

Proposal for Quality Enhancement Plan Project
College of Business/UWF Career Services – Career Strategies Course

Department Names: Career Services and College of Business

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Abstract:

This **one hour elective course**, promoted to COB juniors and seniors, will focus on students' transition from college to their next step out of college. As a partnership with the College of Business and Career Services, the class will base its theories related to the student's 'senior year experience' (Gardner 1997). Primarily, the class will cover topics such as...

- Resume & Professional Correspondence
- Interviewing/Conducting Employer Research (*Mock Interview*)
- Networking (*Network Start-Up: Defined Network Project*)
- Business Etiquette & Dress
- Alternative Career Paths
- Personal Financial Management/Budgets (*Personal Budget Activity*)
- Workplace Diversity
- Goal Setting
- How to "Work a Room"

Some of the content will be presented by the instructor, but there is a significant benefit of inviting guest employers and alumni who work in the business industry. Additionally, depending on the class size and objectives of students, certain topics could be substituted such as...

- Applying to graduate school
- Building a portfolio
- The Business Lunch
- Personal Statements & Graduate Admissions Essays
- Balancing Life and Career
- Career Transitions – Starting Anew is not Starting Over

Project Rationale:

Offering a career course within the College of Business will allow students to develop the tools and strategies necessary for promoting themselves in their careers. Career Services offices and Career Centers across the country offer career education and development courses that assist in enhancing students' career awareness. Classes may focus on assisting students in major or career selection or instructing students in all of the mechanics of the job search and preparation for life after college. A great deal of research exists for the efficacy of career development courses. While career choice will not be the main focus of the course, Ware (1981) evaluated a career course for upper-level psychology and found that 77 percent said that the lectures on graduate school application processes helped with their career choices. 97 percent of the students felt like they improved their own interviewing skills. 84 percent of the students surveyed considered the opportunity to

practice interviewing through the class to be a valuable learning opportunity. Raphael (2005) stated that “...overwhelming evidence shows that career courses have a positive impact on the cognitive functioning of students and the students’ outcomes in college.” Delaware Valley College offers a professional development seminar course to help students manage their transition from college to career and revealed that 95 percent of students that have taken the course found it “definitely informative” (Letourneau 2002). Folsom and Reardon (2001) reviewed 38 studies of career courses that focused on career thoughts, career decision-making skills, career decidedness, and vocational identity, resulting in 90 percent reporting positive gains in the measured outcomes.

Relationship to QEP Goals

A successful next step out of college could be linked directly to effective communication. For instance, experts illustrate that 75% of the time, people find positions through networking. Methods for building a professional and social network will be illustrated and practiced throughout the class. Developing job search and graduate school written communications like resumes, cover letters, reference pages, thank you notes, personal statements, and email correspondence are crucial to landing an interview. With respect with the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), students in this course will be heavily engaged in the communication domain, which includes the all modes of “presenting and demonstrating information and ideas.”

The proposed course offers students engagement in active learning, a cornerstone highlighted by the university’s QEP. The definition that is outlined in the QEP as active learning involves “students in doing things and thinking about what they are doing” (Bonwell & Eison, 2003, p. 2). For instance, a required practice or “mock” interview would be conducted by career services staff or volunteer employers as long as the class size allows. Through this process, students will engage in practice and reinforcement.

The proposed course will also support the QEP’s project management domain. Throughout the course students will be planning, developing, presenting, and evaluating various deliverable correspondence that will be compiled as a portfolio. The course, individual assignments, and portfolio, will again provide students an active learning opportunity while exploring the career planning process.

In addition, regarding the concept of community of learners as outlined by the QEP, students will be engaged in networking opportunities and informational interviewing in and outside the classroom through defined networking projects. John Gardner, author of senior year experience, 1997, echoes the processes of engaging alumni and community members as important for senior pedagogy. Students will present the results of the networking event in class.

Assessment Plan for Course:

Specific projects in the course allow for quality assessment. Not all topics in the course can be assessed with respect to Student Learning Outcomes (SLO). Below are the proposed assessment of specific topics and projects and an overall assessment plan.

