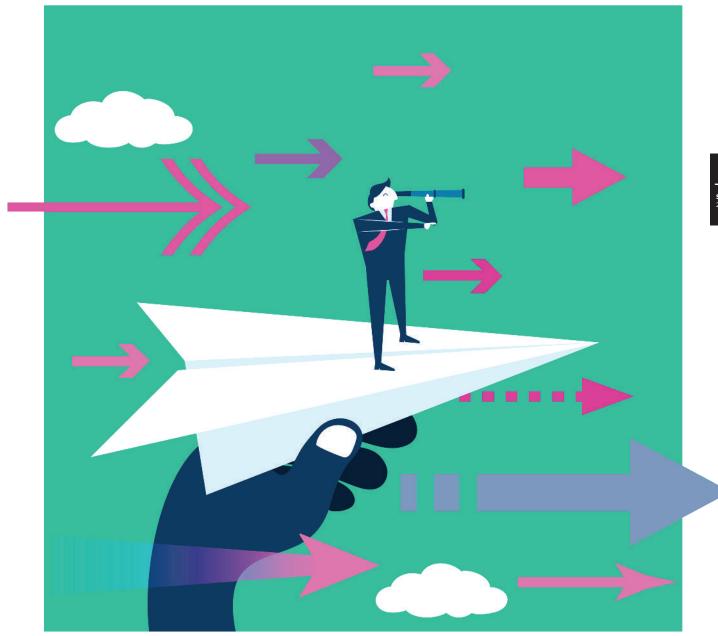# EXPERIENCE

PRACTICE + THEORY

FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Friends and Colleagues —

Many years ago, way back in the early 2000s, I was preparing to teach my very first class at the University of Cincinnati — a course titled *Introduction to Interpersonal Communication*. Prior to that first day, many hours were spent preparing lectures and assessments, thinking about ways to engage students. I simply wanted to **be ready** for that first day of school. With shirt and tie laid-out neatly on the dresser, immaculately polished shoes on the floor, I didn't sleep a wink that night prior.

Arriving to campus about two hours early, I freshly cleaned the chalkboard, writing "Instructor Sharp" in big, carefully written letters. I reviewed my notes, checked the course roster, reviewed my notes again, paced back-and-forth in front of the room, and waited for students to trickle into the room. Eventually, I sat down *on* (not *at*) the desk (because cool teachers sit *on* the desk and I desperately wanted to be one).

Everything was ready to go.

Several more minutes must have passed as one of my mentors, a seasoned colleague in the department, walked into the classroom, observed me sitting alone, and asked, "where are your students?" Looking at my watch, I started to panic because class should have already started. **Where were my students?!** Were all of my students out sick? Did I come on the wrong day or at the wrong time? Nope. I had gone to the wrong classroom.

Now what?

I'm sitting in an empty classroom with meticulously prepared material to deliver, but no one to deliver it to. After quickly packing-up my belongings, I raced down the hallway to the other side of the building, and ran into the room filled with freshman and sophomore students, all staring back at me, a seemingly unprepared, sweaty, nervous college instructor.
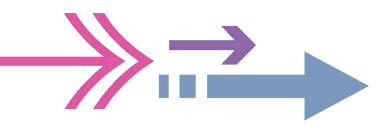
So, what did I do?

I was honest with the students, telling them that I had gone to the wrong classroom. And then I used that opportunity to teach an important lesson about one of the subjects in the class — the primacy effect — the importance of first impressions. I have never gone to the wrong classroom again but have revisited and shared that lesson in many, many course lectures since.

Something important was learned that day, something that I have internalized and have used to inform what I do both inside and outside of the classroom.

I learned to improvise, to build the airplane while flying it.

That first-day-of-teaching scramble has something important to say about Experiential Learning, I think, something that may resonate with you. That is, when real and deep learning occurs for our students, we are always adjusting to the changing milieu. We are reflecting upon our actions and acting upon our reflections,

what Donald Schön wrote about in *The Reflective Practitioner*. We are engaged in an iterative process, ever-adapting to a shifting context, often with multiple stakeholders, each with a perpetually intersecting list of needs, hopes, desires, and plans. And our work, the work of experiential learning thinkers and doers, is located in the messy cockpit of that airborne plane.

Can this messiness be frustrating, exhausting, and frightening? Of course, it can be. Perhaps that frustrating messiness is at the heart of what John Dewey termed a *Felt Difficulty*. Even when the airplane is off-the-ground, it is often clunky, slow, and full of holes that are created as quickly as we fill them. More often than not, we need co-pilots for our journey, or at least a really good air traffic control team. Other times we need to be grounded for a bit to get some rest. Every time, however, we look forward to flying again.

As was mentioned in the last issue's letter from the editor, we have set-out to produce a publication that is rich and accessible. We have worked towards reducing the divide between teachers and learners and between campuses and communities. We have strived to help dissolve the false dichotomy between practice and theory, and we have championed traditional forms of experiential learning while also spotlighting new and innovative forms.

This flight crew's hope is that *Experience* Magazine reflects the ever-shifting flight patterns, adaptive maneuvers, and changing landscapes that we travel across — lessons learned and lessons taught — in the field of experiential education. This issue will share untold stories from the field that invite the curious to pay attention and for scholars, practitioners, teachers, and learners — those inside and outside of the academy — to look inward, look outward, look upward, and, even sometimes, look down.

To say this more simply, the stories you'll find in the pages of this publication are illustrative of the ever-evolving complexity of the incomplete aircraft we call *Experiential Learning*.

Keep building, and safe travels.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Sharp

Michael J. Sharp, Editor

EXPERIENCE

PRACTICE + THEORY

EXPERIENCE

PRACTICE + THEORY

EDITORIAL **TEAM**

FIRST-YEAR INTERNSHIPS: DRIVING IMPACTFUL OUTCOMES

Eric Hall and Cathy Butler // Endicott College

Research has consistently demonstrated the value-added that internships provide students in finding a position after graduating, developing critical professional competencies, and establishing career direction and satisfaction. According to LookSharp's 2016 State of Millennial Hiring Report, graduates with three or more internships are more likely to be employed full-time in a professional position and much less likely to be unemployed (LookSharp, "State of Millennial Hiring" 2016). In the same report, 81.1% of students responded that internships helped them tweak their career choices either significantly (34.8%) or by slightly changing the focus of their classes/majors (46.3%). The ability to refocus career goals is likely one of the reasons why students with internship experience are more likely to start in jobs that meet or exceed expectations (LookSharp, "State of Millennial Hiring", 2016).

Employer responses to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) 2016 Internship and Co-Op Report, indicate that converting students who have taken part in an internship or co-op program into full-time employees is a primary goal for most experiential learning programs (NACE, "Internship & Co-op Report", 2016). "Falling Short? College Learning and Career Success" a survey conducted by Hart Research Associates in conjunction with The American Association of Colleges and Universities, found that 73% of employer respondents think that requiring college students to complete a significant applied learning project before graduation would improve the quality of their preparation for careers (Hart Research Associates, "Falling Short? College Learning and Career Success, 2015). While businesses should not set the terms for college learning, they continue to be an important partner in student success whose ideas and voice should be considered to help graduates reach their destinations. Nearly all employers in the Hart survey said they would be more likely to consider hiring a recent college graduate who had completed an internship or apprenticeship, with three in five (60%) indicating that their company would be much more likely to consider that candidate (Hart Research Associates, "Falling Short? College Learning and Career Success" 2015).

The significant, validated benefits of applied learning, coupled with a desire among college and university career services and experiential education professionals to engage students early on in the career development process, has led to a heightened interest in exploring and implementing first-year internships. Endicott's unique program has had a freshman internship requirement for all undergraduates since its inception. This article will provide an introduction to Endicott's experiential education model and explore Endicott's required first-year internships, highlighting coursework and a multi-pronged approach that fosters self-awareness and professional skill development from day one. Outcomes such as career readiness/planning and on-time graduation will be featured as well as programmatic challenges and implementation strategies on fostering a required first-year internship on your campus.

THE ENDICOTT INTERNSHIP MODEL

Internships have been a vital component of the academic experience at Endicott College since the institution's beginnings in 1939. The College founders believed in a philosophy of "learning by doing," a perspective that continues to shape the curriculum, in which students prepare for their future careers by integrating theory and practice in all of their studies. Through their internship experiences students are better prepared to apply knowledge within a particular discipline, explore career options through field experiences, and develop professional competencies. Graduates leave Endicott with both their diplomas and robust résumés as a result of comprehensive programming integrating academic coursework and professional application across all majors from

freshman to senior year. Students are required to undertake three internships: two 120-hour internships during the January or summer break of the freshman and sophomore years and a full-semester internship during the fall of the senior year.

Comprehensive career preparation is central to the success and uniqueness of Endicott's internship program. Internship and career preparation classes support the internship and ultimately the employment search process and a student's integration into the work environment of the internship site. Each student is assigned an internship coordinator who is based in an academic department, understands the theoretical and professional aspects of a student's major, assists in the search process, and approves internship proposals once a site has been secured.

During the fall semester, first- and second-year students complete class sessions and assignments designed to help prepare them for the internship experience. These assignments include the development of a resume/LinkedIn profile and a target list of potential internship sites. An internship strategies course during the junior year prepares students for the full-semester, twelve-credit senior internship by helping them refine their resumes, practice interviewing techniques, and develop networking skills. The internships are overseen by qualified faculty in collaboration with site supervisors. Students are at their sites full-time, four days per week and participate in weekly on-campus seminars designed to support the internship experience.

THE FIRST YEAR INTERNSHIP

As previously mentioned, all Endicott students are required to complete an internship consisting of 120 hours and three credits in the winter or summer of their freshman year. Prior to heading into the field, first-year students participate in a pre-internship seminar class, INT 010, taught by their respective Internship Coordinator. The classes are held both online and in person a minimum of once per month depending on the Coordinator's requirements, allowing for important dialogue among peers. Coordinators host a minimum of five sessions throughout the semester, with the goal of fostering group collaboration, reflection and support. The Internship and Career Center also partners with employers and alumni to offer dynamic programming to support professional development.

A variety of topics and assignments designed to prepare students for their experiences are covered by the Internship Coordinator: resume and cover letter development, instructions for using the online recruitment platform EC Launch, effective interviewing and networking techniques, social media tips, and internship search strategies. The classroom discussions are supplemented with individual meetings with the student's Internship Coordinator to monitor progress and provide guidance and advice. This high-touch approach ensures students stay on track and builds a strong relationship with a member of the College faculty that they will be collaborating with over the course of their four years.

Upon identifying an internship site and, deciding if they will complete the experience in the winter or summer, students submit an Internship proposal form for approval by their Internship Coordinator. During the approval process, the Coordinator reviews the described job duties and vets the site through either a site visit or conversation depending on distance. The Coordinator then sends a confirmation letter to the site that describes the program goals and the supervisor's, student's, and College's roles and responsibilities.

At the start of the internship, the students develop learning objectives for the internships with input from their site supervisors and submit the documents online. During the 120-hour internship, students are required to complete reflective essay assignments and weekly time sheets to account for their work. Students update their resumes at the conclusion of the internship to include their most recent experiences. Each supervisor is required to complete an online evaluation of the student's performance near the end of the internship field-experience which impacts the student's final grade. We ask that site supervisors discuss this feedback with students so that it can be used as a learning opportunity. Upon returning to the College, all students attend group conferences in which instructors and students discuss experiences and field-related trends. Individual conferences with faculty advisors affords students an opportunity to reaffirm their career expectations. This reflective process allows for maximum personal and professional growth.

Endicott College does not stipulate that interns have to be paid for their work, recognizing the inherent personal and professional value to their short- and long-term development. The primary purpose of the internship and the pre-internship seminar, which is a required part of the academic curriculum, is to have students develop key competencies, explore majors and test career paths and help create meaning in their work. Compensation is a matter left entirely to the supervisor and the intern.

CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITY & OUTCOMES

The implementation and execution of a required first-year internship program is not without its challenges. Employers can often be reluctant to bring in freshmen for internships, making educating organizations about Endicott's pre-internship preparation and site supervisor requirements paramount. The College has found the greater understanding employers have of the model, the more willing they are to engage with the institution to host an intern.

Student anxiety and feelings of being overwhelmed can occur. In addition to starting their first year of college and getting acclimated to the academic and social life, students are being asked to secure internships as early as the winter. Building a strong relationship with an Internship Coordinator, seeking out assistance and resources at the Internship and Career Center to gain career perspective, and using a robust collection of data to review and connect with previous successful peers and sites provides encouragement and can alleviate angst.

Similarly, students can express a lack of confidence in finding an internship opportunity and reservations about the process, highlighting the importance of having an accessible database containing historical internship data on sites and a mechanism to search and apply for internships. Endicott utilizes an internal system called COAST to house information on completed internships, allowing students to search prior experiences and feel much more comfortable knowing those who came before them were successful in landing an internship. EC Launch, Endicott's online recruitment platform, connects students to a vast network of internships and full-time jobs across the nation.

OUTCOMES

By all measures, the first-year internship model has been incredibly effective in develop-ing young professionals, bolstering career confidence and preparing them for success upon graduation. The National Association of Colleges and Employers recently identified seven competencies associated with career readiness, incorporating feedback from college career services and HR/staffing professionals:

- critical thinking/problem solving
- oral/written communication
- teamwork/collaboration
- information technology application
- leadership
- professionalism/work ethic, and
- career management
  (NACE, "Career Readiness Defined", 2015).

Upon comparing Endicott's site supervisor evaluation with NACE's career readiness competencies, the College was pleased to see that site supervisors were already being asked to assess students in these critical areas. Rating students on a seven point scale, with seven equaling an excellent score, first-year Endicott interns consistently performed well in their positions, a testament to the preparation they receive and the growth they experience in the field. Some examples of evaluated competencies/areas and the average scores across all freshmen are as follows:

- *Communicates ideas and concepts clearly in writing:* 5.28
- *Supports and contributes to a team atmosphere:* 6.33
- *Demonstrates ability to think critically and apply analytical processes to solve problems:* 5.78
- *Dress and appearance are appropriate for this organization:* 6.65

Internship Coordinators incorporate this vital supervisor feedback into the pre-internship seminar, adjusting and updating content in any areas where interns underperformed to ensure students are meeting the needs and expectations of employers when entering the workplace.

With college student debt a critical national issue, incorporating a required internship program in the curriculum that allows students to explore careers early and often can be a pathway to on-time graduation and help lessen the financial burden on graduates. The

most recent data provided by Endicott's Office of Institutional Research shows that the median time to degree completion for Endicott's bachelor-degree recipients who began as first-time students in 2009 is 45.3 months (3.77 years); 94% of the students completed their degree in 48 months or less. The College attributes this to the internship program. By affording students an opportunity to discover their passions, develop a professional skill set, network, and gain valuable experience, they are ready to graduate with confidence in their career direction and job offers in hand.

Each year, the Career Center surveys the May graduating class of undergraduates. The data collected is compiled and disseminated annually in the Post-Graduation Report, which examines the effectiveness of the internship program by assessing career outcome variables including the percentage of students employed/pursuing graduate school, the percentage employed through a former internship site or internship contact, and the impact their internship had on their success in their first-year of employment.

Endicott's data shows that as a result of their internship experiences, students have a consistently high rate of positive career outcomes, which are measured using the National Association of Colleges and Employers criteria: full-time/part-time employment, voluntary and military service, and enrollment in graduate school. Highlighting Endicott's most recent post-graduate report, the overall career outcomes rate for 2016 graduates was 99%

with 75% employed full time and 27% in graduate school. Furthermore, the majority of students consistently report former internship sites/internship site contacts (53 %) as the primary methods of securing full-time employment within one year of graduation. On average, 90% of graduates report employment within their fields of study, showing how important internships are in validating major choice. In addition, graduates (85%) indicate that their internships had an impact on their successes in their first year of employment.

RECOMMENDATIONS & STRATEGIES

With all of Endicott's outcome data pointing to the positive impact a first-year internship has on student success, what are strategies/steps an institution can take to implement a successful required freshman internship program on their own campus? Based on Endicott's long history and commitment to experiential education in the first-year and throughout a student's college career, one of the key elements is that support for an internship program must come from the top. Endicott's administration recognizes the value that experiential education has at the College, and they provide the program with the resources needed to thrive. The importance of internships permeates the campus.

Having the internships be part of the academic curriculum weights the experience and adds another layer of personal responsibility for the students, who know that it is required for graduation and will be graded. Employer buy-in is critical. Fostering an understanding of the
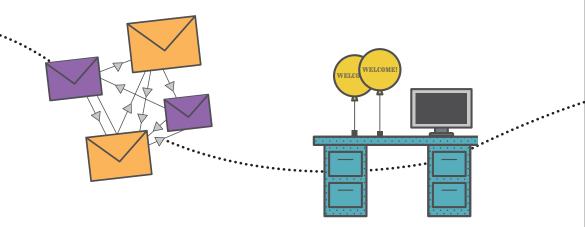
requirements of the program and a site supervisor's role leads to dynamic learning outcomes and competency development and a willingness to host students for internships at each stage of the process. Establishing a course focused on professional preparation prior to a student's field experience, provides interns with an advantage in both applying to positions and starting at the workplace as employers have to invest less time in training.

Finally, it is helpful to take advantage of the outcomes and statistics collected by Endicott and other institutions with first-year internship programs in place. Sharing their impact with administration, faculty and staff is instrumental in creating consensus and value around implementing a similar program and painting a picture of what could be.

