The Senior Experience at University School is designed to help students build a bridge to their undergraduate careers and grow into responsible adults. Working with parents, US tries to help students realize that, in the end, they are responsible for their own learning. Since ultimately an individual’s learning will be applied to real situations in which problem solving, creativity, independence, and responsibility are critical, the School provides a culminating project in which each student is encouraged to develop and utilize these values. The Senior Experience is a University School graduation requirement.
Senior Experience Booklet

Senior Experience Criteria

Seniors at University School are expected to do an independent project during the final month of school. These projects will be planned with the help of their sponsors and others. After the project has been established, the sponsor will work with the student to develop some appropriate goals for the particular undertaking the student has selected. As a rule, the projects selected will not be done at University School. Projects typically fall into the following categories -- social service, academic enrichment, personal challenge, career exploration, artistic development, cultural discovery. For a project to be approved it must meet all of the following criteria:

- Amount to a minimum of five hours each day (or its equivalent) and extend over the entire project period.

    NOTE: Any student who must continue with one or more AP courses or their subsequent tests during any portion of the period may deduct the time spent at school from the time spent at the project.

- Have the approval of the student’s parents and his school sponsor, and be submitted to his House staff for final approval.

- Be so flexible as to allow the student to report to school for specific occasions during May to attend assembly and to meet with his sponsor.

- Have direct, repeated, routine contact with the community supervisor.

- Be nonpaying.

- Be something other than a library research paper.

    NOTE: Some types of work that will be considered, however, include experimental research, field work, case studies, creative work, or participant observation.

- Be scheduled at such times as not to cause any conflict with any other commitment the student has at school.

Although the criteria remain the same, the student has two other options:

1. He may elect a project outside the Cleveland community. The sponsor will work with the student to oversee such a project. Ordinarily the student must contact the sponsor by letter or phone each week.

2. He may elect a project that will be pursued with a small group of other seniors.
1. **Social Service**
   a. Some types of agencies in which a Senior Project can be done:
      - Hunger centers
      - Nursing homes
      - Hospitals
      - Children’s homes
      - Museums
      - Schools for the handicapped or disadvantaged
      - Special interest agencies (e.g., The Society for the Blind, Achievement Center for Children, American Heart Association)
   b. Some kinds of work that can be performed:
      - Tutoring
      - Serving/delivering meals
      - Friendly visiting
      - Transporting residents and/or patients
      - Helping with field trips
      - Construction of schools, churches, hospitals

2. **Academic Enrichment**
   Projects in this category are meant to be an extension of academic work previously completed but perhaps not able to be pursued within the constraints of the regular curriculum. The independent research project should be initiated by the student with the cooperation of a member of the University School faculty and a person from the community in an academic field.
   
   **NOTE:** Davey or Strnad Fellows may use their fellowships as an alternative to the Senior Experience provided that sufficient supervision is involved and equivalent work is produced.

3. **Personal Challenge**
   Projects in this category include participation in such recognized programs as Outward Bound, NOLS, or any other such established programs in which the demands are rigorous and the supervision is extensive.

4. **Career Exploration**
   a. Some types of professions or businesses that may afford a Senior Experience opportunity:
      - Professions: Law — Medicine — Education — Religion
      - Businesses: Advertising — Investments — Public Relations — Manufacturing — Marketing
   b. Kinds of work that may be performed:
      - Tasks to be performed will naturally vary according to the profession or business.
      - It should be noted, however, that constraints on the time of a community sponsor usually make worthwhile tasks difficult to find and thorough supervision difficult to arrange.
      - Therefore, students should seek work experiences in which an established internship program has already been developed, or they must be willing to move among community sponsors at different locations in order to get a good overview of a particular area of interest. This may include apprenticeships with tradesmen.

5. **Artistic Development**
   Projects in this category are intended for students who have already demonstrated both the interest and the talent in studio or performing arts.

6. **Cultural Discovery**
   Projects in this category are intended to give students a broader understanding of this country or of some foreign country. Participation in such an excursion is limited to those trips that are both closely supervised and specifically designed to accommodate student research and/or to increase his understanding of the culture and history of the country.
MARCH—Planning Period

Seniors will develop and set up their project with the help of their sponsors. During this period the following must be determined:

1. The project type and area of interest
2. The community sponsor(s) and his/their role in the project
3. The location(s) at which the project will take place

APRIL—Proposal Approval Period

Each senior will work with his faculty sponsor and his community sponsor(s) to accomplish the following:

1. The development of appropriate goals and meaningful tasks
2. The accurate completion of the necessary proposal forms

Each senior will orally submit his proposal to his House staff at a scheduled time on or after Wednesday, April 13th. The proposal will be reviewed to determine completeness and quality of substance.

