

Razor's Edge Research Scholars Program: Reflective Portfolio

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Abstract

The Razor's Edge Research Scholars Program is a gateway to new opportunities and knowledge in the field of research. The purpose of this Reflective Journal is to compile the learned techniques and information from throughout each academic year. At the end of my time at Nova Southeastern University, I hope to look back on this experience and reflect on my major achievements. I know the resources I learn from this program will aid me in my future as a student and a researcher. I look forward to expanding my knowledge and utilizing these skills.

This Reflective Journal is broken up into several components. The first section of this journal is the Statement of Goals, which contains the expectations that I set for myself at the beginning of each semester. The next section of this Reflective Journal is the Highlighted Experiences. The Highlighted Experiences present the notable events and involvements from each academic school year. Following this section is the Artifact Collection. This portion of the Reflective Portfolio provides evidence of involvement in different research-related events. The final section is the Reflection, which summaries major achievements and learned experiences from each semester.

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Statement of Goals

Fall 2016 Goals

1. Engage in at least one research based activity (or activities) that connects me to the Nova Southeastern University community.
 - For example, I would like to participate in or construct a survey that obtains data from different students comprising NSU's student body. I hope that I could possibly volunteer at an event that informs students and faculty about the Razor's Edge Research Program. This will also allow me to highlight different research opportunities available on campus. I intend to learn more about the different aspects of research and work towards sharing this knowledge with those in the community around me. I believe being informed is the first step to increasing the use of research in our campus.
2. Earn an "A" on a test in Calculus I.
 - Throughout my high school career, I struggled with mathematics. Until the course College Algebra, I was never able to achieve an "A" as my overall score in a math class. Under the prerequisites for optometry (my intended career), the highest required level of math is Calculus I. However, the biology major for Nova Southeastern University requires you to continue to statistics. I want to do well in this class, as well as all my courses. Setting this goal for myself reminds me to always try my best and challenge myself even when it seems difficult.
3. Join a club or organization that challenges me to think creatively.
 - Getting involved on campus is very important to me. However, I do not want to join several clubs that I am only partially interested in. I want to be involved in

organizations that challenge me as an individual and make me step out of my comfort zone. Additionally, I want to be a part of something that helps other people and has a presence in the Nova community. Being involved on campus is the first step to making connections and working with the world around me.

My transition into life at Nova has been enjoyable so far. As expected, I struggle with homesickness and feeling overwhelmed but overall I have felt relatively comfortable with the changes so far. I know that the coursework is going to get more advanced as I continue through the year. I am trying to approach my classes with a proactive stance. I have already attended several tutoring sessions and office hours and I intend to continue to do so throughout my academic career. I am also focused on staying organized in the midst of my new responsibilities. I look forward to Shark Preview Leader (SPL) trainings, starting this September, and the Shark Preview Interview Weekends beginning in the Winter 2017 semester. Having the opportunity to connect with the incoming class of 2021 potentials and represent the Razor's Edge Research Aristotle Class is something that I am very fortunate to do. As I continue through this academic year, I look forward to seeing myself grow as a student and an individual.

Winter 2017 Goals

1. Receive an "A" in General Chemistry I (either in the course or on a test).
 - Similar to my goal for Calculus last semester, I want to challenge myself academically and strive to do my best. I have always had to work harder to grasp the core science and math concepts, just like most students. Academics can be difficult because sometimes you can try your best and still not achieve your desired grade. This semester I want to focus on becoming a better student for myself and learning concepts that usually terrify me.
2. Conduct a University Based Research Project with the intention of improving an element of Campus Life
 - In our Razor's Edge Research class, we are currently learning about different research methods and implications. As we learn about these skills and new knowledge, we look forward to utilizing them on the NSU campus. I personally hope to expand my knowledge in the research field from first hand experience. I also hope that the Razor's Edge Research Aristotle Class will make a continuous legacy of working with those in our campus community.
3. Apply for an on-campus job that allows me connect with the NSU community.
 - In the Fall 2016 and Winter 2017 semesters, I had the amazing opportunity to work as a Shark Preview Leader (SPL). I love helping people and connecting with my peers to create a positive environment for everyone. I hope to continue that as I enter my second year at NSU. I have decided to apply for the position of Resident Assistant, I hope that I can continue to connect to this campus through that position.