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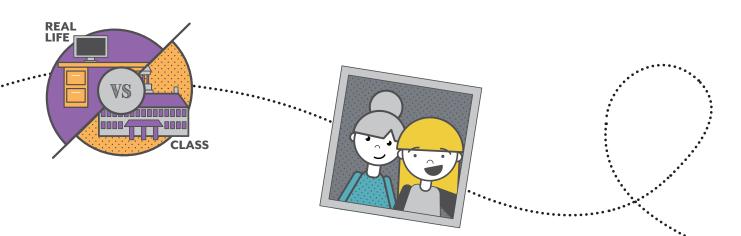
SO, YOU WANT TO HIRE AN INTERN OR CO-OP?

A Collective "Best Practice" Journey

AARON BRADLEY AND CINDY DAMSCHRODER // **UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI**
Illustrations courtesy of Mackenna Dewey, University of Cincinnati, Class of 2016

Over the course of the 2014–2015 and 2015–2016 academic years, two faculty from the University of Cincinnati's Experience-Based Learning and Career Education division conducted a research project with the aim of identifying best practices for starting or growing an internship or co-op program for both employers and educators. After conducting a series of focus groups and workshops with 65 co-op and internship employers from more than 15 unique industry clusters and 50 university faculty and staff representing 24 unique institutions, Professors Aaron Bradley and Cindy Damschroder synthesized more than 1250 qualitative responses and extracted key insights. The results revealed pain points for both parties, opportunities to break down barriers and build bridges, and actionable next steps ranging from quick wins to long-term program development opportunities. These findings informed the creation of two infographic styled "quick start guides" — one targeting potential co-op or internship employers, and one for the educational institutions. This article will discuss and expand upon key findings and insights from the research and offer suggestions for actionable implementation.

INTRODUCTION

Cooperative education and internships are, by definition, an immersion in the practice of workplace. At the University of Cincinnati, there is a separate definition of the terms cooperative education and internship that are needed to understand why these terms are used as differing and not interchangeable terms. We define cooperative education (co-op) programs as full-time (35+ hours per week), paid, supervised, career-relevant experiences for students, with ongoing rotations of semesters or quarters dedicated to school or work. Internships are part or full-time, supervised career-relevant experiences for students, often completed while simultaneously taking classes. These experiences may be paid, or unpaid if working for a non-profit organization.

Both experiences combine learning and professional work experience as "an effective form of teaching." According to Wynd, "teaching methods that actively engage students with the learning process can enhance their development" (1989). This approach, which has been described as experiential learning (Montgomery & Van Dyke, 1993), allows students to "become active participants in their own education" (Toncar & Cudmore, 2000) (Yiu & Law, 377). The nature of experiential learning is such that students pursue this portion of their education while off campus in the environment of a discipline-specific workplace.

Professors Aaron Bradley and Cindy Damschroder, colleagues in the Division of Experienced-Based Learning and Career Education, applied for and received a Center for Cooperative Education Research and Innovation (CERI) grant in 2014 and conducted a series of focus groups and workshops with 65 co-op and internship employers from more than 15 unique industry clusters and 50 university faculty and staff representing 24 unique institutions. The resulting research yielded 1250 qualitative responses and extracted key insights regarding opportunities to improve the experience for all parties engaged with educating students in the co-op 'triad'— employers, faculty, and staff.

This article begins with the framework for this gathered research, including an overview of the common theories of learning for students engaged in cooperative education and/or internships. These theories distill the reflective practice between student and any number of stakeholders: faculty, advisor, or employer.

Building upon the theoretical framework of reflective learning, the second section of this article is dedicated to employer stakeholders and the value of relationship building. Areas such as the establishment and maintenance of relational and educational relationships versus transactional and less personal relationships are covered in addition to general guidelines for systemic processes.

The remainder of the article concentrates on dissemination of information gathered as a result of the focus groups and workshops. The original intention of this research project was to facilitate dialogue and train prospective and/or existing employer partners on best practices with topics for discussion focusing heavily on brand building on campus, interviewing techniques, and onboarding methods. The results were both prescriptive and surprising, and therefore worthy of unpacking further within this established context.

THEORIES OF LEARNING FOR STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

In academic settings, those who study learning theories generally accept that learning can happen in a variety of contexts, and therefore locations. While some institutions award academic credit for co-ops and internships; others recognize these experiences on a student's transcript without awarding or attaching credit hours to them, as professional licensure in a particular field might be jeopardized. Also understood is the idea that students look forward to working and learning in new environments. However, this anticipation is often coupled with anxiety: students are often afraid of failure, their ability (or inability) to fit into their environment, and whether or not they have the knowledge necessary to succeed and thrive. Research states that "the quality of the learning process during internship depends on how mentors arrange the learning context. From the education literature, that is in line with Putnam and Borko (2000), who find interactions with people to be the major determinants in what is learned and how something is learned" (Wong, 517).

When examining the multiple ways students can learn experientially during a work-based learning assignment, the two most common are to examine the single event learning experience or the learning experience as part of a greater whole in comparison to other work-based learning or classroom assignments "Perhaps David Kolb (1984) is cited most often in experiential education research as a theorist whose learning cycle helps researchers define their projects, interpret their data, or justify their programs. . . Very briefly, Kolb argued that in any effective learning experience, four stages can be discerned: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation" (Linn et al, 14). The learner completes an experience, reflects on that experience, is able to explain their observations, and use those observations to set direction for the next course of action which sets the cycle in motion again. This cycle of self-reflection for a student requires that s/he moves through all four phases during a single work-based learning experience, making this theory attractive for many in the field of experiential learning.

When grappling with learning as an active process across a span of time, the work of theorist Jean Piaget (1963, 1972) in the field of epistemology sets the standard. This work revealed that humans create meaning in qualitatively different ways as they mature. Simply stated, "it is not just that our students know less than we do, rather they center on different dimensions of the learning environment than we might think they do . . . It can be reassuring to read that students change in predictable ways in their thinking about where knowledge comes from, how it is acquired, what role others play in their education, and how to make difficult decisions in ambiguous circumstances" (Linn et al, 19). Application of this theory works well when instructing a student either across multiple co-op or internship semesters or even empowering a student to connect the theory of the academic classroom to the practice of the workplace.

The work-based learning experience is no longer examined in isolation — it is examined in context to its curricular surroundings. When this occurs, the role of the employer partner as off-campus educator is a natural fit in the student's curriculum.

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT — MAKE IT RELATIONAL, NOT TRANSACTIONAL

Faculty or advisors who work with internship and/or co-op students rely on healthy relationships with their employer network. What exactly does this mean? Just as it takes time to create an effective teaching pedagogy or advising practice for working with students, the same time and attention should be paid to the other part of the "triad" (university, students, employers). "The tripartite benefits of a formal internship, according to Patterson (1999), are apparent: The students gain real world experience, the academic program enhances its reputation, and employers have an improved pool of student applicants from which to draw when recruiting" (Yiu & Law, 381). Without healthy employer relationships — the university does not maintain a co-op or internship position resulting in a loss to the student. According to Scott Weighart, "ten minutes of time at a firm visit is usually worth more than one hour of trying to understand the job over the phone. You can get a pretty quick read on all kinds of things: manager style, attire, work environment, pace, appropriateness of space for a student employee, ease of commute, and so on" (334). Visiting a company can also be proactive in avoiding future issues as it establishes clear expectations and a line of communication. "You are [ultimately] improving your ability to make sure students are choosing the most appropriate jobs to pursue, while also helping employers understand how to best hire and mentor young professionals" (334).

> Just as it takes time to create an effective teaching pedagogy or advising practice for working with students, the same time and attention should be paid to the other part of the "triad" (university, students, employers).

As many employer partners are also alumni of your institution, they are interested in their work-based learning assignments relating directly to or even influencing curricular change. Engaging employer partners in a discussion of how their co-op or internship creates relevant integrative learning is beneficial to both. Questions such as: How does this job tie back to the academic curriculum? How would you describe the main learning opportunities of the position? What technical competencies are focused on in this position and how do these transfer back to the curriculum? Are there skills necessary for this position that fall outside of the current curriculum and how might a bridge be created to close this gap between academia and industry?

A faculty or campus advisor is in many ways an unpaid consultant to the area of industry they work with. They are helping their employer partners create meaningful work-integrated learning experiences, sharing best practices they have witnessed at other similar industry employers, and developing a keen sense of who hires for what type of job. This knowledge helps the faculty/advisor instruct their students wisely on the type of jobs within their industry cluster and the "fitness" level

for the student and how to best prepare for interviews. This relationship building with employer partners also helps create an open dialogue whenever the occasional performance problem of a student might surface in the workplace. Issues can usually be resolved more quickly and openly without creating long-term damage to the overall relationship with the company. In addition, when economic hard times occur, a deep commitment to the active partnership of work-based learning at your institution will carry further significance to your employer partners versus a perceived feeling that the institution was doing them a favor by allowing them to hire their students.

GRANT-RELATED FOCUS GROUPS — AN OVERVIEW

Professors Bradley and Damschroder held four workshops in four cities across Ohio; Cincinnati, Columbus, Cleveland, and Toledo. The initial plan for these workshops was a facilitation of dialogue with existing and prospective co-op and/or internship employer partners, supplemented with training "tips" for best practices brought to light through the discussions and personal experiences. With this strategy in mind, a presentation deck was built for discussion topics centering around brand building on campus, interviewing techniques, and onboarding methods. When more than 75 attendees registered for the first workshop, spanning a variety of industry sectors and discipline hiring needs, this approach still seemed appropriate. However, what unfolded during the first half-day session opened the door to a far richer dialogue; nearly 30% of the attendees were from other academic institutions, and came eager to hear the employer perspective on engaging with internship and co-op programs. Additionally, the employer partners in attendance who already worked with programs at the University of Cincinnati brought

a diverse array of questions and some concerns that ran deeper than the anticipated surface level discussion of brand building, recruiting, and onboarding. The workshop evolved in real-time, and exposed an enthusiastic desire for better understanding how to build and maintain a holistic co-op and internship program, from both the employer and educator perspective. Building on the dialogue and learning from the initial workshop, those that followed were set up to address these desires; the corresponding outcomes began to reveal opportunities for quick wins, long-term strategies for growth and program improvement, and the pain-points or opportunities for improvement for all parties. After 1250 qualitative responses, Professors Bradley and Damschroder, recipients of the 2015 OCEA (Ohio Cooperative Education Association) Research Award, condensed these results into two infographic-style "reports" — one for employers and one for educators. Preliminary versions of both reports were first shared with their respective audiences at the OCEA conference in 2016.

EMPLOYER BEST PRACTICES

The diverse array of company sizes, industry sectors, and co-op/internship hiring tenures represented in the four focus groups offered no shortage of fodder for a comprehensive report out of best practices with relevance to any employer audience. While the findings were as diverse as the audience, the ideas that emerged began to fall into three somewhat chronological, but overlapping and ongoing categories: on-campus engagement, on-the-job engagement, and planning for the future. What follows is a "user-friendly" summary of noteworthy research findings for co-op and internship employers. The curated results can be found in the full-length reports, available on the Ohio Cooperative Education Association website at www.ohioco-op.com.

Building and Growing a Co-op or Internship Program

10 Big Ideas for Quick Wins:

№1 Define and articulate what your organization hopes to accomplish by building a program. **What does success look like?**

№2 Organizations report a higher ROI with hiring co-ops and interns when adopting the mindset of **building a recruitment pipeline** — rather than sporadic or overload hiring.

№3 Academic calendars and timelines don't always directly align with those in industry. It is typically best to think about **planning for co-op and intern hiring at least 3 months prior** to the season you plan to hire for. Recruitment, hiring, and evaluating is an ongoing process, so it is possible to **build in recurrent or cyclical activities**.

№4 On-boarding and training are often underserved — companies or organizations usually offer something short on day one, but **"ongoing on-boarding"** or training in small segments throughout the semester can have a strong impact.

№5 Building an impactful relationship between universities and companies that hire co-ops/interns requires **ongoing brand-building and multiple touch points** beyond a career fair or on-campus presentation.

№6 A **well-written company and job description** are the most effective first line of "initial screening" to get the right candidates.

№7 A standard **"welcome packet"** with general policies, expectations, program goals, and a company map or seating chart for all co-ops/interns can be a simple but powerful tool for getting them up and running quickly.

№8 Assigning both a supervisor AND a mentor (with different roles) is a great way to increase on-the-job performance throughout the term; students may informally develop mentorship from other sources, but **an assigned mentor creates a "safe-space"** if informal mentorship does not happen organically.

№9 Conducting simple **"exit research"** with co-ops/interns (formal or informal) to measure how the experience met their expectations can be a great tool for continuous improvement of a company's program.

№10 **Staying engaged with former co-ops/interns** between semesters has a strong impact on their potential to return for another semester (and re-integration when they return).

Category #1: On-Campus Engagement

ENVISIONING YOUR PROGRAM

Start with "why," and envision your program before the recruiting begins. What does your organization hope to accomplish by hiring co-ops/interns? What would it take for you to end the semester saying it was a success? This is also the perfect time to think about realistic expectations based on the hours a student will work, the level of students you are recruiting, and the learning curve of your particular industry or company. When thinking about who to recruit, an emphasis on student skills (not just their major) can translate to a stronger pool of candidates.

BUILD YOUR BRAND ON CAMPUS — TELL (SELL) YOUR STORY

Building relationships with the people sending the candidates' resumes (professors, career services staff, etc.) will better equip them to promote your company to students, and you will feel more comfortable asking questions or reaching out if there is a concern. Campus visits are great for brand building, but multiple touch points and visits throughout the year are more valuable than one "big" visit. Consider engaging with events on campus beyond career fairs through participation in class visitations as a panelist or guest speaker, hosting a "lunch and learn" on professional topics relevant to your industry, or serving as a mock interviewer.

GUEST SPEAKER

JOB DESCRIPTIONS AND INTERVIEWING

A well-crafted and engaging company and job description are typically the most powerful first line of screening to attract the right candidates. If boilerplate descriptions have not been updated in awhile, it might be time to draft a new version that describes the advantages your company offers to prospective candidates. When screening candidates, remember that involvement in extracurricular activities can often paint a better picture of the student than GPA alone. When it comes to setting up interviews, on-campus interviewing is easier for students, but on-site at your organization gives them a chance to experience company culture first-hand, and may be easier for involving multiple interviewers.
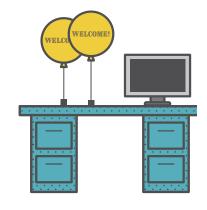
PRE-HIRE ENGAGEMENT

Engaging with students prior to their start date can help them build anticipation and begin the process of feeling like part of the team. A few simple touch points can make their actual first day a lot smoother, and their first week a lot more productive. Consider sending a "welcome pack" with company information, first-day paperwork, and a branded company gift to their home via mail prior to start date. Something as simple as an invitation to any social outings such as company celebrations, holiday parties, lunch and learns, etc. clearly communicates that you are looking forward to getting to know them better.

WELCOME TO OUR COMPANY

NEW HIRE PAPERWORK

Category #2 On-the-Job Engagement

STUDENT ONBOARDING
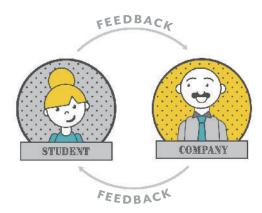
The simplest way to make the first day a great day for everyone is to make it obvious that "we knew you were coming." This can be as simple as having a designated place to sit (including a chair and a desk that is not littered with outdated copies of employee manuals or promotional materials from the 1990s). If a computer is required to do the job, make sure there is one ready for them, including a working login, access to necessary files/servers, and a designated email address (even if it is an alias like "intern@yourcompany.com"). Remember to send a company or department wide e-mail introducing the new co-op(s) or intern(s). Including some details about their school, year and major, who they will primarily be working with, and a few "fun facts" about them will help start conversations when meeting new people. Any orientation (formal or informal) for co-ops and interns will benefit from discussion of "unwritten" policies like dress code, company culture, and lunchtime habits, along with traditional orientation topics like formal policies and procedures.

FOUNDATIONS FIRST

Take time early in the semester to set and articulate expectations of a student's work. The more clearly they know what you are hoping for, the easier it is for them to meet your expectations. Most university programs will require the student to set a few goals for their own personal growth or accomplishments throughout the semester, and you will probably have some company goals. Discuss these early, but consider waiting a few weeks to finalize them to help the student better understand the organization and their role, and help you determine what is realistic.

REAL-TIME FEEDBACK

Negative feedback at the end of the semester without prior awareness of an issue is a common frustration voiced by both students AND employers. A weekly or bi-weekly briefing and/or "mini-assessment" can help both parties track progress, and make the end of semester evaluation much easier. Regular check-ins for formal and informal feedback makes it much easier to have a mid-semester course correction if expectations are not being met (on either side).

GET CONNECTED

Regular lunch & learns across the company (both on- and off-sight) are any easy way to facilitate connections and foster professional development for both the students and full-time employees. Similarly, establishing a "cohort" of recent hires and co-ops/interns can build a sense of camaraderie and informal sharing of experiences.

END OF TERM EVALUATIONS

An end of term summarizing/capstone presentation to company leadership can benefit everyone involved. With the right guidance and invitations, students reflect on and articulate what they have accomplished and gained, co-op/intern supervisors have tangible evidence of accomplishments to help inform the final evaluation, and senior management, HR, and others in the organization can see first-hand what an asset co-ops and interns can be to the organization. When it comes to documenting evaluation feedback, some companies prefer to use the same review documents and procedures they would for a full-time employee, while others prefer a simple exit interview with a few questions about what the student liked/disliked the most, their biggest "takeaways," their perception of culture, etc. Some use both!

Category #3 Future Planning

SO LONG, OR SEE YOU NEXT TIME?

