Core Strategies for Scaling Up: 6-10

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Core Strategies for Scaling Up: 6 - 10
Bret Eynon, Laura M. Gambino & Judit Török

C2L campuses have developed a rich array of approaches to the Scaling Up process discussed in “Scaling Up: Growing Effective ePortfolio Initiatives” and analyzed in “Scaling Strategies and ePortfolio as a Catalyst for Change.” We have distilled these approaches into a set of 10 Core Strategies, which reflect effective approaches observed across the network.

This version of the “10 Core Strategies” essay was originally conceived and written in June 2012 and reflects preliminary thinking about the Catalyst Framework. Many of the references in this version of the Strategies are from the 2011-2012 Activity Reports, which campus teams submitted as part of their reporting requirements and are not publicly available on their campus ePortfolios. An updated set of the 10 Core Strategies will be released in Spring 2014.

Ten Core Strategies for Effective Scaling Up of ePortfolio Initiatives
Group Two: Strategies 6 - 10

#1. Developing an Effective Campus ePortfolio Team:
Successful ePortfolio initiatives build effective leadership teams that possess diverse composition representing different roles in the institution and have strong connections to key stakeholders in the institution.

#2. Connecting to Programs: 
Successful ePortfolio initiatives build relationships with degree programs, engaging a wider community of faculty and serving as catalyst for other departments at the institution.

#3. Connecting to High-Impact Practices: 
Successful ePortfolio initiatives build connections to the ten high-impact practices that have been revealed through broad research to demonstrably improve student success and learning in higher education.

#4. Engaging Students: 
Successful ePortfolio implementations make student work visible and engage students as stakeholders.

#5. Advancing through Professional Development: 
Successful ePortfolio initiatives are advanced through thoughtful professional development activities for faculty and staff to explore both ePortfolio-related pedagogy and practice, and to build crucial buy-in for broad change.

#6. Building Strategic Connections to Outcomes Assessment: 
Successful ePortfolio implementations build strategic connections to assessment of student learning at programmatic and institutional levels.

#7. Making Use of Evidence: 
Successful ePortfolio initiatives gather, analyze, and share meaningful evidence of impact on student learning.

#8. Leveraging Resources: 
Successful ePortfolio implementations require financial resources to support the leadership team, faculty professional development, and technology.

#9. Aligning with Institutional Planning: 
Successful ePortfolio initiatives align with institutional planning efforts through a variety of key strategies, including working with key allies in administration, and working to include ePortfolios in program-level and institutional strategic plans and planning processes.

#10. Building a Culture of Learning: 
Successful ePortfolio initiatives build an ePortfolio awareness and culture at the department and program level, among students, faculty, administrators, advisors, in formal and informal ways.
An ePortfolio implementation is more likely to be successful when....

**Project leaders work with faculty, staff, and administrative leaders to build connections between ePortfolios and program and General Education outcomes assessment initiatives.**

The second Catalyst finding (Proposition 2) suggests ways that ePortfolios make student learning visible. Outcomes assessment involves an examination of contextualized student work in relation to competencies and rubrics to determine the extent and nature of student learning. ePortfolios can make this contextualized student work available for examination. As such, there is a natural connection between ePortfolios and outcomes assessment. Highlighting that connection is a crucial Scaling Up strategy.

Campuses face growing pressure from government and accreditors to improve outcomes assessment. As academic leaders search for ways to respond, many consider ePortfolio solutions. And with good reason. ePortfolio can enable an ecosystemic view of assessment and serve as a connector—almost as a circulatory system—giving multiple stakeholders a continuous, structured flow of evidence (student work, student reflection, and faculty and staff reflection) on how students are achieving key competencies. Across the C2L network, teams that strategically connect ePortfolio with outcomes assessment tend to be successful in solidifying and expanding the use of ePortfolio institution-wide. Yet such connections must be approached with some care, to avoid obscuring ePortfolio’s value in building and deepening student learning.

On campuses in the C2L network, we see that accreditation assessment requirements are often the impetus for launching and scaling an ePortfolio initiative. At Salt Lake Community College, their “ePortfolio initiative traces its roots back to a 2001 task force report that urged the development of an ePortfolio system and hoped that all students would have an ePortfolio by 2004. That goal was not reached. Indeed, in 2004 no faculty were using ePortfolios in their classrooms.” It wasn’t until a 2004 accreditation report provided negative feedback on the college’s inability to conduct assessment that they were able to get an ePortfolio requirement through their governance system as they intentionally connected ePortfolio implementation to their outcomes assessment plan. In their Scaling Up story, the Salt Lake team reported that, “many of the people who were involved with ePortfolio were also involved in writing SLCC’s institutional and General Education learning outcomes, and we made sure to integrate the former with the latter.” [1]. Since that connection has been established, they are now focusing on “1) engaging students and 2) building a culture of learning.”

Manhattanville College’s initial exploration and work with ePortfolio coincided with a warning from their accreditation body, Middle States. “Within the warning was reference to a lack of assessment practices, within courses, departments, and across the institution.” The college worked to develop outcomes and rubrics, and
an assessment plan for programmatic and general education outcomes. ePortfolio leaders, with support from the administration, are working to connect these efforts to ePortfolio-based assessment of student learning:

When thinking about the role of ePortfolio in Outcomes Assessment on our campus, it is important to note that we have administrative support at the highest levels and that ePortfolio development has been written into our strategic plan. This, of course, gives us tremendous leverage for integrating ePortfolio in campus-wide curriculum, instruction and assessment development efforts. With this in mind, we envision ePortfolio supporting our outcomes assessment work at the institutional, departmental, programmatic, course, and student levels. At the institutional level, we envision ePortfolio being the primary platform through which we will capture and assess artifacts that have been tied to general education learning outcomes. [2]

While powerful and productive in many ways, connecting ePortfolio with outcomes assessment can involve complications, particularly on campuses where faculty view assessment with trepidation or outright hostility. In such cases, resistance to outcomes assessment can translate into resistance to ePortfolio. Moreover, even some ePortfolio champions feel the standardization necessarily associated with outcomes assessment can limit the expressiveness and reflective depth of students’ ePortfolios. If students feel that ePortfolio's only goal is assessment, and that it has no benefits for them, they are less likely to put in the effort needed to make reflection meaningful and transformative.

