Foreword

It is with great pleasure that the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) joins our sister organizations, the Association for Authentic, Experiential and Evidence-Based Learning (AAEEBL); the International Journal of ePortfolio (IJeP); and the Electronic Portfolio Action and Communication (EPAC) Community of Practice in producing and publishing the Field Guide to Eportfolio. As reader, you will engage in a path-breaking encounter with an emerging digital ecosystem and the changing nature of knowledge creation and learning.

The eportfolio, a ubiquitous medium available to students and educators, is designed to collect student work to demonstrate learning across the outcomes valued by employers.

As the leading post-secondary association representing all sectors of higher education, including over 1,400 college and university member institutions focused on enhancing undergraduate education for all students, AAC&U brings theory, principles, research, and practice together to advance engaged undergraduate learning. AAC&U’s focus and commitment to liberal learning and inclusive excellence for more than one hundred years is currently represented in our Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP) initiative. LEAP champions the importance of a twenty-first-century liberal education for individual students and for a nation dependent on economic creativity and democratic vitality. The LEAP Challenge is the most recent component of the initiative. The LEAP Challenge

“invites colleges and universities to make signature work a goal for all students—and the expected standard of quality learning in college. . . . A student uses his or her cumulative learning to pursue a significant project. . . . Through signature work, students immerse themselves in exploration, choosing the questions they want to study and preparing to explain the significance of their work to others. The process helps students develop the capacities, e.g. investigation, evidence-based reasoning, and the ability to collaborate constructively, to grapple with problems where the “right answer” is still unknown, and where any answer may be actively contested.” (AAC&U 2015)

The LEAP Challenge invites students, educators, and others to make integration of learning into a collaborative process through encouraging student agency and faculty mentorship to create meaning and sense-making out of the students’ formal education, the cocurriculum, and their lives beyond the academy.

The Field Guide to Eportfolio is the initial embodiment of the research, theory, and practice of learning in the context of eportfolio. Fifty-three eportfolio community practitioners from around the world—leaders in the many facets of eportfolio utilization—collaborated to identify key components defining the field of eportfolios for learning and student success. For each of the chapters, teams of eportfolio community members collaborated through digital working groups to lay out prevailing practice and theory based on research, including links to resources and case studies. Both the executive editor of the Field Guide and coeditor are AAEEBL eportfolio community members who managed the process of finalizing the guide.

AAC&U has long recognized the value of eportfolios for supporting the affirmation of student voice and identity for all students, especially those who may not traditionally see themselves as belonging in the academy or contributing to the educational community as valued partners.
Eportfolios are also situated to encourage students and faculty to demonstrate learning through actual work that takes formal knowledge acquisition and applies it to real problems and issues, either by individuals or by collaborations of multiple learners.

The Field Guide to Eportfolio is a community-sourced, peer-reviewed, global, and digital effort to define a field of professional practice. The guide is envisioned to be regularly updated and curated by the community of practice as the field and the digital ecology evolves. We invite readers to join us in our endeavor to create and advance this learning space in support of lifelong inquiry, evidence-based liberal learning, and equity in student success.

_Terrel L. Rhodes_

**Reference**