A formal exit interview provides the perfect forum for feedback (both ways), and a more serious conversation about the potential of future opportunities. If possible, scheduling a few "transition days" with overlap between the outgoing and incoming co-ops/interns can make for a much smoother hand-off, even if they are just a few hours of part-time work before or after the term from either party. And just because the work-term is over, that doesn't have to be the end of the conversation. Invitations to company events (holiday party, company events, etc.) after the student returns to campus are an easy way to stay in touch if you see a future for the relationship.

EDUCATOR BEST PRACTICES

Having opened the door for deeper conversations between educators and employer partners, the resulting dialogues became a healthy forum for honest conversations about what works well and what could work better. The original intention of the focus groups was gathering and sharing best practices for co-op and internship employers, with employers as the obvious audience. Yet after processing more than 1250 qualitative comments compiled from session notes, feedback forms, and after-session e-mail messages, there were simply too many valuable insights for educator "issues" to be ignored. It was evident that an additional report — one focused on feedback and findings targeting university faculty and staff working to building and grow co-op and/or internship programs—was necessary. The breadth of findings for this audience was equally as enlightening as those for employer partners, but focused more on the identification of challenges employers face when attempting to interface with co-op and internship programs and universities in general. The authors distilled and refined this chorus of difficulties into an additional infographic-styled report titled "Straight Talk with Co-op and Internship Employers," including a "wish list" identified by external partners, suggestions for short-term solutions to elicit change, and ideas for long-range plans to address identified challenges. As with the preceding employer-focused summary, the summary includes notable findings from our research, again with the fully-curated results available in the full-length report.

THE PAIN POINTS

Pain Point #1: Building Buy-In

- The **logistics and requirements** of starting and running a program can scare off some members of management and/or HR departments.

- The **time investment of recurrent training** with each onboarding is a stumbling block, especially for potential co-op/intern supervisors.

- **Learning curves during transitions** between students causes a loss of time and productivity.

- The budget for co-op and internship salaries is a real expense, and it can be **difficult to prove a long or short-term return on investment**, even if funding is available.

Pain Point #2: Student Skills and Preparation

- **Not all students have the basic skills** needed to work in a professional environment, especially first-time co-ops or interns without any prior work experience.

- Students **often lack the "soft skills"** that can not easily be taught with on-the-job training, such as time management, interpersonal communication, and general work ethic.

- There is often a **disconnect** between what is being taught on campus (curriculum) and the technical skills needed for success on the job.

- Some students have an **over-inflated view of the work they will be doing** as a co-op or intern and do not understand they need to work their way up.

Pain Point #3: Program Logistics

- **Managing multiple contacts** at every university, department, program, etc. is a hassle. Getting in touch with the right person without multiple handoffs is difficult, and many schools have different program expectations, systems with logins, etc.

- **University calendars, deadlines, and timelines** don't always align with company needs or "seasons."

- Students are often applying to multiple companies, and then sometimes hold out to **"play the field"** when an offer comes. Nobody wants to know they are the "backup" internship.

- **University evaluations and other paperwork/ forms**, etc. are often lengthy and redundant.

Pain Point #4: Getting the Right Candidates

- **Sorting through candidates** who do not meet basic job requirements or appear to just be randomly applying to any job without direction is time consuming.

- **Building brand recognition on campus** is a struggle when you are not a household name; this is especially true when trying to get students to attend company presentations.

- **Location, location, location**: some students want to leave their hometown for an internship or co-op, and applying to a job in town does not seem as exciting. Some don't want to leave their hometown and will not consider an offer elsewhere.

- Students often work for one semester and then decide they do not want to return. Much of the first term is training, so there is a **big investment of time during the first semester with no guarantee it will work out**.

MAKE A WISH

THE WISH LIST

Having aired some frustrations about what could be done better, the conversation turned to steps that could create the "ideal" co-op or internship program:

Wish List Item #1:
Streamlined Programming and Communication

- A simple **"getting started" website or document** that answers common questions in plain language.

- More **frequent site visits** from co-op/internship faculty and/or staff to see what students are doing first-hand.

- A **centralized co-op and internship program** at the college/university and a **single contact or representative** at the college/university for general questions and help with the process.

- An easily accessed and regularly updated **central calendar** of on-campus employer events.

Wish List Item #2:
Campus Presence and Student Access

- **More frequent communication and opportunities to meet** with college/university faculty and staff running co-op and internship programs.

- **Opportunities to engage with students** beyond a career fair, in an environment where we can see them in action and get to know their personality.

- **Help with building company brand** on campus and getting students interested in what we do (and working for us).

- **Document templates and suggested activities** for on-boarding, orientation, progress reports, exit interviews, etc.

Wish List Item #3:
Simplified Evaluations and Assessments

- A **feedback loop of student input** about our company from the university. We evaluated their performance: what they did well, how they can improve, etc. What did they say about us?

- A **streamlined evaluation of reasonable length**; if it is too long, it probably will not get completed.

- **Permission to substitute our company's existing evaluation** for the university version; sometimes they cover the same topics (or more).

- Access to the official student evaluation BEFORE the student starts; **knowing what they are expected to accomplish** makes it a lot easier to incorporate the right experiences along the way.

Wish List Item #4:
Insights and Advice

- Clear documentation or evidence of the financial ROI of hiring co-ops and/or interns. **Show proof that it is a good investment**.

- **Recommendations on how to keep a student** for future semesters and eventually convert them to full-time hires if they are a fit.

- **Tips for taking a program from good to great**. What are the next steps after you get a program started or hire your first student?

- **Training sessions** for potential or new employers, including specific sessions for managers/supervisors, mentors, human resources, etc.

THE BEST PRACTICES

Having met with an overwhelmingly enthusiastic array of educators and employer partners over the course of nearly two years, and processing the deluge of input on what is working and what could be done better, a few big ideas for quick wins in the short term, and bigger picture goals for long-range planning materialized. These included:

Who are we? Co-op or internship (or both)?

While our educational partners in industry often interchange these titles, our academic institutions need specific definitions as the requirements and implications towards degree are important. Therefore, begin with defining what your institution considers a co-op vs. an internship. If your institution plans to facilitate both, what are the expectations and requirements of each, and what makes them different?

Formalize it!

Establish formal policies and procedures for participation in your program. Researching institutions with existing programs should yield a plethora of resources to build from. Most programs welcome the opportunity to consult and share their best practices.

Clarify it!

Employers may want some help understanding university definitions and expectations for learning objectives, evaluations, assessment, etc. This is everyday language for educators, yet may be completely foreign to an employer that is generally focused on running a business day-to-day.

Simplify It!

The logistics, forms, and supervisory expectations of starting or running a co-op/internship program can seem intimidating, especially for small- to medium-sized companies where it likely will not be someone's sole responsibility. Creating a set of templates for co-op or internship supervisors with tips and recommendations for setting co-op/intern goals, orientation topics, first-day or first-week activities, etc. can ease the tension and help you create consistency across companies.

Equalize It!

Career fairs are a tried and true method for recruitment, but the scope and size of the event can get overwhelming for students, and cause smaller or lesser-known companies to get lost in the shuffle. Consider a series of smaller events geared specifically to certain majors or industry clusters to target the right mix of companies and students for optimal matchmaking.

CONCLUSION

Even though cooperative education and internship programs present their own set of challenges for both employer partners and university educators and staff, the realized benefits outweighed the realized challenges. Educators often cite their frustrations with the coordination-heavy activities needed to run a successful co-op/internship program. Subsequently, an ill-informed employer may not be aware of the educational objectives of a co-op/internship and view students purely as a solution to a labor-shortage problem. However, when constructed correctly, research by Cook, Parker, and Pettijohn (2004)

Once the journey of hiring has begun, employer partners can be coached on pre-hire, on-boarding, supervision/mentoring, and activities/special project best practices.
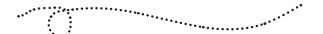
concluded that internship experiences improved students' abilities to ultimately work alongside a greater variety of people and conclude whether they have made the correct career choice (Yiu & Law, 382).

The process of building and growing a co-op or internship program is not unlike embarking on a journey. There is the expectation and build-up as employer partners strive to build their brands and make the most of their on-campus visits. Likewise, educators/advisors strive to prepare students with resumes and perhaps portfolios that will appropriately target the correct employer audience, practice mock interviews, and acquire the skills to research companies thoroughly.

Once the journey of hiring has begun, employer partners can be coached on pre-hire, on-boarding, supervision/mentoring, and activities/special project best practices. Conversely, educators/advisors want to create a teaching pedagogy that will focus on student reflection: what, so what, now what.

As the co-op/internship journey concludes and the "ride comes to an end," employer partners are tasked with evaluations and perhaps an offer to return for a subsequent quarter or semester. Yet more often

than not what an employer is truly focused on is a potential conversion to full-time hire. By leveraging these field-tested learnings, educators, advisors, and employer partners can work together to make the journey as memorable, smooth, thrilling, and "worth the wait" for everyone involved.

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RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT:

a chat with
judene pretti

INTERVIEWED BY: Cheryl Cates, PhD, University of Cincinnati

Q: *Tell us about yourself; how did you get interested in experiential learning research?*

A: I was an undergraduate co-op student at the University of Waterloo in Canada where I completed five work terms, two in the insurance industry, two in public schools and one at the university. The co-op program provided me with such an amazing opportunity to be part of a number of different workplaces and to be exposed to the many ways in which the knowledge and skills I was developing through my mathematics degree could be applied. Through my career at the university, I have been connected to co-op as a supervisor and also as the Director of WatPD, the professional development program we deliver for our co-op students. As a naturally curious person, I always had questions of "HOW" and "WHY" in my mind with respect to co-op but not until I became the Director of the Waterloo Centre for Advancement of Co-operative Education (WatCACE) did I really have the opportunity to pursue answers to co-op research questions as part of my role.

Q: *For the experiential learning practitioner, what key theoretical foundations should he/she understand?*

A: The majority of research in co-op has been rooted in educational theories which is natural and appropriate. There are certainly key theoretical foundations to understand such as Kolb's experiential learning cycle and Lave & Wenger's legitimate peripheral participation. However, I think it's also important for us to recognize and draw on the multi-faceted nature of co-operative education and to look for relevant theories from other disciplines. For example, in my doctoral research in Management Sciences, I'm drawing on organizational theories to understand the experience of the students in the workplace.

Q: *How might one go about becoming involved in co-op research?*

A: Start small. Think about a question that relates to your work that you would like to answer. Reach out to established work-integrated learning researchers. They can listen to your ideas and provide feedback or guidance on how to get started. They may also be able to point you to existing relevant research or to researchers they know who are interested in similar topics. There are sometimes research workshops offered as part of conferences (e.g. CEIA, CAFCE, WACE) that you can attend to flesh out your research questions and planned methodology. Also, as the Regional Vice-Chair for the Americas of the International Research Community for WACE, I would encourage those interested in work-integrated learning research to contact me and join the WACE-IRC to learn about what's happening in the field and to connect with other researchers.

Q: *Tell us about your current research.*

A: The Waterloo co-op program is very large, more than 18,000 four-month paid work terms are supported each year. However, it is not just the quantity of opportunities that matter, it is also the quality. With the

support of government research grants, we undertook a number of research projects that explored the notion of quality, from the perspective of students and employers. Building on that work, we are now examining how organizations view universities and use their work-integrated learning programs as talent pipelines.

Q: *Tell us about your efforts to organize experiential learning research.*

A: I feel very passionately about co-operative education and feel very strongly that research has played and will continue to play an important role in the advancement and sustainability of the co-operative education model. Fortunately, these sentiments are shared by the University of Waterloo, as demonstrated by the existence of WatCACE. The three objectives of WatCACE are to 1) conduct and facilitate research, 2) to provide thought leadership on co-op and other forms of work-integrated learning within and outside the university, and 3) to disseminate findings. Within the university I have expanded the group of WatCACE Associates, who are faculty or staff members whose research areas align or connect with work-integrated learning research. The group is quite multi-disciplinary ranging from Educational Psychology to Management Science. The Associates, who often have grad students working on WIL research projects, meet a couple of times per term to hear presentations on the progress of various WIL research projects. Outside the university, I am the chair of the

research committee for the Canadian Association for Co-operative Education (CAFCE) and the Regional Vice-Chair, Americas for the WACE International Research Community. These roles enable me to better understand the needs of the WIL community and understand the ways that research can continue to advance our understanding and practice.

Q: *Do you have examples of recent studies that you would recommend for Experience Magazine readers to review?*

A: Rather than identifying a specific study, I would like to highlight resources that may be of interest to the Experience Magazine readers. First, with the support of international WIL researchers, I had the opportunity to lead the creation of a Work-Integrated Learning research portal (www.wilresearch.uwaterloo.ca) which currently stores and/or links to articles from the Co-operative Education and Internships journal as well as the Asia Pacific Journal for Co-operative Education and the African Journal for Work-Based Learning. We will be continuing to add links to other WIL research in the coming months and look forward to being able to provide trends analysis on the research in the field. Second, WatCACE produces monthly newsletters, titled "Co-op Research Matters" where we profile recent WIL publications and include a practitioner's perspective on the relevance of the article for his or her work. To sign up for the newsletter, go to the WatCACE website (http://www.uwaterloo.ca/watcace), or follow us on LinkedIn or Twitter (@UW_WatCACE).

Women Students Making Connections Through Community Writing Internships

MARGARET THOMAS EVANS, Ph.D. // INDIANA UNIVERSITY EAST

This paper explores the benefits to women students at a small regional university of completing a community writing internship as part of their undergraduate or graduate education in English. The focus is on female students as over 70% of our students are female and many of them are tied to the local community and desire to remain here and seek employment after graduation. It provides excerpts from interviews with students who discuss the value of their internship experience working with a community partner. Internships conducted in collaboration with community agencies build capacity and knowledge for students and the community in which they work, allowing students to explore tangible writing and research experiences, rather than simply practice exercises that are offered in the classroom. Through this opportunity, female students generate concrete outcomes for community partners and acquire new research, writing, and professional skills, which may result in ongoing relationships with their community partners that last beyond the terms of the internship. This study considers whether internships should be required, or at least recommended, of all English majors at this regional university to assist them in their long term goal of finding employment after graduation in an area with limited employment opportunities.

INTRODUCTION

According to Bay (2006), in her article, "Preparing Undergraduates for Careers: An Argument for the Internship Practicum," there has been a lack of attention to the value of internships for English majors (p.135). Many universities offer internships as a form of service-learning for both undergraduate and graduate students, and scholars have written about the benefits of community engagement and service-learning for students (Cushman, 1996; Julier, Livingston and Goldblatt, 2014; McEachern, 2001; Youngblood and Mackiewicz, 2013). Even less has been written about the benefits to community partners and their role in working with student interns (Cruz and Giles 2000; Goertzen, Greenleaf, and Dougherty 2016). At the regional university where I teach, my department offers both for credit and not for credit internships to our undergraduate and graduate students as well as service learning opportunities in many classes. While not required for a degree, some students select to complete an internship as an elective. Typically these are unpaid internships, largely due to the fact that small local non-profits or businesses cannot afford to provide compensation; however, students may apply for and potentially be awarded internship scholarships from the university.

In this study, I explore the benefits to women students in English of completing an internship and the potential outcomes for their community partners. My work begins with the basic premise that internships, as a form of service-learning, are valuable to students. Internships conducted in collaboration with community agencies build capacity and knowledge for students and the community in which they work, allowing students to explore tangible writing and research experiences, in addition to practice exercises that are offered in the classroom. Through this opportunity, students generate concrete outcomes for community partners and acquire new research, writing, and professional skills, which may result in ongoing relationships with their community partners that last beyond the terms of the internship.

In response to the ubiquitous question—from students, parents, and others— regarding the long-term benefits of their English degree, students completing an internship may have an experience-based, informed answer that those who do not complete an internship would lack. The internship has shown them how to apply their writing, critical thinking, and research skills. It may also have introduced them to networking opportunities and provided them with the experience they need to acquire a job post-graduation.

Similar to students in Bay's study at Purdue University (2006), students at my institution take a for-credit course if they want academic credit for their work. All students, whether they are completing the internship for credit or not, must undergo a thorough review process. Before they are ever sent out to a community partner, two members of faculty interview potential students to make sure the student is aware of the responsibilities and expectations of being an intern and representing the university in a public forum. The faculty members instruct students on how to behave, how to dress, and how to represent the institution, with stress on professionalism. One of the faculty members also contacts our institution's office of Career Services to work with the Internship Coordinator to ensure that the student completes the university's internship requirements.

When a student is partnered with a community organization—typically non-profits or small businesses in the community—a faculty member serves as a liaison between the university, the community partner, and the student. The faculty member introduces the student to the partner and meets with both of them before the internship

commences. Both the student and the partner must understand their respective roles, the hours a student is expected to work, and the tasks the student will be expected to complete. The faculty member continues to meet with the student throughout the internship and should any issues arise, he or she can work with the partner. The student is expected not only to complete the research and writing tasks required by the community partner, but also to keep a journal of her experiences throughout the internship which is regularly submitted to the faculty member. At the end of the internship the student writes a reflective essay about the experience and may also be interviewed by the faculty member. Finally, the student and the community partner each complete an evaluation of the internship as required by the university's office of Career Services.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Limited research is available about internships in English although a few scholars have explored the value of internships for students. None of the sources addressed focus specifically on female students (Tovey, 2001; Bourelle, 2012 and 2014; Savage and Seibele, 2010). Even less research has been published regarding the benefits to community partners of hosting student interns.

Tinkler et al. list the major points to consider from the perspective of the community partner (2014). Students, faculty, and community partners need to be aware of the mission, goals, resources, and work of the partnership. There is significant pedagogical value placed in engaging writing students outside of the classroom in various types of projects. Whether service-learning, internships, or other forms of community-engaged writing, "When students engage with audiences, projects, and purposes outside of the classroom, they are able to wrestle with, analyze, revise, and produce variations of discourse in ways sometimes presumed not possible in a classroom" (Julier, Livingston and Goldblatt, 2014, p. 57).