The story of ePortfolio at LaGuardia Community College illustrates some of these tensions. In the initial plans for ePortfolio at LaGuardia, deepening student learning and supporting outcomes assessment were co-equal goals, and assessment was essential to mobilizing upper-level administrative support. In its first few years of actual activity, however, LaGuardia's ePortfolio team responded to faculty resistance to assessment by focusing primarily on integrative classroom pedagogy and improved student learning. This had some advantages, in that it allowed faculty and students considerable freedom to experiment, creating conditions that nurtured the spread of innovative pedagogy.

Over time, however, the LaGuardia team realized that, if they wanted to firmly embed ePortfolio in institutional structures and build a learning college, they needed to pay greater attention to outcomes assessment. At that point in the Scaling process, ePortfolio leaders worked to intentionally connect ePortfolio with the outcomes assessment work on their campus. As a result of those efforts, they established and continue to grow the use of ePortfolio in an increasing number of majors and programs on their campus. As they tell us in their Scaling Up Story:

The significant work that the College has been doing around outcomes assessment is another example that reveals our scaling up efforts for using ePortfolio as a network for connections. We continue to make strategic, ongoing developmental progress as it relates to institutional assessment and assessment in the program/major. [3]
Across the C2L network, ePortfolio-based outcomes assessment is used to spark growth in other sectors of the Catalyst Framework. At CUNY’s brand new Guttman Community College, ePortfolio is completely integrated with the assessment of their General Education Competencies — the Guttman Learning Outcomes (GLO). Guttman, which enrolled its first class of students in August 2012, introduces both ePortfolio and the learning outcomes to all students during their mandatory Summer Bridge program. Every student uses an ePortfolio to demonstrate their growth and learning in relation to GLO. ePortfolios leaders use the connection to outcomes assessment to introduce faculty to the use of ePortfolio as a pedagogical, learning tool for students. ePortfolio is the “carefully structured nexus between assessment of student learning and on-going curriculum development,” which together shape an institution-wide, evidence-based conversation about teaching and student learning:

The one Core Strategy that has and continues to be critical to the ePortfolio initiative at Guttman is our connection to the College’s outcomes assessment work. Throughout the planning and development stages, explicit connections were developed between ePortfolio and institutional outcomes assessment. This commitment focuses on using assessment for learning across the various layers of the institution: students, faculty, programs, and institution, with the ultimate goal of improving student learning, persistence, and success.[4]

Guttman ePortfolio leaders now work strategically to use this connection between ePortfolio and outcomes assessment, helping to build a culture of learning focused on engaging students and providing professional development for faculty and staff.

Connecting ePortfolio to outcomes assessment at the program level can lead to broader institutional interest in ePortfolio. At Boston University, where “all 1,100 students at Boston University’s College of General Studies use ePortfolios to enhance and archive their learning in our two-year, core-curriculum program,” the use of ePortfolio for assessment is generating interest from other programs and schools at the institution. C2L leaders tell us that:

Using eportfolios for outcomes assessment for our program has probably been the most important practice in the “scaling up” of our eportfolio project…Eportfolios, and the rubric we’ve developed to use across all disciplines in our general education program, enable us to analyze students’ development in various competency areas, such as writing skills and analyzing and documenting data, in a way that goes beyond their performance in individual courses…We’ve simply never had this kind of information before, and many constituencies around and beyond our campus are interested in the assessment system we’ve established since they are looking to establish assessment projects of their own. [5]

Tunxis’ ePortfolio-based outcomes assessment work began with a pilot in two programs: Dental Hygiene and Computer Information Systems. Based on successes there, a year later two additional programs, Early Childhood Education and Business Office Technology began using ePortfolio in their assessment plans. Other programs including Business Administration (BA) also engage in ePortfolio-based outcomes assessment. Now, as the Connecticut State Colleges and University system has developed a set of outcomes for seamless transfer
and articulation across the 2 and 4-year institutions, ePortfolio leaders will be showcasing the work being done in the BA program in hopes of further scaling up their work at the college:

In the fall 2013, Tunxis’ Business Administration program was the first of many programs in the new ConnCSU system to fully articulate our degree program with the other 11 community colleges and five state universities. Though this process – which all other programs at Tunxis will eventually participate in – we are being asked to make stronger connections to the system’s newly defined abilities. We are hoping that BA will lead the way for other programs to showcase these connections through ePortfolio.[6]

As these examples illustrate, there are a variety of ways in which a connection between ePortfolio and outcomes assessment enables institutions to grow and scale ePortfolio implementations. In some cases, external accreditation requirements serve as the driver for broadening ePortfolio use by strategically connecting it to outcomes assessment. Alternatively, if there is already a strong connection between OA and ePortfolio, this connection can catalyze growth in other sectors of the Catalyst Framework such as Pedagogy. Demonstrating the effectiveness of ePortfolio-based outcomes assessment with programs can lead to buy-in across academic departments and programs at an institution.

In each of these cases, institutional or key stakeholder support for outcomes assessment helps strengthen and increase the use of ePortfolio. In turn, using ePortfolio in outcomes assessment centers that process on student learning, encouraging broader faculty and staff participation. And, participating in outcomes assessment work and seeing the ways ePortfolio advances student learning leads to broader use of ePortfolio in courses, programs, and other institutional areas.

To learn more about the use of ePortfolio in outcomes assessment processes, please see the Catalyst essay, Outcomes Assessment and Institutional Learning.

