

# **Superior Edge Task Force Final Report**

**Submitted by  
Dr. Kathleen Thompson, Chair**

April 29, 2005

**SUPERIOR EDGE TASK FORCE**  
**FINAL REPORT**  
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The Superior Edge Task Force was charged with the responsibility to research, discuss and make recommendations for a value-added initiative.

Members: Kathleen Thompson (Chair, Nursing), Michael Andary (Construction Management), Sara Barclay (Student), Dave Bonsall (Student Activities and Leadership Programs), Sarah Breen (Student), Brian Cherry (Political Science), Kevin Duby (Student), Paul Duby (Institutional Research), Bob Fleming (Business), Chuck Ganzert (CAPS), Rachel Harris (Student Activities and Leadership Programs), Cara Kamps (Student Activities and Leadership Programs), Bob Kulisheck (Political Science), Carolyn Lowe (Education), Robert Masterson (Student), Kevin McDonough (AIS), Michael Muslin (Student), Wally Niebauer (CAPS), Mary Pelton-Cooper (Psychology), Sandi Poindexter (Business), Francella Quinnell (Psychology), Ron Sundell, (Environmental Science), James Suksi (Psychology), John Vickers (Military Science), and Bitsy Wedin (Nursing)

The Task Force began meeting in November and the members have been diligent in completing the charges. The Task Force researched what other universities are currently doing and obtained feedback from faculty, staff, administration and the business community. The proposed program was presented at a University-wide forum and to numerous committees (President's Council, Academic Cabinet, Academic Senate, Deans and Department Heads, Student Services, International Task Force, and First-Year Experience). Based on all of the information received, the Task Force makes the following recommendations:

1. Implement the Superior Edge program to include four elements:
  - Citizenship Edge
  - Diversity Edge
  - Leadership Edge
  - "Real World" Edge

To complete the Superior Edge, students would need to complete all four elements. Specific requirements for each of the "Edges" are described later in the report.

2. Establish a Center for Student Development and Civic Engagement. The purpose of the Center would be to organize all the student development activities under one area for better coordination. Areas to be included would be:
  - Academic Service-Learning
  - Superior Edge
  - Student Leadership
  - Volunteer Center
  - Community Outreach
  - Student Activities

3. Provide funding of approximately \$200,000 for the full implementation of the program. Included in the proposed budget are three FTE staff, one graduate assistant, faculty released time, and support dollars. Not included are the costs associated with acquisition of an e-portfolio system or for office space.

The recommended positions are:

- Assistant Director (AP-6, 10 month) to coordinate Academic Service-Learning
- Volunteer Center and Community Service Assistant Director (AP-6, 12 month) to coordinate the Superior Edge Program
- Faculty liaison for Academic Service-Learning
- Clerical/technical (4C) to assist both Superior Edge and Academic Service-Learning
- Graduate assistant to assist with the Superior Edge Program

The budget justification is presented at the end of the report.

4. Begin implementation Fall 2005 with selected students, faculty, and Student Activities and Leadership Programs personnel participating. The purpose of the initial phase would be to evaluate the best approach for implementing the program and to determine the time commitment involved. The advisors would help develop the evaluation mechanism for the program. This would include operationalizing the outcomes and criteria provided in the proposal.
5. Appoint a Superior Edge Advisory Committee in Fall 2005 consisting of faculty, staff, and students. The Committee's responsibilities would be to:
  - review and recommend types of experiences which would be allowed under each of the "Edge" programs;
  - monitor the quality of the Program, student experiences and reflections based on program outcomes;
  - assist in the development of promotional materials for the Superior Edge with Communications and Marketing;
  - help market the program in cooperation with existing student services including Admissions, the First Year Experience Program, Campus Visits, and Orientation.
6. Implement an e-portfolio system as the record-keeping system for the Superior Edge Program. The e-portfolio system could also be used by faculty and students for other educational activities.

One of the charges was to develop a timeline. The implementation of the program is dependent upon the level of commitment of resources. With the recommended budget, it is feasible to begin the Superior Edge program in Fall 2005.

## THE SUPERIOR EDGE

### Mission Statement

Northern Michigan University's Superior Edge is a program encompassing a wide range of experiential activities that complements instructional offerings to provide our students with a distinct advantage by better preparing them for careers, lifelong learning, graduate school, and life as engaged citizens.

### Vision Statement

Northern Michigan University's Superior Edge is based on the belief that learning comes from a variety of experiences during college. Lessons that begin in the classroom are, in many cases, most effectively learned when they are complemented by applied activities that develop both the intellect and character.

