

University Committee for the Advancement of Teaching

UNO TELEVISION STUDENT ENGAGEMENT PROJECT

Group Members: Lyle Kwiatkowski, Michael Pacholski, Frank Vacek

Introduction:

UNO Television is a video production studio within the School of Communication at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. In collaboration with the School of Communication, we contribute to the university's mission of educating students by developing television and video production skills with hands-on experiences. In addition to serving as a learning laboratory, we employ students and offer internships to assist the School of Communication faculty and provide professional services to university and community partners.

Scope:

Since the Fall of 2019, UNO Television has seen an increase in requests for live streaming, content creation, and assistance with graphic and video production needs by both on-campus departments as well as non-profit organizations. Due to the leanness of our staff (three full-time staff, three student workers), there were instances in which we could not accommodate or facilitate production projects due to the minimum requirements needed to operate our Once control rooms.

The scope of the project was to deliberate with the UNO Television staff/faculty and student workers to develop and implement equipment that will enhance the hands-on applied skills and curriculum needed to produce small-scale broadcast production with the hope of increasing students' ability to successfully navigate their way through what it means to be prepared for a job within the television/content creation or live streaming industry.

Context/Background:

The following obstacles were identified throughout our project:

- Purchase Delay
 - o Due to the demand of the production equipment that we purchased and the fund approval process, we were not able to fully commence this grant until September of 2023, which created additional barriers to implementing and exercising the technology successfully.
- Gaining initial interest from students and faculty
 - o The initial goal of this project was to implement a learning community of students and faculty to learn and implement their production experience. Due to the delay in the purchase, it disallowed our UCAT grant committee to showcase the pros of this style of production setup by providing demonstrations to interested parties with an ample timeline for them to integrate it into their courses formally
- Troubleshooting
 - o the items that we purchased had arrived, our UCAT grant committee along with the students employed by UNO Television spent numerous hours setting up a production system that was not only understood by the committee but also something that future groups of students could understand and implement. (Production assembly, graphic creation, presentation integration, audio/visual limitations).

Thanks to the help of our student-worker staff at UNO Television, we were still able to see flashes of educational implementation and the harness of emotional interest when solving the three dilemmas mentioned above. Despite the purchase delay, our UCAT project committee was soliciting organizations that would be interested in being a subject in the implementation of this new equipment. In addition, during the troubleshooting phase, our student workers were dedicated to finding a practical and implementable solution to every obstacle because they believed in the importance of this project for future students who would be working with this equipment as well as the career opportunities available for this skillset.

Project Objectives:

- Enhance student learning through practical experience
 - o For many students, JMC 3320 or JMC 4460 used to be their introduction to the control room, which was overwhelming. By creating this small-scale set-up and creating opportunities to introduce the basic technology of what a control room can do, students were able to understand how a control room works at a fundamental level.
- Foster creativity and collaboration in content creation
 - o By implementing a "client-to-television studio relationship" our students and staff were able to brainstorm and create different production solutions for the various projects we were able to implement during the 2023-2024 grant timeline.

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Project Description:

Thanks to the implementation of the UCAT Student Engagement Grant plus the support of the School of Communication, UNO Television was able to purchase a mini production switcher, a wireless transmitter and receiver, and a streaming laptop to create a small-scale production set-up that assists our students in understanding the various levels of production. In addition, UNO Television is now working in collaboration with Video Field Production (JMC 2320) to implement this technology into their curriculum to help students ease into the control room environment for courses such as Video Studio Production (JMC 3320). In addition, we've had over 5-7 different organizations reach out to us requesting live-streaming and recording service lecture support which has helped our department successfully generate a source of revenue.

Additional Learnings:

Aside from the technical aspects of implementing a new piece of production equipment, our team learned that there are a variety of implementation use cases that lead to educational advancement. UNO Television was able to produce programs for the Political Science Department, the Center for Faculty Excellence, and the School of Communication within four months. From lectures to keynote speakers – every production requires a different level of detail and organization that fosters an environment of curiosity and creativity among all the students, faculty, and staff involved. Overall, we were able to streamline and successfully prove the importance of this investment within our department and show our students that their first step into the production world doesn't have to be intimidating. In the future, UNO Television will continue to leverage this equipment to support future campus-wide productions.