Core Strategy #6 Notes
Core Strategy #7
Making Use of Evidence

An ePortfolio implementation is more likely to be successful when…

**Project leaders pursue a systematic, comprehensive plan for evaluating -- gathering, analyzing, and presenting evidence of -- the ways ePortfolio shapes student learning.**

Across higher education, there is growing emphasis on the importance of evaluating the impact of educational innovations. Funders, accreditation agencies, and internal stakeholders such as academic administrators are asking faculty and staff to gather and analyze evidence to use for planning and decision-making purposes. And innovators themselves have found that evaluation evidence can strengthen their insights and help garner the resources and support needed to take a project to scale. But gathering and analyzing meaningful evaluation evidence of impact can be a challenging task. Isolating variables and scientifically proving causality in education are difficult, if not impossible, tasks. Evaluation takes planning, persistence, and skill. Innovators often lack the training and resources to take on evaluation, along with everything else they’re doing. All too often, educational innovators fall back on anecdotal evidence as the means to indicate an initiative’s impact.

The ePortfolio field is one among many facing this challenge. While most ePortfolio projects seek to improve or deepen student learning, only a small percentage have carried out and published the results of sustained evaluation studies. However, the experience of some C2L campuses shows that, with careful planning, project leaders can gather suggestive evidence indicating that ePortfolio use correlates with improvements in student learning and success. In this regard, effective C2L project leaders are systematically:

- Considering and articulating their project goals;
- Identifying multiple measures for each goal;
- Collecting and analyzing the evidence; and,
- Sharing evidence and analysis with institutional stakeholders.

Following these strategies helps to provide ePortfolio campus leaders with the evidence they need to evaluate the ways ePortfolio shapes student learning, and to use that evidence to deepen and expand their work.

**Considering and Articulating Project Goals**

C2L ePortfolio leaders first consider the goals established for the project in order to identify the appropriate outcomes or measures. These leaders weigh what is important for their campus in terms of issues, needs, and institutional outcomes. Successful ePortfolio leaders consider what stakeholders value, what funders require, and what their ePortfolio project might reasonably accomplish. In most cases, these goals include improvements in student engagement and student learning as well as other goals important to their campus.
Campus teams reported their goals and evaluation measures to C2L leaders through annual evaluation reports. For example, at Indiana University - Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI), their 2011 report stated that one of the purposes of their ePortfolio pilot project is “to help students engage more deeply with the spectrum of their learning, to encourage their commitment, and to strengthen their sense of empowerment.”[1] One of Salt Lake Community College’s goals is to explore “the extent to which ePortfolios can be used to authentically document student progress toward General Education outcomes.”[2] In the initial ePortfolio project planning phase at Tunxis Community College, project leaders identified four goal areas and outcomes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Professional Development</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1A. Create a vibrant teaching and learning community using ePortfolio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1B. Design a comprehensive faculty development plan centered on ePortfolio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Engaging Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2A. Increased student engagement with ePortfolio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2B. Increased student understanding of ePortfolio</td>
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<tr>
<td>2C. Student awareness of integration of knowledge within a degree program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Increased student success and retention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Effective use of ePortfolio for assessment [3]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ePortfolio team at Lehman College began a new study to investigate how:

| 1. the use of ePortfolios supports or can better support students in developing a professional identity as a teacher, and |
| 2. constructing an ePortfolio can lead to becoming a better teacher by allowing students to be more aware of their growth and development as a student and practitioner. [4] |

As is evident from these examples from our C2L network, goals vary widely from institution to institution. While taking campus-specific priorities into account, campus ePortfolio leaders must also adjust for the particular qualities of their project. A project housed in a First Year program will have different goals than a project focused in an Engineering Capstone implementation. An ePortfolio project focused on deepening pedagogical use of ePortfolio will have distinct goals from an assessment focused initiative. No matter the focus of work, well-articulated goals are measurable and achievable in a reasonable amount of time.

**Identifying Multiple Measures for Each Goal**

Once ePortfolio leaders articulate and clarify project goals, they select appropriate quantitative and/or qualitative measures for each goal. Given the challenges of evaluating the impact of an intervention on student learning, evaluation plans often include mixed or multiple measures. The type of measures used varies from institution to institution based on goals, outcomes, and needs. Most, if not all schools in the network use a variety of surveys, including surveys of both students and faculty. A small but growing number of two year and four-year institutions (Manhattanville College, IUPUI, Tunxis, LaGuardia, Northwestern Community College) use retention or persistence rates as a key measure of success. Manhattanville and IUPUI collect GPA data along with retention rates. LaGuardia, Tunxis and NCCC have also gathered data on course pass rates for selected
courses.

Many campuses across the network examine student portfolios and student reflections as evidence of the impact ePortfolio has on student learning. Using student work as evidence helps complement retention and other quantitative data by bringing the authentic student work and student voice into the evaluation process. At Pace University, for example, ePortfolio team leaders piloted the review of student ePortfolio with several programs at their institution:

Our eP team received an internal assessment grant and drafted grading criteria for use in reviewing student work via ePortfolios in the areas of communication and analysis…

A secondary goal of the current eP initiative is to promote the use of the ePortfolio as a means of authentic assessment of student learning. In order to achieve this goal we have facilitated a number of ePortfolio Assessment Pilots, already described above. Within these pilot programs, the faculty and reviewers also have the opportunity to reflect on the process. Faculty members who taught with ePs, and whose student work is being reviewed, are surveyed. The rubric spreadsheet that reviewers use asks them specific questions about the review process, in an effort to encourage their reflection and so that we can use their feedback to improve the process.[5]

In addition to quantitative and student work evidence, two important evaluation measures used in the C2L network are the C2L Core Survey and the AAC&U VALUE Rubrics. C2L leaders developed the C2L Core Survey, intended as an instrument for common use across the network, providing comparable data from multiple institutions. The survey drew on already developed surveys used at participating institutions, including LaGuardia Community College and also incorporated questions drawn (with permission) from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). Survey data was gathered over four semesters and is being used by individual campuses to evaluate the impact of their ePortfolio practices on student learning and engagement. Helen Chen, one of the C2L Senior Scholars, aggregated and analyzed core survey data from across the network to identify trends in student learning and engagement with ePortfolio. (To learn more about C2L’s findings, click here to read the Catalyst Essay “The Difference ePortfolio Makes.”)