### Outcomes

- Students will become engaged, involved citizens (*Citizenship Edge*).
- Students will develop a world view and better understand and appreciate diversity (*Diversity Edge*).
- Students will grow as competent, ethical and effective leaders (*Leadership Edge*).
- Students will develop the ability to relate theory to practice (*"Real World" Edge*).

### To satisfactorily achieve the Superior Edge, students will complete:

- All of the requirements for each of the four "Edge" programs
- An e-portfolio record
- A reflective paper, which would encompass the experiences in the Citizenship, Diversity, Leadership, and "Real World" Edges.

### Recognition options for students completing the Superior Edge:

- Awarded the Superior Edge Certificate
- Provided a congratulatory letter from the President or Provost
- Eligible for annual Superior Edge Awards
- Recognition at the Superior Edge reception
- Listed in the commencement program
- Provided with a special cord to wear at graduation
- Provided with a citation on the student transcript

### Recognition options for completing the Individual Edges: Students who satisfactorily complete any of the "Edges" will be:

- Awarded a Certificate
- Recognized at the annual Superior Edge reception
- Provided with a citation on the student transcript

## The Four Edges

### Citizenship Edge

**Outcome: Students will become engaged, involved citizens. They will:**

- Develop an empathy and concern for others
- Gain practical experience in community settings
- Increase their awareness of community challenges, opportunities and processes

**To satisfactorily achieve the outcome, students will complete:**

- 100 hours of an approved plan that includes a combination of service-learning, community service and civic engagement
- An e-portfolio record
- A reflective paper

**Examples of what would count towards completion of the Citizenship Edge**

- **Service-learning:** course-related experiences
- **Community Service:** volunteer opportunities
- **Civic Engagement:** attending political or governmental meetings, working on community or political campaigns or projects

### Diversity Edge

**Outcome: Students will develop a world view and better understand and appreciate diversity. They will:**

- Develop an appreciation for domestic diversity
- Develop an appreciation for international diversity
- Increase knowledge of different cultures in the United States and around the world
- Better understand global issues

**To satisfactorily achieve the outcome, students will complete:**

- 100 hours of an approved plan that may include a combination of international and domestic diversity
- An e-portfolio record
- A reflective paper

**Examples of what would count towards completion of the Diversity Edge**

- **International Diversity:** study abroad; get a passport; complete courses; attend presentations, workshops, programs, or events; present personal experiences
- **Domestic Diversity:** complete courses, attend presentations, workshops, programs; participate in events such as MLK Week, Pow Wow, Holocaust Awareness Week, National Coming Out Day; experiences at a soup kitchen, working at Bay Cliff, tutoring at Lake Superior Village, working with the elderly; student exchange programs; membership in a diversity student organization

## **Leadership Edge**

**Outcome: Students will grow as competent, ethical and effective leaders. They will:**

- Appreciate the ethical underpinnings of effective leadership
- Understand group dynamics and processes
- Develop an awareness of personal leadership strengths and weaknesses
- Attain the knowledge of different leadership styles and approaches

**To satisfactorily achieve the outcome, students will complete:**

- 100 hours of an approved plan that includes a combination of theory, ethics and experience
- An e-portfolio record
- A reflective paper

**Examples of what would count towards completion of the Leadership Edge**

- **Theory:** courses, workshops or conferences with leadership theory
- **Ethics:** complete courses, participate in presentations or workshops on ethics
- **Experience:** leadership role in a student or community organization, resident adviser (RA), Student Leader Fellowship Program (SLFP), ROTC, employment with leadership responsibilities

## **“Real World” Edge**

**Outcome: Students will develop the ability to relate theory to practice. They will:**

- Develop an appreciation for the many factors (resources, personalities, competing priorities, etc.) involved in “real world” situations
- Develop the confidence needed to succeed in future career and community opportunities
- Better integrate theory with practice

**To satisfactorily achieve the outcome, students will complete:**

- 100 hours of an approved plan that may include a combination of service-learning, research experiences, work experience, internships, professional activities
- An e-portfolio record
- A reflective paper

**Examples of what would count towards completion of the “Real World” Edge**

- **Service-learning courses**
- **Research Experiences:** Freshman Fellows, apprenticeships, working with a faculty member
- **Related Work Experience:** such as an early childhood student working at a daycare or a graphic design student working at a design office
- **Internships/Practica/Apprenticeships/Field Work**
- **Professional Activities:** such as attending or presenting at a professional conference

