MUHLENBERG COLLEGE  
TASK FORCE ON THE SENIOR YEAR EXPERIENCE  
INTERIM REPORT  
Rev. 4/11/07

I. Introduction

As an institution and a community, Muhlenberg is committed to continuous improvement – setting high standards, achieving them, then raising the bar again. Complacency is not one of our core values. Thus, although the College is already distinguished for its powerful educational outcomes (demonstrated by the impressive accomplishments of our graduates), Muhlenberg must think boldly and intentionally about our students’ senior year experience. Can we provide our seniors with a more challenging culminating academic experience and more effective opportunities for integration of the intellectual skills they have mastered? Can we furnish more deliberately thoughtful opportunities for reflection so that they graduate with a deeper perspective on their own development, their strengths and weaknesses, their values, and their potential for lifelong education? Can we offer more creatively designed opportunities to prepare them for a swift, smooth, and successful transition from the so-called Muhlenberg “bubble” to a rich, full, and independent adulthood?

The first of these questions is primarily curricular and is most properly addressed by our faculty, working through its existing committee structure. This is an opportune moment for such deliberations, as the Academic Policy Committee (APC) is already deeply engaged in a full-scale review of Muhlenberg’s curriculum.

Our other two issues – reflection and transition – are also of deep interest to the faculty, but require a wider range of perspectives. To that end, in September 2006 President Helm convened a task force on the Senior Year Experience (SYE) comprised of faculty, students, staff, alumni, and parents. This group assessed existing institutional data, developed additional data, consulted broadly within our community, thought creatively, and offered specific proposals for the consideration of the College community.

II. Task Force Structure, Process, and Timeline

To expedite the work of the Task Force, President Helm assigned its members to one of two subcommittees: the subcommittee on Reflection, chaired by Provost Marjorie Hass, or the subcommittee on Transition, chaired by Dean of Students Karen Green. The College’s Academic Policy Committee (APC) was charged with developing recommendations relating to strengthening academic rigor and integration of intellectual skills during the senior year.
Professor Christine Sistare, Chair of the Philosophy Department, served as liaison between APC and the Task Force Steering Committee. For a full list of Task Force members, please see Attachment 1.

In January 2007 the Transition Subcommittee, assisted by Associate Dean for Institutional Assessment Kathy Harring, conducted a survey of current seniors to determine the relative importance of issues related to their transition from College to “the world of work.” An initial summary of proposals developed by the subcommittees was shared with the campus at a well-attended public forum on February 22, 2007. Discussion was lively and helped the subcommittees refine their ideas further in preparation for this interim draft. Focus groups with selected seniors are scheduled for the latter part of the spring 2007 semester. The results of this research will also inform our final recommendations.

During April we intend to share this interim draft with members of the Muhlenberg Community, the Parents Council, and the Board of Trustees for discussion and feedback. Our goal is to complete a final draft no later than June 1, 2007, with implementation to begin during the fall 2007 semester.

III. The Senior Year at Muhlenberg – Today

At the outset of our deliberations we acknowledged that there are, in fact, many different types of “senior year experience” at Muhlenberg today.

- Some seniors (especially accounting majors) will have job offers in hand by the beginning of senior year and experience little uncertainty or anxiety about their immediate future;
- Some seniors will be focused on filing applications to graduate or professional school;
- Some seniors will be actively exploring career options with the assistance of the Career Center;
- Some seniors will be planning to “take a break” after graduation for travel or other recreational pursuits;
- Some seniors will be planning a year or more of military or public service (Teach for America, Peace Corps, etc.) before pursuing graduate school or a career;
- Some seniors will be happy to procrastinate, deferring post-graduation planning to the last possible moment;
- Some seniors will be in a state of denial, panic, depression, and/or paralysis at the prospect of graduation and what comes afterwards.

Muhlenberg should provide seniors in each of these categories with appropriate levels of challenge and support, while recognizing that not all seniors will need or desire to participate in every service we provide their classmates.