MAY—Project Period

This year the project period will begin on Monday, May 2 and end on Friday, May 27.

JUNE—Evaluation Period

The senior will be evaluated in three ways:

1. By his community sponsor. This evaluation will be based on the quality and quantity of work performed.

2. By his sponsor. This evaluation will be based not only on the quality of the Senior Experience but also on the nature of the student's reflection. Clearly, each student's responsibility in fulfilling the goals and procedures will be taken into account.

3. By the student's House staff and the rest of his House, who will hear the student's oral presentation. This will be a two-part evaluation that will include:
   a. A 5-minute presentation by the senior.
   b. A 5-minute questioning period by the House faculty and students.
**SENIOR EXPERIENCE COMPONENTS**

1. **An Interview**
   Unless the project renders an interview between the student and his community sponsor(s) impossible, the student must meet personally with each person in the community who will supervise in any way the work he does during the project period. The purpose of the interview is threefold:
   a. To determine tasks to be performed
   b. To establish goals
   c. To give the supervising person the opportunity to determine if the student is suited for the particular work to be performed

2. **A Proposal**
   The proposal must be typed or word processed, submitted properly completed to House staff, and signed by all necessary parties.

3. **Weekly Meeting**
   A meeting will take place between the student and his sponsor. Students doing their project outside Cleveland must contact the sponsor weekly by e-mail or by phone. If possible, the sponsor will visit the student and his community advisor on site.

4. **An Oral Presentation**
   At the conclusion of the project period, each student will make a ten-minute oral presentation to his House. The presentation will be divided into two parts and must adhere to the following guidelines:
   a. Must be reflective and evaluative and analyze the student’s entire project, both for what was accomplished and for what has resulted because of his efforts — in other words, a reaction to the original goals
   b. 5-minute presentation by the senior from note cards with the aid of any appropriate audio-visual materials
   c. 5-minute questioning period by the House

**NOTE:** At the time of his oral presentation the student must submit the following items:
1. The text for his presentation—two pages typed
2. The evaluation forms that he has collected from his faculty advisor and his community sponsor
3. The form on which the House will evaluate the student’s oral presentation

In addition, the student must be dressed appropriately in school or House tie and jacket.
Senior Experience Goal Statements

Introduction

For the proposal to be acceptable, students must list at least four individual goals. These goals are to be either technical goals or personal goals, and there must be at least two examples of each type. The goal statements should be written as infinitive phrases. Although the goal statements may be written in the first person, they need not necessarily take that form.

Technical Goals are related specifically to the particular area in which the senior will be working. Naturally, the community sponsor should be very involved in the development of these goals, as the process could help both the student and the sponsor determine more clearly what the senior will be doing.

Personal Goals are related to the student’s hopes in those areas in which he would like to test his own skills or abilities. Often these personal goals can reflect the senior’s own hopes and aspirations. Needless to say, more specific goals give a better focus to the experience.

Examples of Goal Statements

A. Examples of appropriate goals
   1. Technical
      a. To become familiar with the tools, instruments, and lifestyle of an aviator
         (relates to the career, is measurable, is not unrealistic)
      b. To have hands-on experiences in a law firm so as to form definite ideas about a legal career
         (relates to the career and has a real purpose in mind, namely to be able to judge)
      c. To develop an ability to read financial statements
         (relates to the career and is practical for daily life)
      d. To learn and experience the methods of organizing and developing a news story
         (relates to a specific career and involves learning a practical skill related to the career)
   2. Personal
      a. To learn how to take orders from supervisors
         (involves a life skill that one uses in many fields)
      b. To determine if I can make objective decisions without personal relationships interfering
         (involves an activity of life that this experience would provide opportunities to develop or to evaluate)
      c. To see how I react in a conflict or pressure situation
         (involves a skill that is pertinent in any career endeavor)
d. To feel deeply committed to a cause and put full effort into the experience  
(focuses on a personal skill of dedication and commitment)
ed. To develop an ability to meet new people by means of my own initiative  
(focuses on a skill that is invaluable in any walk of life)
f. To be prompt and available for all of my scheduled commitments  
(involves a skill without which one cannot succeed in life)

NOTE: Seniors working with classmates may not have the same goals for their project.