John Rigsby et al. (2013) claim, "There has been a paucity of empirical studies examining the relationship between internships and job opportunities, which is a primary reason why students enter internship programs, schools establish them, and employers hire interns" (p. 1131). Students, especially those in the fields of English and Humanities, whose degree programs may not obviously lead to a "job,"

want this opportunity to expose them to real-life writing opportunities. They come away from the experience more aware of what they can do with the skills acquired through their completed coursework. Therefore, I would argue that students need the opportunity to develop skills directly related to their educational experience and their future professional aspirations. Internships, along with other forms of service learning, are one way of working on those skills.

Janice Tovey (2001) connects the internship experience to the development of relationships between the academy and the workplace in her study at East Carolina University. She also provides pointers on creating successful internship programs for professional writing and communication students. Tovey (2001) points out that "Besides resume items, career opportunities, and job prospects, students benefit from experiential learning by gaining knowledge of how organizations work" (p. 231). The internship program at her institution is similar to the one at my institution. While completing an internship is not required for majors, it is strongly encouraged and shares similar goals of providing students with experiences that they cannot gain in the classroom coursework alone. Deborah Carlin (2002), writing about the internship program at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, focuses on the need for internships for graduate students, arguing that they are necessary because many graduate students in English, who may desire to teach, will find that there are limited opportunities for full-time employment in teaching. We should not assume, however, that all graduate students in English MA programs desire a job in teaching. Consequently, Carlin (2002) argues, "We are…obligated to consider their [graduate students] economic and professional welfare after they leave our institutions. Internship programs can lead to employment after graduate school and at the very least they provide real experience in a nonacademic field, experience that is a necessity in most job searches today" (p. 217). Students reported that their internship experience was both a talking point and an avenue for gaining employment or other opportunities.

Carlin (2001) further reports, "Our internship placements are in professions that our students might actually want to pursue, such as publishing; work in museums, historical societies, or nonprofit humanities organizations; academic administration; and educational consulting" (p. 221). Likewise, at my university, we place students at museums, newspapers, law offices, and environmental centers. In the past five years,

we have placed at least eleven female students with these community partners. At each of these locations, students have been involved in various kinds of writing and research. Some of them have gone on to careers in similar types of work environments.

Given the job market, English departments should consider integrating internships with community-based partners early in an academic program for graduate students (since MA programs are typically two years and students need to think early about their post-graduation plans) and late in an academic program for undergraduates (after students have acquired the necessary skills to successfully complete one or more internships). Perhaps it would be advisable to require or strongly recommend an internship of all students unless they are already employed in a professional capacity and therefore do not need or want an internship.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to describe the potential value to both female students and community partners of completing/hosting internships and to consider whether or not internships should, in the future, be required or recommended of majors at my institution. There is a significant investment of time for the partner (who is benefiting from the work students complete but ideally needs to provide training and support) and for faculty mentors (who work one on one with students). We offer both an undergraduate course and a graduate course for students in which they must enroll if they want to complete the internship for academic credit. The credit hours may vary, but they are typically three or four credits, respectively. Internships require students to spend approximately 10 hours per week over a sixteen week semester working for the organization or business, either on-site or off-site depending on the particular community partner and its needs and available space. Students also complete course assignments for their professor as discussed previously.

METHODOLOGY

Female students in English who completed internships from 2012 through 2016 were contacted via email to participate in this IRB approved research study. These dates were selected as I mentored my first undergraduate student intern in the summer of 2012; my most recent student intern worked during the summer of 2016. During this

time frame, only one male student completed an internship. He was mentored by another faculty member. Of the students who completed internships during this time, I mentored five of them: Elizabeth (at the Historical Museum), Christine, Lily, and Lucy (all at the Environmental Center), and Susan (at the Language School).

Those students who agreed to be interviewed received a consent form and the questions via email. Students were asked questions about what kind of experiences they had as interns and how they believe they benefited from completing an internship. Each student was either interviewed in a face-to-face appointment or provided responses to the questions via email, depending on availability and geographic location. Not all of the students currently reside within a reasonable driving distance to campus. Two of the students provided email responses; the others met with me in person. Their responses appear in the findings section. One student declined to participate in the study; two students did not respond to requests for an interview. Note: all names of students used in the following figure (Figure 1) and discussion have been changed to protect the students' privacy.

Students who provided email responses wrote lengthy, detailed comments about their experiences. The open format provided by email exchanges offered the opportunity for follow-up questions which I asked in some instances. Elizabeth, who had the opportunity to complete two internships during her academic career, wrote about both of her internships (as seen in Figure 1). When I met with students for face-to-face interviews, they answered the questions but also elaborated on their experiences. The face-to-face interview provided a rich conversation. I did not ask additional questions although at times I asked for clarification or more details.

Figure 1 lists the type of community partner and primary responsibility of the interns along with the pseudonyms used in the study. Note: the specific names of community partner organizations are not included for privacy. A generic type of organization is listed. I refer only to the organization, not to any specific individual working at the organization.

Community Partner	Primary Responsibility	Student	Level
Local Newspaper	Feature Writer	**Hazel**	Undergraduate
Historical Museum	Creative Writer	**Tabitha**	Undergraduate
Pro-Bono Law Office	Writer	**Ophelia**	Undergraduate
Historical Museum	Researcher/Writer	**Elizabeth**	Undergraduate
Environmental Center	Grant Writer	**Christine**	Undergraduate
Symphony Orchestra	Grant Writer	**Elizabeth**	Undergraduate
Historical Museum	Professional Writer	**Heather**	Undergraduate
Environmental Center	Grant Writer	**Lily**	Undergraduate
Pro-Bono Law Office	Researcher/Writer	**Mary**	Graduate
Environmental Center	Researcher/Grant Writer	**Lucy**	Undergraduate
Historical Museum	Researcher/Writer	**Jane**	Undergraduate
Language School	Researcher/Grant Writer	**Susan**	Undergraduate

Figure 1. English Internship Placements.

FINDINGS

Seven students were interviewed and the following data offers insights from their experiences during their internships. They were asked the following questions:

Question 1:
Why did you decide to complete an internship as part of your academic work?

Question 2:
What did you expect to accomplish through your internship?

Question 3:
What type of research and writing did you complete for your internship?

Question 4:

Did you mostly work independently or did you receive a lot of supervision?

Question 5:

Did you receive any training from your community partner?

Question 6:

What benefits do you feel you gained from your internship experience?

Question 7:

How have they impacted you since graduating or how do you anticipate they might impact you?

All respondents stated several of the following reasons for completing an internship: an internship provides opportunities outside of the classroom, makes them well-rounded, expands on their work experiences, allows them to polish and learn new skills, provides opportunities to make meaningful connections, and gives the option to work alongside a professional in a field of interest. In general, students hoped to learn new skills, complete writing and research projects, and enhance their networking opportunities. Research and writing for all internships, except for the local newspaper, involved grant writing and developing resources, data collection, pursuing funding for non-profits, creating databases, updating sponsor information, and creating professional documents. Students reported that at the beginning, perhaps the first week or two, they worked partly under the supervision of their host organization, typically with one individual assigned to them, so they could learn about the organization and what was expected of them. All the students said that once acclimated to the organization and role, they worked independently. No formal training, such as workshops or guidelines, was provided by any organization. For the most part, other than occasional meetings or emails with their supervisors, the students were engaged in primarily independent work. In some cases they received limited guidance and few materials to use. Students reported gaining knowledge and experience in working with the public through customer service in the pro-bono law office, developed professional contacts and learned how to network, gained valuable experience to include on their résumés, learned how an organizational board worked, developed professional skills to use outside of university, gained personal success through knowing their abilities, and grew significantly in their self-confidence.

Elizabeth

Elizabeth is the only student who completed two internships; she is currently in graduate school at another institution. Elizabeth said that she decided to complete two internships during her time as an undergraduate student because she wanted to leave school as a well-rounded young woman, and to her, being a successful student is about more than grades. She believed that any outside experience that students can get is valuable. She wanted to feel confident and ready for the next step in her life. She further added that some experiences can only be acquired outside the classroom. Elizabeth indicated that she "hoped to learn about grant writing for a non-profit." Elizabeth wrote articles for the local museum to be used as marketing tools, and she also assisted in organizing archival collections. She also interned for a local symphony orchestra performing a variety of tasks. Elizabeth said, "The benefits are truly endless. I made important networking connections with people in possible fields of interest for me in the future who I can now ask for references.... I learned how to work in a professional environment outside of college, and also gained a variety of invaluable skills that could be useful for many, many different jobs. ...Participating in internships helped me learn what kind of job I want in the future, expanded my skills and just gave me more confidence in my ability to be a successful woman in the professional world after my academic studies [are] completed." Elizabeth also stated, "I learned how to be a confident leader through my various leadership positions and also through being a student intern. I am sure my internship experiences will continue to impact me in a positive way as I move forward. Internships helped me get my new job, and I hope they will help me get into graduate school as well."

Tabitha

Tabitha, who also interned at the historical museum, said she wanted to learn more about archival research, writing articles, and the way a non-profit operates. She completed research on the historical events surrounding the founding of the town where our university is located and wrote several chapters of a historical narrative to be used locally to teach 4th through 6th grade students about the history of their community. This project is still in progress. Tabitha commented, "My internship created the possibility of future writing; it gave me the confidence to know I could be a writer or editor."

Ophelia and Mary

Ophelia and Mary both interned at a Pro-Bono law office. In addition to other tasks, Ophelia created forms to be used for applications for legal aid purposes. She indicated that she realized that participation in an internship program would provide more opportunities to expand upon her previous work experiences. Ophelia noted that she "expected to accomplish many different goals." She hoped to increase her visibility in the professional world through participating in the internship, increase her knowledge and skills through polishing and learning new ones, but she also wanted to try something new.

Ophelia said she did not receive much training from her community partner. She elaborated that he was too busy to devote much time to her. Ophelia added that she gained more knowledge and experience in handling the public through customer service in a professional environment and added more professional contacts. Significantly, Ophelia commented, "My experiences in my internships were so great that I highly recommend them to any person I know who is going to school."

At the Pro-Bono office, Mary (a graduate student) completed extensive research on grant opportunities. She also wanted to learn some skills and develop networking opportunities in the community. Mary went on site every Friday for about 4 hours to meet with her supervisor. They typically spent 30 minutes discussing what needed to be done, and sometimes attended events in the community to network, but most of the time Mary worked alone. Mary said she "figured most things out for herself." She was given one sample grant to use as a guide for writing future grants. Mary added, "I can put this on my CV. I also learned how an organizational cycle runs and how the Board works....It was an eye-opener." Mary believes that internships "lead to new avenues." They could be "volunteer work, part time jobs, or serving on a board. They also provide references for future employment." After she graduated, Mary was offered a part-time position at the Pro-Bono Office – she went on to accept the offer.

Lucy

Lucy indicated that she decided to complete an internship to finish her under-graduate career because she wanted some real-life experience in what she spent five years studying (technical writing). Although she completed some projects

that were actually used, this was her first experience in the technical and professional writing field. Lucy said, "I expected to figure out how to build the bridge between what I have learned academically and its application in the workforce. As a virtual intern, I also wanted to get an idea of what it is like to work independently, as freelance writing has always been a consideration of mine." Lucy completed extensive research on funding opportunities for a local non-profit environmental center. She created a database of information and went on to write a grant. Lucy stated, "I used my technical writing skills in the creation of my grants database. I had to include as much information as possible, while still creating an aesthetically clear and functional product. I definitely got practice on decreasing wordiness, which has always been a struggle of mine!"

Lucy was an intern at the environmental center and initially met with her contact person; however, after that she worked off site, partly due to a lack of space and computer for her at the center and partly to meet her schedule. She needed to work outside the typical 9 to 5 hours at the center as she had a full-time job elsewhere and a small child at home. Lucy noted, "I learned how crucial time management is for an independent project. I also got a lot of practice using Microsoft Excel. The most important benefit I gained was in the research. It was the first time I have ever completed such a large-scale project, and I feel better prepared for the next time around. I think that every college student nearing the end of an undergraduate journey should complete an internship. It is a great way to start connecting college with a future career, while giving just one peek into what that degree could mean professionally." Lucy also added, "I feel more prepared should I choose to go into freelance writing. I would also be more comfortable working on a long-term project involving a lot of research where I would work mostly independently."

Susan

Susan, who interned at a language school, mentioned that the internship opportunity was suggested to her by a professor. She said, "I wanted to take advantage of the time I would have over the summer to gain real work experience and new skills." Susan expected to learn how to research and write grant proposals. She mentioned that she knew almost nothing about grant writing, so she started by reading Grant Writing for Dummies. She also read several articles online about how to be a grant

writer. She researched potential grantors to figure out what grantors look for in a grantee, how to apply, and so on. Then she wrote a template for two types of grant proposals. Susan worked almost entirely independently. Her community partner met with her in person once to explain what he expected of her and they continued to communicate online and over the phone mostly to share her progress and obtain the information she needed. Susan noted, "I learned how to research and write grant proposals. I learned a lot about how a non-profit organization functions. I developed my professional writing and communication skills, and I learned how to web conference. I learned several new functions of Microsoft Excel. I also gained a great deal of confidence in my ability to work independently and problem solve." Susan believes that understanding how to apply for grants is a very useful skill for any college student. She doesn't know if she will ever need to write a grant proposal for an organization again, but she plans to teach college English, so it is certainly possible. She also commented that the internship looks great on her CV. Most of her experience is academic or creative, so it was very important to her to have this professional writing and research experience.

Hazel

Hazel, who wrote for the local newspaper, was trained to gather information from sources, write articles, and take photographs. She had several bylines for her work. Hazel said, "I wanted to learn to write for the public and get my work published." Hazel worked alone at the newspaper once a story was assigned to her. She submitted her work based on a deadline after she had completed each piece. Hazel added, "It gave me more confidence in my ability to be a successful woman in the professional world after my academic studies were completed."

Students who completed internships went on to other opportunities: further education, career placements, or both. One currently works as an advisor at a university; one served in an AmeriCorps Vista program in a local community; one served the local arts community in an administrative capacity; several went on to graduate programs. As mentioned, one student received a part-time job offer from her non-profit organization.

Community Partners

Community partners indicated, prior to agreeing to host interns, that they would not be able to provide much supervision or training for student interns; they would assign them tasks and respond to email or in person questions, as appropriate, but mostly expected them to be able to work independently. With that understanding, the community partners and faculty mentors agreed to the internships. The lack of supervision might have challenged some students and was initially difficult for some of the interns as they learned the organization and its culture. Once they settled into the work and understood what was required of them, the students handled independent work with limited oversight well. They were all highly competent writers and strong researchers. Students were carefully selected and internship assignments considered thoughtfully by faculty before students were sent out to work. Once assigned a specific task, they each created a work plan and followed it. All interns were required to check in every week or two with their faculty mentor, so any potential problems could be addressed quickly. No intervention was necessary— this is better than had been.

Community partners welcome the idea of having additional help due to limited staff and hope students will be able to complete tasks to which they have not been able to attend. They also want to support the university and be valuable partners. They genuinely want students to have opportunities outside the classroom that might be beneficial. Student interns have been able to complete tasks that the respective organizations did not have the staff or time to complete. Student interns have created research databases of potential grant funding organizations and completed grant proposals (Environmental Center, Language School, and Pro-Bono Office); they also wrote a variety of documents (stories for the newspaper, brochures and other documents for the Historical Museum).

Interns received limited training/supervision. The Historical Museum in particular was apologetic about not being able to offer more training or supervision although the Director did answer questions when students were onsite, and he reported in conversations with faculty that he checked in with the students to see how they were getting along. Students at the Pro-Bono Office received a little training and supervision, primarily at the beginning of the internship to get them started on their tasks. They had weekly meetings to check in. Likewise, the students at the

Environmental Center and the Language School received some basic instructions on the tasks expected of them, and then they were left to work on their own. They almost exclusively corresponded via email.

The students mostly worked independently either on site or remotely. The interns placed at the Historical Museum worked on site as they needed access to the artifacts and archives at the facility. They worked in a back room which contained tables/chairs and boxes of archives. The interns working for the Pro-Bono Office primarily worked remotely although they did meet with the community partner onsite weekly. One of the students, Mary, also accompanied the lawyer to meetings in the community. This allowed her to network locally. The interns working at the Environmental Center initially met with the community partner onsite, but after that they worked remotely. This was partly due to a lack of space for them to work onsite and also to fit the hours the interns were available to work. The Environmental Center maintains business hours (9 to 5) and interns placed there had other jobs at the same time or were not local. The intern who worked at the Language School worked independently offsite; she met once with the organization leader early in the semester. The student lived about an hour away from the location, so it was more convenient to work offsite and communicate via email or phone with the organization when she had questions. The student intern at the local newspaper went to the office on the days she worked; however, most of her work was then completed offsite, either gathering information for stories or writing those stories.