I really enjoyed my first semester at Nova. I ended up getting a lot more involved than I thought I ever would. I am grateful for every opportunity. I think I really grew as an individual in the first semester. It definitely took some adjusting and problem-solving but it was a wonderful learning experience. NSU has given me a lot of experiences, some of which I would never have the opportunity to have elsewhere. I hope I can continue to grow as a member of this community and as a human being. I look forward to the future.

Highlighted Experiences

Fall 2016 Experiences

1. Dissertation Defense

- a. "How Far is Too Far? Opinions From the 114th Congress U.S. House of Representatives, Chiefs of Police, and Local Police Officers on the Militarization of Policing." Presented by Mr. Frederick Turner on September 29th, 2016.
- b. Mr. Turner presented his research on opinions regarding militarization from Congress representatives and other respected individuals in the forces. The defense primarily focused on analyzing the possible correlation between opinions on controlling militarization and personal characteristics, such as "gender, ethnicity, prior military service, and political party affiliation". While this does not exactly fall into my field of interest, it was very informative. I learned about a crucial step in the research process and had the opportunity to see my first (of hopefully many) dissertation defense. Additionally, the professors who were critiquing the presentation asked questions which gave me a better understanding of what they look for when reviewing someone's research.

2. Analyzing research in preparation for University-Based Research Project

- a. Macan, T. H., Shahani, C., Dipboye, R. L., & Phillips, A. P. (1990). *Time management behavior scale*
doi:<http://dx.doi.org.ezproxylocal.library.nova.edu/10.1037/t02727-000>

- b. Levenstein, S., Prantera, C., Varvo, V., Scribano, M. L., Berto, E., Luzzi, C., & Andreoli, A. (1993). *Perceived stress questionnaire*
doi:<http://dx.doi.org.ezproxylocal.library.nova.edu/10.1037/t10467-000>
- c. Häfner, A., Stock, A., Pinneker, L., & Ströhle, S. (2014). Stress prevention through a time management training intervention: An experimental study. *Educational Psychology, 34*(3), 403-416. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxylocal.library.nova.edu/docview/1520888042?accountid=6579>
- d. This semester in our RAZR 1000R course, we were asked to identify a topic on campus that could potentially be improved through research and application. We broke into groups and brainstormed different ideas to present to our peers and professors. My group decided to research the effects of time management skills on perceived stress. While the physical experimentation will occur next semester, Dr. Hecht and Dr. Mills guided us in the initial approach to starting a research project. The articles (cited above) we used as references focused on stress prevention through the use of time management training, which parallels our study. We also referenced two Likert scale questionnaires (cited above) to propose our research questions, which are “What is the effect of perceived time management on stress levels?” and “Does usage of university resources such as academic success coaching, Henderson Student Counseling, academic advising, etc. correlate with perceived time management/stress levels?”. Being exposed to this process enhances our knowledge of research and how to utilize the information that we have learned throughout our course so far.

3. NSU Mathematics Colloquium Series

- a. The Halmos College of Natural Sciences and Oceanography presented a series of discussions on mathematic research and opportunities in a variety of fields. The Colloquiums were usually an hour long on average and occurred periodically from September 13th and November 28th.
- b. While I am not a mathematics major, I thoroughly enjoyed attending the Mathematics Colloquium Series. I was able to attend all of them except for two and actually learned several applications of research methods in the mathematics field. As researchers, I think it is very important to be aware of emerging scientific techniques and new research. The world is changing every day and learning about different topics develops our understanding of what is occurring in society. Truthfully, the topics in these colloquiums were advanced and I had some trouble fully understanding the concepts that were discussed. However, I learned that no matter how complicated the scope of mathematics became, the foundation stemmed from the same elementary roots. I also enjoyed learning about different research opportunities available on campus and how to utilize resources offered in different fields.