A. Survey Data

Our first step as a Task Force was to examine what we already know about Muhlenberg’s senior year experience. Associate Dean for Institutional Assessment Kathy Harring provided a useful summary of significant findings from three surveys which the College conducted in
2005: the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the Higher Education Data Sharing (HEDS) senior survey, and the Muhlenberg campus social life survey. (See Attachment 2)

1. According to the NSSE and HEDS surveys comparing Muhlenberg seniors with their counterparts at similar liberal arts colleges,¹ Muhlenberg seniors report a lower level of academic challenge in their senior year, as evidenced by:
   - A lighter reading load;
   - Fewer long research papers (though more short papers);
   - Fewer Muhlenberg seniors feel that they are working as hard as they could be;
   - Fewer Muhlenberg seniors feel that campus culture emphasizes academics;
   - Muhlenberg seniors have fewer class presentations and discussions of ideas outside the classroom;
   - Muhlenberg seniors report fewer culminating academic experiences such as senior seminars, etc.; and
   - Muhlenberg seniors report fewer independent research experiences, collaborative research with faculty experiences, study abroad experiences, paid internships, and leadership development experiences.

2. According to the HEDS and campus social life surveys:
   - Seniors report a generally high level of satisfaction with their campus social life;
   - Seniors report high levels of satisfaction with the sense of community on campus and the level of concern the College shows for their well-being; and
   - Seniors report a higher level of alcohol consumption than underclassmen. This is not necessarily problematic, as most seniors have attained legal drinking age while most underclassmen have not.

3. According to the SYE senior survey undertaken in January 2007, seniors express the most anxiety about their readiness to:
   - Find housing and negotiate apartment leases;
   - Manage money; and
   - Make appropriate decisions about insurance.

B. Programs

A review of current programs and activities targeting the senior class revealed:

1. Academic programs, including senior seminars and senior projects, are offered by approximately 80% of Muhlenberg departments, thought not all seniors take advantage of

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¹ The NSSE benchmark group included: Denison University, DePauw University, Hiram College, Illinois Wesleyan University, Kenyon College, Manhattanville College, Saint Olaf College, The College of Wooster, Ursinus College, Washington College and Willamette University. The HEDS benchmark group included: Bates, Colby, Dickinson, Gettysburg, Hamilton, and St. Lawrence.
such opportunities. Indeed, it is not clear that seniors enrolled in such seminars and projects are aware that these are “capstone experiences.”

2. The Career Center offers a wide range of programs to seniors and other students throughout the year, including job-shadowing opportunities during mid-semester break, Alumni-in-the-Classroom Week, alumni career panels, “Dine for Success,” and other programs during the spring semester. Planned for April 2007 is a new program “Leaving the Red Doors” – a series of workshops to assist seniors in their transition to life after Muhlenberg on such topics as:

- Benefits & Insurance;
- Relocation / Apartments;
- Work Etiquette and Professionalism, and
- Personal Finance: Savings and Budgeting.

3. A full social calendar organized by the Senior Class Council includes 10-12 Senior Pub Nights throughout the year and the 100 Days and 50 Days celebrations, and culminates in Senior Week – an extremely full and varied schedule of parties, meals, and activities, partially subsidized by the College, that far exceeds in scope and expense senior week activities offered by most of our peer institutions (see below).

4. The Senior Connections Campaign, organized by the Alumni Office and Senior Class Officers, includes a series of receptions, cookouts, and other events aimed at encouraging seniors’ engagement in alumni activities, including regional clubs and particularly the Muhlenberg Fund.

C. Outcomes

Muhlenberg’s Admissions office partners with the Career Center to conduct an annual career survey of alumni one-year after graduation, typically receiving a high response rate (85% for the most recent survey). Results for the Class of 2005 confirm full-time employment for 70.1% of our graduates and advanced graduate/professional study for 28.7%. Acceptance rates for medical and law school applications typically run in the 85% - 90% range. Less than 1.5% of survey respondents are still seeking employment one year after graduation. These percentages have remained stable, with minor fluctuations, for at least the last five years (Muhlenberg Source Book 2006-2007, p. 76).

