

The Labyrinth: A Path for Reflection and Transformative Learning

**Proposal for a Permanent Labyrinth on the
The University of Central Oklahoma Campus**



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Executive Summary

The University of Central Oklahoma (UCO) is committed to helping students learn by providing students with transformative learning experiences throughout their college careers. A unique transformative learning opportunity exists on this campus when students interact with the Labyrinth, a design which invites people to participate in reflection through the process of a walking meditation¹. The 11-circuit Chartres Labyrinth² design includes one meandering path that starts at the outer edge and encircles the center.

The walker starts the path at the beginning and follows the twists and turns of the path which lead the walker to the center of the design; after spending time in the center, the walker returns on the same path back out from the center, arriving at the beginning. The walker is encouraged to reflect on the thoughts that come and go as they moved along the path; often times these thoughts provide interesting insights and clarity for the walker¹. According to Mezirow's theory of reflectivity, reflection plays a major role in the transformative learning process (Wang & King, 2006)³. Astin, Astin, and Lindholm recommend that institutions of higher learning can begin to engage students in contemplative practices by "creating spaces for students where they can go to meditate or engage in self-reflection" (p. 153),⁴ and the addition of a permanent 11-circuit Chartres Labyrinth on the UCO campus provides this space.



The University of Central Oklahoma would be the first university in Oklahoma to have a permanent labyrinth located on their campus. There are approximately 68 colleges and universities in the United States that have built permanent labyrinths on their campuses,⁵ and there are approximately 70 permanent labyrinths in the State of Oklahoma (this includes both public and private labyrinths, such as the one located at Mercy Hospital in Oklahoma City, OK)⁶. There are almost 4000 labyrinths worldwide⁵.

Placing a permanent paver 11-circuit Chartres Labyrinth outdoors on the UCO campus would provide a meditation space for reflection for students, faculty and staff, and it would be a beautiful work of art as a component of the campus beautification project. A permanent labyrinth would also facilitate learning and teaching based on the Central Six Tenets of Transformative Learning: Discipline Knowledge, Leadership, Problem Solving (Research, Scholarly and Creative Activities), Service Learning and Civic Engagement, Global and Cultural Competencies, and Health and Wellness⁷.

- Since the labyrinth is used in almost all cultures in the world², it would provide a place that is inclusive of all faiths and cultures because the labyrinth is not tied to a specific religion or denomination; therefore, its adaptability for use is unique. (Global and Cultural Competency)
- Benefits of providing a permanent labyrinth on campus are infinite: it could be utilized in interdisciplinary research projects (Problem Solving- Research, Scholarly and Creative Activities) and research in the health and wellness disciplines (Health and Wellness).
- Research areas could include research on stress reduction, increased productivity, academic success, first year student success, student retention, and creativity just to identify a few (Problem Solving – Research, Scholarly and Creative Activities).

- All disciplines and departments on campus could utilize the labyrinth such as: outdoor performances by the Dance Department (Problem Solving – Research, Scholarly and Creative Activities); a space for creative writing; it could be used for leadership, team building and professional development (Leadership); and walked when groups are focused on problem solving (Discipline Knowledge).
- Groups and individuals in the community would also be welcome to come on campus to experience the labyrinth (Service Learning and Civic Engagement).

Providing a space for reflection is an integral part of learning⁴. Students who walked the labyrinth at various UCO campus events reported feeling calmer, having clarity, and feeling more relaxed after walking the labyrinth; they also stated it was beneficial to have time to “pause” during their day. While the current labyrinth resources are beneficial, they are limited by space availability and maintaining the labyrinth painted on the grass (the canvas labyrinth can only be laid out indoors and requires an indoor space 50 x 50 feet, and the outdoor labyrinth requires repainting every three weeks). Dr. Diane Rudebock, Associate Professor in Kinesiology and Health Studies and a Certified Veriditas Labyrinth Facilitator, collaborates with the UCO Counseling Center, The Wellness Center, Student Affairs, the Department of Dance, as well as various community groups to offer regular labyrinth events on the UCO campus and in the community. The portable canvas Labyrinth and the painted labyrinth on the dedicated lawn space north of HPE west of the Y Chapel are used for these events.

The 11-circuit Chartres paver labyrinth creation is a beautiful work of art, and this design is recommended for the permanent paver labyrinth on campus; this design can accommodate large groups of people, and since it is made of pavers, it is accessible to people with disabilities. The approximate size of the 11-circuit Chartres Labyrinth is 42-44 feet in diameter, and the cost of creating a permanent design varies, but generally can be completed for approximately \$70,000, depending on site preparation, the materials selected, and the group selected to complete installation. The area west of the Y Chapel on the west side of campus is the recommended location for the permanent installation.