Outcome/Class Segment	Steps for Assessment
<i>Resumes</i> - Students will be able to identify the primary purpose and critical parts of the resume. Students will develop a resume that is appropriate for their career area and highlights their skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Class instruction, followed by short quiz 2. Students identify mistakes in sample resume in groups 3. Students complete resume 4. Evaluation of resume through student shared rubric by instructor or Career Services professional
<i>Cover Letters</i> - Students will be able to identify the critical parts of the cover letter and express appropriate strategies for cover letter development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Class instruction, followed by short quiz 2. Students create sample cover letter 3. Evaluation through student shared rubric by instructor or Career Services professional

<i>Interviews-</i> Students will be able to communicate strengths and unique skills during a mock interview. Students will demonstrate proper interview attire in a mock interview	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Class instruction 2. Participate in scheduled mock interview with instructor, career services professional, or alumni/employer volunteer 3. Students' performance in mock interview is evaluated with student shared rubric by instructor or Career Services professional
<i>Networking-</i> Students will be able to demonstrate appropriate networking strategies in the networking project	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Class Instruction and networking methods and project clearly defined 2. Student is evaluated with rubric by instructor during student reflection presentation
Overall Course Assessment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. UWF Campus-designed assessment will be given 2. Pre-test/Post-test self-disclosure of current knowledge of topics would be utilized (Likert Scale)

Plan for Formative Assessment of the Project:

Formative assessment will occur throughout the span of the class. The instructor, career services professionals, and volunteer alumni and employers will informally provide feedback. Throughout the class, students will be asked to discuss and reflect upon the direction of specific projects and class assignments.

Information Dessimination Plan:

This information along with data collected from the formal assessment will be used by the instructor, the College of Business, and Career Services to revise the course for future years. The results of this course will also be submitted for presentation at various campus meetings in addition to regional and national professional association meetings... Ideas for dessimination may include but not be limited to...

- The UWF Student Affairs Symposium
- The National Association of Colleges and Employers
- The Southeastern Association of Colleges and Employers
- Florida Career Centers
- Florida Career Professionals Association

The College of Business Career Course could serve as a pilot project for other divisions, colleges, and departments at UWF. For example, the College of Professional Studies may wish to develop a course similar to this in their Engineering curriculum.

Resources Needed:

The most crucial resource needed in this course project is time. UWF Career Services has an extreme interest in facilitating this course. However, if a Career Services professional teaches the course, he or she will be continually responsible for lost time. It is estimated that 15 – 25 hrs per week would be devoted to this course. Incorporating a Graduate Assistant in this practice is crucial to the delivery of this course. A GA could assist in some of the delivery, planning, and networking and mock interview projects. A GA would also ease the loss of time of the professional staff member and could participate in walk-in hours, resume critiques, and career services workshops that are services of the department. The GA will have outlined projects and feedback will be given in the form of semester performance reviews.

The budget below reflects one course offering with a course size of 25 students. Costs of delivering the course will be reduced because we hope to use eLearning D2L.

Budget Item	Description	Unit Cost	Total Item Cost
<i>Grad Assistant</i>	1 grad assistant for one year (16 weeks in the Fall, 16 weeks in the Spring, and 14 weeks in the summer at \$10.25 an hour for 10 hours a week.		\$4715.00
<i>Printing Materials</i>	Some booklets and instructional materials will be printed. Elearning D2L will be used, which will reduce some of the cost of printing.	\$50 - \$75	\$50 - \$75
<i>Text</i>	Instructor text materials may require cost, depending on supplier. A description of the proposed text is attached.	\$50	\$50

Scenarios for Course Delivery:

The method of delivery of this course has been explored. In the state of Florida, University of Florida has an upper division course in the college of business focused on Career and Life Planning. As defined, the course is a systematically designed course based on the cognitive information processing theory for career problem solving and decision making. The course is delivered via modularized multi-media instructional materials. The course is designed to inform students about career planning and management interventions and to accommodate students at different levels of decidedness about their career aspirations. Lectures, electronic media, computer-based career guidance systems, outside projects and readings constitute a sample of the techniques used to deliver instruction in the course.

Especially for the first year that this course is delivered, there is a need for face-to-face and delivering entirely online will not fully meet the objectives of this class as discussed. Due to the rationale and abstract presented above, it is suggested that all or a majority of the course be offered face-to-face in order to be optimal. Active learning is key to this course, and unlike the courses presented at other institutions, career engagement rather than career assessment is a focus. Once the course has been established, we intend to explore ways to extend accessibility to all UWF campuses through technology such as D2L or videoconferencing.

As a part of the class creation, a submission has begun with submitting Form 990 and the CCR.

References

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