IV. Intellectual Integration

Integration of student learning is an important aim of the Senior Year Experience. As noted by the Association of American Colleges and Universities, “Developing the ability to make, recognize, and evaluate connections among disparate concepts, fields, or contexts is what
integrative learning is all about.”2 The contemporary world is marked by rapid changes in the development of knowledge and in economic and employment opportunities, and by the challenges of global citizenship. Our students must become “integrative thinkers who can see connections in seemingly disparate information and draw on a wide range of knowledge to make decisions [and who can] adapt the skills learned in one situation to problems encountered in another,” so that they will “succeed even when instability is the only constant.”3

Curricular efforts to provide opportunities for such integration are often referred to as “capstone” experiences. Curricular initiatives such as these fall within the purview of the faculty and are under review by the faculty’s Academic Policy committee (APC).

**Recommendation 1:**
The SYE Task Force recommends that efforts be made to identify and publicize currently existing capstone experiences more effectively. Departments should be encouraged to use the name “capstone” in their curricular material and offices such as admissions and career services should emphasize the range of such opportunities to prospective and current students. The Task Force endorses APC’s efforts in this area and encourages the results of APC’s work to be folded into the overall “marketing” of the SYE as these results become available.

**Recommendation 1a:**
We further recommend that departments that do not currently offer an integrative capstone experience in their major develop such experiences. All departments should guarantee the availability of such experiences to interested seniors [depending on the outcome of APC curricular discussions].

**Recommendation 1b:**
We also recommend that the College continue to build its investment in the “Praxis” initiatives of the strategic plan, including additional funding for student research, expansion of study abroad opportunities, and internships.

Given the feedback APC has received up to this point, there appears to be general agreement on the part of the faculty that a capstone integrative experience is best handled through individual majors. Other points of agreement are that such an experience should be available to, but not necessarily required of, every senior. The type of capstone experience available will vary by major. Examples of such experiences include a senior seminar and associated research paper, a student concert or art exhibition, a student teaching term, or an internship. APC has determined that approximately 80% of majors currently offer some type of Capstone experience, although not all majors explicitly identify it as such. (See Attachment 3).

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2 From Integrative Learning: Opportunities to Connect, a 10-college project sponsored by AAC&U and The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

3 From Greater Expectations: Chapter Three, The Education All Students Need. AAC&U Report; 2002. Also see LEAP (Liberal Education and America’s Promise), another AAC&U project which advocates for the importance of integrative learning.
As part of its overall curricular review, APC intends to create a statement of the goals and expected outcomes of Capstone experiences and also to examine whether every major should be required to offer such an opportunity to students. APC also intends to include issues relating to the senior year and academic integration in its forthcoming survey of faculty positions on curriculum and its follow-up focus group efforts.

V. Reflection

Linked to the goal of intellectual integration is that of personal reflection. The senior year experience should offer opportunities for our graduates to gain a deeper understanding of who they have become through their Muhlenberg journey and who they will become in the future. Through individual and shared reflection, seniors can make connections between their Muhlenberg experiences – personal and academic – and the growth and development they have undergone. One member of the Task Force suggested that “the ideal is that we create a culture of reflection for seniors, reflection that manifests itself in a variety of formal and informal ways.”

Recommendation 2:
The SYE Task Force recommends the creation of senior mentor groups, consisting of no more than 8-10 seniors each and led by volunteer faculty, staff, Trustees, Observers, alumni, and/or parents who are equipped with clear guidelines and expectations for this role. Senior mentor groups will meet at least 3 times during the senior year for structured, thoughtful conversation about students’ Muhlenberg experience, personal growth, development, and future plans.