The video, “Labyrinths for Our Time: Places of Refuge in a Hectic World,” shows labyrinths on university campuses and is available for viewing by contacting Dr. Rudebock at 405-974-5216 or email: crudebock@uco.edu.



University of Southern Indiana Labyrinth, Evansville, Indiana
 Created by Marty Kermeen, Labyrinths in Stone
<http://www.labyrinthbuilder.com/page46.html>

The Labyrinth: A Path for Reflection and Transformative Learning

Introduction

The University of Central Oklahoma (UCO) is committed to helping students learn by providing students with transformative learning opportunities throughout their college careers. Transformative learning engages students as well as faculty and staff who provide students with new and distinctive approaches to learning and overall growth⁷. A unique transformative learning opportunity exists on this campus when students interact with the Labyrinth, a design which invites participants to experience moments for reflection in a moving meditation¹. According to Mezirow's theory of reflectivity, reflection plays a major role in the transformative learning process (Wang & King, 2006)³. Astin, Astin, and Lindholm recommend that institutions of higher learning can begin to engage students in contemplative practices by "creating spaces for students where they can go to meditate or engage in self-reflection" (p. 153),⁴ and the addition of a permanent 11-circuit Chartres Labyrinth on the UCO campus provides this space. Glisczinski states that "The research points to the promise of frontal-cortex-rich critical reflection, which plays a central role in transforming learning. Educators engaged in fostering such transformation structure opportunities for learners to sojourn into the environments that trigger supported cognitive dissonance" (p. 9)⁸. It is through this dissonance that teachers can "model and then facilitate critical reflection..." (p. 9)⁸ which is at the center of a transformative experience.



University of Central Oklahoma 11-circuit Chartres canvas labyrinth

Over the past seven years, hundreds of UCO students have participated in labyrinth events which have been held on the UCO campus using canvas labyrinths as well as the outdoor labyrinth painted on the grass by Y Chapel and north of the HPE building. These events have been facilitated by Dr. C. Diane Rudebock, a Veriditas Certified Labyrinth Facilitator, who has worked in collaboration with the staff at the Wellness Center, Counseling Center, and faculty in the Kinesiology and Health Studies Department. Additional collaborations with the Office of Student Affairs, the faculty in Art, Media and Design, the Department of Dance (faculty and students), faculty and students in Math and Science, and Biology have provided a multitude of opportunities for students to experience the labyrinth as a moving meditation. The recurring question from those whom experience the labyrinth on campus is "When can we get a permanent labyrinth on campus?"

Background

The Labyrinth is a design which includes one path that encircles the center of the design, and when one walks the path starting at the beginning, the path can be followed to the center and back out again to the beginning². As the path is walked, the walker pays attention to their thoughts as they come and go, reflecting on the journey as they move along the path. This is different from an intentional or sitting meditation which is generally a focused meditation intended to clear the mind¹. The labyrinth path does not have dead ends or tricks like the path of a maze, but simply one path leading to the center and back out again. The walker is free to use analogies or metaphors to reflect on their experience after walking, and the walker is encouraged to write a reflection which helps make sense of the experience⁹.

Labyrinth designs have been found in many cultures throughout history dating back as far as 4000 years ago. The designs were found on coins and jewelry and were drawn on cave walls². While the origins of the design or its early uses are unknown, beginning in the Middle Ages, Labyrinths were used for a symbolic pilgrimage and walking meditations, using the path of the labyrinth to symbolize one's life journey¹.

Today, outdoor labyrinths are found in many settings such as universities, hospitals, parks, schools and churches¹. The well-known labyrinth in the floor of Chartres Cathedral in France was built in the Middle Ages around 1200 C. E.². Reverend Dr. Lauren Artress, an Episcopal Priest, introduced the Labyrinth in the United States in the early 1990s as a walking meditation. According to Artress (2006), using a labyrinth is a personal experience, and labyrinths can be used as moving meditations⁹. In 2006, The Department of Kinesiology and Health Studies purchased an 11-circuit Chartres labyrinth design made of canvas, and it is used regularly for indoor campus and community events.