B. Examples of inappropriate goals

1. Unrealistic goals
   a. To learn how to perform the basic structures of the different types of jobs at a CPA firm
   b. To gain enough experience to become a doctor at some point in the future  
   (involve skills that require years of college and graduate school to develop)

2. Unrelated or meaningless goals
   a. To learn the names of the various departments of an engineering firm
   b. To accomplish my other goals
   c. To graduate  
   (relate to one specific event rather than to experiences over the project period or fail to relate to any specific aspect of the project)
All necessary forms —
the four sheets of the proposal,
the community sponsor’s evaluation,
the faculty advisor’s evaluation,
the committee evaluation —
are available in
ELECTRONIC FORMAT
on the US Network in
http://upper.us.edu/academic/srexp.pdf

Access each form there and give it to the appropriate recipient in timely fashion.
DIRECTIONS
— ALL INFORMATION ON BOTH PAGES OF THIS PROPOSAL MUST BE CLEARLY PRESENTED.
— THIS PROPOSAL MUST BE COMPLETED ENTIRELY.

STUDENT NAME ____________________________

PROJECT TYPE ____________________________

SPECIFIC AREA OF INTEREST ____________________________

PROJECT TITLE ____________________________

FACULTY SPONSOR ____________________________

PRINCIPAL COMMUNITY SPONSOR ____________________________

ORGANIZATION ____________________________

POSITION ____________________________

ADDRESS ____________________________

PHONE ____________________________

KINDS OF TASKS TO BE PERFORMED
1. ____________________________

2. ____________________________

3. ____________________________

4. ____________________________

STATEMENT OF GOALS
1. ____________________________

2. ____________________________
LOCATION OF PROJECT

ONE LOCATION
MORE THAN ONE LOCATION
IN CLEVELAND AREA
OUT OF CLEVELAND AREA
IN/OUT OF CLEVELAND

OTHER COMMUNITY SPONSORS (If applicable)

Name | Organization | Phone
--- | --- | ---


PROJECT CALENDAR

April 13-20 | Project proposed to House staff
April 21-29 | Project revised (if needed) and approved by House staff
May 2 | Start Date
May 27 | Project End
May 26-27 | Oral Presentations
To Whom It May Concern:

This letter will serve to introduce __________________________________ who is a senior at University School and is participating in an out-of-school learning project in the community during the month of May.

This year the project period will begin on Monday, May 2 and end on Friday, May 27.

The concept of the project is to provide an opportunity for a senior at US to experience a learning situation of his own interest that is not structured within the traditional curriculum. The senior must design the project, set appropriate goals, write an analytical report and deliver it, and pass an oral examination before a panel of his teachers and peers.

The senior must gain the support of a member or members of the community who will consent to serve as sponsors. This person or these persons will be the on-site contact with the student and will offer supervision to the student’s work. The sponsor(s) will be asked to reflect with the student on his goals and offer constructive criticism of the senior’s goals and performance. It is recommended that the senior arrange additional visits during the months of March and April with you, his community sponsor, in order that he may understand more fully what is expected of him as a prerequisite to the project. Also, the senior would undertake these meetings so that you, his community sponsor, can better familiarize yourself with this senior. These preliminary meetings between the community sponsor and the senior will facilitate a mutual understanding of expectations and what the overall design of the ‘Senior Experience’ will be. The sponsor will also be asked to complete an evaluation at the end of the project period.

The senior will be expected to meet certain basic requirements. He must devote at least five hours per day, five days a week, during the last three weeks of the school term. The senior will also be working with a faculty advisor who will be making the necessary arrangements regarding supervision and methods of follow-up evaluation. These arrangements will be kept to a minimum in order not to cause any unnecessary inconvenience to you.

If you are willing to participate with University School and the senior in this learning experience as his principal community sponsor, please indicate your consent in the area below and on the student’s Senior Experience contract.

COMMUNITY SPONSOR _______________________________________

NAME OF ORGANIZATION _______________________________________

ADDRESS ______________________________________________________

TELEPHONE ___________________________________________________

SIGNATURE OF COMMUNITY SPONSOR _______________________________
SENIOR EXPERIENCE CONTRACT

I UNDERSTAND:

A. THAT ACCEPTABLE REPORTING AS WELL AS SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE PROJECT ARE REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION.