We believe that small groups of seniors can benefit from collective reflection and conversation about the academic, social, emotional, and/or spiritual growth and transformation they have experienced during their time at Muhlenberg. Participation should be optional, but we hope that an appropriately broad variety of volunteer leaders to facilitate and guide such discussions will attract a large percentage of the senior class. Such mentors would not be expected to provide seniors with individual advising, replace formal academic advising, or provide the kind of services or support offered by the Counseling Center and chaplains.

Recommendation 3:
We recommend creation of a Senior Year Website incorporating a multimedia Reflection Anthology of resources that will encourage personal reflection among Muhlenberg seniors.

Ready access to a wide array of relevant, accurate information will, we believe, provide seniors with a powerful tool for reflection and transition as they complete their undergraduate careers. Muhlenberg’s website should provide a one-stop shop designed for and by seniors that includes pertinent information about senior year activities, requirements, services, and deadlines, and graduation and post-college information, as well as interactive web-based reflection opportunities such as blogs, discussion forums, notice boards, video montages, slide-shows, surveys for seniors (what I wish I’d known when I was a freshman) and for young alumni (what I wish I’d known when I left Muhlenberg), and the like. Over time, links to reflections of previous Muhlenberg Senior classes including commencement addresses might be included as well. Such a website should also provide links to other resources for reflection including websites such as
www.turbulenttwenties.com and www.quarterlifecrisis.com and books such as The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People. The Reflection Anthology could be an important resource for senior mentor groups, for which it might also include questions and discussion prompts. The website would also provide a useful tool for seniors dealing with transition issues (see below).

Recommendation 4:
We recommend that appropriate faculty, administrators, and OIT staff develop the technology to provide students with the means to develop and maintain convenient and flexible web-based personal portfolios that can assemble representative examples of their work throughout their four years at Muhlenberg, providing a useful tool for individual reflection during the senior year on one's intellectual growth and development, as well as material of interest to potential employers.

Some years ago the College’s Career Services Office launched a “Mules Portfolio Project” linked to the Freshman Seminar Program. For a variety of reasons this effort failed to gain acceptance and was later abandoned. We believe that individual students should have the tools to organize and retain examples of their work (including faculty feedback on their efforts) over their time at Muhlenberg, and that the curriculum should encourage the use of such portfolios as an important tool for teaching and learning. We are advised that the College does not have the technical ability to provide this functionality without an additional investment of resources. Such an investment would be worthwhile, if supported by faculty commitment to encourage its use. We believe that this should be explored and promoted.

VI. Transition

Different seniors need different kinds of assistance in preparing to leave the relatively sheltered life of the Muhlenberg campus for the less forgiving world of work or graduate/professional school. Ultimately, our newest graduates must take responsibility for their own futures, but Muhlenberg can and should provide our seniors with opportunities to obtain a robust tool kit of survival skills before they leave us.

Recommendation 5:
We recommend a yearlong “Re-Orientation” for seniors to help prepare them more intentionally for the many transitions they face as they move from Muhlenberg to whatever comes next. Combining events currently offered by the Career Center and the Alumni Office with new programs (see below) “Re-orientation” would be marketed to both seniors and their parents as a way of maximizing student participation.

The one-stop shop Senior year website discussed above is a tool that can provide tips, pointers, career advice, and links to further information about housing, personal finances, health, car, and homeowners/renters insurance, and other life skills.

In addition to events already offered during the fall semester, we believe that a “for seniors-only” mid-year Re-orientation Program during the last part of mid-winter break should provide an intensive survival skills boot camp experience, along with class bonding opportunities. The mid-
A year program would provide a wide array of elective topics and skill sessions to appeal to the varied needs of seniors. Planning for the program should include extensive consultation with juniors in preparation for their senior year (members of the Transition Subcommittee are currently planning focus groups to obtain student input on factors that would make such a program successful). Effective marketing of Re-orientation events will be important. Such efforts might include a Senior Year Experience/Re-Orientation brochure that would go to both students and parents announcing the year’s goals and events, advertising on Facebook to reach seniors where they are likely to be hanging out, as well as the usual and current advertising techniques. Re-Orientation would continue throughout the spring term with Career Center and Alumni Office events.