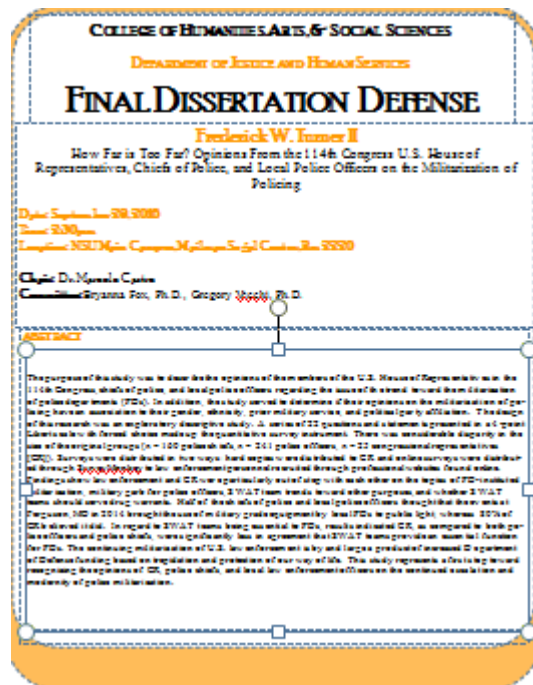
Artifact Collection

Fall 2016 Artifacts

1. Dissertation Defense

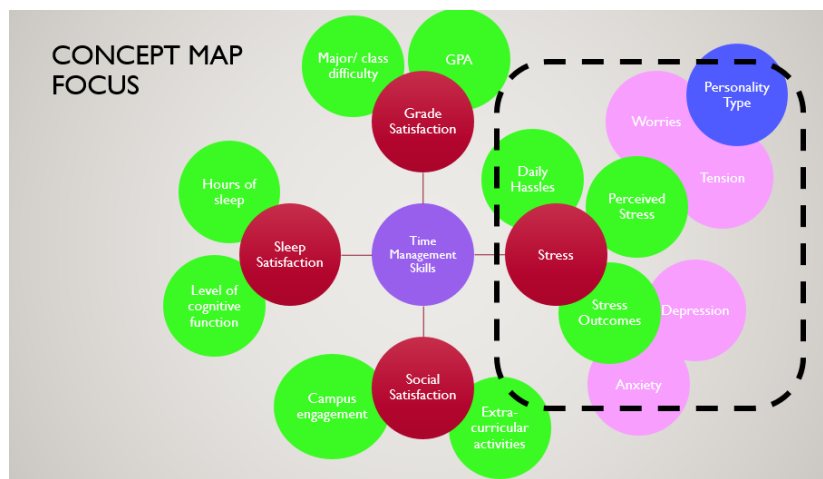
- a. Provided Abstract on Announcement Flyer (announcement flyer on the following page): The purpose of this study was to describe the opinions of the members of the U.S. House of Representatives in the 114th Congress, chiefs of police, and local police officers regarding the issue of the trend toward the militarization of police departments (PDs). In addition, the study served to determine if their opinions on the militarization of policing have an association to their gender, ethnicity, prior military service, and political party affiliation. The design of this research was an exploratory descriptive study. A series of 22 questions and statements presented in a 4-point Likert scale with forced choice made up the quantitative survey instrument. There was considerable disparity in the size of the original groups (n = 160 police chiefs, n = 241 police officers, n = 25 congressional representatives [CR]). Surveys were distributed in two ways: hard copies were distributed to CR and online surveys were distributed through SurveyMonkey to law enforcement personnel recruited through professional websites found online. Findings show law enforcement and CR were particularly out of step with each other on the topics of PD-instituted militarization, military garb for police officers, SWAT team trends toward other purposes, and whether SWAT teams should serve drug warrants. Half of the chiefs of police and local police officers thought that the events at Ferguson, MO in 2014 brought the use of military grade equipment by local PDs to public light, whereas 80% of CR

believed it did. In regard to SWAT teams being essential to PDs, results indicated CR, as compared to both police officers and police chiefs, were significantly less in agreement that SWAT teams provide an essential function for PDs. The continuing militarization of U.S. law enforcement is by and large a product of increased Department of Defense funding based on trepidation and protection of our way of life. This study represents a first step toward recognizing the opinions of CR, police chiefs, and local law enforcement officers on the continued escalation and modernity of police militarization.



2. Analyzing research in preparation for University-Based Research Project
 - a. Time Management Behavior Scale, Perceived Stress Questionnaire and Concept Map created for the purpose if the project.

