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Framing Essay [Draft]
BIS 499
Due: 29 May 2021 by 11:59pm

As you conclude your undergraduate education, what knowledge and abilities have you developed that you can carry forward? How does your portfolio provide evidence that you have the knowledge and abilities you claim?

My path to completing my undergraduate education has not been a direct one. It has veered in many different directions, sometimes looping around wildly, generally resembling a Jackson Pollock painting. There have been many starts and stops and a few roadblocks to boot, but the experiences I have gained throughout that craziness have led me to here, this place in time where I am on the verge of becoming a first-generation graduate from a university that I deemed too big and overwhelming when I first set out on my academic journey. I am immensely proud of where I am today and appreciate both the connections and indirect path that have led me here.

Thoughts on IAS
The mission statement for the School of Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences (IAS) at University of Washington Bothell (UWB) reads that it "…provides a rigorous liberal arts education that draws connections across academic disciplines and links classroom learning to practical experience across diverse fields and sectors." (https://www.uwb.edu/ias/about) This statement succinctly sums up my journey thus far: I have interests in many academic disciplines being a Mathematical Thinking and Visualization (MTV) major, with a minor in Mathematics and a background in Graphic Design; I have practical experience having participated as a Research Assistant for three projects ranging from "Document Co-Citation Analysis" to the "White Anti-Racist Project"; and my rigorous liberal arts education has included classes focusing on topics such as *Introduction to Statistical Inference*, *Representation, Colonialism, and the Tropical World*, and *Introduction to Interaction Design*. Pursuing an MTV degree has expanded my knowledge of the IAS core learning objectives and I will demonstrate my insight in these areas below.

Diversity & Equity
When I decided to go back to school and pursue a formal degree, I had just returned from living abroad. During my time in Asia, I lived in three different countries, traveled to twelve more, and interacted with people from all over the world. My knowledge of people, food, religion, and cultures were broadened far beyond what I knew from my upbringing and my local neighborhood. I learned from my time in Singapore that people from different cultures could peacefully co-exist. Living in Indonesia taught me that Muslims are wonderful people, contradicting the widespread belief held by many of my family and community members in America. The decision to include the paper "How Racial Hierarchy is Challenged in *The Letter*" in my mini portfolio on this topic was partly due to the fact that I had great difficulty watching this movie: its White-person perspective, inaccurate details of the locale, racial biases and overt stereotypes, made it troublesome to watch.

Collaboration and shared leadership
I appreciate feedback. I like to know the perspective of others, how I can improve personally, if I can be helpful to others. I like to apply experience of what has and has not worked in past group settings and apply it towards future collaborations. I like supporting others and watching them succeed. I aim to

make connections with shy participants to help them grow and showcase their talents. I do my best to offer encouragement and accolades at a higher rate than constructive criticism. An example of my collaboration and shared leadership abilities is apparent in my artifact "Spider-Man vs. Batman". This group project greatly benefitted from open communication in a safe environment. We encountered many bumps, from working with difficult personalities to ensuring the work was spread evenly, from allowing each participant to shine, to ensuring timelines were met. Ultimately, we were respectful of each other and produced an amazing project. Discovering avenues to overcoming our challenges helped me with forthcoming group projects and gave me some good points to draw from for future group endeavors.

Critical and creative thinking

Critical and creative thinking both require *unordinary* thinking. Critical thinking involves analysis, questioning, and asking why. Creative thinking needs an open mind, brainstorming, and originality. My Mathematical Thinking and Visualization degree, by definition, requires both these skills and I was thrilled when I discovered it. I did not imagine I would find a degree that blended aspects of my artistic side with that of my analytical side, and my artifact "Data Dashboard: Racial Demographics of Police and Population in the United States" does just that. This project allowed me to further my knowledge of using R to create an interactive data dashboard. This dashboard not only presents information but tells a story. A story that is relevant and necessary in today's world.

Interdisciplinary research and inquiry

Interdisciplinary: "involving two or more academic, scientific, or artistic disciplines" (Merriam-Webster). Life itself is interdisciplinary. There are very few areas where you focus on only one thing. Mothers are actually chefs, chauffeurs, nurses, and tutors. Professors require knowledge in many areas to be effective teachers. My role outside of UWB will require knowledge in many areas. I showcase my ability to perform interdisciplinary research and inquiry in my artifact "The Impact of Internship Credits on Student Success Varies Across Schools." This project required research into high-impact practices at UWB, creating visualizations using R, analysis of our results, and team work.

Writing and communication

Upon entering UWB, I did not consider myself to be a strong writer. It does not come easily for me as I would much rather do other things such as math or art. That said, I have worked at it and have produced work of which I am particularly proud. The artifacts I included for this mini portfolio are extremely different yet showcase a distinct range in my capabilities to both write and communicate. "Data Dashboard: Project Proposal" demonstrates a thorough plan for the data dashboard I proposed to create. I conducted research for the data biography, implemented a project timeline, and created a mockup of the design. I learned how to effectively present the information and tell a story. The second artifact included in this mini portfolio is "Mental Mapping of Your Home Community". This is a completely different form of communication as it uses images rather than words. I created borders for my community that were unique to me, focusing on areas that were important and held memories. I communicate with emotion, images, and fondness for the neighborhood I once called home.

Conclusion

This has been the right time for me to be at UWB and a member of the School of IAS. My time at UWB has been wildly successful and I have created connections with professors that I never would have during my time immediately following high school. The detours of COVID and immense racial tensions have provided an opportunity for perseverance, growth, and flexibility. I am confident in my abilities and

the strengths I have acquired being a member of the UWB community and am proud of the indirect path of experiences that have led me here.

Works Cited

https://www.uwb.edu/ias/about

Nelson, Darcie. "Data Dashboard: Project Proposal." BIS 493 Advanced Data Visualization. Winter 2021.

Nelson, Darcie. *Data Dashboard: Racial Demographics of Police and Population in the United States*. BIS 493 Advanced Data Visualization. Winter 2021.

Nelson, Darcie. "How Racial Hierarchy is Challenged in *The Letter*." BIS 372 Representation, Colonialism, and the Tropical World. Autumn 2020.

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Nelson, Darcie, et al. *Spider-Man vs. Batman*. B IMD 250 Introduction to Interaction Design. Winter 2020.