Purpose

The purpose of creating a permanent labyrinth on the University of Central Oklahoma's campus is to provide a space for students, faculty, and staff of all cultures to experience time for reflection as well as to cultivate spiritual wellness¹⁰. Glisczinski states:

For millennia, scholarly teachers have theorized about the phenomenology of the sort of learning that lights up the mind. From Confucius to Aristotle, from Whitehead to Kolb to Mezirow, deep, meaningful, and lasting learning has long been understood as constructed through cycles of experience, reflection, conceptualization, and application. (p. 1)⁸

There are many benefits that college students can derive from using the labyrinth as a means for self-reflection. According to Astin, Astin, and Lindholm (2011), in their book *Cultivating the Spirit: How College Can Enhance Student's Inner Lives*, the benefits of self-reflection include enhanced leadership development, enhanced intellectual self-esteem, and a greater ability to get along with others from different races and cultures (p. 148)⁴. The same authors also talk about the goals of practicing self-reflection. These goals of self-reflection include enhancing self-awareness which includes a deeper knowledge of oneself, creating a greater awareness of one's emotional states, and creating a greater understanding of how one's beliefs and life situations

elicit these states (p. 57)⁴. These benefits and goals of self-reflection in turn can be enhanced through the practice of reflective writing (p. 77)⁴. A written reflection is a regular component of the labyrinth walks that are facilitated on and off campus by Dr. Rudebock.

According to the World-Wide Labyrinth Locator, labyrinths are located on approximately sixty eight (68) different college and university campuses throughout the United States⁵. Oklahoma has approximately 75 permanent labyrinths throughout the state, however, currently there are no labyrinths located on any college or university campuses in the state⁶. A permanent labyrinth built on the University of Central Oklahoma's campus would be the *first* of its kind on a college or university campus in the state of Oklahoma. Creating a labyrinth on campus would provide an inspirational teaching and learning environment which could be utilized by all disciplines.

It is recommended that the University of Central Oklahoma consider creating a permanent paver 11-circuit Chartres style labyrinth as a work of art on the UCO campus. The 11-circuit Chartres design (shown on Title page) is approximately 44 feet in diameter, can accommodate 30-40 walkers at a time, and the path walked in and back out equals 1/3 of a mile. A permanent paver design is accessible to those with disabilities or limitations in their physical mobility since it is flat.



Heartland Plaza; current location of the UCO 11-circuit Chartres painted on the grass

The 11-circuit Chartres design is the most recognizable labyrinth design in the United States and was created on campuses at The University of Ohio, Central Michigan University, University of Southern Indiana as well as on campuses on the east and west coasts⁵.

A labyrinth on this university's campus would provide students and faculty with space for personal reflection. Personal reflection is a critical component to learning as expressed by Dirkx who describes a form of reflection that is carried on as an "imaginal dialogue", and this internal dialogue can take place "through journaling or other practices" so that the experience comes forward in the conscious mind, and "we are able to gradually incorporate it into our sense of who we are" (p. 137)¹¹. The labyrinth would also provide research and scholarly opportunities for students and faculty. Research studies and articles have been published in the areas of nursing, psychology, education, creative arts, complementary care, and communication, and numerous master's theses as well as dissertations have been completed using the labyrinth¹². A permanent

labyrinth would provide students, faculty and staff opportunities to engage the campus community as well as connect with the surrounding communities of Edmond. This aligns with the University's mission of Transformative Learning by helping students be transformed through the Central Six areas of Leadership, Discipline Knowledge, Leadership, Problem Solving (Research, Scholarly and Creative Activities), Service Learning and Civic Engagement, Global and Cultural Competencies, and Health and Wellness⁷.

- Since the labyrinth is used in almost all cultures in the world², it would provide a place that is inclusive of all faiths and cultures because the labyrinth is not tied to a specific religion or belief; therefore, its adaptability for use is unique. (Global and Cultural Competency)
- Benefits of providing a permanent labyrinth on campus are infinite: it could be utilized in interdisciplinary research projects (Problem Solving – Research, Scholarly and Creative Activities) and research in the health and wellness disciplines (Health and Wellness).
- Research areas could include research on stress reduction, increased productivity, academic success, first year student success, student retention, and creativity just to identify a few.
- All disciplines and departments on campus could utilize the labyrinth such as: outdoor performances by the Dance Department and a space for creative writing (Creative Activities); it could be used for leadership, team building and professional development (Leadership); and walked for reflection focusing on course content (Discipline Knowledge).
- Groups and individuals in the community would also be welcome to come on campus to experience the labyrinth (Service Learning and Civic Engagement).

Benefits and Current Uses of the Labyrinth

The two most important tools for a student's spiritual growth and development are meditation and self-reflection³, which is exactly what interaction with the Labyrinth provides. According to Astin, et al (2011), meditation and self-reflection have been shown, through their research, to enhance spiritual growth and development in college students which in turn has resulted in the enhancement of students' academic performance, psychological well-being, leadership development, and overall satisfaction with their college experience⁴. These findings have major implications for institutions of higher education to consider providing students with opportunities to develop and grow in this area due to its positive benefits which translate to more engaged students and better retention. In addition, Mezirow's work emphasizes "ways in which our beliefs and assumptions shape and influence our perspectives, actions, and being in the world" and "through critical reflection, can potentially be transformed"(p. 135)¹¹.