Across the C2L network, there is considerable interest in the VALUE rubrics developed by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). Many C2L campuses are using the VALUE rubrics as part of their broader institutional outcomes assessment process – the original purpose for which they were developed. But several campuses have begun to consider ways to also use the VALUE rubrics to assess student work as part of an evaluation of ePortfolio’s impact. The VALUE rubric on Integrative Learning could be particularly valuable in helping campuses examine the ways ePortfolio helps students connect their learning. While this wouldn’t replace “hard” outcomes such as retention or course pass rates, such sophisticated data could provide unique complementary insight. Manhattanville College, for example, used the VALUE rubrics when developing their learning outcomes and rubrics and are now conducting baseline assessments with those rubrics:

The first working group established baseline measures using work submitted to student
Portfolios. We assessed Written Communication and Global Awareness, both using a revised VALUE rubric. In the fall of 2012, a second working group was established to assess Critical Analysis and Reasoning. Again, a revised VALUE rubric was used to accomplish this work. In terms of student learning assessment, the Board on Academic Standards, the faculty group that oversees and evaluates all Portfolios, has established learning outcomes for the Portfolio and uses revised VALUE rubrics to evaluate student essays submitted as a Portfolio requirement. The Digication Committee-based Assessment System has been used to evaluate all student Portfolio submissions beginning in Spring 2013. [6]

It is evident from the above examples that there are a variety of measures, both quantitative and qualitative, that campus leaders implement to help evaluate the impact of ePortfolio on student learning. Revisiting the Tunxis project goals, we see the types of measures they used for measuring the impact of their work:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1A. Create a vibrant teaching and learning community using ePortfolio | • Faculty Training Survey  
• Number of faculty using ePortfolio in courses  
• Number of faculty who participate in the ePortfolio Seminar Series  
• Number of faculty who participate in the ePortfolio Continuing Conversations series  
• Faculty reflection narratives |
| 1B. Design a comprehensive faculty development plan centered on ePortfolio |                                                                       |
| 2A. Student engagement with ePortfolio                               | • Comparison of success (C- or better) rates in ePortfolio/  
non-ePortfolio sections in developmental English  
• Retention rate comparison in developmental English  
• College-wide retention rates based on number of ePortfolio courses  
• Examination of student work |
| 2B. Increased student understanding of ePortfolio                    |                                                                       |
| 2C. Student awareness of integration of knowledge within a degree program |                                                                       |
| 3. Increased student success and retention                           | • Comparison of success (C- or better) rates in ePortfolio/  
non-ePortfolio sections in developmental English  
• Retention rate comparison in developmental English  
• College-wide retention rates based on number of ePortfolio courses  
• Examination of student work |
| 4. Effective use of ePortfolio for assessment                        | • Percentage of students using ePortfolio to demonstrate program outcomes  
• Percentage of students using ePortfolio to demonstrate general education outcomes  
• ePortfolio use in program accreditation and review process  
• Advisory Board Survey [7] |
Similarly for Lehman College:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The use of ePortfolios supports or can better support students in developing a professional identity as a teacher, and 2. Constructing an ePortfolio can lead to becoming a better teacher by allowing students to be more aware of their growth and development as a student and practitioner.</td>
<td>1. A comparison of the ePortfolios constructed by the traditional program and the ePortfolios constructed by the pilot 5th year childhood education program. 2. A comparison of the traditional student’s ePortfolio with a traditional research paper. This will compare student’s performance/grade on a traditional written research paper with the scores on their ePortfolio. 3. An inter-rater reliability session on the ePortfolio rubric. After students have completed the ePortfolios a group of elementary teachers and college professors will engage in a session utilizing blind scoring of ePortfolios using that rubric. [8]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These two examples show ways in which C2L ePortfolio leaders implement a comprehensive, mixed measures approach for gathering evidence to measure the success of their ePortfolio work. Identifying multiple measures for each project goal will help ePortfolio leaders gather the evidence they need to evaluate the impact ePortfolio has on student learning.

**Collecting and Analyzing the Evidence**

Throughout the evaluation process, C2L campus leaders benefit from collaboration with their campus department of institutional research. Institutional research departments are an excellent resource for planning evaluations, and for data collection and analysis. For example, Norwalk Community College leaders tell us that “the Institutional Effectiveness department administers surveys when we request them and is willing to discuss various possibilities of alternative means of assessment and evaluation of the project.”[9] At Pace University, one way the Assistant Vice President supported their ePortfolio leaders was “to provide her staff to help with analyzing the data...(they are) really involved in helping to make sense of the data and learn from it.”[10] LaGuardia, Queensborough, and Tunxis Community Colleges have built sustained working relations with their IR offices; and the University of Delaware and Virginia Tech teams have gone one step further, incorporating members of the IR office on their C2L teams. In these ways, teams benefit from working with someone who brings sophistication and experience in analyzing and interpreting a range of data sources.