			Almost never	Sometimes	Often	Usually
Evaluates daily schedule	Carries notebook	1. You feel rested	1	2	3	4
Reviews activities	Avoids interruptions	2. You feel that too many demands are being made on you	1	2	3	4
Sets deadlines	Schedules events weekly	3. You are irritable or grouchy	1	2	3	4
Increases task efficiency	Keeps daily log	4. You have too many things to do	1	2	3	4
Sets priorities	Schedules time daily	5. You feel lonely or isolated	1	2	3	4
Breaks down tasks	Organizes paperwork	6. You find yourself in situations of conflict	1	2	3	4
Sets short-term goals	Is disorganized	7. You feel you're doing things you really like	1	2	3	4
Reviews goals	Is disorganized	8. You feel tired	1	2	3	4
Completes priority tasks	Has messy work space	9. You fear you may not manage to attain your goals	1	2	3	4
Keeps long-term goals	Organizes tasks by preference	10. You feel calm	1	2	3	4
Handles letters & memos	Forgets lists made	11. You have too many decisions to make	1	2	3	4
Carries appointment book	Believes days to be too unpredictable	12. You feel frustrated	1	2	3	4
Makes list of things to do	Schedules wasted time	13. You are full of energy	1	2	3	4
Writes reminder notes	Leaves clean work space	14. You feel tense	1	2	3	4
Uses waiting time	Sorts mail daily	15. Your problems seem to be piling up	1	2	3	4
Practices recordkeeping	Doesn't organize tasks	16. You feel you're in a hurry	1	2	3	4
		17. You feel safe and protected	1	2	3	4
		18. You have many worries	1	2	3	4
		19. You are under pressure from other people	1	2	3	4
		20. You feel discouraged	1	2	3	4
		21. You enjoy yourself	1	2	3	4
		22. You are afraid for the future	1	2	3	4
		23. You feel you're doing things because you have to not because you want to	1	2	3	4
		24. You feel criticized or judged	1	2	3	4
		25. You are lighthearted	1	2	3	4
		26. You feel mentally exhausted	1	2	3	4
		27. You have trouble relaxing	1	2	3	4
		28. You feel loaded down with responsibility	1	2	3	4
		29. You have enough time for yourself	1	2	3	4
		30. You feel under pressure from deadlines	1	2	3	4



3. NSU Mathematics Colloquium Series

- a. Provided below is a short summary provided to my Calculus I professor after attending the first Mathematics Colloquium of the academic year, “Data Analysis in the Florida Panthers Organization” on September 13th, 2016.
- b. “Personally, I know very little about hockey or the way that it works. However, I found the conversation extremely interesting. I never thought to use math to measure statistics and make inferences about ticket sales and possible revenue. I enjoyed the use of mathematics to make predictions about the number of people who would attend games and how “announced attendance” meant a different thing for each team. A slant in collected data showing game attendance was

clearly viable based on how a team performed in a specific season. If they performed worse than usual, the next season, they would have a lower overall average quantity of attendance at their games. When they performed noticeably well, the number of people attending their games would steadily increase over time. I also enjoyed how this data could also be used to predict how a specific team's games would perform throughout a season. I never thought about outliers such as holidays and the day of the week as factors that would impact the number of people who attend a game. Looking at the collected data, there is clearly a correlation. Around the holiday season, the amount of free time that someone has is significantly different than during a regular week. Overall, I thought the entire colloquium was very interesting, full of subjects that I had never thought of before. I will definitely attend a Mathematic Colloquium Series session again in the future.”

Reflection

Fall 2016 Reflection

This semester was challenging and it took some time to adjust to changes that came with the first semester of college. However, I am very excited about what I have learned about research so far and look forward to expanding my knowledge in the future. Throughout the experiences that we have already had, I have learned the fundamental steps in the research process and how to apply them when trying to begin an experimental project. Additionally, in-class discussions that have taken place with my fellow Razor's Edge Research Aristotle members have been stimulating and exciting.

Regarding my goals, I am proud of what I accomplished this semester. While I did not receive an "A" on a Calculus test, I managed to get a "B" as well as several scores of 100 on my weekly quizzes. I believe I tried my best and put in hours of quality work that I take pride in. I was able to engage in several research based activities occurring on campus spanning from surveys to the University-Based Research Project that we started in class. One of my favorite volunteer opportunities was Open House 2016. I was given the opportunity to inform potential incoming students about the benefits of the Razor's Edge Program and encourage them to apply for the upcoming school year.

Finally, I joined several clubs, but I primarily enjoy the ones that challenge me as an individual. Some of these include Ablaze, the on-campus Christian group, and Cozy Corners, a club that redecorates the rooms of cancer patients before they come back home. I look forward to participating in these clubs continuously in the future. Learning more about research has had an effect on the way I approach my school work and social life. I find myself wanting to be fully

informed about a subject before I pursue it. When I do not know about something and make the effort to research it and learn so that I can help myself and others.

I am excited for my future at NSU and I look forward to engaging in more research as I learn more. Next semester, I have the opportunity to be a Shark Preview Leader (SPL) and connect with potential incoming freshman on a personal level. I look forward to sharing my experiences with the Research Program and recommending students to apply as well. Planting the seeds of research is important to ensure future growth in the NSU community. I anticipate being a part of that process.