

Outside Inspiration: Spokane Falls Gateway Students Go on a Field Trip

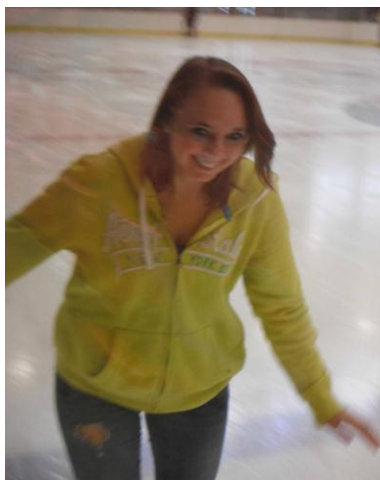
The Gateway to College team at Spokane Falls Community College (SFCC) recently rewarded students who were performing well in the program by taking them on a field trip to Eastern Washington University, a four-year institution located nearby. Students earned the chance to participate through good grades, attendance, and class participation. The main goals of the trip included:

1. Increasing students' motivation to succeed in Gateway;
2. Getting students to think about pursuing a 4-year degree by seeing a college campus and experiencing campus life;
3. Exposing students to fields of study and careers they hadn't realized were possible; and
4. Providing a casual, non-academic atmosphere for students to bond with one another and with the Resource Specialists who support them.

Seventeen students went on the day trip and had an opportunity to participate in a presentation and Q&A with admissions representatives, a campus tour, lunch at one of the dining halls, a stop at the college bookstore, and ice skating at the on-campus rink.

According to Jennifer Alt, SFCC program director, the field trip was a great success and far exceeded the initial goals.

Students repeatedly said, "This was the best day ever!" Jennifer believes that the students are more motivated to continue working hard after seeing the allure of the university campus, especially after hearing feedback like this, "I am SUPER motivated in going to a 4 year college. In visiting EWU, I actually envisioned myself going there, I thought about what a day in EWU would be like and I found myself excited. I will do well in school, I will earn good grades and I will be successful in life!" At the end of the day one student summed up the view of many in saying, "We thought we were in college and knew what a college campus felt like until we came here today; Man this place



Crystal Budik at the skating rink

In This Issue

- [>> Outside Inspiration: Spokane Falls Gateway Students Go on a Field Trip](#)
- [>> Having a College Degree Matters: Project DEgree is Helping Broward Students Get There](#)
- [>> Digital Storytelling at Front Range Community College](#)
- [>> At the Close of the Year, Much Thankfulness](#)
- [>> Announcements for National Network Partners](#)
- [>> Upcoming Events](#)

Do you want to help a young person get a second chance at an education and a better life?

Click [here](#) for information on how to make a secure, online contribution.

Gateway to College National Network is a recognized non-profit organization under IRS Section 501(c)(3) (Tax ID 32-0237828), so your donation is tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.

Gateway Media and News

[GtCNN, A Model in Changing Lives and Empowering Young People](#)

[High School Dropout, Turned Aspiring Business Owner](#)

[Interview with Leslie Aldana, a Student at GtC South Texas College](#)

is WAY cooler than SFCC!" We're glad to hear that the students had fun, but we still think SFCC is pretty cool.

Having a College Degree Matters: Project DEgree is Helping Broward Students Get There

It pays to have a college degree. The Bureau of Labor Statistics' figures for October 2012 show a wide gap in the unemployment rate between adults with a bachelor's degree (3.8%) versus those with only a high school diploma (8.4%). Yet, far too few young people are earning college credentials, particularly students who enroll in community college with a need for additional preparation before enrolling in college-level coursework.

Broward College in Fort Lauderdale, Florida has been actively pursuing new approaches to improving their students' completion rates, including implementation of Project DEgree, now in its third year serving students. With funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Open Society Foundations, Gateway to College National Network (GtCNN) launched Project DEgree in 2010 at nine pilot sites across the country to help move more students starting in developmental education courses to degree completion. Broward College was among the first colleges awarded with a start-up grant to implement Project DEgree.

Project DEgree intentionally integrates academics with student services. Developmental reading and writing faculty, math tutors, and a student advisor work as a team to create a cross-content, project-based curriculum. They also meet regularly to review student progress and develop proactive strategies to help students stay on track. Project DEgree students take most of their first year classes together to increase peer-to-peer support and are encouraged to maintain full-time enrollment.

Like most colleges involved in the pilot, Broward has seen impressive outcomes for Project DEgree students across a range of important indicators. When measured against a comparison group, Broward's Project DEgree students are on average earning more overall credits and have higher overall course completion rates. In addition, Project DEgree students at Broward are more likely to stick with college, making progress term after term.