VII. Senior Week

As our deliberations about the senior year experience proceeded, it became clear that we should consider the phenomenon of Senior Week at Muhlenberg: what it has become and what it should be in the future. The Office of Student Activities conducted research with our benchmark institutions in order to ascertain the scope of their offerings, in addition to the associated costs. Attachment 4 provides an overview of what we learned.

To summarize, it seems evident that Muhlenberg’s Senior Week is the most ambitious, extensive, expensive, and most heavily subsidized program among our peer institutions. We were troubled to learn that a number of other institutions have largely disassociated themselves from senior week, packing the graduating class off to beach towns in other states for several days of parties. This seems an invitation to tragedy. However, while we strongly endorse the idea of a culminating period on-campus for seniors to celebrate their Muhlenberg years and class friendships, we are also concerned that the current roster of events has tipped too far in the direction of purely social activity and believe that there is room for a service component that will make this culminating week more meaningful and memorable for our graduates.

**Recommendation 7:**
We recommend that the Dean of Students and Office of Student Activities work with student leaders to rethink the schedule for Senior Week; we also suggest that the Dean of Students consider redeploying some of the institutional subsidy for Senior Week to support the mid-year Re-orientation program.

VIII. Resources, Timing, and Assessment

Additional resources and work will be required to implement these recommendations. It is unrealistic to believe that worthwhile progress can be made without dedicated administrative support and appropriate resources.
**Recommendation 8:**
We recommend that the President approve creation of a part-time position, Associate Dean for the Senior Year Experience, and determine an appropriate reporting line. Additionally, we recommend the allocation of appropriate resources to launch these initiatives.

We believe that the new initiatives recommended in this report should be implemented as soon as possible, but realize that it may not be practical or desirable to implement all of them simultaneously. It will be important to review the impact of these efforts formally to determine whether they represent a good investment of College resources or need to be revised, strengthened, or terminated.

**Recommendation 9:**
The SYE recommendations should be phased in over a maximum of three years. At the end of the fourth year, the success and effectiveness of these initiatives should be formally assessed and a recommendation made to the President as to whether to continue the program.

**IX. Pro Forma Budget:**

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<th>Year 3</th>
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<td>Website development</td>
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<td>Reorientation</td>
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<td>- marketing/printing</td>
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<td>Portfolio initiative</td>
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<td>Assessment costs</td>
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**Revenues/Resources**

Partial redeployment of Family weekend subsidy
Nominal Reorientation Registration Fee (@$50)
Operating budget
Attachment 1

Steering Committee
Dr. Randy Helm, President
Chair, Steering Committee
Ms. Sharon Albert, Religion Studies
Ms. Tammy Bormann ’83, Trustee
Mr. Ryan Campbell ’08
Mr. Alex Corgan ’08
Ms. Karen Green, Dean of Students
Dr. Kathy Harring, Associate Dean of Assessment
Dr. Marjorie Hass, Provost
Mr. Chris Hooker-Haring, Dean of Admissions
Ms. Kelli Provost-Brown, Director of the Career Center
Dr. Christine Sistare, Philosophy

Reflection Subcommittee
Dr. Marjorie Hass, Provost
Chair, Reflections Subcommittee
Sharon Albert, Religion Studies
Rev. Peter Bredlau, College Chaplain
Ryan Campbell ’08
Dr. Keri Colabroy, Chemistry
Dr. Thomas Cragin, History
Ms. Christine Davies ’05
Ms. Deborah Kipp, Assoc. Vice President for Development
Dr. Jeff Rudski, Psychology
Dr. Alan Tjeltveit, Psychology
Mr. Trevor Wade ’07
Dr. Carol Shiner Wilson, Dean of the College for Academic Life

