SHOULD BE COMPLETED EACH SEMESTER)

Dr. Victor Frankenstein – Mentor
Eager McLearner – Honors Scholar
(SPECIFY NAMES OF BOTH THE MENTOR AND SCHOLAR)

In order to successfully complete the Honors Capstone Project and to fulfill the responsibilities of mentor and scholar, we the undersigned propose the following:

I. That we will meet once a week on Mondays at 10:00 a.m. during the Fall semester of 20XX.
(BE SURE TO SPECIFY DAY OF WEEK AND TIME, SEMESTER AND YEAR)

II. That we will pursue a study of the possibility of creating a sentient being out of recycled human elements, during which the student will attempt to gain an understanding of and insight into the ethics of such attempts, giving special attention to the responsibilities of the scientist towards the being that she has animated.
(BE SPECIFIC ABOUT THE SUBJECT OF THE STUDY, THE PRIMARY AVENUES OF INQUIRY AND THE GOALS)

III. That the student will read works suggested by the mentor and other works that the student may find relevant to the study.
(BE AS EXPLICIT AS POSSIBLE ABOUT THIS READING LIST)

IV. That during weekly discussions the student will relate understandings, opinions, and elaborations on readings done during the tutorial; the mentor will question, clarify, and criticize **the student's efforts with the goal of advancing the student's understanding and helping the project to continue to progress.**
(BE PRECISE REGARDING WHAT THE MENTOR EXPECTS FROM THE STUDENT AND WHAT THE STUDENT NEEDS FROM THE MENTOR)

V. That the Student will submit continuous drafts and the mentor will provide consistent feedback. The student will submit a final draft to the mentor no less than one month prior to Study Day. The mentor will provide feedback and revision suggestions within one week in order for student to have time to revise and submit the final draft to the mentor and second reader two weeks prior to Study Day.
(BE SURE THAT DATES INCLUDED COINCIDE WITH HONORS CAPSTONE COURSE REQUIREMENTS)

VI. That our goal for the semester will be for the student to complete the research and prepare an annotated bibliography in preparation for the Honors Capstone Course.
(BE SPECIFIC ABOUT ANY OTHER GOALS THE STUDENT AND MENTOR SET)

Honors Capstone Mentor Signature: _____ *Date:* _____

Honors Student Signature: _____ *Date:* _____

Appendix C: Common Problems and Possible Solutions

The student loses interest in the topic before the project is complete.

This may happen for several reasons. The student may find out that she has **tackled a topic that is too broad or that she doesn't have a grasp of basic concepts** important to the topic. The student may switch majors, or simply find out that the subject did not yield the results or research possibilities she had hoped. When this happens, the student and mentor may need to regroup, finding alternative approaches that might stimulate questions that excite the student anew. Any project will involve some kind of redirecting and adjustment; however, if the student and mentor cannot find a new approach to the subject, the student may need to find a new subject and new mentor.

Either student or mentor fails to meet as agreed upon.

Sometimes schedules simply conflict for a week or two; this is often unavoidable. However, if either the mentor or student misses a number of weeks in a row, the research relationship is not working. If the mentor finds that she is unable to devote an hour a week to the project, the mentor should be frank with the student about the situation and suggest that the student find a new mentor. If the student fails to come to meetings, it is probably a sign of another problem: research malaise, a bad relationship with the mentor, or unhappiness with the topic. If this happens, the mentor should try to discover the problem, or contact the Honors College.

The student fails to accomplish a significant amount of reading or to make progress in answering the research question.

This can happen if the student fails to find a narrow enough focus for the topic to make it workable in the timeframe available, or for one of the problems mentioned above. The mentor should always seek to evaluate the student based on the effort and progress she has made. Both mentor and student should be frank about this; often acknowledging that both believe little has been accomplished can be a relief to each and lead to a new direction in the research. However, if the mentor concludes that the student has not put effort into the research and has not reached the goals established at the beginning of the term, the mentor should feel free to evaluate the student accordingly. If the problem is not one of effort or enthusiasm but instead of the volume of research or if failing to sufficiently narrow the topic, then the student and mentor may agree to continue the work through a modified or second project and the mentor should **evaluate the student's progress according to what she has achieved.**

The student and mentor simply do not work well together.

