

## **Division of Student Affairs and Academic Support**

### **Preston Residential College**

**Note: in this version, material in red is new; in red and underscored is eliminated.**

## **Final Departmental Performance Blueprint for Service Excellence 2009-2010**

### **Vision Statement**

Preston Residential College is dedicated to enhancing our residents' appreciation of the opportunities and responsibilities associated with living in a successful campus community so that they will become responsible citizens as USC alumni wherever they live after graduation.

### **Mission Statement**

Preston Residential College is a vibrant and diverse living and learning residential community comprising a live-in principal, faculty associates, staff, and freshmen through senior students from any major. The mission of the College is to enhance student learning and development by promoting the expression and exchange of ideas within the community via social and intellectual interactions outside the confines of the traditional classroom setting.

**Goal No. 1:** Enhanced student success through participation in intellectual, social, and service opportunities within Preston (many, in the Preston tradition, created by the students themselves).

### **Link to Division Goal and Outcome**

Goal #1 contributes to Division goal #1/outcomes A, B, and C.

**Initiative #1:** Encourage students to attend the Preston Presents programs.  
Outcome: Students attend the programs.

**Initiative #2:** Offer our Jamaica service-learning trip, round II, during Spring break.

- Outcomes: A. The trip actually happens. (not easy this year)  
B. Students have a valuable service experience.

**Initiative #3:** Solicit students to serve on a committee to improve our website and maintain a calendar of events.

- Outcomes: A. Website is improved.  
B. Calendar of events is maintained.

**Initiative #4.** Encourage students to participate in research opportunities.

- Outcome: Students engage in research.

**Initiative #5:** Encourage students to get involved with Y-Impact, Preston's own community service club.

- Outcomes: A. Y-Impact operates.  
B. Students participate in numerous activities.

**Initiative #6:** Encourage students to resurrect the Preston Literary Magazine.

- Outcome: Magazine is published.

**KPIs:** 1/number of students attending; 2/number of students joining the trip; 3/website improved and maintained; 4/number of students involved in research; 5/success of Y-Impact; 6/reappearance of the magazine

### **Final report of goal achievement**

So far attendance at Preston Presents has been about normal—5 to 12, which is to say disappointing. But experience shows that it appears unrealistic to expect much more. Students have more competing demands than ever and more are taking classes at night. These trends will probably continue. To try to combat this, in mid-year I encouraged three students to form Preston Scholars, a new club, whose role would be to run Preston Presents and offer other intellectual opportunities. The idea was that if students were in charge of the planning, more students would be involved and attend. So far it has been slow to catch on, but over the next month several events are planned. It will be interesting to see what the final data are.

Preston Scholars never did take off, but a new leader, Caroline DeHaven, has taken it over for next year and I am hopeful and reasonably confident that it will be a success.

The Jamaica trippers just got back. Initial reports from students and faculty were very positive. Keith Kenney thought it was even better than last year's trip. We will survey the opinions of the participants in writing.

Alas, the survey was not performed. Keith convened a premiere of the video in late spring and all the major players were there including several students who went on the trip. It was a good show and well-received. The students were unanimous in their beliefs that the trip enhanced their self-esteem and self-confidence, their leadership skills, and their appreciation of another culture.

The website is vastly improved, but almost entirely due to the efforts of the principal's GA Alexis Stratton. Students have been diligent in providing her with events to put on the calendar. It is not clear how well students are using the website. It will take some time for them to adjust to its improved utility.

We will survey our students near year's end to determine the extent of their research involvement.

We will conduct that survey next year.

Y-Impact did not make it this year as no one took the reins from the chair who graduated last year. Once again, the Literary Magazine will not appear. It seems that students interests have shifted from print media. Perhaps an online magazine could be attempted next year.

**Goal No. 2:** Encourage Robust faculty/student interaction outside the classroom.

**Link to Division Goal and Outcome**

Goal #2 contributes to Division goal #1/outcomes A, B, and C.

**Initiative #1:** Encourage faculty to attend the Preston Presents series even if they are not faculty presenters and especially if students are presenting.

Outcome: More faculty attend.

**Initiative #2:** Make it easier for students and faculty to share tables at Preston Dining through use of name tags and rearranging the tables so that two tables seating four become one that seats six.

Outcome: More students and faculty share dinner.

**Initiative #3:** Continue the tradition of monthly Teas in the Principal's Lodge, albeit scaled back due to budget constraints.

Outcome: Teas continue, with sustained attendance levels for both students and faculty associates.

**Initiative #4.** Solicit more faculty associate involvement in the Selection Committee and the grounds committee, and encourage spontaneous visits to the Lobby.

Outcome: Faculty are more involved in these activities.

**Initiative #5:** Encourage students to spend more time in the offices of our three in-house faculty associates.

Outcome: The faculty host more students.

**Initiative #6:** Encourage faculty to set up weekly interest tables at Preston Dining.

Outcome: Interest tables are set up.

**KPIs:** 1/number of faculty attending; 2/number of students and faculty sharing tables; 3/number of students and faculty attending; 4/number of faculty involved; 5/number of students visiting offices; 6/number of interest tables formed

### **Final report of goal achievement**

Results are very mixed. Few faculty have attended Preston Presents unless they were presenting. It's probably too much to expect. Faculty have other obligations including families after normal hours. On the other hand, the use of name tags by students and faculty were welcomed by both groups, and many of each group said they facilitated the sharing of tables by easing introductions. Teas have continued to flourish despite budgetary constraints.

