

# THE EMPOWERMENT TOOLKIT



## A PERSONAL EMPOWERMENT COURSE FOR HIGH SCHOOL & COLLEGE STUDENTS



Designed and Written by  
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The *Empowerment Toolkit*® is a self-help course designed to help students develop values-driven statements:

- ◆ The **Vision Portfolio**®, statements of values, vision, mission, and *The Element*;
- ◆ **Strategic Goals** based on the four Vision Portfolio® statements; and a
- ◆ **Personal Development Program (PDP)** with a seven-year planning horizon.

The course, designed primarily for high school and college students, consists of seven online lectures and homework assignments delivered over a two-week period.

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**1. Background and Rationale:** Alexander Hamilton Scholars (AHS) was established in 2004. Since that time, the organization has worked with high-achieving, economically challenged, service-oriented young people to help them gain admission to college, graduate and enter the post-college world successfully. Key to the AHS methodology is the *Empowerment Toolkit*®.

The *Empowerment Toolkit*® is based on findings that suggest transition first to college and later to the post-college world is disconnected in ways that for many impede college and early career success. These “disconnects” have four major causes:

- ◆ **Cultural disconnects.** The cultural or critical success factors for high school, college, and the workplace differ, causing unnecessary periods of post-college adjustment.
- ◆ **Socialization.** There are unwritten rules concerning hiring practices that advantage some at the expense of others based on family, academic and experiential factors.
- ◆ **Economic factors.** Economic advantage has enabled many to gain experiences over others which help to ease the adjustment to life in the post-academic world.
- ◆ **Lack of intergenerational understanding.** Students associate with their peer age group until they enter the workplace. This can lead to a lack of knowledge of the experiences and attitudes of older (and younger) generations.

No program can eliminate future uncertainty, but the AHS experience shows by developing values-based, long-range goals designed to mitigate the negative impact of such disconnects, college and early career success follow in a high percentage of the cases. With respect to college success, the measurable results have been significant amongst Hamilton Scholars. The *Empowerment Toolkit*® is the anchor program used to accomplish these goals.

## 2. The Empowerment Toolkit Online Course Program Description:

The program consists of three integrated parts *Inquiry*, *Vision Portfolio*® and the *Personal Development Program*. It is delivered through seven online PowerPoint sessions with supporting text and workbook assignments.