Each organization has indicated it is willing to continue hosting interns and finds them to be highly valuable; however, they all have the ongoing stipulation that they can only offer limited supervision and little to no specific training. The community partners indicated that the interns have the potential to have a significant impact on the fundraising for the organization because of the research and database work they completed (Environmental Center and Pro-Bono Office). The Historical Museum had interns who wrote documents, such as brochures and placards, about the museum that could be used for visitors to learn about various exhibits and indicated that this was useful to draw attention to specific displays. One student started work on a novella about local history. It has not yet been completed. If it is completed later, then it might be used to teach local history to grade-school children.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This is a small study; seven female students agreed to participate in this study out of the possible eleven who completed an internship during the time frame of the study. The results of the student interviews demonstrate a positive experience for all students who participated. Despite the fact that most received only limited supervision and worked alone much of the time, they all believed their internships would help them in future employment – by helping them understand the process of acquiring a position, by completing relevant freelance projects, or by actually working on the job site. Those who completed internships indicated they thought the experience would help/had helped in finding employment or provided insight as to how they might perform freelance work as a writer. The students benefited by forming community relationships/connections and considered the service learning internship to be a valuable endeavor which they would recommend to others. The student who received a job offer certainly appreciated the value of her internship. She is also grateful for the opportunity to contribute to her community. Her community partner benefited from having her work for the organization for a semester and will continue to develop that relationship as she works as an employee.

The students put in a lot of time and effort to achieve their community partner's goals. Although most of the organizations were not able to provide significant training or supervision, they were all pleased with the work students performed based on evaluations that they completed for each of the students. All of the students who participated thus far in internships have been comfortable working independently and knew they could contact their community partner with questions as they arose. If they had any concerns, they could also work with their faculty mentor to resolve them. It would likely be more beneficial to students to receive training from community partners at the beginning of their internships; however, the students indicated that they enjoyed being forced to think for themselves and figure things out. Once they got involved with their work, the lack of training did not seem to be an issue as long as the community partner responded to emails. Students are able to research and build databases – typically of potential grant funding organizations relevant to the organizations; complete grant applications; create documents; and write reports and articles. They clearly applied their classroom-based learning to real world experiences, such as writing proposals, articles, and brochures, and conducting

research. All of these skills will be helpful in gaining future opportunities, whether they are in careers which will require them to research and write or in further education. All of the women who agreed to participate in this study have gone on to find employment using skills they developed during their internships or they have gone on to further education (masters or doctoral work). Perhaps they would have followed these paths even without the internships; however, the internship definitely increased their self-confidence and demonstrated to them that they could accomplish the tasks required of them. They could also include it on a résumé and talk about it during an interview.

As the English department continues to offer internships and works to grow the program, further studies should be conducted to build a more comprehensive set of data on the benefits of internships to undergraduate and graduate students and to community partners. As noted above, students went on to other opportunities and one was hired by her internship partner; some used both their internship experience and contacts/references as they sought future placements. All of those who participated in the research indicated that the experience benefited them, personally and professionally. Therefore, it would be helpful to continue offering internships, to as many students as possible, and to work to expand the opportunity to more students with a goal of requiring or recommending an internship of all undergraduate majors (unless they are already employed in the field) and encouraging additional graduate students to seriously consider an internship as part of their program of study, especially if their goals do not include a future teaching position. It would also be necessary for the success of such an expanded program to solicit further community partners with whom the students could work. This will require extensive effort by the faculty who wish to promote community internships and mentor students in such a program. Employment is a crucial concern in the region due to the economic decline and the limited options available to our graduating students. Unless they relocate to a larger city, students find great difficulty in securing employment using their education and skills.

Internships provide the department a means to show students the many ways they can use an English degree in their future careers and personal lives. Not all students who earn degrees in English wish to acquire teaching credentials and become teachers. Many are seeking other forms of employment. Internships are of particular

value in discovering what types of jobs are available to them either in their communities or potentially elsewhere. Graduate students earning an MA might want to teach; however, there are limited opportunities to teach at the college level except as adjuncts. They could seek certification to teach K-12, but teaching may not be their goal. They might want to be employed in other fields. Students may have pursued an English degree with a concentration in technical or professional writing and they may want to work as professional or technical writers or editors. Completing an internship in one or more of these fields will give them first-hand experience performing the kind of work they may seek after graduation.

Offering students the option of an internship (or multiple internships) allows them to explore opportunities in the community, network with various groups, and develop critical thinking, writing, communication skills, and many other valuable strengths that may assist them in their future plans. These skills also benefit the community partners, especially if they are hired by them, or by other local organizations.

Internships separate a student from the crowd of degree-endowed students. Employers may look more favorably on applicants that come to them with experience, and internships are an excellent way to accomplish this. Some students are able to complete one or more internships while in school; others may have to wait until they graduate, but it is not too late to complete one post-graduation. Graduates may find short term opportunities to complete—possibly working full time hours—and that may help them secure employment at that organization or another.

As universities, especially small regional universities in areas where employment is difficult to secure, continue to explore their relationships with their local community partners, student internships can have tremendous potential for supporting research and knowledge-based needs of local community partners, while providing valuable skills and training to a cohort of students who bring their academic research and writing skills to create real world solutions. The results presented in this study demonstrate the benefits to a small number of female students electing to engage in internships and to the community partner organizations they served.

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TRY BEFORE YOU BUY: A STUDENT REFLECTION ABOUT THE POWER OF FIELD EXPERIENCE

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I AM UNIQUE IN THAT I WAS NOT OVERLY ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT COLLEGE.

When my acceptance letter came in the mail, I could not understand why there was such a big celebration. Coming from a school with relatively high standards, college seemed like the next natural step, which ultimately led to my apprehension about it. Was it really something that I wanted to do? Before I could answer that question, summer came and went, and I headed to the University of Cincinnati for my first year of college.

When I had received the acceptance letter, I had been accepted into the major of English Literature. I quickly realized that I didn't want that to be my major and consulted my family for advice on what I should do with the rest of my life (because they obviously knew, right?). We flung around the idea of teaching and it sounded fun. I always had a respect for the occupation, and am an avid reader and writer. I figured being an English teacher wouldn't be a bad gig.

So, I spoke with my academic advisor and he set me up with a semester schedule filled with introductory courses in education. I thanked him, and was a little more at ease at the prospect of college.

THEN CLASSES STARTED; I HATED IT.

This was not because of any of my professors, or anything in particular really. It was simply uninteresting to me. Classes were centered around what teaching *would* be like, and it seemed like the time between now and actually teaching was so distant that it didn't matter. In addition to these seemingly trivial classes, there was so much red tape that had to be cut very carefully: background checks, volunteer hours, observational hours and field experience hours.

TIME MARCHED ON, AND I WAS BITING THE BULLET.

I stuck with the classes for a semester, but was eager to jump ship into something new, something different and something more exciting. Halfway through the first semester I decided to knock out some field experience hours. The class in question was "Individuals with Exceptionalities" with the lovely and talented Nicole Birri, a class centered around special education. The field assignment demanded 10 hours

of observation/involvement with individuals with disabilities. It seemed rather simple but a little exciting because it got me out of the classroom and into, well, another classroom.

I reached out to St. Rita's School for the Deaf, located near Cincinnati. I had heard about the school before, and it was honestly the only thing that came to my mind in terms of satisfying my hours. They allowed me to observe some classes, and I thought nothing of it until the day came where I had to observe. Arriving at the school, I could tell almost immediately that I would be out of my comfort zone the entire day.

Upon entering the building and receiving my visitors badge, **I WAS CULTURE SHOCKED. THIS WAS AN ENTIRELY NEW WORLD TO ME.** I looked so out of place, and I was incredibly nervous about offending people as I had never really been around deaf people. The students differed dramatically, in terms of age and level of hearing. I didn't speak to anyone unless they spoke to me first, and it wasn't until I sat down in my very first classroom did the feeling of uneasiness begin to subside, if only a little bit.

My first class of observation was an American Government class. When I went to the room, I introduced myself by saying my name and exchanging pleasantries with the teacher. The most horrible and excruciating pain entered my body when I realized that the teacher herself was also deaf, and seemed rather offended that I had spoken to her. With my mouth firmly shut, she shuffled me to a table in the back of the classroom.

THE NEXT HOUR COMPLETELY CHANGED MY PERSPECTIVE ON THE PROFESSION OF EDUCATION.

There were only three students in the room, which struck me as extremely odd. Coming from Mason, Ohio It was not unusual to have 28-31 students in a single class, and seeing a class this small simply did not make sense in my mind. However, the level of interaction in the room, the pure energy between student and teacher completely fascinated me. It was not like the textbooks.

I had then spent the next four hours traveling around the school, watching each subject taught in a silent beauty. From ocean currents to simple story writing, each classroom seemed to have a tightknit feeling of acceptance and a genuine pursuit of education. **A NEW SIDE OF EDUCATION WAS SHOWN TO ME, ONE THAT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO SEE FROM READING A BOOK.**

I went home that day feeling completely rejuvenated about the prospect of teaching. The idea that it was some bland boring occupation was completely dispelled with my field experience. Seeing the interaction between student and teacher, the personal connections built between them, reignited my passion for it. It had given me a clear goal to work towards, that all the classes would be worth it.

I am uncertain of my future, I think all of us are—that's okay. However, without experiencing firsthand the environment in which you are pursuing a degree in, you are giving yourself a disadvantage. No one wants to wait four years to discover that what they do is like walking over glass. The odds are that I will switch majors, but I know that **THE FIELD EXPERIENCE THAT I GAINED THAT DAY WILL RESIDE IN ME FOREVER, NO MATTER WHAT I END UP DOING.**

EMPLOYEE CITIZENSHIP:

PRACTICING CIVIC SKILLS IN THE WORKPLACE

Adrienne McNally // New York Institute of Technology

Too often internships are viewed only as a means to gain a small focused set of work-specific skills with the goal of getting new graduates into their first entry-level position upon graduation. But, internships are not only about gaining this practical experience. As co-op and internship program managers we can build upon this short-term goal model to prepare students not only for their first job after graduation, but for other positions in their careers: in different industries and even different disciplines. Through our programs, we can develop stronger employee citizens. Employee citizens understand their rights and responsibilities as employees and the full spectrum of activities they can engage in to contribute to their workplaces and industries. Employee citizens can make change in their professional communities and in all the communities they are members of including their campuses, towns, states, and the world. Employee citizenship describes how interns can be fully engaged citizens of the organizations they intern for, therefore building confidence and a robust foundation for their careers.

INTRODUCTION

In this article I will describe why I chose to incorporate civic skills development and the teaching and practice of democratic participation through employee citizenship into a centralized internship program. I will describe the educational philosophies and professional practice supporting this approach and show results from assessments obtained through employer and student evaluations that support this methodology and highlight our successes.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Most students now attend school primarily to get a degree as a necessary credential to getting a job that they want. However, this wasn't the original purpose of higher education. John Dewey wrote that we learn by doing and that democracy is practiced in all facets of life (Dewey, Democracy and Education, 1916). Dewey described higher education as a place to prepare citizens for participating in democracy (Dewey, 1927). Herman Schneider further developed the idea of practicing work skills directly through the traditional co-op model of alternating periods of work and school. This moved higher education further into the realm of preparing citizens to be active participants in the workforce, and not necessarily the other communities they were members of. Higher education experienced an even more radical shift in the 1980's and 1990's to higher education programs pumping

out employees. Degrees are becoming ever more specialized, and the liberal arts, which in many ways provides students with the skills they will need to be engaged citizens, are questioned as becoming obsolete.

Luckily, in 2007 *Educating for Democracy*, Anne Colby, Elizabeth Beaumont, Thomas Ehrlich, and Joseph Corngold (Anne Colby, 2007) reminded practitioners why higher education exists. Harry Boyte then took these concepts to another level. Instead of simply educating for participation in democracy, Boyte designs and implements programs for students to practice civic skills in their communities in conjunction with learning in the classroom. One of these programs, public achievement (Public Achievement, 2016), does this particularly well. Public achievement is a community organizing paradigm where students of any age or education level work together to solve public problems. It highlights the fact that every individual has some skill or experience to offer from their unique background. Another of Boyte's ideas is that of the citizen professional, which contributes to the foundation of my work. The citizen professional is someone who works alongside their fellow community members to solve public problems

where their professional expertise can be used as a resource (Boyte, 2008). The citizen professional is of particular interest because it describes how skill sets bridge a citizen's communities. The citizen professional is using their professional skills, which they contribute regularly to their professional community, in another community. This other community could be their town, a civic association, or even a group of individuals who have joined for the sole purpose of solving a specific public problem.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

In addition to these individuals who have clearly defined and even reimagined the idea of citizenship, professional associations are also interested in civic skills, civic engagement, and our ability as higher education professionals to develop students in those areas. The Association of American Colleges and Universities released a list of High-Impact Educational Practices that research suggests increases student engagement. Student engagement on campus fulfills Dewey's view of providing a place for students to practice democratic engagement. A college campus is indeed a community and the students are citizens of that

community. It is our job to identify for students that they are practicing civic engagement when they are engaged on campus by joining organizations and clubs, attending a town hall meeting, or participating in a voluntary activity on campus. By naming civic engagement and giving students the language to talk about civic skills they will gain the confidence and initiative they need to propel them through their careers. It's not enough for students to state on a resume that they were a member of a club or even the president. They need to discuss the civic skill, for example, leadership, and how they demonstrated leadership. For instance a student could describe how they used their position as a leader to create change within their institutional community.

Additionally, the Cooperative Education and Internship Association (CEIA) and National Society for Experiential Education (NSEE) are guided by the Council for Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS). CAS has set internship standards that those managing internship programs "must model ethical behavior and institutional citizenship (Education, 2015)." Related to ethics, CAS also states that those involved in internship programs are expected to

identify and hold accountable those that are engaged in unethical behavior (Education, 2015). This is a difficult task, but an important civic skill. The ability to recognize unethical behavior is especially important for the political aspects of civic engagement. Students can gain the confidence to hold their elected representatives to a high ethical standard by recognizing these behaviors in their own colleagues and supervisors and talking about them with the appropriate people at their school or company. As professionals we are responsible for assisting students in working through such situations and modeling ethical behavior ourselves.

Finally, the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) have outlined Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Professionals that include civic engagement and further define behavior modeling and employee citizenship (although it is not named employee citizenship). These organizations note that modeling the behavior we expect from our students is as important as teaching them and assessing what we teach in their joint publication "Professional Competency Areas for Student

Affairs Practitioners" (ACPA and NASPA, 2010). This publication outlines several areas that professionals can assess themselves in. In particular, the authors discuss different forms of engagement in one's professional field, including in scholarship and research, service, and leadership. Another area is being knowledgeable of the laws and policies that govern our profession. At a more advanced level we should be applying these laws and even influencing how these laws are created by contacting our representatives or lobbying. This is a direct application of employee citizenship. In addressing civic skills, ACPA and NASPA note the ability to assess oneself, build consensus, take responsibility, and engage with others to move change forward. Each of these skills can be transferred into the public sphere to solve community problems. Citizens must be able to understand and communicate their feelings, build consensus with others and then use that consensus to create a plan or solution. Effective change is driven from citizens on the ground level who compel officials and elected representatives to pass legislation to make the change permanent.

Focusing again on our institutions in and of themselves as communities, we must recognize all of our members, Who are these members, and what are their expectations? They include families who want their students to graduate with jobs and "get a good education." Also, the institution itself, which has to answer to the needs of families and students, and its staff and faculty. Many, if not most, institutions seek to provide students with a broad education and a set of skills that will benefit them personally and professionally. This can sometimes seem at odds with creating highly employable graduates. Another set of members are the outside organizations regulating our institutions. We must not only comply with these government and accrediting agency's policies and regulations, but also with the way data is shared with them and how it's used. For instance, the College Scorecard (U.S. Department of Education) is used by families and prospective students to make decisions about schools they will apply to and attend. Regardless of how we feel about how that data is collected and used, it's out there, and it's being used to determine the value of the education our institutions provide.

In the midst of these seemingly competing priorities, I look back to the foundation of higher education's purpose: to provide a place for citizens to develop and practice skills for democratic engagement. I believe that we do not have to choose to satisfy one member of our community over another. By teaching employee citizenship we provide a place for students to practice civic skills while meeting their expectations for an internship or co-op program. The definition of employee citizenship reveals equivalencies that I describe below on how to meet these expectations.

EMPLOYEE CITIZENSHIP

The first equivalency is employee citizenship (Figure 2: Employee Citizenship Equivalency). I define employee citizenship as the understanding of one's role as a community member at work. Here, the role of the employee is equivalent to the role of the citizen.

EMPLOYEE CITIZENSHIP

Role of employee   Role of citizen
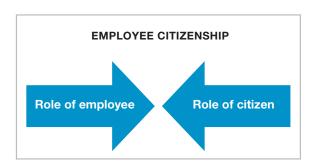
Figure 1: Employee Citizenship Equivalency

So, what is a citizen? Most people think of citizenship in terms of their nationality, but citizenship is your membership in any community you're a part of (Citizenship). If you live in an apartment complex, you're a member of that community, or your neighborhood if you live in the suburbs. Then, of course, you're a citizen of your state, your country, and a global citizen. This is the first part of citizenship: awareness. Awareness include multiple aspects including that start with simply knowing the communities you're a part of. For a student this includes at least their college, where they live, and where they work. Next is becoming aware of the issues affecting the communities, who the decision makers are, how change is made, and how citizens can be part of that change.

In the engagement figure (Figure 4: Traditional Civic Engagement Spectrum) awareness is the first part of civic engagement. Awareness can be as simple as reading a newspaper to further understand the issues in your community. The equivalent employee citizenship awareness activity for students is being aware of the major organizations in their industry, what policies and regulations govern their industry, and who the important people are in

their industry. Once they're in an internship students should also understand how their organization contributes to and ranks within its industry and how the work they're doing helps their organization achieve its mission. As students gain more experience and skills through their internships and grow as professionals, they further develop this awareness to expand what they can offer beyond their organization to what they can offer to their industry. Through our coaching we show students how they can use their professional skills in the civic arena.