Sometimes personalities do not mesh. If this happens, the student and mentor should discuss the problem openly and if both the mentor and student agree that the issue

cannot be resolved, the student should find a new mentor. The process for doing so requires the student and original mentor to meet with the honors administration and Capstone course instructor.

The mentor dominates the meetings.

The mentor, no matter how enthusiastic about the topic, should allow the student to take the leadership role and to do most of the talking. It is not a goal of the Honors Capstone Project **for the student to discover the mentor's wisdom**; instead, **the project's aim is** to provide a setting for conversation in which the student tries out a position on an informed and interested listener. If the student feels the mentor is being domineering, the student should respectfully tell the mentor so. Sometimes, students feel shy about doing this; if so, a Schedler Honors College administrator may call a meeting with both student and mentor to discuss and try to resolve the problem. The problem can best be alleviated by setting up a format for meetings that ensures ample time for the student to present her findings.

The mentor and student develop fundamentally opposing viewpoints that impede progress.

Certainly, the mentor should differ with the student at times, and part of his job is to push the student to look at a number of viewpoints. Students and mentors should be open about these differences and use them for discussion. If the student or mentor feels that their **philosophical differences may impede the student's** progress or the **mentor's evaluation of the project**, however, the student and mentor should be frank about the situation; the student or mentor may wish to withdraw from the relationship.

Appendix D: Assessment & Grade Recommendation Criteria

Mentors will be asked to indicate the level that best matches student performance on the Honors Capstone Project, recommend a final grade, and sign the official form. Assessment criteria are as follows:

Integrative Scholarship. Independently transfers skills, abilities, theories, and/or methodologies acquired in a disciplinary or multidisciplinary instructional situation to new situations to solve complex research and/or creative problems in a project of **one's own design.**

Central message. Central message is compelling, reinforced, and strongly supported.

Organization. Organizational pattern is clear and consistent, polished, and makes the content cohesive.

Supporting Material. Employs timely and relevant material to provide effective support in a way that reflects a thorough understanding of the topic/thesis.

Context & Audience. Demonstrates a thorough understanding of the context; uses compelling language appropriate to the audience.

Syntax & Mechanics. Demonstrates clear and fluid controls of syntax and mechanics that skillfully communicates meaning to readers and is virtually error-free.

Knowledge. Shows both a broad and deep understanding of the concepts/principles and their relevance to important questions in the discipline.

Information. Selects information from the most relevant and credible sources, without critical omissions of key sources.

Analysis. Justifies a position and/or draws a logical conclusion using appropriate disciplinary analysis on a significant question or problem.

Final Project Grade: _____ If lower than a B, please explain:

Appendix E: Guidelines for Creative Projects

How to Produce a Creative Capstone Project

Some Schedler Honors College students select creative projects to fulfill the capstone requirements. Creative projects may include producing an original literary or musical composition, painting, film, sculpture, photography exhibit and photo essay, or other art form. The goal of the initial cycle of planning and proposal writing is to give the student the perspective to intellectually fit the project into appropriate fields of study while also becoming familiar with other projects, techniques, basic concepts, and terminology that might benefit your project at hand. The student is building a solid platform from which to discuss the project with others and increase the chances of producing something new or different rather than repeating past creations.

A primary intention of the project is to produce an original work which also demonstrates the technical competence of its creator. Despite the heavy burden implied in the building of a solid foundation for any given project, the creative work itself is liberating. **The creative project might be an expression of the student's own journey through life as shared with many other people.** The project might be the work of an active imagination, perhaps developing even greater distance between the author and the audience. The mode of expression for a specifically creative project, whether it be comedy, drama, musical, satire, might be considered its defining feature.

Creative work, perhaps even more than traditional scholarship, is social activity. The **words "author" and "authority" come from the Latin root *augere*, which means "to increase, to create, to promote."** Thus, **a Creative project is not solely the isolated goings-on of the originator, but comes into being through the sharing of the producer's creative vision with other people.** Authorship is about developing an idea that can be communicated to other people. Likewise, feedback from those other people can be a powerful tool for personal growth.