The labyrinth can be used in a variety of ways in various contexts, only limited by our imagination. Using the labyrinth as a reflective walk provides walkers an opportunity to enhance spiritual wellness, which in turn, has documented benefits. According to Diaconis (2010), the labyrinth is a tool used for meditation that is spiritual in nature, rather than religious which is an important difference to note¹³. Astin, Astin, and Lindholm (2011), in their book *Cultivating the Spirit: How College Can Enhance Student's Inner Lives*, distinguish the difference between

religiousness and spirituality. Religiousness involves adherence to a set of faith-based beliefs, membership to some kind of group of believers or practitioners and participation in ceremonies or rituals. Spirituality on the other hand deals with a person's values, sense of who they are and where they come from, a sense of meaning and purpose in all aspects of their life, and a sense of connectedness to other people and the surrounding world. The same authors report the findings of their research about spirituality and college students. Based on their findings, they discuss the importance of spiritual development and growth in this age group of college students and the benefits that can be derived from this development and growth stating, "To ignore the spiritual side of students' and faculty's lives is to encourage a kind of fragmentation and lack of authenticity...growing numbers of educators are calling for a more holistic education, point to the need to connect mind and spirit and to return...to the true values of liberal education..." (p. 7)⁴.

Many of these activities on university campuses which incorporate the labyrinth include a component of reflection which is at the heart of transformative learning. Kitchenham discusses that Mezirow expanded his original model of transformative learning which included 10 phases to add a phase which included the importance of "critical self-reflection" or "intentional assessment" (p. 114)¹⁴. In Kitchenham's review of the evolution of Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory, he describes the importance of reflecting in a critical way on one's assumptions in order to investigate the causes and nature of those assumptions which allow one to look within at one's beliefs, values, intentions and feelings¹⁴. When comparing UCO's Central Six Tenants of Transformative Learning, many similarities can be seen in Bigard's documentation of the uses of the labyrinth on campuses of higher education¹⁵. The labyrinth on these campuses has been used for:

- faculty training to promote reflection in addition to personal and professional growth;
- as a component of a wellness program to reduce stress (which is a priority for the Healthy Campus Initiative)¹⁵;
- as a part of a multicultural program to reduce prejudice (which certainly requires critical self-reflection as described by Mezirow);
- as a component of an academic class for students in transition using transition as a theme for the labyrinth workshops¹⁵; using the labyrinth could easily be integrated in to coursework, especially for Success Central or Success Strategies;
- and by other student groups such as the Sexual Aggression Peer Advocates as part of a vigil¹².

Based on these examples, walking the labyrinth can transform individuals through its integration into the educational process¹⁰. In Wang and King's work looking at Mezirow's theory of relativity,

The central focal point and power of transformative learning is **fundamental change** in perspective that transforms the way that an adult understands and interacts with his or her world. **Reflective thinking** is the foundational activity that supports and cultivates such "perspective transformation . (p. 4)³

In 2008, a permanent Labyrinth was installed on the campus of The University of Kent in the UK and is used regularly for workshops by all disciplines as listed in the examples below:

- Applied Professional Practice – Team building; staff development
- Arts Media and Design – Art project; creating labyrinths

- Business Study and Management – Reducing stress and anxiety; MBA program-final projects
- Computer Science – Approaching coursework in a calmer/reflective manner
- Dentistry – Goal setting
- Drama and Dance – Spiritual exploration through movement
- Community Project – Campus community collaborated with residential care facility which included collecting memories of residents
- English and Creative Writing – Building networks and community for a forum of English teachers; creating a series of poetry posters which were used on local buses. Used for prompts for creative writing in classes.
- European Culture and Languages – Students explored the history and symbolism of the labyrinth
- Inter-disciplinary – Conference for educational; used for creation of revised learning strategies; developing values¹⁶.

The use of the labyrinth as a meditative tool has also been shown to reduce anxiety¹⁰. According to Zahourek (2006), the labyrinth has great potential for future study to examine the positive outcomes of this meditative exercise¹⁰. Scandinavian schools use the labyrinth as a tool to foster creativity, problem solving, and teamwork among students¹⁷. In these same schools, the labyrinth has also been used to resolve conflict and provide a means by which to build student and teacher relationships¹⁷.

Utilizing the Labyrinth at UCO

The labyrinth has been available for students for numerous events throughout the past seven years. Using the labyrinth is a way to promote reflection and spiritual wellness among the diverse groups at UCO since the labyrinth is a walking or moving meditation. UCO has a large group of international students, and using the labyrinth can be a way that all students can interact based on their own belief system. A multidisciplinary labyrinth research team has been established at UCO. The initial research project was completed by an undergraduate student as a part of the Student Research Grant process. This pilot study was in collaboration with Epworth Villa where older adults walked the labyrinth weekly; pre and post surveys were administered evaluating stress and quality of life. Due to the small number of participants (an outbreak of flu occurred during the study which significantly decreased participation), specific conclusions could not be reached, although participants reported that they liked the experience because it gave them a time to reflect on their life.