An area where students may struggle is during the search process, especially if they don't have any experience yet. What do they have to offer as a first-time intern? Aware-ness plays an important role here. As experiential education practitioners, we know our students have something to offer—every student has experiences and skills that make him/her unique. We help students to become aware of what they offer employers and then develop the ability to talk about that through their resumes, informational interviews, cover letters, and networking activities. This can be the very first way students practice employee citizenship.

The next, and key parts, of citizenship are the rights and responsibilities that come along with it (Figure 2: Citizenship—Rights and Responsibilities).
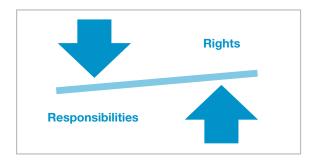
Figure 2:
Citizenship—Rights and Responsibilities

Most often, we think of the rights we're eligible for as citizens. Rights like voting and freedom of speech. The other part of citizenship that holds up democracy are the responsibilities of its citizens. Many responsibilities go hand in hand with rights. For instance, we have the right to vote, but we also have the responsibility to do so. In a broader sense, citizens have a responsibility to be engaged in their communities in other ways.

Engagement is the fourth aspect of citizenship and it falls across a spectrum. Figure 4 shows this spectrum of civic engagement in the traditional sense of citizenship.
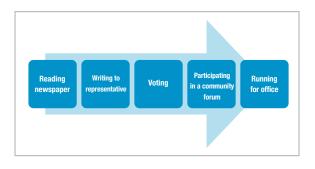
Figure 3: Traditional Civic Engagement Spectrum

Figure 4: Employee Citizenship Engagement Spectrum shows the equivalent spectrum of civic engagement for employee citizenship.

Figure 4: Employee Citizenship Engagement Spectrum

CIVIC SKILLS

The second equivalency is within experiential education itself (Figure 5: Experiential Education Equivalency). A key part of the definition of experiential education is that students learn through experience. This is shown in one arrow.

The opposite arrow shows the equivalent concept in the civic arena: practicing civic skills. Through the internship or co-op, students can practice civic skills. In fact, part of the learning students gain through their experience is civic learning.
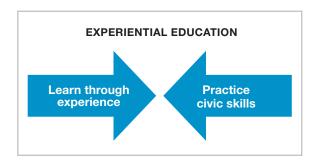
Figure 5: Experiential Education Equivalency

The concept of civic engagement is foreign to many of our students because we have not had a strong liberal arts history and many students in our internship program are international students. Because of this, we introduce citizenship and civic engagement early in the internship search process, when students are learning how to find an internship. Among search strategies and learning about the resources available to them on campus, we talk to students about what civic engagement is and how it applies to their internship through employee citizenship. This is the awareness phase that I mentioned above.

The second phase comes after the student has secured the internship. At this point the student is filling out a learning agreement. In addition to contact and employer information, students identify their learning objectives and the civic skills they want to develop on their learning agreements. Students choose from the following set of civic skills:

- Critical thinking/problem solving
- Adaptability
- Written communication
- Verbal communication
- Intercultural communication
- Intergenerational communication
- Organization/planning
- Research
- Technology
- Leadership
- Time management
- Flexibility

At the end of the internship students self-evaluate their learning and skill development. As part of the evaluation, we ask students to write specifically about how they demonstrated a civic skill during their internship. Below is a sampling of how students utilized civic skills at work from spring 2016 student evaluations. The civic skill is listed

first, with a description of how the student used the skill in the student's own words following the skill.

- **Intercultural and intergenerational communication:** "The interaction with diverse employees across the global environment is something that helped me gain exposure on developing patience and maturity in interactions and relationships between people from various facets of the organization."

- **Verbal communication and research:** "This job was a lot of problem solving, so I would have to interact with the underwriters of the company on a daily basis to piece together an answer."

- **Problem solving, communication, leadership:** "I am not supposed to leak passwords to unauthorized people, but sometimes people call looking for that information. I have to balance the ethics of my company as well as be humble to the people."

- **Flexibility, adaptability:** "All projects were to be approved, and I learned that while working under someone your ideas will not always be to their liking, hence why I learned much about

adapting my work and ideas, but without losing my initial vision."

- **Critical thinking:** we had an international student in the biology department who was unable to do an internship because there was no course through which she could do the internship and meet the federal requirement. She did research, met with the appropriate decision makers in her department, and wrote a proposal and petition to get a zero credit course proposed and approved in her department so that international students would be able to intern without having to pay extra for an internship course. She was able to make lasting change at her institution for students coming after her.

Students are stronger candidates when they are able to discuss in specific detail how they demonstrated skills. Their resumes are richer and they can answer interview questions more readily using examples from their experiences. In developing this ability students gain confidence. Through our coaching students are able to apply these skills to the civic arena.

IMPLEMENTATION AND ASSESSMENT

As I've mentioned, one of our jobs as experiential education practitioners is to act as coaches. We need to name employee citizenship and keep naming it. That means during the search process, at the start of the internship or co-op, during the experience itself, and at reflection. Without naming it, it's easy for students to get embedded in the everyday tasks of their internship and fail to see the wider implications of their work and how their experience can be used to move them forward throughout their careers, not just to the next internship or job after graduation. Employee citizenship helps us do that because it is a model through which we can take the professional skills that students can easily understand and translate them into communities they are members of, including their professional communities. Students see that their professional community extends widely, far beyond the borders of the bullets in their internship description and the organization they're working for.

In addition to this anecdotal evidence of student growth, we are able to report each semester and year on civic skill development,

students' engagement at their internships, and employer reactions to the employee citizenship approach to experiential education. We generate the report through supervisor and student feedback. Supervisors evaluate their interns at about 4-6 weeks into the internship and then again at the end of the internship. Students evaluate their experiences at the end of the internship. These evaluations not only capture typical professional behavior, but also the civic skill development and employee citizenship behaviors that we've trained students on. In particular, at the midterm, supervisors indicate what civic skills they want their interns to further develop during the second half of their internship. This gives the student the opportunity to improve on these skills with the help of advisors. Advisors work specifically with students over phone and email to provide personalized tips and infographics to enhance their civic skill development.

We measure skill improvement in two ways: 1. by comparing the midterm and the endterm supervisor evaluations and 2. by comparing the endterm evaluation with the student evaluation. At the end of the

semester the supervisor identifies which skills the student developed, allowing us to compare with the midterm evaluation. We do an additional comparison with the student evaluation. Students (independently from the supervisor evaluation) identify the civic skills they feel they developed during the internship and we can look for consistency with the supervisor's feedback. In the data from spring 2016 (Figure 6: Civic skill development), we can see that for the top five skills there is consistency among the midterm (in blue), end term (in red) and student evaluation (in green) results. That is, at midterm supervisors reported that they wanted to see their interns further develop verbal communication, critical thinking/problem solving, adaptability, time management, and organization/planning skills. Then at the end term supervisors report that their interns did indeed develop these skills and students also report that they developed these skills. This consistency is important. First, by comparing the midterm to the endterm supervisor evaluations, the consistency shows that our coaching was effective in helping students improve on skills supervisors noted in the midterm evaluation. Second,
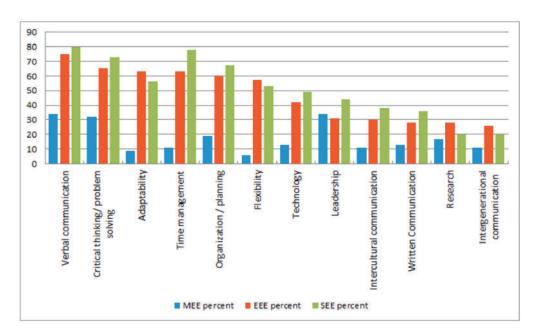
Figure 6: Civic skill development

by comparing the endterm supervisor evaluation to the student evaluation, the consistency shows that students and supervisors recognize the same skill developments, showing that the communication among advisor, supervisor, and student was effective

We assess employee citizenship activities through the student evaluation at the conclusion of the internship. Students select from a list of employee citizenship activities that they engaged in during their internship. In Figure 7 we see results from spring 2016 showing the activities our students participated in. Most students learned more about their company and industry, with about a third looking a little deeper into what their organization contributed to their industry. About a third of students also reported that they recognized where they could make improvements and then took it upon themselves to make those improvements. This is the initiative that is so sought after by employers. About a quarter of students also contributed to a project using other skills they had that are not required for their discipline. This helps students see how their talents can be used in a multitude of ways as employee citizens.

To further cement the employee citizenship concept we ask students to write about how they demonstrated the civic skills they identified as having developed. Some of those examples I included above. This is

Employee citizenship activity	%
Asked questions about the work, organization, or industry to the people at my company	64%
Learned about my organization's contribution to its industry	36%
Recognized an area where improvements could be made and took it upon myself to make those improvements	31%
Read publications concerning my field/industry	29%
Contributed to a project using a skill not required for my discipline	23%
Attended a conference or seminar	17%
Participated in a community project sponsored by my organization	10%
Joined a professional organization / I am a member of my professional organization	8%
Conducted at least one informational interview	8%
Gave a presentation to my department or a department I did not work in	7%
Participated in an online discussion related to my field	7%

Figure 7: Employee citizenship activities

useful for us to see that students truly understand what those skills are and can articulate them to employers. Students can even use these statements in resumes, cover letters, and interviews to give specific examples of how they've used the skills in professional situations.

CONCLUSIONS

In addition to these positive aspects, there are other reasons why employee citizenship enhances students' internship experiences. They gain confidence in themselves because they've been able to practice skills beyond what's in their job descriptions. They've learned about the company they're interning for and the industry it belongs to— including the different organizations that make up that industry, the major players, and how to move around professionally within it. Most importantly students see how the professional skills they've gained are civic skills that can be used in the other communities they are part of.

These civic skills that we emphasize are also the skills that the National Association of Colleges and

Employers and other organizations like it report that employers are most looking for in their recruits. In the latest NACE survey the top skills employers listed were leadership, ability to work in a team, communication skills, problem-solving skills, strong work ethic, and initiative. In fact, technical skills don't show up until about half-way through the list. Interns will gain those technical skills anyway through their work and school. It's the civic skills that they need the coaching on. Employee citizenship also speaks to the T-shaped professional that employers seek—a professional that has deep knowledge in the field, but also the ability to apply that knowledge broadly across disciplines. That ability thrives through the employee citizenship model.

We can ensure that our students are prepared for contributing to their professional and personal communities by incorporating employee citizenship into our experiential education programs. By talking about employee citizenship and coaching our students through civic skills we can meet our objectives of developing strong professionals who will be able to navigate their careers and be change makers in their communities.

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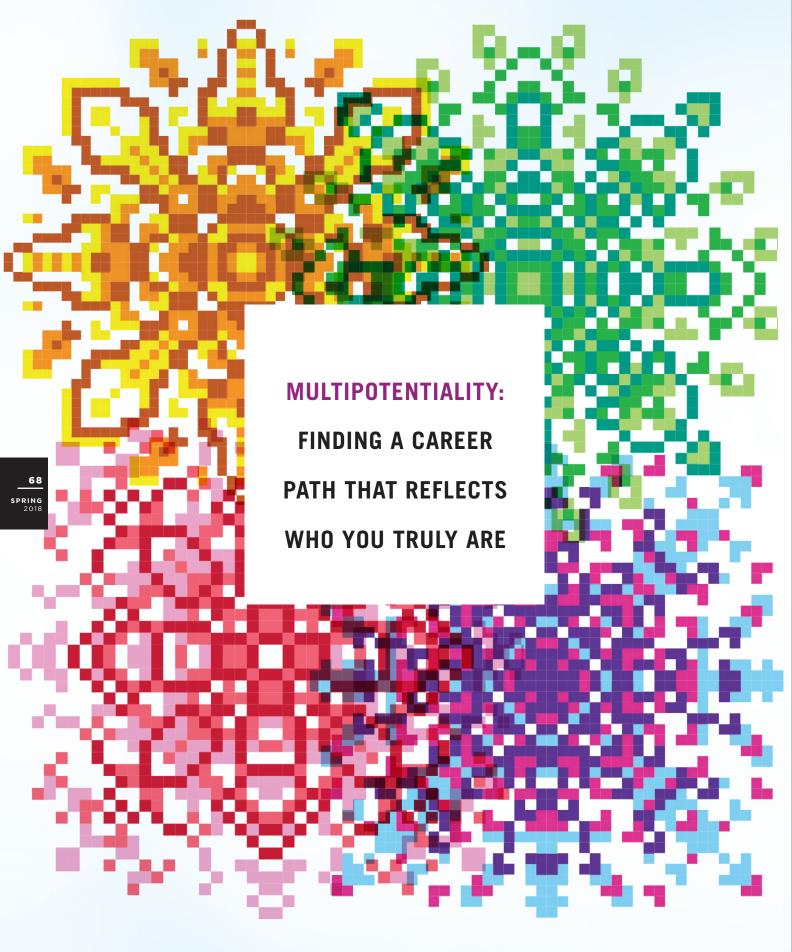
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MULTIPOTENTIALITY:

FINDING A CAREER

PATH THAT REFLECTS

WHO YOU TRULY ARE

Heather Nester and Melanie Buford // University of Cincinnati

72% of Generation Z students say that colleges should allow them to create their own majors. The average American changes jobs every 4.2 years, typically ending up in areas very different from what they studied in college. Our society, especially our present and incoming workforce, is not as interested in the linear career path that has traditionally been center stage. Some individuals have a passion for multiple interests and creative pursuits, a phenomenon that Emilie Wapnick has coined "Multipotentiality." This article outlines the theory of Multipotentiality, some of the challenges associated with this identity, and tangible steps to assist these students in finding a "career worth having" for themselves. One of the greatest challenges we face – as higher education administrators, family members, friends, and employees – is the need to challenge those in our lives to pursue meaningful work. We are used to understanding "meaningful work" in terms of income, established professions and our society's traditional definition of success. The idea of multipotentiality challenges us to evolve our understanding of experiential learning, and to examine what meaningful work looks like for each student. Instead of defining it for them we need to let students speak for themselves and assist them in finding a way to make their definitions a reality. >>>

The Issue at Hand – Work Climate and Conflicting Generational Expectations

The honest truth that we need to present to college students is that the workforce is not the carefully painted picture they encountered growing up. The workforce is changing, and so is the nature of the demands placed on employees. Out of approximately 100 million full-time American employees, 51% aren't engaged at work and feel no real connection to their jobs. 6% are "actively disengaged," miserable and resenting their jobs. 51% of employees are searching for new positions or watching for openings, while, in general, 47% of the workforce agrees that now is a good time to find a quality job (Gallup, 2017). The Bureau of Labor Statistics states that the average American changes jobs every 4.2 years, often ending up in areas very different from what they studied in college ("Employee Tenure Summary," 2016).

Many people aren't defining success, fulfillment, and happiness the same way their predecessors did. Generation Z (Gen-Z) is changing what happiness looks like, becoming "less focused on consumption and more focused on contribution." They're asking "'How can I do something that makes a difference?' and they long to be part of something bigger in a more meaningful way" (Coca-Cola, 2015). While previous generations might have defined "meaningful work" in terms of income, established professions and our society's traditional definition of success, 78% of Gen-Z agreed that "Choosing to be happy is more important than anything else you can do in your life." On top of this statistic, school/ college is considered the least critical component

of a meaningful life for this generation with a minimal 27% (Coca-Cola, 2015). A significant portion of Gen-Z students say that their colleges should allow them to create their own majors (Bach, 2016).

While part of the climate is influenced by outside forces and organizational structure, some of it can be attributed to the fact that these individuals might not be working in a field or job that aligns with all of their passions. We are attempting to construct a passionate workforce in a generation with new characteristics and expectations. Millennials and Generation Z have a developmental history of increased exposure to social media and open access to the advantages of the internet, changing how they process and discuss information. The very language we use to describe fulfillment can become one of our greatest barriers for those who aren't finding satisfaction in one career path over a lifetime. Some individuals have a passion for multiple interests and creative pursuits, a term that Emilie Wapnick has coined "Multipotentiality." Thus, our challenge now is how to make sure the students we are working with, who may desire to pursue an array of interests, flow into the current workforce.

What is Multipotentiality?

"An educational and psychological term referring to a pattern found among intellectually gifted individuals. [Multipotentialites] generally have diverse interests across numerous domains and may be capable of success in many endeavors or professions, they are confronted with unique decisions as a result of these choices" (Puttylike).

When we begin to look at multipotentiality with a career education and experiential lens, we must acknowledge that we are deviating from education's traditional linear path. The irony is that although multipotentiality is a new term, the idea is not. Many of us are already familiar with the concept of a "Renaissance man" or "Polymath," someone whose expertise spans various subjects. The term "Renaissance man" comes from the idea that men who were knowledgeable or proficient in various fields were considered successful during the Renaissance period.

As we move through western history, our perspective on career success has become narrower, valuing specialization over a breadth of knowledge. We began to romanticize the idea of having "one true calling," as opposed to pursuing multiple passions. Emphasizing one ideal occupation supported the cultural and institutional preference for specialization, making it easier for us to sort individuals by careers, majors, fields, etc.

However, if someone truly has multiple interests, passions, and talents, they might not find happiness in one specific job or field. These individuals thrive on learning, exploring, and mastering new skills throughout their lives. While this idea of multipotentiality might seem perfect only in an "ideal world," successful multipotentialites are more common than you might think. Some well-known multipotentialites include:

MAYA ANGELOU

Poet // Memoirist // Civil Rights Activist
Fry Cook // Performer and Dancer

AMY NG

Magazine Editor // Illustrator // Entrepreneur
Teacher // Creative Director

DR. BOB CHILDS

Psychotherapist // Luthier

ISAAC NEWTON

Mathematician // Astronomer // Physicist

HELEN BEATRIX POTTER

Writer // Illustrator // Natural Scientist
Conservationist

Instead of falling into the stereotype of "jumping between interests," these individuals were able to bring their multiple interests together into different careers and passions. They did not define "finishing" with a career the way that someone in a specialized field might. They brought their talents from one field, and repurposed them into another. In reality, multipotentialites excel in harnessing their transferable skills. The challenge becomes how multipotentialite students can showcase these skills and accomplishments to the rest of the world.