**Sharing Evidence and Analysis with Institutional Stakeholders**

The last piece of the evaluation process is the sharing of evidence and analysis with institutional stakeholders. How do campus leaders use, or want to use, evidence to help the scaling up and breadth of use of ePortfolio at their institutions? This is a difficult question to answer as many C2L campuses are not yet at this stage of evaluation, but we are getting initial glimpses from some C2L campus leaders. David Hubert, from Salt Lake Community College, for example, planned to compile his assessment evidence into an evaluation report and then “have a retreat with some upper-level administrator and really show them what is possible, and maybe have some students come in and talk about ePortfolios, and get them (administrators) on board.”[11] David England, Dean of Institutional Effectiveness and Outreach at Tunxis, tells us if you can “show that it [ePortfolio]
has an impact on student success, which we’re all interested in, that gets people more interested...and I think that data will be key to convincing other institutions as we go forward. That this does make a difference."[12] The IUPUI ePortfolio team “prepared a five-year progress report on ePortfolio adoption and use, which garnered renewed support from the Executive Vice Chancellor, the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, the Special Assistant to the Chancellor for Planning and Evaluation, and the Indiana University Associate Vice President for Learning Technologies. Their support is essential to garnering the resources, both human and financial, to sustain the rapid growth we are experiencing.”[13] At LaGuardia Community College, “our success in growing the ePortfolio project at LaGuardia has been directly dependent on evaluation,” explains Bret Eynon. “Our President is a strong believer in evidence-based decision-making. When we were able to show that, over a period of multiple semesters, ePortfolio use correlated with improved student learning and retention, we received her support to begin taking it to scale.”[14]

Core Strategy #7 Notes
[10] Interview with Pace University ePortfolio Leadership team. April 2012.
[12] Interview with Tunxis Community College Administration. April 2012.
An ePortfolio implementation is more likely to be successful when…

**Acquiring resources is a strategic part of the planning and scaling up process.**

A successful ePortfolio project needs considerable financial resources to grow and build. Across the C2L network, we observe a direct relationship between the successful scaling up of projects and the ways in which campus ePortfolio project leaders acquire the necessary resources to fund and support their work. Successful campus ePortfolio leaders:

- Work with key administrators to obtain the necessary levels of funding from within their college’s budget.
- Explore and pursue external funding and grant opportunities as part of their strategic planning.

The strategic use of these financial resources then serves as a catalyst to the growth of an ePortfolio project.

**Working with Administrators**

Financial resources are needed to support many aspects of a campus ePortfolio project. Resources to support the leadership team, faculty professional development, and technology support are all vital to a project’s growth. C2L ePortfolio leaders work with administrative stakeholders to obtain the resources they need to support their campus ePortfolio project. A number of schools in the C2L network request faculty reassigned time or stipends to support and fund the work of the ePortfolio leadership team. Manhattanville College, LaGuardia Community College, and Tunxis Community College utilize this approach. Some schools take this concept one step further, and work with administrators to create faculty and staff ePortfolio positions. At Salt Lake Community College, for example, C2L team leader David Hubert explained that at his institution, administrators “have been very supportive, as well, behind the scenes. They’ve given us some money so we have been able to hire Kati as an ePortfolio coordinator.”[1]

At LaGuardia Community College, ePortfolio leaders worked closely with the Dean and the Vice President for Academic Affairs from the very beginning of the ePortfolio project; in 2004, the VP used a CUNY-wide investment initiative (The Community College Investment Plan) to allocate two full-time lines to the Center for Teaching and Learning, to be used to advance the growth of the ePortfolio initiative.

Providing support for faculty and staff ePortfolio-related professional development is a critical resource that project leaders work strategically to acquire, particularly in the case of institutional funding and support. As evidence of this practice, Pace University offers seminars, or teaching circles, as part of their faculty development efforts. They secured institutional funding for this facet of their work. According to one of their ePortfolio team leaders: [1]In terms of the teaching circle, too, I think another important, decision – strategic, too – in terms of institutionalizing ePortfolio was getting a provost to actually fund the teaching circles so that it’s not coming out of grant money, but it’s really part of the institutional budget now. [2]
Successful ePortfolio leaders take advantage of opportunities within their local institution or system to acquire resources for their ePortfolio faculty and staff. Within the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities system, for example, in addition to their normal teaching load, full-time faculty members are required to participate in nine hours (the equivalent of 1 course) of “Additional Responsibilities” at their institution per week. These responsibilities are negotiated and agreed upon between the faculty member and the administration. At Tunxis Community College and Three Rivers Community College (TRCC), both ePortfolio teams gained approval from their administration to recognize ePortfolio work and professional development as an acceptable task for faculty additional responsibilities. Lili Rafeldt, ePortfolio leader from TRCC explained: “I was able to get the buy-in of our administration to allow those hours that are spent on ePortfolio by those faculty to be supported through additional responsibility, which I think has been really a valuable piece.”[3]

Additionally, once an ePortfolio platform and lab space is acquired, it requires ongoing support to assist with the technology platform and related pedagogy. Many ePortfolio leaders engage the assistance of their campus Instructional Technology departments for this support. The Manhattanville College team recognized the difficulties in scaling up without that support as they shared in a 2012 interview, they “have been without an Instructional Technologist all year, which has been a serious limitation.”[4]

As this example from Manhattanville shows, acquiring the necessary institutional resources to scale and grow an ePortfolio project are, at times, challenging for ePortfolio leaders. Some C2L campus leaders echoed this thought in interviews conducted by the C2L leadership team earlier this year. As one ePortfolio project leader stated, “in terms of barriers, I think we’re reaching a point where the money that we have is not quite going to be enough to get us to the next level, and so there is that budgetary fight.” Another team leader reported, “I think the key decision to switch the way our funding and our budget – in the sense that we would call it a budget; we don’t actually have a budget – the financial decisions that were made also had an impact on us in a not-so-good way…those decisions really limited us to what we could do this year.”