Transition Subcommittee
Ms. Karen Green, Dean of Students
Chair, Transition Subcommittee
Mr. Mike Bruckner, VP for Public Relations
Ms. Wendy Cole, Director of the Academic Resource Center
Mr. Alex Corgan ’08
Ms. Sarah Efronson ’07
Ms. Traci Falco, Director of Alumni Relations
Mr. Chris Hooker-Haring, Dean of Admissions
Dr. Erika Iyengar, Biology
Dr. Hartley Lachter, Religion Studies
Mr. Greg Lichtman ’07, Alumnus
Ms. Evelyn Lipschutz P’06, Parent
Ms. Patti Mittleman, Hillel Director
Ms. Kelli Provost-Brown, Director of the Career Center
Dr. Kate Ranieri, Media and Communication
Dr. Jen Risley ’02, Alumna
Ms. Rachel Rosenberg ’07, Alumna
Dr. Chris Sistare, Philosophy
Mr. Jeff Slotterback ’04, Alumnus
Attachment 2

Perceptions of the Senior Year Experience

Results of the NSSE 2005 and HEDS 2005 Student Surveys

and the Muhlenberg Social Life Survey 2005

Prepared by Kathleen Harring

October 19, 2006

Muhlenberg Seniors Compared to Muhlenberg First Years on NSSE Benchmarks

- No real difference for *Level of Academic Challenge*
- Seniors had a higher rating for *Active and Collaborative Learning*
- Seniors scored higher for *Student-Faculty Interaction*
- Seniors had a higher rating for *Enriching Educational Experiences*
- FY students scored higher for *Supportive Campus Environment*

Seniors rated their relationships with other students and with administrators lower than did FY students, but they rated relationships with faculty members higher than FYs.

Seniors also had lower ratings for:
- Whether the campus helps them cope with nonacademic responsibilities
- Whether the campus provides the support for them to thrive socially

Muhlenberg Seniors Compared to Peer Group Seniors on NSSE Benchmarks

Muhlenberg was significantly lower on **three** of five benchmarks compared to peer group (Denison University, DePauw University, Hiram College, Illinois Wesleyan University, Kenyon College, Manhattanville College, Saint Olaf College, The College of Wooster, Ursinus College, Washington College and Willamette University).

*Level of Academic Challenge*

- MC seniors were somewhat less likely to report that they are working harder than they thought they could.
- MC seniors are writing a greater number of shorter papers, but fewer longer papers (20 pages or more) than peers.
- MC seniors reading load was somewhat lower.
- MC seniors somewhat less likely to report that the campus culture emphasizes studying and academic work.
**Active and Collaborative Learning**

- MC seniors were somewhat less likely to make a class presentation and discuss ideas from class with others (students, friends, family).

**Enriching Educational Experiences**

- MC seniors were less likely to interact with someone of a different ethnicity or feel that the college encourages contact among students of different backgrounds.
- MC seniors were less likely to study abroad or have a culminating senior experience.

**Supportive Campus Environment**

- No difference with peer group on this benchmark.
- MC seniors had somewhat lower ratings for relationships with other students and with faculty members, but higher ratings for relationships with administration and with the academic support they are provided.
- MC seniors had somewhat lower ratings for nonacademic support and for support for social life.
- HEDS 2005 results for satisfaction with social life did not show any real differences between Muhlenberg seniors and peer group seniors (74% of our seniors reported being generally or very satisfied with the campus social life).

**Overall Ratings compared to Peer Group**

- Similar ratings for advising and overall experience (HEDS 2005 results were similar).
- MC seniors were significantly less likely to report that they would attend the college if starting over (similar findings for the HEDS 2005).

**Muhlenberg Seniors Compared to Peer Group Seniors for HEDS 2005**


**Participation in Enriching Educational Experiences**

- MC Seniors were less likely to study abroad (26%), travel abroad during the summer (6%), apply for a grant/fellowship (7%), participate in leadership training (12%), have a summer paid internship (16%), conduct independent study/research (26%), work with faculty on their research (13%), participate in a racial/cultural awareness program (5%) or a gender studies program (4%) than at our peer institutions.
Sense of Community on Campus

- MC Seniors reported the highest level of community compared to peer group seniors (86% were generally or very satisfied with the sense of community).