Challenges of Multipotentiality

While there may be multiple challenges inherent in teaching, advising, and supporting multipotentialite students, below are three overarching issues:

1. SELF-ESTEEM AND NORMALIZATION

Students, advisors, professors, parents, colleagues, and friends, generally do not have the language to describe and legitimize the reality of multipotentiality. It's not a term that most of us have grown up with. Thus, a lot of

people have encountered negative stigma, being labeled "lazy," "restless," "immature," or "lacking direction." Thus, throughout their lives, many have not had language upon which to build their self-esteem, and have instead had to grapple with the negative connotations of our existing vocabulary.

For example, since many colleges and universities require the selection of a specific college major, students therefore face social and family pressures to narrow down their choices early on in their careers. Little attention is paid to the anxiety that may be caused by this process, because nearly everyone goes through it. Selecting one discipline, or calling, is the "norm," and if you can't decide, it may be viewed as a kind of failure. Now, as higher education professionals, we are tasked with helping these students understand that it isn't "wrong" to have multiple passions and interests.

Suggestions:

- The most fundamental suggestion is to *share* the concept of multipotentiality with students – *validate it* – and give them language to describe themselves in a positive way.

- *Encourage* them to explore a variety of interests. Help ease the anxiety that they have only "one true calling," especially if they haven't figured out what that is yet.

- If a student seems stuck, and is open to the idea, suggest travel or international work experiences. These give students a chance to be exposed to new ideas, different outlooks about work, and a broader sense of opportunities.

- Encourage them to find other like-minded students that are facing the same challenges. This might include joining a club, exploring a liberal arts major, or pursuing their hobbies. Help them find others so they know they aren't alone in the way they feel and the challenges they are having picking a career path.

- Refer to real-life cases to validate that there are *real* people that have succeeded as multipotentialites.

2. QUALITY EXPERIENCES

Another challenge is how these students can gain quality experiences and become professionally competitive when they appear to be "all over the place." If students are holding several major and career possibilities open, they might have an array of experiences, including internships, part-time jobs, and organizational involvement. Thus, one significant challenge is how to assist students in defining, and pursuing, success.

Suggestions:

- Recommend experiences that will help students gain transferable skills – those relevant across multiple interests and sectors.

  - *Examples:* Study abroad, international work, rotational internships/co-ops, leadership roles in activities they are passionate about, adding a minor, volunteer work and post-graduate fellowships.

- Watch for signs of over-commitment – suggest a few high-quality experiences that still resonate with the student's passions and interests.

3. MAKING DECISIONS

It can be difficult for multipotentialites to make decisions that close doors on topics they are interested in. Career decisions may produce anxiety for students who aren't "100% sure" about their chosen major or career path. Some narrowing may be appropriate, but these decisions are still hard to make. By choosing a single direction or position, they might feel like they are missing out on something else.

Suggestions:

- Reframe the language about making a career decision so that it emphasizes a choice "for now" instead of "forever." Their decision in college, on a specific major, does not lock them into one option for the rest of their lives.

- Shift the conversation, and thinking, from selecting a major to focus on developing skills.
  – Ask "What types of skills might you want to learn/develop?"
  – Encourage diverse experiences so that students can build new skills and clarify their passions and talents.
  – Recommend personality assessments – the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), StrengthFinder, Strong Inventory, DISC, etc.

While these challenges require working around some existing higher education structures, we must acknowledge the presence of these themes in many students' lives. We need to find a way to serve all students, whether they have a single career focus or multiple interests.

Four Approaches to Working with Multipotentialites

The following strategies have been extracted from Emilie Wapnick's book, How to Be Everything: A Guide for Those Who (Still) Don't Know What They Want to Be When They Grow Up.

1. **THE GROUP HUG APPROACH:**
   Having one multi-faceted job or business that allows you to wear many hats and shift between several domains at work.

   Strategy 1: Working in a naturally interdisciplinary field.

   Strategy 2: Finding where multipotentialites hang out (a niche within your discipline).

   Strategy 3: Working for an open-minded organization.

   Strategy 4: Making an existing job more plural.

   Strategy 5: Starting a business.

2. **THE SLASH APPROACH:** A "Portfolio Career," with two or more part-time jobs and/or businesses that you move between on a regular basis.

   Strategy: Dive in and refine as you go – which slashes do you enjoy, are the most profitable, present opportunities, etc. This is key for individuals who might not desire the typical full-time structure.

3. **THE EINSTEIN APPROACH:**
   Having one full-time job or business that fully supports you, while leaving you with enough time and energy to pursue your other passions on the side.

Strategy: Have a job that is enjoyable, with a high enough salary for your financial goals, while leaving you with enough energy to pursue your interests.

4. THE PHOENIX APPROACH:

Working in a single industry for several months or years and then shifting gears and starting a new career in a new industry.

Strategy: Create a balance between depth and breadth, gradually building skills to get where you want to go, and exploring options before you commit.

Final Steps & Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle Theory

In essence, experiential learning is grounded in the idea that students must actively acquire experiences and reflect on them. Thus, no matter your approach to working with students, we must all remember to genuinely listen to their experiences and desires. We need to let them define what their career paths look like, reflecting on their own experiences and skills, so they can join the part of the workforce that finds happiness in what they do.

If you look at Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle Theory, you can see how multipotentiality fits in. Kolb's theory operates on two levels: a four-stage cycle of learning and four separate learning styles that focus on the learner's cognitive processes. One of the main tenets of this theory states that "learning involves the acquisition of abstract concepts that can be applied flexibly in a range of situations" (McLeod, 2010). Multipotentiality, in essence, touches on all four stages in the experiential learning cycle as a student works with their advisor or professor.

Kolb – Learning Styles

CONCRETE EXPERIENCE
(doing / having an experience)

ACTIVE EXPERIMENTATION
(planning / trying out what you have learned)

REFLECTIVE OBSERVATION
(reviewing / reflecting on the experience)

ABSTRACT CONCEPTUALISATION
(concluding / learning from the experience)

- **CONCRETE EXPERIENCE**
  (doing/having an experience)

  Multipotentialites are actively completing experiences across their multiple interests. A concrete experience, to them, is any completion of activities, regardless of whether or not it adheres to their declared major.

- **REFLECTION OBSERVATION**
  (reviewing/reflecting on the experience)

  With the guidance of an advisor, students reflect in some way on their experiences. Multipotentialites directly benefit from this relationship because they can reflect on how their interests might fit into one of the four aforementioned muiltpitentialites approaches to arranging their work.

- **ABSTRACT CONCEPTUALIZATION**
  (concluding/learning from teh experience)

  After reflecting on their experiences, multipotentialites can begin to determine which of the four work arrangements would best fit their career goals. The approach they choose will support them in fully learning from the experience.

- ## ACTIVE EXPERIMENTATION

  (planning/trying out what you have learned)

  Multipotentialites now have the ability to move forward with one of the approaches, applying it directly to their careers. They can actively test out what they want to do.

Whether it is an internship, co-op, post-graduate career, or something else, these students now have a better understanding of how their experiences, and multiple passions, can tie together to become successful and meaningful work. By listening to our students, and not forcing them to limit their passions to find a career, we let them explore all aspects of their happiness and well-being. As Arthur Golden once said, "A mind troubled by doubt cannot focus on the course to victory." Those plagued by the challenges of multipotentiality can't focus on their course to victory unless we give them the tools to do so.

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Piloting a Theory-Driven, Applied Measure of Community Partner Participation and Impact

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As community-engaged pedagogy becomes more popular, ensuring meaningful community partner impact should be a priority. As higher education foundations ask universities to report their community impact (i.e. Campus Compact, Carnegie Foundation), current gaps in assessing community impact take on new significance.

In its 2015 classification and reclassification letters, the Carnegie Foundation recognized the need to better measure community empowerment. They urged universities to continue developing assessments that capture *community perceptions* of university engagement; how community engagement affects students, faculty, the community, and the university; and provides ongoing

feedback mechanisms for partnerships ("Reclassification letter", 2015). The Foundation's advice was not surprising given their definition of "community engagement." Specifically, they define community engagement as "collaboration between higher education institutions and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity" (Carnegie Community Engagement Classification, 2016). Their definition clearly corresponds to recent academic research about community-university partnerships. Jacoby (2015) and Reardon (2006) emphasize the need for empowering, reciprocal partnerships. That is, partnerships cannot be one-sided or only student-focused; they must also be meaningful for the community.

Measuring Ongoing Perceptions and Effects of Partnerships

The Carnegie Foundation's (2015) classification letter identified three critical factors missing from partnership assessment: community partner perceptions, effect on communities, and ongoing evaluation. Conceptually, these factors parallel Miron and Moely's (2006) definitions of "agency benefit" and "agency voice." Agency benefit, or the economic and social gains the community partner (agency) makes through university partnerships, corresponds to community effects. Agency voice, or level of community partner involvement in a project's planning and implementation, is compatible with community partner perceptions. Additionally, effective interpersonal relationships contribute to increased agency voice.

The current preliminary pilot study focuses on reliably and validly measuring agency voice by comparing faculty and community partner attitudes toward community-engaged projects. If university-community partnerships are mutually beneficial and empowering, reported faculty and community partner attitudes should be positive (above the scale's midpoint) and aligned (not statistically different from one another). Developing a measure of agency voice is a first step toward establishing a longitudinal survey that will include measures related to agency benefit and student learning outcomes. The ultimate goal is to measure the university-community partnership outcomes requested by the Carnegie Foundation

by providing a concise, effective tool for university administrators charged with assessing community-engaged projects and enhancing community engagement programs.

Why measure attitudes?

Psychologically speaking, perceptions are sensory intake related to environmental stimuli. Individuals constantly perceive their surroundings and their interactions with those surroundings. Therefore, measuring perceptions requires tapping into individuals' responses about different objects or experiences in their social and environmental interactions. One fundamental social-psychological measure attitude, or the overall, conscious evaluation of a stimulus, is comprised of smaller evaluations related to stimulus characteristics (Eagly & Chaiken, 1998; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). While the final evaluation may be good or bad, stimulus characteristics contribute to the evaluation. In the university-community partnership context, the partnership functions as the stimulus that produces partners' attitudes. Those involved in a partnership evaluate it by reporting how good or bad the partnership was based upon different characteristics of their experiences.

Capturing partners' attitudes toward their partnership can be achieved by using semantic differentials, or bipolar sets of adjectives (i.e., fun—boring, exciting—dull) that align with characteristics of the university-community partnership. Semantic differentials are frequently and reliably used to measure attitudes and their underlying components (Ajzen, 2005; Osgood, Suci, & Tannenbaum, 1957). Comparing attitudes toward a community-engaged project from different constituent groups (community partners and faculty) provides insights into strengths and weaknesses of community-engaged programs at a university.

Method

Study Design and Procedures

Using a posttest, repeated-measure survey design, faculty member and community partner attitudes were obtained. During final exam week at a midwestern university, faculty and community partner participants in known community-

engaged partnerships (N = 12) were recruited to complete a questionnaire administered via the Qualtrics online survey platform (Qualtrics, 2016). IRB-approved human subjects protocols were followed. Participants were emailed the questionnaire's hyperlink along with a letter of instruction asking them to complete the questionnaire within 10 days. Participation was voluntary and responses were kept anonymous and confidential. Other data were collected and will be reported elsewhere.

Measures

Building upon Miron & Moely's (2006) conceptualization of agency voice, faculty member and community organization reported their attitudes toward three characteristics of participating in mutually beneficial, empowered community-engaged projects. Using 7-point semantic differentials, faculty and community partners evaluated community partner contribution, project goal achievement, and project benefit. Community partners reported their attitudes toward their participation, whether the project met their organization's goals, and whether the project benefitted the organization. Faculty reported their attitudes toward the community partner's participation, whether the project met their pedagogical goals, and whether the project benefitted their class (see Appendix A.)

Data Reduction and Analysis

Responses from community partners (n = 8) and faculty members (n = 4) along each of the characteristics were averaged. Some items were reverse scored so that a 1 indicated the most negative response (i.e., exclusive, empty, burdened) and a 7 indicated the most positive response (i.e., inclusive, full, freed). The larger the score, the more positive the participants' attitude is for an item or a scale. Internal consistency of all scales (partner contribution, $\alpha = .84$; goal achievement, $\alpha = .84$; project benefit, $\alpha = .88$) was acceptable. Item scores for each factor were averaged to create a scale for each factor. Because of the small sample size, differences between faculty and community partners were not statistically tested and only descriptive statistics were calculated.

Results

Although response rates for community partners (75%) and faculty (33%) are reasonable, the final sample size is admittedly low, which makes conducting statistical analyses inappropriate. However, the descriptive statistics reveal an initial understanding of differences between community partner and faculty attitudes toward partner contribution, project goal achievement, and project benefit.

Table 1.
Mean response to semantic differential items.

SCALE AND SEMANTIC DIFFERENTIAL	Community Partner		Faculty	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Participation				
Included—excluded	5.88	.83	5.25	1.26
Relevant—irrelevant	5.88	.83	5.75	1.50
Purposeful—useless	5.75	.89	5.25	2.06
Beneficial—detrimental	5.75	.89	6.00	1.55
Full—empty	5.00	1.85	3.25	1.70
Valued—ignored	6.25	.89	6.25	.96
Goal achievement				
Full—empty	5.13	1.36	5.00	2.16
Helpful—harmful	5.75	.89	5.75	1.23
Easy—difficult	4.63	.60	4.50	2.38
Competent—incompetent	5.50	1.51	5.75	1.26
Efficient—inefficient	5.00	1.51	3.25	2.21
Inclusive—exclusive	5.25	1.39	4.25	2.50
Project benefit				
Helped—harmed	5.25	1.49	6.50	.58
Increased—decreased	5.25	.89	5.50	1.73
Empowered—weakened	5.38	1.19	6.50	.58
Productive—idle	5.00	1.07	6.50	.58
Excited—bored	5.50	1.31	6.75	.50
Freed—burdened	4.36	1.60	3.75	1.89
Participation scale mean	**5.75**	**1.24**	**5.30**	**1.02**
Goal achievement scale mean	**5.20**	**1.24**	**4.75**	**1.31**
Project benefit scale mean	**5.13**	**1.11**	**5.92**	**.57**

Understandably, because of the sample size, some items vary widely. Any conclusions drawn from this data are tenuous; however, some differences between community partners and faculty merit consideration. Among overall attitudes toward partner participation in a project and whether a project met each group's goals, community partners responded more positively than faculty. Conversely, community partners reported less positive attitudes than faculty in terms of project impact. Because scale means were above the scale's midpoint, it appears that community partners were satisfied that their voice was heard. Faculty did not report being less satisfied with community partner participation and project goal achievement, but their attitude was positive and scale averages were well above the midpoint.

As indicated by average responses to some scale items, faculty was dissatisfied with certain characteristics of each factor. Expectations about partner participation (m = 3.25), the efficiency with which goals were met (m = 3.25), and how freeing the project was (m = 3.75) were below or just above the item's midpoint. This suggests that faculty may find engaging partner voice difficult or a more time-intensive part of the project. When designing a class, faculty tends to have full autonomy. Working with a community partner may impinge on that autonomy.

One characteristic that faculty and community partners may report is how burdened they feel by a particular project. While the faculty's average response was just above the midpoint on the freed—burdened item, community partners' average response (m = 4.38) was the lowest of all the items. It appears both groups find project collaboration to be taxing. This could be the result of limited time and human resources, or unfamiliar projects and collaborations. Or, it could indicate the difficulty of developing projects that utilize faculty and partners' skillsets or expertise.

Regardless, future versions of the posttest need to be more widely distributed. The sample size must be larger so that more nuanced statistical analyses can be conducted. Differences between groups should be tested,

as well as possibly controlling for other mediating variables. Time spent on a project or number of previous projects a community partner or faculty member has participated in may impact their reported attitudes.

Next Steps

The current pilot study is a small step toward understanding community impact and engagement and how to overcome barriers to developing ideal university-community partnerships. By operationalizing practical, real-world assessment recommendations with theoretically and methodologically sound measures, several constituent groups can benefit from the measure. Community partners can enhance their voice by reporting about specific partnerships, while community-engaged scholars can assess their own or their university's partnerships. Administrators, too, can utilize data to improve such work and to report community impact more clearly to external agencies or foundations.

The most obvious next step is to recruit more participants to the study. The data reported here are preliminary and are clearly not generalizable. While they provide initial insights into community impact, it is difficult to extrapolate patterns of response or tests for significant differences between groups. The data's strength is its theoretical framework and development.

This pilot study attempted to ascertain whether capturing attitudes toward a community-university partnership would inform academic and applied understandings of community impact. Adding this measure to ongoing, longitudinal assessment efforts has the potential to provide all constituents groups with a snapshot of attitudes toward community-university partnerships along with specific criteria through which partnerships can be improved. Community partners, engaged faculty, and university administrators would benefit from refining their practices, aligning their vision and values, and increasing their understanding of incentives for and barriers to investing resources in a community-engaged project.