**NMU CENTER FOR STUDENT DEVELOPMENT  
AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

**Proposed Budget**

**Staffing**

Assistant Director for Civic Engagement

- (10 month)
- Minimum Salary \$29,158
- Fringe (57.5%) 16,766 \$45,924

Assistant Director for the Superior Edge

- (12 month)
- Minimum Salary 34,989
- Fringe (57.5%) 20,119 55,108

Academic Service-Learning Faculty Liaison

- (1/3 released time;
- adjunct instructor salary) Fall 4,500
- Winter 4,500 9,000

CT 4C (2004-05 rates)

- Salary (\$795/bi-weekly) 20,670
- Fringe (73.9%) 15,275 35,945

Graduate Assistant

- Stipend 7,244
- Tuition 3,760
- Activity Fee (\$30/semester) 60 11,064

Staffing Total \$157,041

**Support**

Laptop Computer (\$385/semester x 2 semester x 1 person)	\$770	
Internet Connections (\$240 x 4 computers)	960	
Telephone (\$27.52/month x 12 months x 4 phones)	<u>\$1,321</u>	<u>\$3,051</u>

	<u>AS-L</u>	<u>Superior Edge</u>	
Telephone (Local & Long Distance)	\$1,500	\$1,500	
Copying	1,500	1,500	
Printing	1,000	7,000	
Postage	500	1,000	
Office Supplies	500	1,000	
Travel	3,500	4,000	
Evaluation & Research	1,000	1,000	
Faculty Professional Development & Other Materials	1,000	1,000	
Miscellaneous	1,000	4,000	
Student Assistance	<u>6,000</u>	<u>10,000</u>	
Total	<u>\$17,500</u>	<u>\$32,000</u>	<u>\$49,500</u>
			<u>\$209,592</u>

\*Start-Up Costs: This does not include any expenses associated with the acquisition or training related to the e-portfolio nor any expenses with regard to needs for additional office space.

## Budget Justification

**Assistant Director for Civic Engagement:** The individual filling this position will coordinate several responsibilities that will significantly advance civic engagement and community service activities at Northern Michigan University (NMU). They include:

- Continuing and expanding the advancement of academic service-learning (AS-L) in cooperation with faculty leaders. In addition to being a major initiative at the present time, AS-L is also a key component of the Superior Edge Program
- Coordinating the flow of activity from the University into the community (NMU Volunteer Center, AS-L, etc)
- Developing long-term partnerships with community organizations
- Continuing to work with faculty leadership and AS-L in-service activities, including AS-L as a tenure and promotion consideration
- Promoting recognition of faculty and students who are engaged in unique and noteworthy AS-L
- Serving as the grant writer/coordinator for AS-L, volunteerism, and civic engagement activities
- Advancing the national recognition of NMU's AS-L and civic engagement activities
- Serve as a liaison to the Superior Edge Advisory Committee

**Assistant Director for the Superior Edge:** The individual filling this position will coordinate all aspects of the Superior Edge program. They include:

- Developing systems for organizing, verifying and "tracking" Superior Edge participation, i.e., e-portfolios
- Developing promotional materials and a plan to promote participation of current, new and prospective student in the Superior Edge
- Implementing recognition activities for Superior Edge participation
- Working with faculty to make the Superior Edge a comprehensive in- and out-of-classroom experience
- Creating mechanisms for assisting students with the development of electronic portfolios and providing periodic feedback on their progress
- Advancing the regional and national recognition of the Superior Edge so as to impact student recruitment and the placement of NMU graduates
- Serve as a liaison to the Superior Edge Advisory Committee

**Academic Service Learning Faculty Liaison:** The faculty member filling this position will be responsible for:

- working closely with the Assistant Director for Civic Engagement in planning and implementing Academic Service-Learning seminars and in-service programs
- meeting with individual faculty members and faculty departments who have an interest in Academic Service-Learning
- promoting Academic Service-Learning as a valuable teaching methodology with faculty
- conducting periodic meetings with the Academic Service-Learning Advisory Board

**Clerical Position:** The person in this position will be responsible for:

- Providing clerical support for the two Assistant Director positions
- Coordinating the record-keeping for the Superior Edge
- Coordinating the many logistical arrangements that will be associated with the AS-L, civic engagement, Superior Edge and community service initiatives
- Taking minutes for the Superior Edge Advisory Committee

**Graduate Assistant:** The Graduate Assistant will be responsible for:

- Assisting with the promotion of the Superior Edge Program (promotional materials, classroom visits, and presentations)
- Assisting with recognition efforts
- Advising individual students regarding their participation