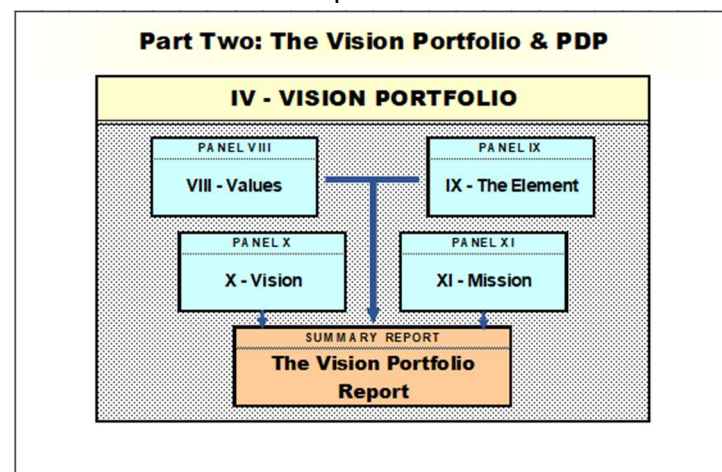
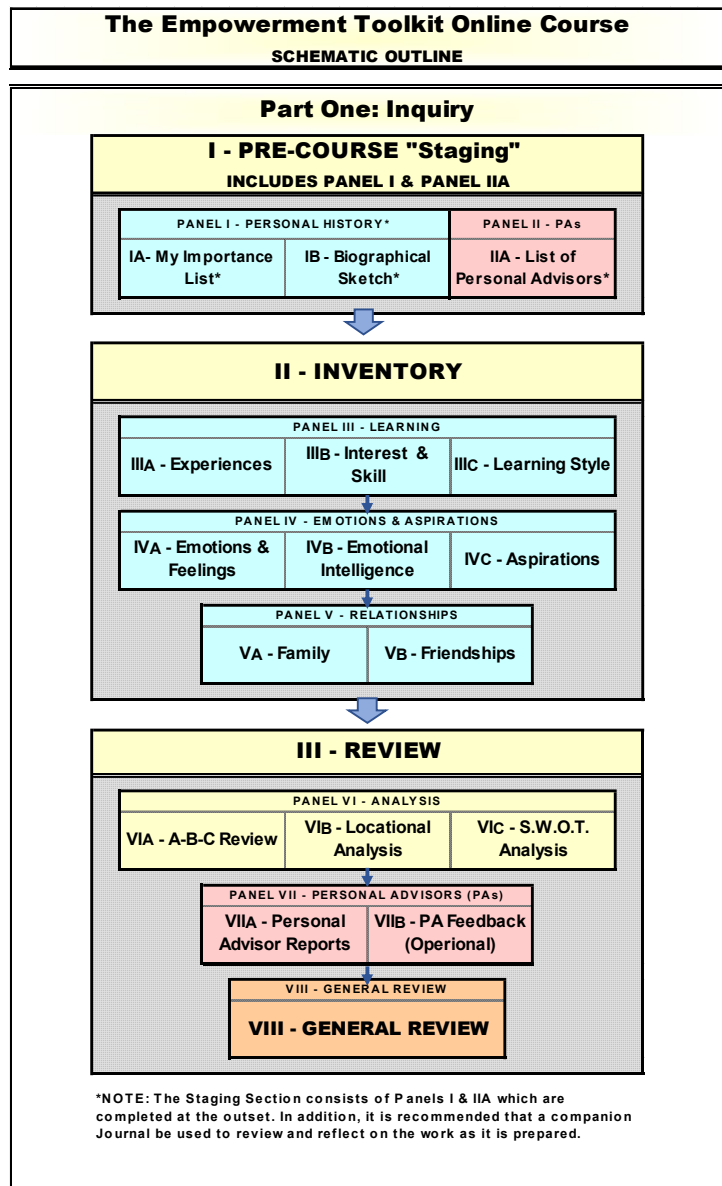
a) *Inquiry* consists of three sections, *Pre-Course "Staging"*, *Inventory*, and *Review*. Each section is further divided into chapters called *panels*. The exhibit at right shows the *Inquiry* sections and panel chapters.

The Pre-Course Staging section includes two panels students are to prepare prior to the first online session. On these panels, students develop a list of things they consider important and identify two or three *Personal Advisors* or *PAs*. *PAs* are friends, family or other trusted individuals who stand ready to critique, council and advise students throughout the Empowerment Toolkit Program.

The fact-finding, *Inventory*, (shown in blue) is concerned with *Learning*, *Emotions & Aspirations*, and *Relationships*. The *Personal History* pre-course work, also shown in blue, is part of the *Inventory* effort.

The final *Inquiry* section brings everything together in the form of a *Review* designed both as a general review of work completed to date and a prelude for the second section, *Vision Portfolio*®. During the *General Review* students will address the reports received from their *Personal Advisors* based on their personal assessments.

b) *Vision Portfolio*®. The *Vision Portfolio*® chapters build and summarize the four personal statements of *Values*, *Vision*, *Mission* and *The Element*. Using the material developed in the first three chapters, these statements answer key questions reviewed on the next page.



◆ **Values:** What are my core principles? And How do I wish to engage the world.

◆ **Vision:** Who do I want to be? And who do I wish to become?

◆ **Mission:** What do I want to do? And what do I want to achieve?

◆ **The Element:** Whom do I wish to associate with? At what activities do I excel? What am I passionate about?

### c) **Personal Development Program.**

The final two sections are concerned with *Strategic Goals* and the *Personal Development Program* or *PDP*.

Strategic goals are of two types, identified by the acronyms *SMART* and *COLA*. The *SMART* goal acronym stands for goals that are *Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound*.

Strategic *SMART* goals are derived from the Personal Mission Statement. The second goal acronym stands for *Context, Observation, Loci or Location, and Agency*. This is a proprietary goal concept that encapsulates vision related goals. The *Elevator Speech* is a 30 to 45 seconds verbal speech. It incorporates summary points from the Vision Portfolio and Strategic goals. Generally, it is designed to answer the question, *Tell me about yourself?*

**3. The Course.** The course consists of a pre-course assignment, six online sessions with homework requirements following each session, and ends with a seventh student sharing session.

### a) **Materials and Requirements.**

◆ Each student must have access to a computer with videoconferencing (Zoom) capability. It is desirable to have access to a printer to print the individual panels, which are designed as fill-in forms.

