

Goddard College Presentation

Good morning. My name is Joyce Gustafson and I am the Director of Operations for Goddard College in Port Townsend. I'm joined here today by my colleague Jessica Plumb.

I want to begin by thanking the PDA Board members and staff for the work you are doing on behalf of Fort Worden and those of us who love this place. I recognize that the challenge is daunting. And I thank you for your commitment of time and energy.

For the past ten years I have directed operations for Goddard at this site. I'd like to take some time today to reflect on a question I've thought about a good deal over the years - how does Goddard contribute to the culture of this emerging community at Fort Worden?

The short answer might be that, "we offer transformative experiences for our students." But a more nuanced reply would be to recognize that we do so in collaboration with the PDA and our Fort Worden Partners. In my mind the strength of this endeavor, this *re-creation* of Fort Worden, is sourced in partnership.

The PDA is leading the transformation of the physical property and welcoming new community members while Fort Partners are delivering on the mission to provide lifelong learning experiences in arts education. *The Partners programs are changing people's lives.*

Goddard College has been doing that from its Vermont campus for more than 150 years. Goddard's approach to education is unconventional. It is based on the Progressive Education model, an experimental movement inspired by the teachings of John Dewey and William Heard Kilpatrick.

When a student first speaks with a Goddard admissions counselor one of the first questions they'll be asked is, "What do you want to learn?" From there students work closely with a faculty advisor to develop an individualized study plan, which guides their academic journey.

There are not many Colleges in the nation that employ a progressive, student-centered model like Goddard's. Which makes Fort Worden one of a few places in the nation where this experience is available.

The College has been here for 14 years. Over the past five years alone Goddard has invested close to one million dollars in Fort Worden. We offer two Master of Fine Arts degree programs at this site: Creative Writing and Interdisciplinary Arts.

Our students at Fort Worden are poets and painters who have returned from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. They are reporting back to us from the front lines, in visuals and in verse. Our students are retired physicians and attorneys, young mothers who can't leave their families to attend a residential college. They are teachers, authors, opera singers, Circ de Soleil aerialists, filmmakers, musicians, stage performers and visual artists.

Goddard is an inclusive community welcoming people in all of the unique and diverse ways in which we manifest our humanity. Our students engage. They interact with their surroundings. They build community. At Goddard they are encouraged to take “imaginative and responsible action in the world.” Our students frame their work and their lives through the lens of social justice.

One of the more dramatic examples of this was when Tommie Smith won a gold medal at the summer games in Mexico City in 1968. You may recall the image when he stood on the Olympic podium, bowed his head and raised his fist in the Black Power salute along with bronze medalist John Carlos. They did so in solidarity with the civil and human rights movements of the time. Those battles are not over. I’m thinking now of the guest artist who worked with Goddard students here two semesters ago. Her name is Patrisse Cullors. She co-founded the Black Lives Matter movement.

Goddard’s distinguished alums, Centrum’s musicians, Madrona’s teachers and Copper Canyon’s poets are making a name for themselves in the global literary and art worlds and in contemporary culture. Like all Fort Partners and the students whose lives they change, Partners are also making a name for Fort Worden as the place where the magic happens.

Looking ahead my hope for the next ten years is that the PDA and Partners remain focused on our *shared commitments*; the things we all agree on. It’s easy to recognize the places where we disagree. But it’s the places of intersection, where our ideas and aspirations align, that will strengthen the foundation for what we are building here. And what we are building here is a vibrant and viable community, dedicated to life long learning in arts’ education, that will last for generations to come.

Transitions are never easy but there is collective wisdom in all of the voices in the room and we must listen more closely to one another. Goddard is experiencing its own transition as I step down from my position with the College in a few weeks’ time. Jessica Plumb and I are working together on a transition plan. For many of you Jessica needs no introduction. For those who don’t know her:

Jessica is an award-winning filmmaker and writer. She is the Producer, Co-Director and writer of *Return of the River*, a feature documentary about the restoration of the Elwha River, and the largest dam removal in history. Recognized with a dozen festival awards, the film was reviewed as "hell-raising documentary filmmaking at its best".

Her short environmental films and video installations, described as video poetry, have screened in galleries and theaters throughout the United States and internationally.