B. THAT THESE REPORTS INCLUDE:

— A WEEKLY MEETING WITH THE STUDENT'S SPONSOR WHILE THE PROJECT IS IN PROGRESS. OUT-OF-TOWN PROJECTS REQUIRE A WEEKLY REPORT IN E-MAIL FORM OR A PHONE CALL TO THE SPONSOR.

— AN ORAL PRESENTATION TO MY HOUSE COMMITTEE. THIS ORAL PRESENTATION IS MEANT TO BE A SYNTHESIS OF THE PROJECT FROM THE STANDPOINT OF "GOALS MET," "PERSONAL ENRICHMENT," AND "ANALYSIS." THE TEXT SHOULD BE TYPED AND SUBMITTED TO THE SPONSOR.

— AN EVALUATION BY THE COOPERATING SPONSORS.

I AGREE:

TO ADHERE AS CLOSELY AS POSSIBLE TO THE SCHEDULE AND GOALS THAT I HAVE DESIGNATED WITH MY SCHOOL SPONSOR AND COMMUNITY SPONSOR.

SIGNATURE OF SENIOR____________________________________ DATE_______

SIGNATURE OF PARENT____________________________________  DATE_______

SIGNATURE OF FACULTY SPONSOR ____________________________ DATE_______

SIGNATURE OF COMMUNITY SPONSOR_________________________ DATE_______

ACTION OF FACULTY APPROVAL COMMITTEE: DATE CONSIDERED__________

ACTION TAKEN__________________
1. PLEASE COMMENT ABOUT THE QUANTITY AND QUALITY OF PREPARATION THAT OCCURRED BETWEEN YOU AND THIS STUDENT PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE PROJECT.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

2. DID THIS STUDENT MAKE ANY SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION BY MEANS OF HIS PROJECT?

_________ YES    ___________ NO

PLEASE COMMENT.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

3. PLEASE RATE THIS STUDENT’S PERFORMANCE IN TERMS OF THE FOLLOWING QUALITIES:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Outstanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independence, Initiative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Disciplined work habits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dependability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sense of responsibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of work</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

4. IN REGARD TO HIS ON-THE-JOB WORK, PLEASE LIST THE MAJOR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF HIS PERFORMANCE.

STRENGTHS               WEAKNESSES
1. ______________________ 1. ______________________
2. ______________________ 2. ______________________
3. ______________________ 3. ______________________
4. ______________________ 4. ______________________

5. PLEASE GRADE THE STUDENT’S WORK BASED ONLY ON THE WORK SUPERVISED.

______ HONORS     _______ PASS     _______ FAIL

SIGNATURE
SENIOR EXPERIENCE
SPONSOR EVALUATION

STUDENT’S NAME: __________________________________________________________

SPONSOR’S NAME: _________________________________________________________

1. DURING THE PROJECT PERIOD, DID YOU MEET WITH THIS STUDENT ON THE GIVEN WEDNESDAYS?

    _______ YES  ________ NO

IF THE ANSWER IS NO, PLEASE EXPLAIN THE REASON(S) FOR NOT MEETING.

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

2. DOES THE STUDENT SEEM TO HAVE MET HIS STATED GOALS?

    _______ YES  ________ NO

3. PLEASE ASSIGN A GRADE FOR THE PROJECT. CONSIDER BOTH THE PROCESS AND THE END RESULT.

    _______ HONORS  ________ PASS  ________ FAIL

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ARE WELCOME

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

SIGNATURE
STUDENT’S NAME: ____________________________________________

COMMITTEE MEMBERS’ NAMES: ____________________________________________

1. PLEASE RATE THE STUDENT’S ORAL PRESENTATION IN TERMS OF THE FOLLOWING:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Outstanding</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation</td>
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<td>Delivery</td>
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<td>Creativity</td>
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<td>Interest</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal Appearance</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

2. PLEASE COMMENT ABOUT THE STUDENT’S PERFORMANCE DURING THE QUESTION-ANSWER PORTION OF THE PRESENTATION.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

3. DURING THE COURSE OF THIS PRESENTATION, DID THE STUDENT GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT HIS SENIOR EXPERIENCE WAS WORTHWHILE?

    _____ YES    _____ NO

4. BASED ONLY ON THIS ORAL PRESENTATION, PLEASE GRADE THE STUDENT’S PROJECT.

    _______HONORS    _______ PASS    _______ FAIL

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

SIGNATURES