Creative projects are almost always more time-intensive than traditional theses. Why? Unlike traditional thesis writers, who have a natural home in Torreyson Library and its associated services (article and manuscript databases, archives, and interlibrary loan), creative project researchers must first assemble their own laboratories or studios (often borrowed from their advisors) and then generate their own resources to accomplish the project.

Like traditional theses, Creative projects have a written component. Creative Projects must include an Artist Statement that is at least ten pages in length describing the **project's intent** in producing the creative work and influences on the producer (e.g. **other artists' work, musical styles, and performances**). **The statement will describe the history and process of the project's production, including** research, internships, group meetings (with performers, participants, collaborators, and interviewees), gathering of materials, rehearsals, and so forth. The statement will also include an assessment of

the final product. This may include observations by the audience or participants or external judges based on their reaction to the work (including interviews or written responses on-site), and the student's evaluation of the responses, interpretations, or sentiment elicited by the project.

Writing an Artist Statement

An Artist Statement is a document that provides a window into the world of the creator. It offers insight into a single piece or an entire body of work by describing the developmental process, philosophy, vision, and passion behind the Creative Project. It enlightens and engages while at the same time giving the audience freedom to draw conclusions. An Artist Statement reads easily, is informative, and adds to the understanding of the project and its scholarly producer.

How does one get started writing an Artist Statement? Keep a journal of the progress as the project advances. Memory of the moments when important ideas were born, how decisions were made, and where events took place will fade over the course of an entire year (or more) of researching, planning, and writing. Carefully documenting the work as the project moves along will make the writing of a final Artist Statement much easier. Keep track of relevant information about (e.g. meetings with community members, staging choices, settings, plotting, creative writing, actions, critiques, conflicts, conflict resolution, overall themes, purposes, effects to be achieved, and future plans). Take note of what happens each day that work proceeds on the project.

Some questions to keep in mind as benchmarks for progress are met and goals are accomplished: What led to this work? What were its inspirations? What vision/philosophy was brought to the work? How are the inspirations and visions/philosophy expressed in the work? What does it feel like when work is going well? What are the favorite things about the work? What does it mean to say that a project has turned out really well? What is the feeling of creating something new? How does the work reflect the producer? What patterns are emerging in the work? Is there a pattern in the way materials or tools are selected or in working relationships with other people? What messages is the work trying to convey? How much time is spent at each stage of the work? How does the work process differ from prior expectations of who it would go? Why? What are the goals for the future? The Capstone mentor, serving as a sounding board, will be asking questions too. Write those questions down even when there is no ready answer.

When writing the Artist Statement, begin with a simple statement of why the work was undertaken. Support that statement, telling the reader more about its goals and the **producer's aspirations. Tell the reader how decisions were made in the course of the work.** How and why were materials, techniques, and themes selected? Keep it simple and be candid. Tell the reader a little more about the current work and how it is grew out of prior work or life experiences. What is being explored, attempted, or challenged by doing this work? Share the approach or philosophy. **Mention one's education.** Mention any significant awards won or exhibitions participated in, or professional

societies belonged to. Display professional credibility even if formal certification has not yet been conferred. It is the work that makes one credible, not the qualifications, per se. Include descriptions of what other people have said about the work, what is being aimed at through the project.

An Artist Statement is not a résumé, a biography, a list of accomplishments and awards, a summary of exhibitions, or a catalogue of works. It is not insignificant and should not be hastily written. It is not difficult to understand, pretentious, irritating, or laughter-provoking.

Appendix F: Guidelines for Experiential Projects

How to Produce an Experiential Capstone Project

Some Schedler Honors College students select experiential projects to fulfill the capstone requirements. Experiential projects may include developing a business plan, founding a student organization, developing a curriculum, or fulfilling a community need. The goal of the initial cycle of planning and proposal writing is to give the student the perspective to intellectually fit the project into appropriate fields of study while also becoming familiar with other projects, techniques, basic concepts, and terminology that might benefit your project at hand. The student is building a solid platform from which to discuss the project with others and increase the chances of producing something new or different rather than repeating past endeavors.

