

What's the Hype with the UML Stereotype- North vs. South?

As freshmen at UML, you have obviously noted two different campuses separated by the mighty Merrimack River. Now that we have read and discussed Dr. Frank's book about the history of the university, it has become clear that each campus has hosted diverse areas of study with the Lowell Textile Institute and Lowell Technological Institute having once been located on North Campus and the Lowell Normal School and State Teachers College having once been located on South Campus before the university became a united institution. This diverse background has given rise to cultural stereotypes about which location hosts the "best or most serious" students or which campus is more important in retaining UML's status as a well-respected state university, or, simply, which campus is better.

Utilizing our class discussions about the purpose, function, and dangers associated with stereotyping, I am now asking you to write an essay focusing on what elements make the students, faculty, facilities, appearance and/or atmosphere of each campus unique and what elements they share and how these features feed the stereotype about each. It may help you to consider the following questions:

- Are gender stereotypes still a part of higher education?
- Are academics, athletics, and the arts in competition at UML?
- How do the students from each campus differ?
- Does a rift exist between students and/or faculty on each campus?
- Does this internalized stereotype undermine the confidence and success of students?

This assignment will be the third short essay of the semester, but it will count twice, so it will be worth a possible 40 points, instead of 20, and it will be 2-3 pages long. This essay will be due on Oct. 30th, and it should follow standard MLA format, i.e. one inch margins, double spacing, and Times New Roman 12.

The **objectives** to focus on in this essay include thoughtfully analyzing your evidence and extracting sophisticated conclusions about the information you have discovered. Then, you will need to construct a meaningful thesis which will convey your thoughts about the effects of the stereotypes relating to each campus. After you separate your ideas by features, you will then organize your essay by following the compare/contrast rhetorical method utilizing either point by point, subject by subject, or a combination of both to present your argument. You will also need to interject appropriate transition words (see Glenn's chapter 6) between ideas. To be most effective, you will save your strongest evidence about the stereotypes of these two campuses for last. Your success with this essay will also depend on your skillful use of language in both

vocabulary choices and mechanics. Establish an interesting hook in the introduction to entice your reader with your subject and conclude with your newly discovered knowledge about the possible or probable effects of this cultural stereotyping.

In order **to accomplish this goal** effectively, you will have to become investigative reporters to generate enough information to formulate a strong thesis. Since many of you will have most, or all, of your classes on only one campus, to discover the information needed to analyze the differences between these two campuses fairly, you will need to venture to the other side of the river for one day of observation or be daring and visit often. Wearing a disguise is optional.

First, you will need to visit a dining hall/eating area and observe the students' dress, behavior, and socialization patterns. Keep a low profile and scribble your observations madly on your notepad. Perhaps initiating a conversation with someone to extract opinions would prove fruitful.

Then, you will also need to stake out students and staff in both O'Leary and Lydon libraries while assessing student behaviors in both. Spend some time in at least two locations within each library distinguishing how alike or different both the libraries and the people are. Hint: a library is not enemy territory.

Next, you will need to enter a building that is unfamiliar to you on the campus that is most 'alien' to you. This could be the gym, the theater, a music auditorium, the rec center, classrooms, and/or labs. Challenge yourself and try to determine if students are 'northies' or 'southies'.

Lastly, you will be expected to interview, through email, one of the students who takes my class on the campus opposite of you. This will require having some prepared questions that we will work on in class to help you construct an even stronger image of the staff, students, and facilities on the opposing campus. As an added plus, you may make a new friend this way!

Your success with this essay will depend on the uniqueness of the insight you propose about the cultural stereotype separating north and south campus in your carefully constructed thesis, and on how well you support your thesis with carefully crafted topic sentences and paragraphs filled with your gathered observations. You also need to make effective choices in vocabulary along with constructing well-crafted sentences that are both grammatically correct and punctuated correctly.

Good luck!