Appendix:

JMC 2320:

The class provides in-depth, hands-on theory and practice of field production and editing principles and techniques. It expands from single camera to multi-camera projects. The goal is for students to leave this course with a strong understanding of aesthetic shooting principles, audio and video equipment, and a solid working knowledge of field production and post-production practices.

JMC 3320:

The class introduces the student to the studio-production environment, equipment, and best practices. It applies multi-camera production concepts to a live switched environment. It provides reinforcement of editing principles by integrating pre-produced elements into a live production. The goal is for students to leave this course with a strong understanding of live-production principles, studio-production equipment, and a solid working knowledge of studio-production practices.

JMC 4460:

This advanced course provides students with professional development opportunities to polish their skills. Students will continue to create content for the School of Communication's media outlets and will assume mentoring and leadership roles under the supervision of instructors of the capstone classes.

Equipment Purchased using the UCAT Grant Funding:

- BlackMagic ATEM Mini Pro
- Hollyland Mars 4K Wireless Video Transmission System

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Introduction to Interdisciplinary 3D Printing

Group Members: Charles Fisher I, Shawn Plucinski, Drew Roberts, Craig Finlay

Scope:

The “Introduction to Interdisciplinary 3D Printing” project resulted in open-workshop sessions taught in the computer instruction labs at the UNO Criss Library. Spring and Summer 2023 saw the development of workshop materials and test-fielding to internal partners. Fall 2023 saw 6 live sessions, with Spring 2024 presenting 8. These workshop sessions are open to students and faculty of UNO and covered the essentials of 3D modeling.

Participants created a project model for 3D printing through the Criss Library Creative Production Lab. The Fall sessions saw 20 participants (17 undergrads, 2 faculty, 1 staff).

Context/Background:

Across all majors, students must be able to engage in contemporary media creation for digital literacy, and faculty or future teachers must find unique project-based learning experiences to elevate student engagement on campus. 3D modeling enables rapid iteration options for STEM projects, portfolio development in the Arts, and can solidify concept engagement when incorporated into researched humanities projects. However, given time pressures and overall graduation objectives students may not be able to fit a digital projects course in their schedule, or faculty may not have the expertise or equipment to offer it within their class. As related to Cavanagh’s expertise, this workshop enabled participants to engage in a direct creative action based on personal interest and walk away with a tangible artifact meant for play and reflection of practice.

Project Objectives:

- Participants will be able to design basic 3D models using TinkerCAD, an online 3D modeling application, with specific online education engagement applications.
- Participants will know the basics of how 3D printers and their operated to incorporate that knowledge into their studies and/or instructional processes.

Project Description:

Every Friday in October, November, March, and April the Criss Library Instruction Lab 232 is open to all interested participants for a 1-hour session that introduces the basics of 3D modeling using the TinkerCAD suite of online tools. Participants are guided through the creation of a personalized luggage tag, through which they engage with all primary tools of the modeling suite. Key concepts of creating objects for 3D printing, such as minimum element size and overhangs, are utilized in object creation. No prior experience is necessary, and workshops are open to all majors. After the digital portion, participants discuss with instructors on how 3D printing and modeling might be used for their own projects and classwork.

Additional Learnings:

Efforts in the development of these open-workshop sessions have already altered the class-specific versions of CPL workshops as they relate to 3D printing. The introduction of modeling tools has been re-ordered to better align with feedback from participants. Workshops now provide more partner-help and self-learning time for participants to help each other and actively *play* with features of TinkerCAD. Student participants from the workshop sessions have become active regulars in the use of the CPL for personal projects. Project leads hope to see more faculty-level engagement in Spring 2024 and future partnership with listed undergraduate classes for expansion of the project.

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First Year Student Support

Group Members: Ruth Elias and Alli Devney

Scope:

We held three programming events for Success Academies and Exploratory Studies first-year students to learn about the campus resources UNO offers, understand their personal and academic finances, and hear personal experiences from their peers on navigating college life. Choose Your Own Adventure (9/6/23) paired students in groups of 4-6 to do a scavenger hunt of campus resources. That Makes Cent\$ (10/3/23) included 2 staff from the Office of Financial Support and Scholarships. Staff discussed exploring scholarships, SAP Appeals and understanding their MavLink balances. Hear From Your Peers (11/8/23) included a panelist of 8 upperclassmen sharing their experiences and advice on how to navigate college.