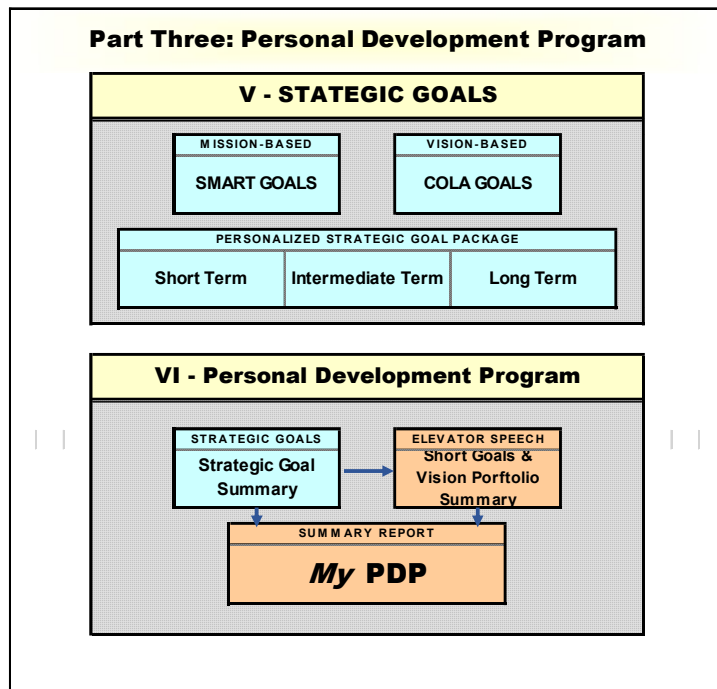
◆ Students may have no more than one unexcused absence from the program and must make up homework assignments for any session missed.

◆ Each online session will be approximately 90 minutes in length.

◆ Course text and panel materials will be mailed and/or emailed. The method of delivery will be determined prior to the beginning of the course.

◆ Homework assignments vary in length. Some students will be able to complete assignments in one or two hours. Others may wish to spend considerable time on one or more of the assignments. Either approach is at the discretion of the student.

◆ Follow-up session. In addition to the optional sharing session, a follow-up session will be planned one year following the completion of the program to review and update attending student's PDP and Vision Portfolio®.



**b) General Course Schedule.** Each course is designed to be taught over a two to three-week period, however, adjustments can be made under certain circumstances.

◆ Course Preview. A 45-minute videoconference designed to review the course and answer aspirant student questions. Previews are scheduled periodically. (Attendance not required.)

◆ Pre-course Materials. Pre-course materials include a nondisclosure statement, a student information form, and a tentative course time schedule. The final time schedule will be finalized during the first online session.

◆ Assignment One (Pre-course). The first assignment is to be completed prior to the first online session. Materials will be emailed and/or mailed once all pre-course materials are received at Hamilton Empowerment. The first assignment is to prepare the *Staging Panels*, discussed above.

◆ Online Session One – Staging Panel Review, Learning Panel Presentation and Discussion: The first session reviews the first homework session and cover the three-part Learning Panel with special emphasis on issues of different categories of intelligence.

◆ Assignment Two. Complete the three-part Learning Panel.

◆ Online Session Two – Discussion of the three-part Emotions & Aspirations Panel.

◆ Assignment Three. Complete the three-part Emotions & Aspirations Panel.

◆ Online Session Three – Complete the Inventory Chapter with a discussion of the two-part Relationships Panel and begin a discussion of the General Review, Analysis Chapter.

◆ Assignment Four. Complete the two-part Relationships Panel and those Analysis sections completed during Online Session Three.

◆ Online Session Four – Discussion of the General Review and the Values Panel of Section II, Vision Portfolio<sup>®</sup>.

◆ Assignment Five. Finish the General Review Panels and the Values Panel.

◆ Online Session Five – Review homework assignment and. Discuss the remaining Vision Portfolio<sup>®</sup> Panels and discuss Strategic Goals.

◆ Assignment Six. Complete the Vision Portfolio<sup>®</sup> and Strategic Goals. (Note: This homework requires may require a greater than normal time commitment.)

◆ Online Session Six – Review homework assignment and. Discuss the Personal Development Plan and Elevator Speech.

◆ Assignment Seven. Complete the Personal Development Plan PDP!

◆ Online Session Seven – Sharing of individual PDPs.

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