**Pursuing External Funding**

One way C2L project leaders address this challenge is by seeking external funding opportunities to augment the financial resources provided by their institution. Campuses such as Boston University, Manhattanville College, LaGuardia Community College, and Tunxis Community College have received or are currently seeking grant funding for their ePortfolio projects. The funding received from grants helps projects move forward in a variety of ways. In their 2011-2012 Campus Activity Report, the Boston University team shared that “the grant we received from the Davis Educational Foundation is making it possible to advance our project by funding a large-scale assessment practice using ePortfolios. It is also funding conference presentations about our use of ePortfolios.”[5]

Similarly, during an interview with the Manhattanville College C2L team, when campus team leaders were asked about the most important decision made this past year, one member of the team responded, “applying for a grant.” That grant will be used to augment the institutional resources for their ePortfolio work. The team went on to report:
Core Strategies for Scaling Up: 6 - 10

[We are applying for a Title III grant. We're applying for a salary for an ePortfolio manager/assessment person...that is something we desperately need for the sustainability of the program...if we got a grant it could fund something like that for four years, then the hope is that down the line, we would be able to convert it into a permanent position.[6]

LaGuardia Community College’s success in attracting grant funding has played an important role in the growth of its ePortfolio initiative. LaGuardia’s ePortfolio project was initially launched in 2001 with a 5-year “Strengthening Institutions” grant from the Title V program (for Hispanic Serving Institutions) of the U.S. Department of Education. ePortfolio leaders at LaGuardia have found ways to connect ePortfolio to other sources, such as Perkins funds from the U.S. DOE (enhancing the success and technical literacy of vocational education students) and City University sources (for supporting general education and assessment). A subsequent Title V grant focused on strengthening capstone education, and helped build ePortfolio use in that area. “We’ve found ways to take advantage of ePortfolio’s multi-faceted qualities and find funding for different facets from different sources,” said Bret Eynon, who underscored a lesson drawn from his experience:

We’ve been able to interest funders because we track the impact of ePortfolio on student learning. In this era, funders want to know whether their grants are making a difference. Using the CCSSE and being able to talk about the impact of ePortfolio on ‘hard’ outcomes like course attrition rates, pass rates, and next semester retention has been absolutely critical for us. If you want to attract external or internal funds, my strongest recommendation is to pay close and sustained attention to evaluation.[7]

Acquiring the resources to scale up an ePortfolio project is a challenging task and one encountered by many project leaders on an ongoing basis. Successful campus project leaders pay careful attention to and strategically plan for obtaining both institutional and external resources. These campus leaders then utilize those funds to catalyze their work and assist in the scaling up of their ePortfolio project.

Core Strategy #8 Notes
[1] Interview with David Hubert, Salt Lake Community College. January 2012.
[6] Interview with Manhattanville College ePortfolio Leadership Team. January 2012
Core Strategies for Scaling Up: 6 - 10

Core Strategy #9
Aligning with Institutional Planning

An ePortfolio implementation is more likely to be successful when...

Project leaders work at the institution level to build relationships and connect their work to institutional plans and systems.

Many ePortfolio projects begin within small segments of an institution, piloting implementation with a single faculty member, course, or program. Scaling up begins from those small pockets of implementation, as additional faculty, courses, and programs begin to work with ePortfolio. For campus ePortfolio leaders whose long-term goal is broad, institution-wide use of ePortfolio, the likelihood of reaching this goal will be strengthened if ePortfolio is integrated with the college's institutional initiatives, such as general education, outcomes assessment, and High Impact Practices. Across the C2L network, campus ePortfolio leaders work to advance the connections between ePortfolio and these initiatives. C2L ePortfolio project leaders:

- Find relationships with key allies in administration;
- Work with and through the college's governance structure; and,
- Seek to incorporate ePortfolio into an institution's strategic plan.

Institutional Leaders and Administrators

In the C2L network, many campus ePortfolio leaders connect with institutional leaders who serve as allies in their ePortfolio work. These campus leaders repeatedly emphasize the importance of having a good working relationship with a key administrator. Leaders also point to the significant role of administrators in supporting the Scaling Up of a project. In some cases academic leaders support the project from its initiation. Even if administrative support is not initially strong, successful ePortfolio leaders continually work to cultivate and build and administrative connections. For example, at Salt Lake Community College, “another development goal that the SLCC team wanted to achieve was getting better administrative acknowledgement of and support for the ePortfolio program. Although this goal has not been fully achieved, it is underway.” [1]

Working to build strong relationships with administrators is an ongoing process, as changes in leadership are not uncommon in higher education. At Pace University, for example, project leaders reported that, “for ten years...(we) have been working with all the provosts... making our case, and I think our current... interim [provost], has been the most receptive...that's been a kind of pleasant surprise.”[2] Similarly, at the University of Delaware, the ePortfolio leadership team members report to the deputy provost. And the former deputy provost was a strong advocate of ePortfolios...[!]It's not that the new deputy provost is not an advocate. She just wants to see
how [does] it work, why does it take so many of your resources, and what is the impact?…
So we’re working on that now, and that’s actually a nice place to be.[3]

In this case, building a relationship with the deputy provost will necessitate gathering evidence and evaluating the impact of their ePortfolio work. Successful ePortfolio leaders work to provide administrative stakeholders with evidence that ePortfolio is having a positive impact on student learning at their institution.

**Faculty Governance and Curriculum Committees**

Equally as important as building relationships with key administrators is the need for ePortfolio leaders to work within and through the college’s governance structures. Getting approval of ePortfolio work through these structures solidifies the sense of permanence of ePortfolio at an institution. As David Hubert, C2L ePortfolio leader from Salt Lake Community College stated, "That’s part of our strategy. So, we have enjoyed our freedom, but I think it’s time to officially bureaucratize, institutionalize our place in the system."[4] The strategies employed by C2L ePortfolio leaders vary based on the unique culture and issues at their institution.

For example, as a means to scaling up beyond the nursing program, the team at Three Rivers Community College (TRCC) is working closely with the college’s General Education Task Force. They reported that in 2012, as a result of these efforts the "General Education Task Force and college body is seeing the value of an electronic system."[5] Currently, TRCC ePortfolio leaders are working with that task force preparing for institution-wide use of ePortfolio.