28 students in total attended the events which aligned with the work we do everyday. Both Success Academies/DASH and MAC work with students who are predominantly first-generation, lower-income and admitted-by-review. We collaborated with over 20 individual departments on our projects. Two UNO colleagues worked on this project, Ruth Elias, from the Maverick Advising Center (MAC) & Alli Devney from Durango's Advancement & Support Hub (DASH). Additional support was given from colleagues in both offices as they were able.

Context/Background:

Our projects' aim was to introduce our student populations to campus resources, connect them with their peers, and equip them with the financial skills to ease their transition to college. Sarah Rose Cavanagh's book, *The Spark of Learning*, provided a framework that informed our selection of programming. For example, Sarah speaks to the importance emotions play in impacting and driving human behavior, motivation, and sparking curiosity in student learning. This understanding of her work provided a lens for us to critically think and intentionally select social activities that garnered student interest, curiosity, and promote engagement.

Project Objectives:

The objective of our project was to create more social events to promote relationship building amongst the campus community and bring more awareness to orienting to college life.

1. Connecting students with one another and resources on campus to foster learning in a social setting
2. Guiding students in understanding their finances and the financial opportunities available to them
3. Learning from others' experiences to understand that they are not alone, hear advice, and become inspired

Project Description:

Our collaboration with different departments and students throughout the project was intentional. Our goal was to involve various majors, interests, and programs so they could see how each may be different but are part of one campus community that offers support in many different ways.

Additional Learnings

The survey results confirmed that students really enjoyed meeting and bonding with their peers. Attendees appreciated learning about many campus resources and learning directly from Financial Support and Scholarships and their peers' experiences.

Excitement from presenters and staff seemed to spark interest and excitement from the students who attended. For example, in Choose Your Own Adventure, students entered the room quietly and distanced themselves. As staff interacted with students and were excited to begin, it was clear that the students became excited as they talked with students they did not know before, went on the scavenger hunt, and returned very upbeat, laughing, and full of inside jokes with their groups.

Unsurprising to us, food is a big draw for students.

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Business Dining and Networking Etiquette: Taking Soft Skills to the Next Level

Group Member: Sharon Storch

Scope:

Course: CMST 3130 860, Speech in Business and the Professions, Fall 2023, 24 students enrolled

This course often is a mix of communication and business students at approximately 50/50 and this sparks insight on various insight and contexts. This this student engagement initiative focuses on this one section of the course, but has a broad reach beyond that single unit.

This dining etiquette event project reached students outside the walls of the single 3130 classroom. The project brought course curriculum to life through a practical dining etiquette/business networking experience that reached

- 80 students across the UNO campus from any degree program
- 17 9-12 students through a community partnership with Urban League of Nebraska.
- 16 community professionals
- 8 UNO professors, directors, and associate deans
- 6 Graduate Student Volunteers/Collaborators

Context/Background:

This class (CMST 3130) is designed to give students real world opportunities to face communicative challenges in multiple contexts such as getting a job and excelling on the job. The **Spark of Learning** book content is directly related to the way this course is approached by its focus on student emotions, attention getting and memory retention activities, and enhancing student motivation. Emotions are addressed by the anxiety students and individuals have on presenting and business acumen. By providing students practical experience in these contexts, students built their overall performance and confidence. Additionally, engaging in experiences outside of the classroom in a real-world, practical setting where community professionals are present, students had greater motivation for learning and memory retention of knowledge and skills.

Project Objectives:

1. Build confidence in the students' soft skills (communication, presenting, networking), which businesses look for in future employees to build and maintain positive images of their organizations
2. Learn and exemplify proper dining etiquette while facilitating opportunities for K-12 students and UNO students to engage in professional conversations

Project Description:

- Offered high-level, real-world experiences for CMST 3130 students
- Hosted 28 different programs and degree areas within our UNO attendees
- Hosted 16 different community professional disciplines for networking interactions

Additional Learnings:

- Raised awareness to importance of honing soft skills for career preparedness
- Built future collaborations such as a service learning project with Career Services, Fall 2024
- Future efforts could increase UNO attendance and community connections with high school programs