Drs. Murray, Powers, Rudebock and James Allen conducted a pilot research study on campus in 2011 that included 16 staff and faculty who were caregivers. In this study, participants were divided into two groups, one group that began walking the UCO outdoor labyrinth three times a week for six weeks and the second group was delayed in walking, starting after six weeks. Pre, post, and post-post surveys were administered to both groups which looked at job satisfaction and stress. Due to the small sample size, it was difficult to determine trends, but at the end of 12 weeks, participants reported that during their labyrinth walk, they felt calmer and enjoyed having time to reflect on their life. The data for this study is currently being analyzed. As a part of this study, a labyrinth painted on the grass that is 32 ½ feet in diameter located in the Heartland Plaza

garden on the UCO campus. The full walk from the start, to the middle, and back out again is approximately a quarter (1/4) of a mile. The current location of the grass painted labyrinth, in the Heartland Plaza garden, is the proposed location for a permanent labyrinth on campus.

The outdoor labyrinth painted on the grass and the 11-circuit canvas labyrinth in the Kinesiology and Health Studies Department (KHS) are used regularly for campus and community Labyrinth events. Some recent events include:

1. Edmond YMCA Labyrinth Event: “A gift to yourself”. Members and staff of the Edmond YMCA participated for the first Labyrinth Walk at the Y, December 6, 2011. (Collaboration with Emilee Bounds YMCA Health and Wellness Director and KHS.)
2. UCO Campus Gratitude Walk, outdoor labyrinth. Collaboration with UCO Counseling Center, Department of Kinesiology and Health Studies and UCO Wellness Center, November 21, 2011.
3. Multi-disciplinary Grant Research Project – Fall 2010-Spring 2011 included faculty and staff in Kinesiology and Health Studies, Math and Science, and The Wellness Center as well as two student Research Assistants.



Labyrinth Research Team: UCO Labyrinth painted on grass in Heartland Plaza

4. UCO Campus Events: each fall and spring to facilitate campus-wide labyrinth walks in conjunction with the UCO Counseling Center. This labyrinth walk is a part of their Stress Reduction series. After the labyrinth walk that was held on October 6, 2011, Dr. Rudebock and Jan Chapel from the Counseling Center received emails and written comments those who walked the labyrinth at this event: (responses used with permission)
 - “I just wanted to tell you both “THANK YOU” for giving me the opportunity to get out in the fresh air and sunshine today to walk a full eleven circuit Chartres labyrinth during my lunch break.”
 - “I cannot remember the last time I enjoyed lunch time so much! The walk was relaxing, refreshing and energizing. I know I overheard other participants sharing how much they enjoyed their walks, too.”
 - “Is there a way we could have a permanent one placed here on campus?”
 - “In the meantime, I’m planning to use this one as often as possible and hope that you have plenty of paint left!”
5. In April 2011, Epworth Villa WalkFit group came to UCO Campus to walk the Labyrinth. Anna Sherman, a student in The Department of Kinesiology and Health Studies who is involved with the group, explained the following: “The WalkFit program is a grant between the UCO Kinesiology and Health Studies Department and

- Epworth Villa Retirement Community. In helping our senior community to stay engaged in physical activity, the WalkFit grant was given the opportunity in April 2011 to set up a field trip to UCO for participants to walk the labyrinth. After a brief discussion, 9 members of Epworth community ranging in age from 65 - 94 were able to walk the labyrinth and write a reflection about their experience following the walk. Participants had given positive feedback and expressed a need to return again or to bring the labyrinth to Epworth's community. Beginning in November, WalkFit will begin its grant and after speaking with past and new participants, the labyrinth field trip was requested and has become popular among our active community.”
6. Department of Dance – 2011 Kaleidoscope Spring Concert – as a part of a campus collaboration between the Department of Dance, Department of Kinesiology and Health Studies, and the Art Department, the labyrinth was used as inspiration for a number in the Spring Concert.



2011 Spring Kaleidoscope Spring Concert, Mitchell Hall

The labyrinth has also been utilized by the on numerous occasions with the dance students. Tina Kambour, the Assistant Chair in the Dance Department, stated “a permanent labyrinth would be a positive addition to the UCO campus. My students are dance majors, and I have taken them to walk the temporary labyrinths that are periodically set up on campus. The students experienced the calming and centering effects so often associated with labyrinths. In addition, the mystery and patterning of the labyrinth has served as an inspiration for both faculty and students in creating choreography.”