Before moving to the Olympic Peninsula, where she has also produced intensive art programs for Centrum, she worked in Boston and Beijing, and served as interim editor of the *Yale China Review*. Plumb holds a B.A. from Yale University and an interdisciplinary MFA from Goddard College. Please join me in welcoming her.

Goddard College Presentation - Jessica Plumb

I'd like to thank Joyce for 10 years of work in building Goddard's presence as a partner here at Fort Worden.

I want to start by taking a broad view, one that encompasses more than my current role as Interim Director for Goddard on this campus. While my role at Goddard is new, my engagement in Fort Worden as a lifelong learning center runs deep, and goes back almost two decades, beginning with a job at Centrum. I am devoted to the lifelong learning mission of the PDA in this community, having engaged closely with all of the founding partners as a learner and as a program facilitator. I believe that the life-changing experiences offered by Fort Worden partners are what put this place on the map. This is the secret ingredient in the sauce here at Fort Worden.

I'm going to start by sharing my own Fort Worden story, rather than a power point presentation. When I came to Port Townsend from the East Coast nineteen years ago, my first job here was directing youth programs at Centrum, serving creative kids from around Washington State, taught by artists from the Northwest & beyond. During my tenure at Centrum, we also saw the need to better serve local students, and in response I helped to launch the weeklong immersion program for Blue Heron Middle School, which continues to this day.

I left Centrum shortly before I had my daughter, and wondered how, as a new Mom on the Olympic Peninsula, I would realize the dream of completing a master's degree. Goddard appeared at just that moment - and my path circled back to Fort Worden. I was able to stay in this community and take the next step

in my education, infant in arms, thanks to Goddard's unique low residency program model. During those years, I bore witness to the transformation of the former gym here at the Fort, a building reborn on campus as Madrona Mind Body Institute, and I continue to take classes there. When PTSA launched workshops for young people at Fort Worden, I was first to knock on the door to register my daughter for youth classes. I've done the same at the Marine Science Center.

Between my personal experience, and the opportunities I've had to facilitate & witness literally thousands of creative experiences right here at Fort Worden, I've come to believe that lifelong learners are also the PDA's lifelong customers. People who have life-changing experiences here will forever associate this place with that journey - just as I do. Whether they are students, instructors or members of the public who come to the Fort for partner program - whether they come to listen to a reading, to dance, to create, or to teach someone else - all of these people have an opportunity to fall in love with this place.

Stepping into the Interim Director role here at Goddard, I am inspired by the ways that Fort Worden continues to grow as a vibrant, truly unique community for learning, with a diverse circle of partners and Maker's Square on the horizon. From Goddard's vantage point, I'm well aware of challenges that small, progressive colleges have faced across the country, Goddard among them. However I also see that Goddard as a pioneer of a growing, more inclusive model of education that has taken off in recent years: low residency degree programs. What does this mean? Students gather for eight days at beginning of each semester, creating a sense of community and building relationships with faculty

that they will carry throughout the rest of the semester, when they work from home. All Goddard programs use this low residency model since 2002, including undergraduate programs. Here on this campus, Goddard offers two masters degrees, both MFA programs: creative writing and interdisciplinary art.

I believe that low residency education is a model that Fort Worden has the potential to engage in unique ways, thanks to the synergy created by Fort Worden partners. This is more than a place to stay and recreate, although it offers exceptional opportunities in that arena. Every time a Goddard residency, or a Centrum program fills the Fort, these programs import talented people: artists, writers, performers, professors and doers of all stripes. The public opportunities that come out of partner programs offer value to everyone else who shares this place; from leisure travelers to community members who might come to hear a reading, then stay for a drink Taps.

Meanwhile, Goddard continues to develop the potential of low residency education, with a deepening commitment to Washington State, including a Seattle based master's program in education. One of my hopes is to see Goddard's leading role in low residency education offer a model that might be replicable here at Fort Worden. Operating a "pop-up" college has its challenges, and Goddard has 14 years of experience making it work on this campus.

This has been a time of transition for Goddard and for the Goddard Port Townsend office. I'm happy to report that the College's new President, Dr. Bernard Bull, is deeply committed to satellite sites, and to Washington State as an

arena for the growth. Meanwhile, I see that our community is hungry for higher education opportunities, and for the diverse talent that partner programming brings to Fort Worden. I want to thank you all for your role in making this possible, and for your commitment to lifelong learning here at the Fort; as a grateful learner, frequent customer, and above all a partner in this endeavor.