[Lack of Support Causes High School Drop Outs](#)

[Student Testimonials from GtC at Metropolitan Community College](#)

[HCC Sets Priorities with Area Legislators](#)

[Gateway to College at Lake Washington Institute of Technology Video](#)



Bethany Peralta, for example, enrolled in Project DEgree at Broward College in the fall of 2010 after testing into developmental education courses in reading, writing, and math. She recalls her experience as a new college student, "I was actually scared when I came to college." With limited understanding of large college systems like Broward, Bethany says she didn't know "what college was really about." A native Floridian, Bethany moved to Mexico with her mother during 8th grade, but returned to Ft. Lauderdale in 2010 to live with her aunt and uncle and start college. "Project DEgree prepares you to become successful in the areas that you might be having trouble," says Bethany. "The instructors were phenomenal and really helped me to capture and learn the material in new ways."



Bethany Peralta

The program's career exploration component even helped Bethany identify the area of study she is passionate about - veterinary sciences. She expects to graduate with an associate of arts degree and then transfer to the University of Florida to pursue her dream of becoming a veterinarian. According to Bethany, "I am happy and concentrating on my future."

For more information about Project DEgree, visit www.projectdegree.org

Digital Storytelling at Front Range Community College

Last year, the Gateway to College program at Front Range Community College piloted a new project-based learning course. Inspired by the Hero's Journey workshop at the 2011 Peer Learning Conference and by the Center for Digital Storytelling, they decided to build on the Hero's Journey concept by incorporating new mediums.

During the six week project, students studied the elements of the Hero's Journey (for more information on the Hero's Journey [click here](#)) and then created their own Hero's Journey story. According to Sean McAndrew, one of the Resource Specialists involved in the project, students gained a sense of motivation and clarity through the process. Sean quickly lost count of how many times he heard phrases like, "I never realized that..." and "I never thought of it that way!" By taking a step back to look at the events and circumstances in their lives up to that point, students developed a newfound sense of agency, viewing themselves as the protagonists in their own Hero's Journey. The process of framing and presenting their story often led to self-discovery and healing, and many of the stories focused on themes of forgiveness and acceptance.

Once the stories were completed, students had the opportunity to share their digital story with the rest of the class. Initially, students were reluctant but, once the ice was broken, enthusiasm spread and nearly everyone decided to share their story. Sean believes that the presentations marked a pivot point for many

students, giving them voice and a supportive environment to say, "This is my journey to date, and this is where I want to go."

After his first semester piloting the digital storytelling curriculum, Sean had only one regret--he wished he had created his own digital story and shared it with his students. "It was such a nice way to interact with students and build community within the classroom. I got to see the students in a different light and I realized that, if they were sharing so much with me, I should be sharing with them."

For examples of some digital stories, [click here](#).

At the Close of the Year, Much Thankfulness

As the holidays approach and the year comes to a close, the time for introspection has arrived. We recently asked our network partners what they are most thankful for this year. Here's what we heard:

"I am thankful to be surrounded by such wonderful people. I am energized and inspired by their great work!"

"Family, Friends, & Life."

"I'm thankful for our students! We've got such a great group this year!"

"I'm thankful for so many things! My beautiful nephews, dear friends, and hilarious co-workers, just to name a few!"

"I am thankful for my wonderful family and friends."

"Love."

"Good health, great friends and family, and fulfilling work."

Announcements for National Network Partners

Social Media Toolkit

This summer we launched a [Gateway to College National Network Facebook Page](#) and [Twitter account](#). The process of creating a social media presence has been fun and full of surprises. We realized that many of you might be interested in finding ways to incorporate social media in your program practices, either in the classroom or on a broader program level. With that in mind we created a Social Media Toolkit to offer guidance, helpful tips, and curriculum ideas for anyone who is interested in learning more about how social media can be used in education.

[Click here](#) to take a look at the toolkit. It is designed to be helpful for everyone, from the social media novice to the ultra savvy. It's fun, we promise!

Share Your Student and Program Success Stories with Us

Do you have a student success story or promising program practice that you'd like to highlight? If so, we want to hear from you! Please contact Jahsie Ault by phone: (971) 634-1523 or by email: jault@gatewaytocollege.org to share your program updates.

Upcoming Events

January 23, 2013: Partnering for Sustainability Webinar Series - Part 2

Time: 10am - 11am PST

Details: Join us for the second of a three-part webinar series. During this webinar, participants will gather ideas about which policymakers can be natural allies and develop strategies for how to best engage them. For more information, [click here](#).

February 26 and 27, 2013: Gateway to College Directors Convening

Location: Portland, Oregon

Details: The directors convening is our best opportunity to exchange information and ideas. All Gateway to College program directors are strongly encouraged to attend! For more information, [click here](#).

April 10, 2013: Partnering for Sustainability Webinar Series - Part 3

Time: 10am - 11am PST

Details: Join us for the final webinar in this three-part series. During this webinar, participants will gain ideas about which philanthropic partners are potential funders for GtC.

July 22-24, 2013: Peer Learning Conference

Location: St. Louis, Missouri

Details: [Click here](#) for more information.