Student Labyrinth Reflections

Students who walk the labyrinth at various events write a reflection about their experience and share these with the facilitator of the event. These reflections are examples of how one makes sense of their experiences through analogies and metaphors. These students have given us their permission to share their experiences and reflections.

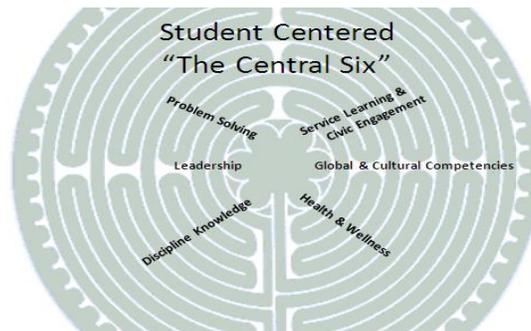
Carol G. Naifeh, R.N. shared “My experiences walking a labyrinth range from ordinary to extraordinary. While some labyrinth walks merely provide quiet respite from a busy day, other walks offer insight and wisdom. Like so many others, I find myself in different roles. Whether as a UCO graduate student, an employee, a caregiver, or a wife

and mother, the labyrinth provides exactly what I need at the moment. The labyrinth helps my mind and body come into balance, allows spiritual discovery, and connects me to inner resources. What wonderful gifts from a simple, winding path!”

Lanice William George was also willing to share, “My first experience of walking through a labyrinth was at BCLI (Broncho Corral Leadership Institute) 2011. Once I began walking the labyrinth, I looked ahead to see where the path would take me. With that I started planning ahead and preparing myself for what is to come. As I was walking, I reminisced about my life and where I would be at in certain ages in my life. I illustrated this by marking different spots on the labyrinth. When having reached the half-way point or the three-fourths point of the path, I felt a sense of peace and contentment. The final ending spot (the middle), was rewarding. I have learned that walking through a labyrinth allowed me to pause and reflect how I was living my day-to-day life.”

Tommy Dunlap reflected, “There is the ability that we have as a species to find patterns and analogies for everything that we do, where we are, and why we are. Just when you believe that you are closest to the goal you really are most distant from it. Never though do I believe that the most enjoyable part is truly enjoyed, it is the memory I believe that we learn to enjoy true satisfaction. The lack of appreciation to see that even the mundane, seemingly less meaningful, are quite possibly the most special for they do not exist without one another and they exist for each other. As well as every interaction has meaning, it has purpose.”

Linking the Labyrinth to the Central Six Areas of Transformative Learning



In the past twenty years, articles, books and conferences have emerged which focus specifically on Transformative Learning. The University of Central Oklahoma created the Central Six Tenants of Transformative Learning to align with the UCO mission of helping students learn which has established UCO as a progressive Metropolitan University. Glisczinski states, “Twenty-first century educators who teach in order to foster illumination and transformation rather than to habituate simple recall will do well by their learners to construct curriculum cycles that engage multiple senses, structure critical reflection, advance rational conceptualization, and require active experimentation” (p. 11)⁸ which describes what has been implemented on the UCO campus.

A permanent 11-circuit Chartres Labyrinth would also facilitate learning and teaching based on the Central Six Tenants of Transformative Learning: Discipline Knowledge, Leadership,

Problem Solving, Service Learning and Civic Engagement, Global and Cultural Competencies, and Health and Wellness⁶.