The Grounds committee has been lamentably inactive. Students have so far run the Selection Committee process without faculty involvement, due to a number of factors. Meetings have taken place on Sunday afternoons or avoided altogether (scheduling difficulties) by opting for individual review

of applications left in a folder at the front desk. Internal transfers require quick turnarounds. New freshmen do not, so there is still an opportunity for faculty to be involved with their applications. As an historical fact, our selection process is somewhat less rigorous than it was when we were able to fill the hall with those we selected. Lately, perhaps because of the economy and the increasing number of off-campus alternatives and attractive new residence halls, Housing has been placing up to 25 students in Preston who never applied to live here.

Few faculty drop by our lobby, but more students have been visiting the offices of our in-house faculty associates. They have been asked to provide counts at the end of the year. Only a few interest tables are formally active in Preston Dining but several faculty associates attract discipline-oriented students simply by reputation while leaving their table open to random student participation. In general, more faculty join students than the reverse.

**Goal No. 3:** Increased engagement of Preston with the Columbia community.

**Link to Division Goal and Outcome** Goal #3 contributes to Division goal #2.

**Initiative #1:** Invite a few selected Columbians to Preston Presents, either as presenters or members of the audience.

**Initiative #2:** Invite selected Columbians to Preston Dining and our Teas.

**KPIs:** 1,2/number of Columbians attending

**Final report of goal achievement**

Only a few Columbians have been invited to participate and fewer have accepted the invitation. This is a good idea and should be pursued more vigorously next year for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is a possible tie-in to development. A number of opportunities still remain on this year's calendar, however.

**Goal No. 4:** The students and faculty associates actively participate in the maintenance and improvement of our building and grounds.

## **Link to Division Goal and Outcome**

Goal #4 contributes to Division goal #2/outcome D.

**Initiative #1:** Get the Garden Committee on the ground asap. (This will be especially important this year since the Back Garden is being torn up by the renovation activities.)

Outcome: Garden committee gets to work.

**Initiative #2:** Get the Library Committee working immediately.

Outcome: Library will be maintained and holding expanded.

**Initiative #3:** Form a Grounds Committee to pick up trash, keep the front porch neat, etc. (and try to inculcate a general spirit of caring).

Outcome: General improvement in appearance.

**KPIs:** 1/restoration of grounds to former glory; 2/books arranged in some logical manner and maintained; 3/general appearance good

## **Final report of goal achievement**

In short, committee work has mostly been a failure. However, the Back Garden (Preston Close) was not damaged by renovation workers nearly as much as feared. The weather has certainly been a discouraging factor as well; too much rain and cold temperatures were not conducive to outdoor work. As happened last year, in April I will organize a group of students to beautify the grounds in anticipation of our Gatsby Banquet and Celebration in the Back Garden. Faculty have been interested in being involved in past years.

The Garden Committee (five students led by Tripp McDaniel) worked hard to get the gardens in good shape for the Gatsby Week. No faculty associates were involved.

The library has not been improved. On the other hand it has been reasonably well maintained informally by students who like to use it. Likewise, individual students who care have helped to keep Preston reasonably neat and clean so our general appearance is acceptable.

**Goal No. 5:** Continue to work on a development initiative.\*

## **Link to Division Goal and Outcome**

Unclear, but outside funding would clearly support many goals.

**Initiative #1:** Create a database of Preston residents from 1995 to the present.

Outcome: Database created.

**Initiative #2:** contact alums and friends for support (Jamaica trip scholarships first priority, but even our normal activities need more funding given the current fiscal realities)

Outcome: Funds increase.

**Initiative #3:** Pursue the President's suggestion that the Development Office might be able to solicit support for Preston, Capstone, and the Green Quad.

Outcome: Initiate cooperation with the division's development office.

**KPIs:** 1/size of database; 2/dollars raised; action taken by the division/central development offices.

\* This is clearly a long-term initiative, but it is important to start work now. We can support only half of a GA this year, and it will be critical to hire a competent work-study student to assist in our efforts.

## **Final report of goal achievement**

Emphasize long-term. Our budget funded only a half-time principal's research GA this year and we did not hire a work-study. So virtually nothing has been done toward this goal so far this year. However, things are looking up for next year. Kirsten Kennedy has kindly agreed to fully fund our research GA for next year, and I have hired an excellent person with great skills for the position and in particular for development work. Also, Polly Lafitte has indicated that she is willing and able to work with Preston, Capstone, and the Green Quad to help us fund our special needs. Moreover, the Jamaica trip, which consumes a lot of the GA's time, will probably be scaled back to run every other year as long as hard financial times continue.

Keith Kenney, Paul Beasley, and incoming principal Bobby Donaldson are exploring ways to revamp the Jamaica trip following up on an exciting idea of Keith's that meshes with Bobby's research interests. If things work out as

I anticipate, the trip will run again in spring 2011 and perhaps yearly. How much of a demand on the GA's time this will make can not be estimated at this time.

### **Global Comments with a Look ahead**

It must be remembered that activities initiated by the principal are important but constitute only a fraction of the life of the College. Preston Residential College is by design a bottom-up residence hall. The vast majority of the happenings in Preston are created by students. Some carry on traditions of years past, while many, reflecting changing student interests, are novel, perhaps destined to become traditions of their own. Others are spontaneous charitable responses to critical needs or one-time events outside the university. For example, several students in the fall semester organized a drive to support Susan Komen's Race for the Cure (breast cancer awareness and research). For every \$100 level reached, a male resident agreed to have his hair dyed pink for the day. I was at the \$1000 level and proudly went pink at one of our Friday Teas—and then, to a lesser degree, again on a Tuesday to my honors logic class, since some of my students also contributed. Over 1100 dollars were contributed to the cause. Again, this semester the Preston Date Auction raised nearly \$1400 to contribute to the university's Haiti relief efforts. Our students also join with the larger Carolina community in numerous ways. For example, Preston is a regular participant in Dance Marathon.

Jim Stiver  
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