A primary intention of the project is to produce an article or a service that is original and which also demonstrates the technical competence of its producer. Despite the heavy burden implied in building a solid foundation for any given project, actions taken to produce something original is liberating in many ways. The project may be instrumental, aiming for an end state of improvement from producing new means to that end such as with a community service project or business plan or curriculum development, therefore the outcome may be more central in judging the character of its defining feature.

Experiential Projects, perhaps even more than traditional scholarship, involve social activity. The words “author” and “authority” come from the Latin root *augere*, which means “to increase, to create, to promote.” Thus, an experiential project is not solely the isolated goings-on of the originator, but comes into being through the sharing of **the producer’s vision with other people. Authorship is about** developing an idea that can be communicated to other people. Likewise, feedback from those other people can be a powerful tool for personal growth.

Experiential Projects are almost always more time-intensive than traditional theses. Why? Unlike traditional thesis writers, who have a natural home in Torreyson Library and its associated services (article and manuscript databases, archives, and interlibrary loan), Experiential Project researchers must first assemble their own laboratories or studios and then generate their own resources (data, survey results, needs assessments, preliminary outlines) to accomplish the project.

Like traditional theses, Experiential Projects have a written component. Experiential Projects must include a final Project Reflection that is at least ten pages in length **describing the project’s intent, influences on the producer (e.g. other similar work, business goals, class learning goals for a curriculum, or community need to be addressed by a service).** The Project Reflection will describe the history and process of **the project’s production, including research, internships, group meetings (with performers, participants, collaborators, and interviewees),** gathering of materials, and so forth. The statement will also include an assessment of the final product. This may

include observations by the participants or external judges based on their reaction to the work (including interviews or written responses on-site), and the student's evaluation of the responses, interpretations, or sentiment elicited by the project.

Writing a Project Reflection

A Final Project Reflection is a document that provides a window onto the world of the producer. It offers insight into a single piece or an entire body of work (or actions) by describing the developmental process, philosophy, vision, and passion behind the Experiential Project. A Project Reflection reads easily, is informative, and adds to the understanding of the project and its scholarly producer.

How does one get started writing a Project Reflection? Keep a journal of the progress as the project advances. Memory of the moments when important ideas were born, how decisions were made, and where events took place will fade over the course of an entire year (or more) of researching, planning, and writing. Carefully documenting the work as the project moves along will make the writing of a final Project Reflection much easier. Keep track of relevant information (e.g. meetings with community members, student-teacher interactions, goal-setting brainstorming with entrepreneurs, actions, critiques, conflicts, conflict resolution, overall themes, purposes, effects to be achieved, and future plans). Take note of what happens each day that work proceeds on the project.

Some questions to keep in mind as benchmarks for progress are met and goals are accomplished: What led to this work? What were its inspirations? What vision/philosophy was brought to the work? How are the inspirations and visions/philosophy expressed in the work? What does it feel like when work is going well? What are the favorite things about the work? What does it mean to say that a project has turned out really well? What is the feeling of creating something new? How does the work reflect the producer? What patterns are emerging in the work? Is there a pattern in the way materials or tools are selected or in working relationships with other people? What messages is the work trying to convey? How much time is spent at each stage of the work? How does the work process differ from prior expectations of who it would go? Why? What are the goals for the future? The capstone mentor, serving as a sounding board, will be asking questions too. Write those questions down even when there is no ready answer.

When writing the Project Reflection, begin with a simple statement of why the work was undertaken. Support that statement, telling the reader more about its goals and the **producer's aspirations. Tell the reader how decisions were made in the course of the work.** How and why were materials, techniques, and themes selected? Keep it simple and be candid. Tell the reader a little more about the current work and how it is grown out of prior work or life experiences. What is being explored, attempted, or challenged by doing this work? Share the approach or philosophy. **Mention one's education.** Mention any significant awards won or exhibitions participated in, or professional societies belonged to. Display professional credibility even if formal certification has

not yet been conferred. It is the work that makes one credible, not the qualifications, per se. Include descriptions of what other people have said about the work, what is being aimed at through the project.

What isn't a Project Reflection? A Project Reflection is **not a résumé, a biography, a list of accomplishments and awards, a summary of exhibitions, or a catalogue of works.** It is not insignificant and should not be hastily written. It is not difficult to understand, pretentious, irritating, or laughter-provoking.