- **Discipline Knowledge:** The labyrinth could be used in the context of the focus of any course. For example, the labyrinth is used regularly in the course, Leadership and Value Formation. Early in the course, students identify their leadership traits and values, then have the opportunity to walk the labyrinth focused on where these traits and values originated and how the student will foster developing leadership skills.
- **Leadership:** A permanent labyrinth on campus would provide students with a tool to experience a transformative journey centered on learning. The components of leadership: integrity, stewardship, and service, can be points of focus on the students' transformative journey to the center of the labyrinth and back out. According to Astin, Astin, and Lindholm (2011), spiritual growth in students has led to enhanced leadership development³. The labyrinth is a tool that can be used to enhance spiritual growth and thus enhance leadership development not only in students, but in faculty and staff as well. For example, The Labyrinth is a part of the events offered at Broncho Leadership Corral each fall prior to the start of classes. This event is sponsored by Student Affairs, and the Broncho Leadership Corral is a weekend retreat for campus leaders at Canyon Camp in Hinton, OK. The labyrinth is used at this retreat specifically to focus on leadership.
- **Problem Solving:** According to Zahourek (2006), labyrinths have a lot of potential for future study to examine the positive outcomes of this meditative exercise¹⁰. A permanent labyrinth on campus would provide both students and faculty, from a wide range of disciplines, an opportunity to engage in research, scholarly, and creative opportunities to use the labyrinth within those disciplines. These research, scholarly, and creative opportunities have the potential to lead to "products" that could contribute to each of those disciplines in unique, rare, and often unexplored ways. The UCO Multidisciplinary Research team, including faculty from Kinesiology and Health Studies, College of Math and Science and staff from the UCO Wellness Center recently completed a pilot research study using the painted grass labyrinth in May 2011.
- **Service Learning and Civic Engagement:** On April 4, 2011, a Labyrinth walk was facilitated using the 11-circuit Chartres canvas Labyrinth in the KHS Department which was made available walk for the WalkFit group as a celebration of their completion of their class. The WalkFit group consisted of residents from Epworth Villa, a local retirement community, and students from UCO. A permanent labyrinth on campus would provide students with service learning and civic engagement opportunities as evidenced by the WalkFit group. This particular event was just the beginning of all of the different possibilities a permanent labyrinth on campus could provide. The WalkFit group also provided a wonderful example of how collaborations can be promoted between students, faculty, staff, and community partners.
- **Global and Cultural Competencies:** Having access to a permanent labyrinth on campus would also have the potential to provide students with greater cultural awareness, more positive attitudes and perspectives for cultural differences, and greater knowledge of different cultural views and practices. This could provide the student with the skills that are necessary to be able to interact with individuals of different cultures in more productive and meaningful ways. For example, the labyrinth at Central Michigan University has been used for a multicultural program through their counseling center.

The students were asked to “walk the labyrinth as means to process their individual and group experience regarding discrimination”¹⁵.

- **Health and Wellness:** Research areas could include research on stress reduction, increased productivity, academic success, first year student success, student retention, and creativity just to identify a few which relate to overall health and wellness.

Building a permanent labyrinth on campus would also provide students with the skills and abilities to be flexible, adaptable, and creative as well as provide students with a tool to deal with their successes and their failures and foster a sense of humor and self-reliance. All of these skills and abilities are necessary for students to become not only productive citizens of the surrounding community and the state of Oklahoma, but to be productive citizens of the much broader global society as well.

Wellness is composed of many different elements that include physical, spiritual, environmental, emotional, intellectual, and social/interpersonal health and wellbeing. A permanent labyrinth on campus would provide students, faculty, and staff with the opportunity to grow in all of these areas of wellness. For students, growth in all of these areas of health and wellness, could positively impact their academic life while they are here at this university resulting in positive attitudes of achieving academic success and successful degree completion.

Using a labyrinth as a tool for meditation and self-reflection can greatly enhance the spiritual development and growth in students as well as faculty and staff. Spiritual growth, specifically in students, has been shown to enhance academic performance, psychological well-being, leadership, and greater overall satisfaction with their college experience⁴.

According to the University of Central Oklahoma Healthy Campus Initiative, stress management is a priority area on campus¹⁸. A permanent labyrinth on campus would provide students, faculty, and staff with another tool to manage stress. For example, Central Michigan University has used the labyrinth as part of their human resources wellness program as means for stress reduction and self-care for staff members¹¹. Every fall and spring, there is a campus-wide labyrinth walk in conjunction with the UCO Counseling Center as part of their Stress Reduction series. A permanent labyrinth on campus would allow these individuals to continue using the labyrinth on their own time outside of the facilitated walks as a means for reducing stress.

Conclusion

In conclusion, a labyrinth is essentially a unique path of reflection which results in transformative learning experiences for all those who journey along the path. It is a tool that can be used to enhance all aspects of the lives of those individuals on this campus as well as the lives of those in the surrounding communities of this university. Labyrinths exemplify abundant opportunities that exist for students, faculty, and staff in the Central Six areas of Discipline Knowledge Leadership, Problem Solving (Research, Scholarly and Creative Activities), Service Learning and Civic Engagement, Global and Cultural Competencies, and Health and Wellness⁶. There is no doubt that a permanent outdoor labyrinth on campus can be a positive addition to the great student learning environment that already exists on this beautiful campus.

Cost Estimate and Potential Funding and Donation Opportunities

The 11-circuit Chartres paver labyrinth creation is a beautiful work of art, and is the design recommended for the permanent labyrinth on campus; this design can accommodate large groups of people, and since it is made of pavers, is accessible to people with disabilities. The approximate size of the 11-circuit Chartres Labyrinth is 42-44 feet in diameter, and the cost of creating a permanent design varies, but generally can be completed for approximately \$70,000, depending on site preparation, the materials selected, and the group selected to complete installation. The area west of the Y Chapel on the west side of campus is the recommended location.

