

Blueprint Updates for Preston Residential College

Report for May 6, 2009

Changes to previous report in red

Action Plans/Key Performance Indicators

Create a new website

KPI: survey resident satisfaction; responses from alums; query on application form

Progress/Status Update:

The Preston Research GA with the help of a student committee and guidance by the Principal has completely revised an ineffective and unattractive website. It is now user-friendly and informative for current residents, our faculty associates, prospective residents, and general visitors. Before semester's end a survey will gauge the satisfaction of our residents and faculty associates. A few selected alumni will be asked to review it. Next year's application form will contain an opportunity for the applicant to comment on its effectiveness.

The commitment of our GA's time to our Jamaica trip (planning, trip, and aftermath) subverted our KPIs. The website also needs more work, including placement of our Facebook online. We will have the same KPIs next year.

Action Plans/Key Performance Indicators

Beautify our gardens: get Garden Committee active early to work on gardens

KPI: dead shrubs removed, replaced; pruning done as needed; ficus brought under control; flowers planted and tended

Progress/Status Update:

The Garden Committee, led by the Principal, has removed all dead shrubs and has pruned out-of-control growth, not least the ever-invasive ficus. Some flowers have been planted. More will be planted in early April in anticipation of our Gatsby ceremony. On March 20 an attempt will be made to repair the brick borders that have been undone by tree roots. Mr. Tommy Fallaw visited the gardens recently and said they look better than they have in years. To the extent our budget allows, some new shrubs will be planted next year.

The Back Garden looked great for Gatsby. Brick borders around our trees were repaired and flowers planted. We could not afford shrubs this year, and in truth they would continue to be a luxury next year in these lean times. We

hope that the continued renovation of Preston this summer and next does not damage our gardens.

Action Plans/Key Performance Indicators

Tidy our porches: form Porch Committee

KPI: umbrellas replaced, lowered if windy; tables and chairs aligned daily

Progress/Status Update:

No Porch Committee formed. The umbrellas were too expensive to replace, particularly given their history of breaking. Without umbrellas, aligning the tables and chairs after use will remain a shared community responsibility.

We were able to resurrect one awning. The residents are doing a reasonably good job of keeping the porch neat.

Action Plans/Key Performance Indicators

Organize library: form Library Committee to clean up library

KPI: books are reviewed, tossed, or kept and organized; survey of resident satisfaction

Progress/Status Update:

Last summer the library got some new furniture. Before the students arrived the Principal and his wife tidied up the bookshelves and tables. Since then, even though a library committee was formed, little has been done. The chair will be prodded. If appropriate, the survey will be conducted.

Prodding proved insufficient for this year, but the resident in charge feels extremely guilty about it and assures me that she will do next year all and more that was promised this year. I intend to hold her to it!

Action Plans/Key Performance Indicators

Publish Preston Literary Magazine: reform committee

KPI: magazine is published

Progress/Status Update:

The magazine has not been published and student interest is low. We will try again next year.

Nothing new to report.

Action Plans/Key Performance Indicators

Launch a Preston-specific Study Abroad: plan a study abroad experience for Spring 09

KPI: trip offered Fall 2008; taken Spring 2009

Progress/Status Update:

Ten students enrolled in JOUR 563X: Communication, Community, and Culture, taught by Professor Keith Kenney (JOUR). As part of the course requirements, they spent Spring Break 2009 in Petersfield, Jamaica on a service-learning trip. They were led by Kenney and Preston's Research GA Mike Tyson. Another film documentary in the series Beyond the Classroom is planned.

This is a significant study abroad experience. It is the university's first Spring Break trip, and will be the first in the film series to document a service-learning trip. Moreover, the students are living in the homes of the village residents, so the level of interaction between visitors and the host community will be profoundly personal.

The original intent of this trip was that it would be the first in a series of annual visits thereby establishing a long-term community-to-community relationship. The current and future economy may impact this aspiration negatively. One serious problem is already known: budget reductions have forced us to eliminate the Research GA position. Most of the Research GA's duties this year have centered on this creating and organizing this trip.

We have had a change of heart and hope it is not too late to reverse direction. I will be meeting with Dr. Gene Luna on Monday May 11 to see if we can find the money to keep the Jamaica enterprise alive and in Preston. For a variety of reasons, that's where it needs to be.

Action Plans/Key Performance Indicators

Create database: Form a database of Preston residents from 1995 to the present

KPI: number of entries

Progress/Status Update:

Little has been done on this project, but the groundwork has been laid. If Preston is able to hire a work/study student next year, it will be one of that person's duties to press forward on this important initiative.

Nothing new to add except to observe that as the budget situation promises to get even worse, the importance of turning to our alums for help increases, and the database is critical.

Action Plans/Key Performance Indicators

Initiate development: contact alums and friends for support (Study

Abroad scholarships first priority)

KPI: number of contacts made; dollars raised

Progress/Status Update:

Nothing has been accomplished because the focus on the service-learning trip consumed so much of Preston's resources. Work on the database must precede this effort. In the meantime, the alternative is contact with targeted alumni. The current Principal knows some of Preston's alums through his tenure in the Honors College. An attempt to reach at least some of them will be made. Previous principals will also be asked to contact some of their former residents directly. Our new website provides visitors with the opportunity to give to Preston, but until they can be reached with a mass mailing, little money can be expected.