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Student-to-Student Mentorship to Increase Student Engagement- Executive Summary

Group Members: Sandra Rodriguez-Arroyo, Ferial Pearson, Gabriel Gutierrez, Kristina Stamatias

Scope:

This project aimed to develop a structure to create a student-to-student mentorship program within the Teacher Education Diversity Organization (TEDO). Five faculty members are part of this project: Dr. Sandra Rodriguez-Arroyo (TED), Dr. Ferial Pearson (TED), Dr. Gabriel Gutierrez (TED), Dr. Kristina Stamatias (TED), and Dr. Herb Thompson (Communication Studies). Our original plan was to work with TEDO leaders and members, but we decided to expand a possible mentoring program to underrepresented UNO students. We sent a survey to diverse student organizations and invited them to join us in a Zoom meeting.

Context/Background:

Past teacher education students involved in TEDO have reported challenges. Specifically, they have recounted interactions that left them feeling emotionally isolated, marginalized, and misunderstood by their peers and instructors. When this happens, it impacts their engagement in the college classroom and during their practicums. Using the learnings from Sarah Rose Cavanagh, team members wished to engage in a conversation with students to explore 1) how mentorship materials and training could be designed to acknowledge the connections between emotions and learning and 2) how to increase the high control-high value experiences for TEDO students.

Project Objectives:

- Team members will design and deliver mentor training for TEDO students in the fall of 2023.
- Ten or more student mentors will receive mentor training and be formally matched with a mentee in TED 2200 or TED 2400 in spring 2024.
- TEDO co-sponsors will discuss how to use emotions to increase the engagement of all students in TED 2200 and 2400.

Project Description:

- As time was against us, we sent a UNO Student Mentoring survey to 18 student organizations and an invitation to join us in a Zoom conversation. These organizations included groups from different colleges to promote student engagement and learning across the campus, focusing on student mentoring.

Additional Learnings:

- We decided to wait until fall 2023 to connect with students as many TEDO members were graduating. We developed a flier and applications for mentees and mentors. Unfortunately, we all have many commitments that affect our timeline.
- We expanded the project to all UNO underrepresented students and needed to gather contact information from diverse student organizations. After some thought, we could have kept the mentoring project just for TEDO, but we wanted others to give their input and engage at the university level. However, this affected our timeline, and we haven't been able to make as much progress with materials development and mentor training. We are still planning to do this as we gathered more input through the survey and Zoom conversation.
- Even though we haven't been able to implement the mentoring program, we also needed to take a step back and make sure that for a UNO mentoring program to work and maximize student engagement, students need to be collaborators, not just listeners or receivers of information. For this reason, we would like to use the rest of the budget (\$400) to provide stipends to student collaborators before the semester ends. We plan to identify students through our courses and diversity organizations who could be part of co-designing/reimagining the mentoring project, which was part of what we had brainstormed during the afternoon session with Cavanaugh and needed to remember to center the project.

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Executive Summary: Student Engagement In Professional Selling Course

Group Members: Anne E. Herman, Shannon Cummins, and Gary Domet

Scope:

We offer 6 sections serving 150-170 students each semester. The spring semester will offer 4 sections taught in 'in-person', and 2 sections taught online. This course includes students across all of the College of Business Administration (CBA) concentrations (e.g., accounting, finance, management, real estate) who are sophomores, juniors, or seniors in standing.

Context/Background:

Our professional selling (MKT3100) class is a "different kind of class" than most students have experienced at UNO prior to being enrolled in this course per feedback shared by our students. This class is a designated Service-Learning course because it integrates with community organizations and partners to the Center for Professional Sales, and it fulfills the University Speech 2 requirement because it involves performing in front of others. The additional distinctions relating to this class – especially fulfilling the Speech 2 requirement in a business-related field – provide the opportunity to impact almost every student that matriculates through CBA to a successful graduate status.

Students demonstrate their learning and skill acquisition through simulated performances of sales related skills with partner professionals. These live performances include setting an appointment, "pitching" themselves for a sales role, and conducting a sales meeting.

Students are often very anxious and experience significant stress in advance of these public performances and the professionals who provide qualitative feedback and scoring. Though we do provide transparency of the scoring and how the experience and judging will work, students are often quite worried about their abilities for these projects.