How do Seniors Compare with Underclass Students on the Social Life Survey?

Ratings of Social Life and College Concern for Students

- Overall % of seniors rating the social life as excellent or good was higher (51%) compared to sophomores (39%) and juniors (34%), but lower than FY (61%).
- Similar results for satisfaction with the level of concern that the college shows for its students with more seniors (69%) compared to sophomores (64%) and juniors (64%) being very or somewhat satisfied, but FYs (75%) expressing the most satisfaction.

Drinking Behavior

- A greater % of seniors (55%) report having five or more drinks in a row three or more times within the last two weeks compared to underclassmen.
- More seniors (49%) reported drinking more now compared to the beginning of their college career.
- There was a class year trend in the frequency of hangovers in the past year with seniors reporting more frequent hangovers due to drinking or drugs (51% were hung over three or more times in the past year).
- A greater % of seniors (33%) missed class due to drinking or drug use three or more times within the last year compared to underclassmen.
- More seniors (10%) reported being injured three or more times within the year due to drinking or drugs compared to underclassmen.
### Examples of Capstone Experiences Within the Major Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Types of Experiences</th>
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<tr>
<td>Accounting, Business &amp; Economics</td>
<td>Capstone Course</td>
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<td>BUS 444: Business Policy &amp; Strategy Capstone</td>
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<td>American Studies</td>
<td>Senior seminar chosen in consultation with advisor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>Senior Studio seminar that includes monthly critiques with faculty</td>
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<td>Biochemistry</td>
<td>Capstone Course</td>
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<td>BCM 441: Advanced Biochemistry</td>
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<td>Biology</td>
<td>400-level seminar course</td>
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<td>Computer Science</td>
<td>Project-based Capstone Seminar</td>
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<td>Dance</td>
<td>Choreography project or Independent Study</td>
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<td>English</td>
<td>500-level advanced seminars</td>
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<td>Film Studies</td>
<td>FLM 450: Film Studies Seminar</td>
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<td>COM 467: Advanced Electronic Media Production</td>
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<td>History</td>
<td>Two-semester capstone experience (Reading Seminar in History, Research Seminar in History) and Honors Independent Study</td>
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<td>International Studies</td>
<td>Senior Capstone Seminar</td>
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<td>Media and Communications</td>
<td>COM 480 or 481: Media and Communications Honors Seminar</td>
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<td>Music</td>
<td>Performance students: Senior Recital</td>
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<td>History &amp; Theory students: Research paper</td>
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<td>Composition students: Portfolio of pieces</td>
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<td>Neuroscience</td>
<td>Capstone Seminar</td>
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<td>NSC 448: Advanced Topics in Neuroscience</td>
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<td>Philosophy</td>
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<td>Philosophy and Political Thought</td>
<td>Advanced Seminar</td>
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<td>Physics</td>
<td>Independent research experience</td>
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<td>Political Science</td>
<td>Senior Seminar</td>
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<td>Department</td>
<td>Types of Experiences</td>
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| Psychology                  | Advanced Lab course with research component and presentation at Department Research Conference  
                             | Independent research/study                                                             
                             | Honors Research                                                                      |
| Religion                    | Senior Seminar                                                                      |
| Sociology/Anthropology      | Senior seminar with research component                                                
                             | Honors research                                                                      |
| Theatre                     | Acting/Directing students: Directing course and/or major role                        
                             | Directing/Design students: Opportunity to direct/design production                    
                             | Stage Management students: Opportunity to manage a production                         
                             | Performance Studies students: Independent Study                                       |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scholars Programs</th>
<th>Types of Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dana Program</td>
<td>Senior Dana Forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muhlenberg Scholars</td>
<td>Senior Scholars Seminar with senior project</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| RJ Fellows                  | Capstone Seminar                                                                     
                             | Presentation of major research/creative project at RJ Symposium                      |
## Attachment 4