At Pace University, ePortfolio leaders saw an opportunity to introduce faculty to ePortfolio through the promotion and tenure process. They developed a plan to have faculty submit promotion and tenure applications using ePortfolios. These leaders spoke with the provost, and after gaining support, received approval from the faculty council and the college’s promotion and tenure committee. Currently, every faculty member seeking promotion or tenure submits an electronic portfolio. According to one of the Pace ePortfolio leaders, “we did have a little bit of resistance but I think looking back, not as much as I would have guessed.”[6]

In a strategic variation on the idea of working within the institutional committee structure, Northwestern Community College leaders saw an upcoming accreditation visit from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) as an opportunity to introduce their faculty and staff to ePortfolio. They proposed to the administration and the accreditation steering committee that the college use ePortfolio for preparing their accreditation report. The institution decided that ePortfolio would be the vehicle for collaborating on our NEASC report and ultimately for presenting our NEASC project online to the accrediting body. ...the NEASC steering committee were firm in their commitment to this decision. This means that almost every single member of our faculty and staff will have at least some experience using our ePortfolio platform by the end of the coming year.[7]

As is evident from these examples, C2L ePortfolio leaders strategically plan and work with their institution’s committees and governance structures. In order to support the scaling up of an ePortfolio project, David Hubert
from Salt Lake Community College suggested that ePortfolio leaders continually plan and work to “make sure all deciding bodies (curriculum committee, department chair, faculty senate, etc) are formally on board. Get a vote; get a memorandum stating “We are committed to this implementation for X years until we can collect good data as to its efficacy. ”[8]

Institutional and Strategic Planning
In addition to solidifying ePortfolio’s role in an institution through interaction with governance and committee structures, ePortfolio C2L network campus leaders incorporate ePortfolio into their institution’s strategic plan and planning process. Achieving this milestone serves as a visible sign of long-term institutional commitment to ePortfolio. In addition, having ePortfolio in the strategic plan provides the opportunity for project leaders to obtain additional support and resources for scaling up their work. Since a strategic plan drives the work of a college, including ePortfolio in that plan serves as a catalyst for departments and programs to include ePortfolio in their planning and development processes. In smaller colleges, such as Tunxis Community College and Manhattanville College, ePortfolio is included in the institution-wide strategic plan. In larger universities, ePortfolio is included in college or departmental strategic plans which then connect back to broader institutional planning goals. For example, at Pace University, campus leaders reported in 2012 that they “just finished our ITS strategic plan and specifically have a section on ePortfolios that’s tied into that broader goal, the educational technology plan.”[9] Similarly, at the University of Delaware, “the College of Arts and Science’s strategic plan is not only nesting well within the university strategic plan, they specifically wrote that they’re going to [use ePortfolio to] assess student learning.”[10]

Successful ePortfolio leaders realize that the Scaling Up of an ePortfolio Project does not happen without institutional stakeholder support. Across the C2L network we observe these leaders building relationships with administrators, and connecting ePortfolio with institutional plans and initiatives. In turn, ePortfolio then serves as a catalyst for many of these institutional initiatives such as outcomes assessment and High Impact Practices.

Core Strategy #9 Notes
[1] Interview with David Hubert, Salt Lake Community College. January 2012
[2] Interview with Pace University ePortfolio Leadership Team. April 2012
[3] Interview with University of Delaware ePortfolio Leadership Team. April 2012
[4] Interview with David Hubert, Salt Lake Community College. January 2012
[5] Interview with Three Rivers Community College ePortfolio Leadership Team. March 2012
[6] Interview with Pace University ePortfolio Leadership Team. April 2012
[9] Interview with Pace University ePortfolio Leadership Team. April 2012
[10] Interview with the University of Delaware ePortfolio Leadership Team. April 2012
An ePortfolio implementation is more likely to be successful when…

Efforts are made to build an ePortfolio-based learning culture across the institution.

I think cultures are marked by the norms and practices that exist, and so we want it to be normal for a student to have an ePortfolio, in other words, to be unremarkable. Right now, students sort of think – oh, this is a new thing…It’s just going to be normal, and students who come to the college will expect to do this.

It’s also [going to be] normal among faculty, in terms of their expectations and practices.[1]

Building an ePortfolio-based learning culture is an institution-wide effort that requires time, concentrated effort, resources, and a dedicated, resilient, adaptable, well-positioned and knowledgeable leadership team. ePortfolio cultures need to grow organically from the ground up – from pilot to broader implementation, where ePortfolio use is encouraged and supported, but not mandated. ePortfolio also needs to be part of the fabric of the institution – woven through and connected to institutional planning and campus-wide initiatives, such as outcomes assessment and High Impact Practices. In other words, as David Hubert explains in the quote above, campus leaders strive to make ePortfolio a "normal" part of the work of the college. In order to build an ePortfolio-based learning culture, C2L campus leaders engage with a range of stakeholders including, students, faculty and staff, departments and programs, and institutional stakeholders. C2L leaders employ a variety of strategies to build awareness of an ePortfolio culture with each of these stakeholders. In doing so, ePortfolio becomes a catalyst for developing and growing a culture of learning within an institution.

Students

Across the C2L network, we observe ePortfolio leaders employing strategies to help build an ePortfolio-based learning culture among the students at their institution. At St. John’s University, the ePortfolio leaders, “with the help of the provost’s office and IT…have distributed written material, videos and mass emails to our students.”[2] The Pace University team “tried a more direct approach to reaching students. [They] held two pizza sessions (1 on each campus) where students could walk in, grab a slice of pizza, and work on their ePortfolio.”[3] Three Rivers Community College used “poster presentations on bulletin boards throughout the school.”[4] In addition to these strategies, many C2L ePortfolio leaders use student showcases to make student work visible and employ student mentors to engage with their peers and encourage the use of ePortfolio at the institution. When students become active, engaged participants in the scaling up of an ePortfolio project, they help create a learning culture by sharing authentic learning experiences through ePortfolio.
Faculty and Staff
In addition to reaching out to students, C2L campus leaders work to build an ePortfolio culture among faculty and staff at their schools. Across the network, ePortfolio leaders offer a variety of professional development activities to introduce, broaden, and deepen ePortfolio use. For example, during the Spring 2012 semester, Hunter College offered “five sessions that included presentations on ePortfolios” at their Tech Thursday weekly seminar series for faculty. The University of Delaware ePortfolio team introduces faculty to their program ePortfolio during their summer faculty institutes. The Business and Technology and Academic Strategies departments at Tunxis Community College hold regular professional development meetings with adjunct faculty members specifically to help them deepen the use of ePortfolio and reflection in their courses.