Groups of 4-6 students are formed early in the semester and expected to think together, practice with one another, and provide specific feedback to themselves and each member of the team through defined rubrics for many of the assignments in the class. In part this accomplishes a learning goal that students will learn how to provide and receive feedback. Additionally, we hope that the work students do together provides a peer-support system where they can learn and develop confidence with people whom they build trust. Student feedback has indicated that for many the connections they develop through these groups are some of the strongest relationships they make in a college class.

Upon review of our current course structure and deep study of Dr. Cavanagh's book, we identified that we currently do employ the suggested Knowledge Emotion Teaching Practices 1 and 3 with current protocols and assignment components.

A few of the challenges that we wanted to address with this opportunity relate to the stress and anxiety students can feel during some of the performance practice and final demonstrations. Most of these opportunities include practice with and in front of peers and faculty, but the idea of showing their skills to professionals tends to bring about doubt and uncertainty for many students.

Additionally, sometimes students do not fully engage in the course when they do not see the relevancy of foundational sales skills for their anticipated career. We explicitly chose a book, "To Sell is Human" that has the central premise that we all may have opportunities to sell (e.g., an idea, a request for help). Some students remain less convinced that they will benefit from the things we do in their career.

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We benefited from Dr. Cavanagh's expertise in how we leveraged other existing practices she shared to further create an environment that maximizes student engagement with the material, each other, and the CBA and University communities. Additionally, we learned more about how we could enhance the work we do in connecting students to sales role opportunities and also find options that "are deeply relevant to the future careers of students." As Cavanagh shared it "may be the most powerful organizing principle we can leverage as a teacher". Furthermore, we attempted to use goal setting to enhance student persistence in a few of our classes. Finally, we'd like to build on our feedback team structure and foundation to enhance how the shared learning component of the course can enhance the student experience and help them maximize what they take from the course.

Project Objectives:

Our proposed student objectives were as follows:

1. Students would find a connection between the skills they'll learn and develop and their anticipated chosen career – regardless of their concentration(s) or majors.
 - a. Students developed confidence and a positive affect toward their abilities to present themselves for a professional opportunity in a sales role AND in their own anticipated career field.
2. Students can benefit from goal setting practices that will help them persist through some of the challenging aspects of the projects that are exacerbated by their lack of confidence in their skills.
3. We maximize the inter-dependent learning structure to build authentic relationships among students and create peer support among the students in the feedback groups.

These 3 project objectives presented clear opportunities to expand on how we built intentional student engagement efforts into the course. Because the class focuses on the sales profession, and not all students are planning for, or will continue toward a sales concentration, it will help maximize how the students see the content as personally relevant. We can leverage an existing positive student engagement practice (i.e., feedback teams) to enhance the likelihood that students build relationships with one another, confidence in their potential through peer interaction, and dissuade the likelihood of social loafing in the groups.

Project Description:

Our lead applicant is the co-chair of the University Committee on the Advancement of Teaching (UCAT), so we are connected to the efforts they champion as well as the work supported by the Center for Faculty Excellence (CFE). Dr. Herman has participated in multiple opportunities to enhance our practices of student engagement (e.g., currently a member of the Community of Practice for Engaged Learning and Teaching), which allows her to share our work with colleagues across the UNO campus.

Our class students potentially have at least 15 different concentrations across the CBA and other disciplines who take our course are focused outside of business areas (e.g., psychology, computer science), so we are certain to impact students focusing in many areas.

Additional Learnings:

We learned many things in our first semester of implementation (fall 2023). We had envisioned having students set goals for different projects during the semester. We used two sections of the class to try and implement this component. We found that students were not always clear around performance vs. process goals. For example, many students set goals for "A" final performance scores but neglected how the preparation components would contribute to achieving strong performance.

We have been very intentional with student relationship development in this class and have continued these practices in the current semester. We believe that having students' work intentionally designed to be interdependent helps to create and fortify bonds amongst students. We will continue to explore how these efforts are impacting the connectedness to each other and the class in general. Additionally, we believe that students clearly understanding connections between their skill development and how it will help them in the future – regardless of which career path they pursue is also a benefit we can leverage in this course. We will continue to examine the extent to which our efforts to do so are helpful to students and their engagement.