### Comparison of Senior Week Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Senior Events</th>
<th>Student Charges</th>
<th>Cost of Event(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Muhlenberg College** | Wednesday:  
♦ Senior Ball  
Thursday:  
♦ Senior Surprise  
Friday:  
♦ Champagne Brunch  
♦ Senior Farewell Party |
|                   | Saturday:  
♦ Senior Class Meeting  
♦ Baccalaureate Service  
♦ Senior Appreciate Reception (Seniors & Family Members) |
|                   |                                                                 |                 | Senior Ball is sponsored by funds raised by the Senior Class |
|                   |                                                                 |                 | Senior Surprise: $18,700-$24,000                      |
| **Bucknell College** | Many seniors spend their week after classes at the shore.  
Friday:  
♦ Campus-wide (faculty, staff, students) wine and cheese party with entertainment, ending with fireworks.  
Saturday:  
♦ Departmental receptions  
♦ Award banquets  
♦ Candle lighting Ceremony  
♦ Tent party for graduation  
Beer & wine is served in the tent party and those who are 21+ are given tickets for 3 drinks. |
|                   |                                                                 | N/A             | N/A                                                   |
| **Dickinson College** | Tuesday:  
♦ “Found Your Path” event – senior walk across campus for a retrospective walk, food and drinks are served at each stop from Admissions to dorms and final stop at Student Union for wine and desserts where they meet alumni, attend by 300.  
Wednesday:  
♦ “Senior Surprise” is now Campus Carnival – open to seniors, staff, faculty and families. Dinner and beer is served.  
♦ Alumni band performs, 300-400 seniors attend |
<p>|                   |                                                                 |                 | Found Your Path - Food and drinks, tips trained staff, spend approximately $5,000 |
|                   |                                                                 |                 | Campus Carnival - Picnic style food, tips trained staff, spend between |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thursday:</td>
<td>• Senior Formal – off campus. Hosted and planned by senior class.</td>
<td>$10,000-$11,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday:</td>
<td>• Champagne Toast – President offers a welcome and champagne toast for seniors and their parents from the steps of the Administration Building – kick-off for Commencement.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin &amp; Marshall</td>
<td>♦ Senior Surprise: dinner, drinks, and entertainment</td>
<td>N/A  $12,000-$15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gettysburg</td>
<td>♦ Most seniors leave campus between exam period and commencement.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>♦ Commencement Weekend - a party is sponsored by the college for students and families. Alcohol and food are served.</td>
<td>N/A  N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday:</td>
<td>• Senior soiree-picnic at President’s House with bar</td>
<td>-Students must register for Senior Week - $65 fee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday:</td>
<td>• Off-campus bar with drink specials that students pay for</td>
<td>-“Safe Rides” (buses) for all off-campus events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday:</td>
<td>• BBQ on campus with inflatables and beer 3-7pm</td>
<td>-Approximately 350 out of 500 seniors participate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday:</td>
<td>• Rock ‘n Bowl – College pays for bowling; students pay for drink specials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday:</td>
<td>• Senior only party on campus with beer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lafayette
1. **Re-orientation**
   There was general support for a re-orientation program. Seniors were particularly vocal about their desire for such a program. They emphasized that the program should be structured to address multiple needs, should be setup to appeal to young adults, and should involve recent alums.

2. **Young alums**
   Students repeatedly expressed interest in meeting with young alums and learning about how to connect with other Muhlenberg graduates.

3. **Internships**
   Students complained about the current fee structure for summer internships. Several students suggested that internships were very helpful in making the transition beyond College.

4. **Communicating with the senior class**
   Suggestions included: advertising at MILE houses and at social venues on and off campus, Blogs and other web communication were also cited as useful.

5. **Academic Capstone**
   Several of those present had participated in a capstone experience. It was universally praised as an exciting intellectual achievement. Some students compared it in importance to the FYS.

6. **Reflection**
   There was support for mentorship groups, although students worried about finding the time for reflection as they focused on making the transition. Support from faculty, staff, and alums and from peers was seen as important.