The cost of building a permanent labyrinth varies depending on the materials used. The 11-circuit paver Chartres design at Mercy Hospital in Oklahoma City, OK, was approximately \$60,000. The possibility exists that some of the materials may be donated, such as concrete from a concrete company or stones from one of the stone yards. These funding opportunities have not been explored as this project is a proposal to the administration to create a permanent labyrinth on campus. The project has been presented to campus facilities and a tentative approval has been received by Mr. Rodolf to move forward with the proposed space west of Y Chapel.

The following is a list of labyrinth companies, the different types of labyrinth options that they offer to customers, cost, and company/builder contact information. Also, names of two companies are provided at the end of this section that can be contacted for potential funding and donation opportunities if the need arises.

Labyrinths In Stone

Commissioned Paver Art: approximately \$70,000

Marty and Debi Kermeen

211 Windham Circle

Yorkville, IL 60560, USA

Email: [http://www.labyrinthbuilder.com/
artisticpaver@sbcglobal.net](http://www.labyrinthbuilder.com/artisticpaver@sbcglobal.net)

Phone: 630-553-5305

- Marty and Debi Kermeen have built two paver labyrinths in Oklahoma, the one in Standing Bear Park in Ponca City, OK, and they created a Labyrinth for the City of Tonkawa.

Labyrinth Enterprises, LLC

Polymer Concrete Labyrinth Cost Range: \$18,000-\$45,000

- Labyrinth Enterprises has developed some proprietary techniques for making affordable, durable, low-maintenance concrete labyrinths that are very popular with institutions. We either stencil or score the pattern, using polymer concrete to color the pattern. It is much stronger than stain or paint. We are not contractors, however, so the client first has a local company do the underlying concrete. (We can supply our suggested guidelines.) Then we come and install the labyrinth pattern. Our fee varies from \$15,000 to \$27,000 depending on the pattern, size, and circumstances. Including the cost of the concrete, the range should be fairly accurate.

Labyrinth Enterprises, LLC (con't)

Granite Resin Cost Range: \$10,000-\$40,000

- This is a material that Labyrinth Enterprises, LLC, began offering in 2008. Made of crushed granite in a resin base, it has no pigments and should not fade. The color is the natural color of the granite itself. Being mostly quartz, granite has crystals in it, and sparkles accordingly. It is available in vivid colors not possible with concrete. Note: We can install a granite labyrinth using your volunteers as workers, reducing the cost by as much as 25%. That means a full-size Chartres labyrinth for around \$30,000. That's quite a bargain.

CutPaver Cost Range: \$30,000-\$120,000

Making labyrinths from two colors of pavers involves a lot of cutting. Both the shape and the background color must be cut, creating double the work. When cut completely by hand, such a Labyrinth is an astounding work of art, worth of a six-figure price tag. Now, however, we have taken advantage of water jet technology to cut some of the pavers. This has brought down the cost of a two-color paver labyrinth to an affordable range. Here at Labyrinth Enterprises we work with Marty Kermeen, the world's most accomplished paver artist, to install our paver labyrinths.

Grass Paver Cost Range: \$10,000-\$20,000

- Grass paving allows for spaces to remain green while still supporting wheelchairs and even vehicles. Click on the photo for more details.

Do-It-Yourself Labyrinths: Soft Path Labyrinths Cost Range: up to \$6,000; Crushed Stone Labyrinth Cost Range: up to \$10,000

- Contact Information: Robert Ferré Phone: Toll free: (800) 873-9873; (314) 517-6543
 - Email: Robert's email: robert@labyrinth-enterprises.com

The Labyrinth Company

Chartres Style Paver Kits - Cost: \$27,000 + \$1900 (freight cost)

- Chartres Replica™ 11 Circuit
 - Size: 39' 0.5" diameter plaza with a 38' 4.25" (91%) precisely scaled model of the original 800 year old labyrinth design from the nave floor at Chartres Cathedral in France
 - Colors: Charcoal, Rose Red, Buff and Granite Gray. Charcoal is recommended for contrast as either the line or field color.
- David Tolzman
 - Email: David@LabyrinthCompany.com

PAXworks

They provide consultation, design, and installation service for outdoor labyrinths.

John E. Ridder

- Emails: info@paxworks.com
- Phone: 317-842-2997

Possible Funding and Donation Opportunities:

Dolese Bros. Co.

20 N.W. 13th Street

P.O. Box 677

Oklahoma City, OK 73101

Phone: (405) 235-2311

Schwarz (M P) Ready Mix

4004 S Kelly Ave

Edmond, OK 73013

Phone: (405) 475-1746

Ray Williams

Crutcho Creek Sod Farms, Oklahoma

<p>Please contact Dr. C. Diane Rudebock, crudebock@uco.edu 974-5216, for additional information and video of university labyrinths</p>
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