In addition to professional development, Lehman College is strategically using an inter-rater reliability session with faculty and external stakeholders to build awareness of ePortfolio-based learning. One of the responses in their 2011-2012 Campus Activity report explained:

After students have completed the ePortfolios, a group of elementary teachers and college professors will engage in a session utilizing blind scoring of ePortfolios using the rubric…This project will expose faculty members interested in using ePortfolios to the final product of an ePortfolio through a showcase from a select number of students…

LaGuardia Community College has engaged faculty with ePortfolio through their outcomes assessment process, which was recently featured as a case study for the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment. In Provezis’ article “LaGuardia Community College: Weaving Assessment into the Institutional Fabric,” Assessment Director Marisa Klages explained that faculty members, working in teams, read student artifacts from student portfolios. She described how this process helps to build a culture of learning at LaGuardia.

According to Klages, this reading process:

engaged faculty in an evidence-based discussion of where students should be at graduation and how to ensure that the general education competencies were being taught throughout all programs at the college. This lays critical groundwork for future efforts to strengthen assessment and improve student learning.

As these examples show, C2L leaders carefully consider and plan which faculty and staff to engage with and the types of professional development that will work best at their institution. Alycia Shada, ePortfolio team leader from San Francisco State University, summarized some of the ways project leaders plan for working with faculty and staff to develop an ePortfolio-based learning culture:

Be flexible, but strategic. Begin with instructors who have an interest and allow initial implementation to be uneven. Plan meetings strategically – make sure that the timing works for faculty schedules and needs and ensure that the meetings are “timely, well-taught, and designed for appropriate stages of concern and levels of use” (Brzycki & Dudt, 2005, p. 638). Reiterate that the project will maintain flexibility and…keep a focus on long-term goals. Allow
Core Strategies for Scaling Up: 6 - 10

for a flexible implementation, but provide some structure and accountability for the project participants.[8]

Departments and Programs
C2L ePortfolio leaders work strategically at the department and program level to build and cultivate an ePortfolio-based learning culture. ePortfolio project leaders at San Francisco State University “continue to work at a program level with many departments at SF State to support a range of ePortfolio projects.”[9] At Tunxis Community College, project leaders strategically selected programs to focus on in the pilot and initial implementation phases of their ePortfolio project. Former Tunxis team leader Laura Gambino reported:

We worked with specific programs to bring them on board – ones that we knew were further along in the outcomes assessment work, ones that needed it for accreditation, like Dental Hygiene and Early Childhood Education. I think those were decisions we made…with that consciousness of trying to build this as part of what we do for our students and to really make it part of our culture. [10]

Campus ePortfolio leaders may encounter challenges or resistance when building an ePortfolio-based learning culture at the program and department level, as the department chairperson plays a strategic role in this effort. After working with a number of departments at the University of Delaware, team members talked about their observations about the importance of the chairperson in shaping departmental culture:

I think that in some departments, given the implementation of the ePortfolio project an ePortfolio culture has been established under the leadership of the chair. Where the leadership of the chair has not been present, that ePortfolio culture has not been as prevalent…It’s not being infused, not being embraced.[11]

Institutional Culture
Building an ePortfolio-based learning culture is essential, not just at the department level, but at the institutional level. As mentioned in the Tunxis reference above, many ePortfolio leaders across the C2L network intentionally connect ePortfolio to institutional initiatives, such as general education and outcomes assessment. These connections help integrate and weave ePortfolio into the institutional culture, helping to create an institutional culture of learning. At Three Rivers Community College, C2L campus leaders see general education outcomes assessment as an opportunity to expand the use of ePortfolio across the institution. In 2012, they invited two guest speakers, Laura Gambino from Tunxis Community College and Trent Batson from the Association for Authentic, Experiential, and Evidence-Based Learning (AAEEBL), to meet with their General Education Task Force and “review and answer questions about ePortfolio as a tool for institutional assessment.”[12] Similarly, Salt Lake Community College ePortfolio leaders connect ePortfolio directly to the institution’s general education initiative. According to their 2011-2012 activity report, ePortfolio team leaders:

pushed through two main changes to institutional policies that both promote ePortfolio culture at SLCC. The ePortfolio is now an integral part of our assessment processes…Last May,
the ePortfolio Director’s office conducted a pilot assessment of a random sample of student ePortfolios using a holistic assessment rubric. The results were promising, and this will become an annual or semi-annual assessment...[13]

The Virginia Tech team took a more direct approach to developing an institutional ePortfolio-based learning culture. With the help of ePortfolio project leaders, a “campus-wide committee was convened from May 2011 to May 2012 in order to develop a vision for moving ePortfolio culture forward at Virginia Tech.”[14]

Building an ePortfolio-based learning culture requires thoughtful and strategic planning by ePortfolio campus leaders. Careful attention is given across all level of an institution and efforts made to connect ePortfolio to departmental and institutional initiatives. It is apparent across the C2L network that when campus ePortfolio leaders actively engage in developing an ePortfolio-based learning culture, that culture, in turn, serves as a catalyst for the development of an institutional culture of learning.

Core Strategy #10 Notes
[1] Interview with David Hubert, Salt Lake Community College. January 2012
[10] Interview with Tunxis Community College ePortfolio Leadership Team. April 2012.

Citation