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Students Exploring Aging in the Community

Group Members: Amy Hanson and Rachel Bash

Scope:

The Students Exploring Aging project engaged students from Introduction to Gerontology (GERO 2000) and Exploratory Studies (EXPL 1000) and gave these students the opportunity to explore if working with the aging population is a career path and/or college major they want to pursue. Additionally, as a part of the EXPL 1000 curriculum, students design and complete a prototype (a practical experience) that allows them to gain experience related to a major or a career of interest. In GERO 2000, students are to interview two older adults, and this project gave students an opportunity to meet older adults and conduct the interview if they chose to do so. Dr. Rachel Bash (EXPL 1000 instructor) and Dr. Amy Hanson (GERO 2000 instructor) collaborated on this project. In total, 13 students from these two courses participated in the project.

Context/Background:

Experiential learning (often through volunteering) gives students the opportunity to discover if they have an interest or passion in a particular area, but it can be hard for some students to find and create these opportunities on their own. This project provided opportunities for students to serve at two different Omaha sites: Aksarben Senior Living and the Intercultural Senior Center.

Sarah Rose Cavanagh's expertise in the importance of connecting emotion and learning was especially relevant to this project, in that students may have classroom learning about a particular population group but until they have an experience with a particular group, certain emotions and motivations may be left untapped. The hope was for the project to provide opportunities for students to draw connections between the classroom and the world off campus, creating a new sense of relevance and emotional investment.

Project Objectives:

Students will be able to identify whether they do or do not want to continue to explore aging as a potential career path and/or college major.

Students will be able to identify experiences from this project that contributed to their decision to explore gerontology/aging as a career and/or major.

Students will be able to communicate 2 or more things they learned about older adults and 2 or more things they learned about themselves as a result of participating in the project.

Project Description:

The Students Exploring Aging project created hands-on experiences for students to interact with older adults in meaningful ways. Interested students signed up to volunteer with older adults at a short "field experience." The project lead coordinated with the two sites to ensure meaningful interaction. At Aksarben Village, the activity was an ice cream social and bingo and at the Intercultural Senior Center this was a craft project, Wii sports, and other games.

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Additional Learnings:

In a survey completed after their site visit, student participants reported a number of insights and potential changes. Some of those are related to major and career exploration: for several students, their experience at Aksarben Senior Living or the Intercultural Senior Center confirmed their interest in helping professions or awoke a potential interest in pursuing the field of gerontology. Several were able to see the value of possessing skills in languages and/or language technology like Google Translate, which prompted additional study or work in that area. For others, the insights were more personal and philosophical in nature. They talked about realizing that older adults are fun to be with and have a lot of wisdom to offer. Students were inspired to make volunteering a more regular part of their lives. They felt called to a deeper investment in and exploration of the lives around them. That

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call has led to a concrete plan for this spring: one of the EXPL Peer Mentors, Anibal Chan, plans to lead a group of students back to the Intercultural Senior Center this April and may try to make the trip a regular occurrence. Seeing the students interact with the residents at the Intercultural Senior Center has confirmed the importance of service learning for Dr. Bash and Dr. Hanson. Students were able to utilize assistive technology like Google Translate to have meaningful conversations and learn from the seniors. They brought questions related to the content of their courses but they also were able to experience the ways that those questions become more than academic exercises.

The project also highlighted the possibilities in designing experiential, service learning projects for multiple courses at the same time. Dr. Hanson and Dr. Bash were able to design an approach that fulfilled requirements for students in both courses, which bolstered the numbers of students for both sites and allowed students to chat with each other about their different courses, questions, and purposes. Dr. Bash will continue to include at least one off-site experience in as many courses as possible, and she will seek opportunities to collaborate with other courses. It would be ideal to incorporate cooperative work between those courses: perhaps prep together and then reflect together after the experience.

Students can tend to view their individual classes as well as their larger college experience as contained units: they go to class, complete their work, and earn their degrees. Experiences like this require them to make connections between what they are learning and the world around them as well as other classes of UNO students. So many students also report a lack of motivation, that it's hard to invest in something that doesn't capture their imagination. Projects like this can help create that investment by putting students in contact with the stories around them. This is emotion made manifest.