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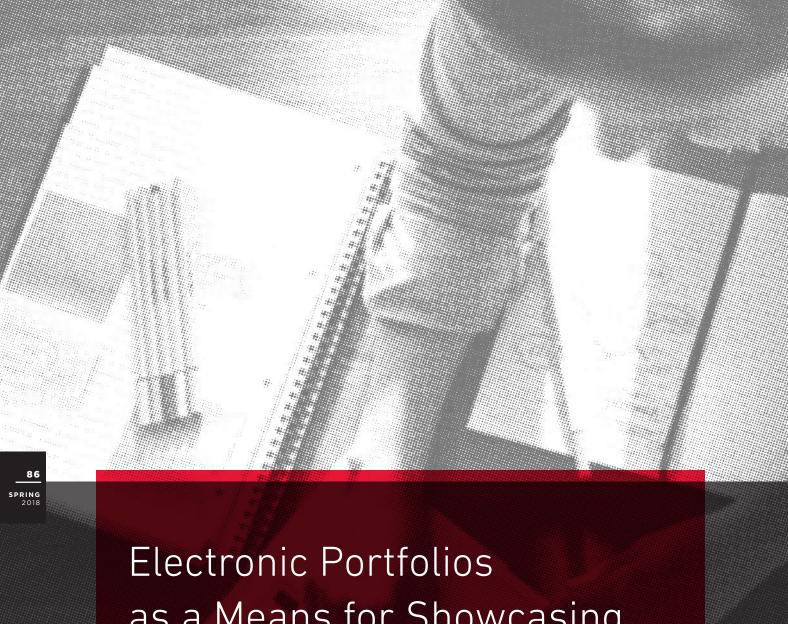
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Appendix A.

Semantic differential items

Factors of agency voice	Prompt	Semantic differentials
Community partner participation	How did you feel about your (community partner's) participation in this partnership?	Included—excluded Relevant—irrelevant Purposeful—useless Beneficial—detrimental Full—empty Valued—ignored
Project goals	My goals for this partnership were met in a ___ manner.	Full—partial Helpful—harmful Easy—difficult Competent—incompetent Inefficient—efficient Inclusive—exclusive
Project benefit for organization/class	My organization/class was ___ by this project.	Helped—harmed Increased—decreased Empowered—weakened Productive—idle Excited—bored Freed—burdened

Electronic Portfolios as a Means for Showcasing Student Learning and Professional Development

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What are ePortfolios?

For college students, eportfolios represent a collection selected work to illustrate their skills and serve as a reflection tool examining their learning. ePortfolio content is most commonly showcased through the medium of a web-based content management system (CMS) such as WordPress, Wix, or Weebly. Students' selected work can be text-based or presented using a variety of multimedia elements like graphics, photographs, audio and/or movies. ePortfolios can be built and maintained for shorter-term purposes (e.g., specific learning experiences, college courses) or longitudinal projects (e.g., sequential term courses, multi-year academic programs). >>>

How do ePortfolio Methods Impact the Student Learning Experience?

ePortfolio methods for examining student learning are becoming increasingly more common in higher education settings due to the versatility of the platforms for conveying course content. Reardon, Lumsden, and Meyer (2004) utilized eportfolios to showcase student learning throughout students' undergraduate experiences. The researchers claimed that eportfolios are important for job seekers to "show examples of their work to potential employers and to document accomplishments included on the resumes" (p. 369). Further, these researchers postulated that eportfolios can promote "student learning, career preparation, and employment" while serving as a "high-visibility program to positively support student recruitment and retention" (p. 372).

Within eportfolio literature, a small number of studies employed eportfolios in professional development programs oriented towards aiding students in a career advancement process. One study focused on the utility of an eportfolio system in a first-year engineering course (Carroll, Markauskaite, & Calvo, 2007) while another noted how graduate students found that eportfolios "facilitated reflection on their professional practice, especially in relation to the competencies they had developed" (Wakimoto & Lewis, 2014, p. 55). Another series of studies focused on advanced engineering students completing eportfolio preparation workshops towards the end of their collegiate experience (Sattler & Turns, 2015; Kilgore, Sattler, & Turns, 2013). Results demonstrated how eportfolios facilitated student professional development through content inclusion and reflection. Few studies present evidence on how students are encouraged to actively transform their experiences around identified outcomes to better articulate their learning.

Utilizing ePortfolios to Facilitate Student Professional Development

Researchers at the University of Cincinnati promoted essential student learning outcomes through the medium of an introductory level professional development course called *Introduction to Cooperative Education*. Introduction to Cooperative Education was selected as the appropriate course to promote student learning outcomes due to the course serving as the gateway to cooperative education work experiences for undergraduate students. The learning outcomes emphasized in this study were derived from the Association of American Colleges and Universities' (AAC&U) Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) Report (Association of American Colleges & Universities, & National Leadership Council, 2007). An eportfolio assignment structure was incorporated into one section of Introduction to Cooperative Education for one academic following AAC&U's suggestion of eportfolio integration as a best practice for examining student learning.

The study was comprised of first-year, primarily baccalaureate degree-seeking students in the information technology major. ePortfolios were used in the course as a repository for student assignments, a reflection tool, and a means for students to project an electronic identity to external constituents (e.g., peers, faculty, prospective employers). Assignments associated with the eportfolio course were thoughtfully designed

to address two specific learning outcomes from the AAC&U VALUE Project: *teamwork* and *written communication*. The identified learning outcomes were validated as essential undergraduate student learning outcomes through the administration of an industry survey given to employer-partners associated with the cooperative education program.

The researchers designed assignments that allowed students to reflect on their competence within areas of teamwork and written communication. The researchers utilized AAC&U's feedback rubrics (i.e. metarubrics) for teamwork and written communication to provide constructive insight into students' illustration of these competencies. Feedback was provided to students at the conclusion of each assignment through a rubric evaluation administered by peers and a rubric evaluation administered by the researchers. The researchers employed a program evaluation methodology, whereby the goal was to evaluate students' use of eportfolios throughout the program-specific course.

Can Structured ePortfolio Assignments Enhance Student Confidence?

The researchers desired to test whether eportfolios could be used as a tool to enhance student confidence with respect to teamwork and written communication. The researchers created pre-test and post-test student confidence surveys to determine students' self-perceived levels of confidence with respect to the aforementioned essential student learning outcomes. In between the tests, researchers employed the eportfolio assignments and feedback

methodology through the use of rubrics. Survey results indicated that participating students reported higher levels of confidence with respect to the essential learning outcomes of teamwork and written communication following the conclusion of the coordinated assignments and feedback implementation through eportfolio rubrics.

ePortfolio Impact on Teaching

The results of the present study suggest that the incorporation of eportfolios in higher education assignments may offer legitimate benefits to students. Specifically, they may enhance student confidence in numerous, valued career education competencies. Knowing that structured eportfolio assignments could contribute to enhanced confidence levels in students is noteworthy on several fronts. As educators, a central role should be the continued preparation of students for their inevitable transitions to the world of work. Teaching methodologies that contribute to this effort should be prioritized whenever possible. Utilizing eportfolios as a reflection tool to showcase student learning is a principal example of furthering student development in the career education space. Further, as first and second year students often struggle to feel self-assured prior to professional experiences (e.g., co-ops, internships) educators should be aware of those practices that could contribute to greater student confidence and self-efficacy. Perhaps the use of eportfolios and assignments aimed at essential student learning outcomes from AAC&U could be used to enhance student confidence and self-efficacy in preparation for work placement experiences.

ePortfolios are unique in that there are endless possibilities regarding how they can be structured to deliver the same level of value to students and their instructors. These platforms should be used as a space to encourage free student expression as opposed to creating a prescriptive framework for their usage.

While the researchers in this study only examined two variables with respect to student confidence, these variables aligned directly with AAC&U employer-partners' desired student learning outcomes as well as the desired student learning outcomes of the research institution. Additional exploration of other AAC&U student learning outcomes would enhance the validity of this study and contribute to further research in the realm of eportfolio integration in professional development courses.

Recommendations for ePortfolio Implementation

For educators that have taught courses the same way for several years, the thought of incorporating new technologies in the classroom can feel like a daunting task. However, there are rewarding benefits to pushing through some of this temporary discomfort. ePortfolios specifically provide an interactive, online space for students to share significant experiences and provide a digitized representation of their identities that are unlike traditional assignment platforms. Students that utilized eportfolios in this study reported they enjoyed having the ability to share assignment content and aesthetic features with their peers. Many of this sharing occurred during formalized workshop sessions in class; some of this occurred organically outside the traditional classroom environment as well.

It is recommended that a stable platform such as WordPress, Weebly, or Wix be utilized should educators consider eportfolio implementation. These existing platforms have incredibly user-friendly interfaces that simplify content manipulation for development purposes. Additionally, these platforms have free versions that will not impose unnecessary financial burdens on students or educators. Finally, these platforms are considered widely used content management systems across the globe. Some employer-partners within this study even reported their desire for student-candidates with content management system experience as a prerequisite to employment.

An additional recommendation for eportfolio integration in courses is that educators should encourage student creativity within their design, communication of assignments, and artifact (e.g. pictures, designs, videos) inclusion. ePortfolios are unique in that there are endless possibilities regarding how they can be structured to deliver the same level of value to students and their instructors. These platforms should be used as a space to encourage free student expression as opposed to creating a prescriptive framework for their usage. Initially, students may feel some sense of dissonance regarding their freedom for expression, however, this dissonance should dissipate as feedback

is provided from the instructor and peers throughout the eportfolio development process.

Lastly, eportfolios should be seen as an opportunity for educators to provide validation to students regarding their expression of significant life experiences. Educators have a critical responsibility to provide validation to students in their personal learning process. It should be acknowledged that the sharing of life experiences and personal learning through a public medium suggests a degree of vulnerability and trust on behalf of students. Educators can use this opportunity as a chance to validate students as knowers, which is a critical component of the student development process (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004).

Conclusion

In an age where students in higher education possess extraordinary degrees of technical acumen, educators can make the intentional effort to incorporate some technological advancements into their teaching to provide a platform for assignment content, as well as a chance to promote fun, creativity and self-reflection. ePortfolio integration is one way that educators can make strides in this direction. Moreover, should eportfolio assignments be used as a tool to enhance student confidence with respect to course objectives or essential student learning outcomes, it can be presumed that educators are assisting students in a powerful develop-ment journey — one that contributes to their ability to succeed in work-integrated learning experiences and professions.

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3

THE THREE KEY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Vice President of Research and Development

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Over the course of my 30+ years in industrial Research and Development (R&D) I have recruited dozens of interns and new hires. I recruited for a global Fortune 500 consumer products company with billions of dollars in annual sales and for a small, start-up biotechnology company working off of venture capital funding. What I learned from these experiences is that the qualifications defining a successful candidate, whether an intern or a permanent employee, are the same regardless of company size, and they can be boiled down to the following three key questions:

1. *Do you know your stuff?*

2. *How do you solve problems?*

3. *Will you fit?*

While there are a myriad of ways to ask these questions, and even more ways to probe with follow-ups, they basically boil down to demonstrating three key competencies: Technical competence (Question 1), Creativity and the ability to learn (Question 2) and, the ability to work well with others (Question 3).

In this article, I provide my perspective on these questions and what an employer is looking for in the answers provided by prospective candidates.

DO YOU KNOW YOUR STUFF?
Demonstrating Technical Competence

If you are being recruited for a job as a chemist or biologist, for example, you had better come into a job interview knowing basic chemistry or biology. It would not be at all unusual for an interviewer to ask, "How would you make a 0.1 Molar, pH 5 phosphate buffer?" Or, "how would you determine the concentration of a dye in solution?" It's unlikely you will know the exact right answer. That's not important. What the interviewer is looking for is whether or not you have enough basic knowledge to know how to get the right answer… and saying, "I would look it up on Google" is NOT the right answer!

Here, a little background research on the candidates' part can be very helpful. What is the primary work of the employer? Have they published any technical papers, patents, or other information where they discuss test methods or explain how they gather data? Are they a highly technical company requiring in-depth expertise in specific areas like gene sequencing, bioinformatics, mass spectroscopy, etc., or, is their work more general requiring a broad technical background? Knowing the general technical areas where a company plays can help a prospective new hire prepare for the technical portion of the job interview.

I currently work for a company where the primary R&D focus is microbiology. When we interview candidates for R&D positions we skew our technical questions toward that discipline. If we are interviewing a microbiologist we may ask how they would go about enumerating a product claiming to contain certain types of bacteria. If we are interviewing a chemist, we may ask how they would determine the concentration of a particular analyte in a biological mixture. In neither case do we expect the candidate to know the exact right answer. What we want to see is if they can provide a

reasonably accurate technical description of how they would go about the task based on our expectation of what someone with academic training in microbiology or chemistry should know. We may follow up with more specific questions to probe the candidates' depth of knowledge in a given area or if we have doubts about basic technical competency.

For interns, the technical interview will likely be less rigorous. We understand that interns are still building their technical base and may have limited experience depending on where they are in their academic career or in the background experience they bring. When interviewing an intern, I tailor Question 1 according to their academic background. For example, for a sophomore with one year of general chemistry classes and laboratory experience, I may ask "what is the proper way to neutralize an acid?" For a candidate with two or three years of Biology classes and associated laboratories, I might ask, "What methods are commonly used for enumerating bacteria?" The point is to see if the candidate has basic technical competency commensurate with their academic training and the requirements of the job.

While some companies live and die by technical competency, in my opinion it is the least critical of the three basic competencies. If a candidate has a demonstrated ability to learn (Question #2), and is enthusiastic about learning new things, they can acquire technical competence on the job. We can teach you what you need to know.

However, those job candidates demonstrating strong technical competence in the interview process will generally have an advantage when it comes time to make a hiring decision assuming they also hit the mark on the other two questions. Which brings us to…

HOW DO YOU SOLVE PROBLEMS?
Demonstrating Creativity and the Ability to Learn

Employers typically start recruiting for a position by looking for people with certain skills or technical expertise. Job postings will call for applicants with training and background in defined technical fields. This is based on the employer's assessment of the skill set required for the job and is often used as a quick screen to identify candidates for further consideration. Obviously, if a job requires a specific skill, say microbiology or gene sequencing, the employer only wants to see candidates with that skill set. However, it is not unusual for employers to recruit against a general technical background even though the specific job may not require that technical background per se. This is because the employer has a history of success recruiting candidates with training in a specific field. When I worked for Procter & Gamble (P&G), we often recruited chemical engineers for positions where the primary responsibility did not require a chemical engineering degree. However, historically, P&G had great success recruiting chemical engineers into the R&D organization so the assumption was that chemical engineering training provided a good base on which a new hire could build a successful R&D career.

In my case, I was trained as a physical chemist and my first job at P&G drew on that chemistry background. But, within a few years I was managing research programs on protein engineering and biotechnology. My physical chemistry training was not particularly helpful. However, what was helpful was knowing how to get answers to technical questions, knowing who to ask when I ran into technical problems, and building a network of technical experts that I could draw on as needed. In essence, it helped knowing how to solve a problem even though I may not have specific technical training in the area. In this case, the answer "I would start by looking at what's available on the web" is a perfectly acceptable way to begin finding solutions to problems outside your area of technical expertise.

In my current role, I am managing an R&D program in microbiology. I have no formal training in microbiology, so I read a number of textbooks to get familiar with the field. Then I went out and hired a very good microbiologist! This is an important point. Don't be afraid to acknowledge your technical gaps. If you don't have the knowledge, go find someone who does!

One of the ways I ask the question "How do you solve problems?" is by presenting a problem we have encountered in our work and asking the candidate how they would go about finding a solution. I am listening for two things in their answer. Does it make technical sense and is there an element of creativity? Years ago, during an interview with a freshly minted Ph.D., I described the problem we were having trying

to communicate benefits of a new technology to our marketing colleagues. She thought about it for a bit, asked some clarifying questions, and then proposed a set of simple "before-your-eyes" demos that could showcase the unique benefits of the technology. Her answer showed depth of technical thinking and creativity. She got the job.

Companies need people who can identify and then solve problems. People who have the ability to think analytically, perform under pressure, cope with complex situations, and produce work-able solutions. It is almost a certainty that, at some point, in any job you will run into a problem neither you nor your employer have encountered before. Identifying the problem and knowing how to solve it is the reason you are in the job in the first place. Employers want to make sure the people they hire have critical thinking and problem-solving skills that enable them to tackle these new, unexpected challenges. This is why problem-solving questions are such an important part of any interview. In my opinion, problem-solving and critical thinking are the most important skills a new hire offers an employer followed closely by…

WILL YOU FIT?
The Ability to Work Well with Others

One of the best hires I ever made was a recently graduated biologist who saw our fledgling basement start-up laboratory facilities and got excited by the future possibilities, not discouraged by the current limitations. That excitement spoke volumes about his passion and energy. I knew he would be a good fit for the job. "Fit" is a

significant factor when assessing potential new hires. The ability to fit the job requirements and corporate culture is critical to their success.

What does it mean to "fit?" It's a difficult concept to define. Fundamentally, it is the way things get done. It is the alignment between employee behavior and employer values and expectations. In the example above, I was looking for someone who could expand our internal R&D capabilities while working with a very limited budget. The job candidate was looking for a place where he could contribute immediately and leverage his technical skills to help grow the organization. It was a good fit!

In essence, for both the employer and prospective hire, the entire interview process is an attempt to determine fit. The employer is looking for fit against cultural elements like work dress, language, company history, daily work practices, and diversity. They are also making an overall assessment on less tangible elements of fit. Is this a person I want to work with? Will this person work well with the rest of the organization? The prospective hire, on the other hand, is trying to understand the company culture and determine if they will be comfortable working in that environment.

To help understand "fit" the interviewer may ask you to describe the work environment in which you are most productive. Do you prefer working alone or in teams? What management style enables your best work and effort? What are the important factors that must be present in the work environment for you to be successful? These questions are geared toward understand-

ing how you would fit within the specific corporate environment. How you answer these questions can be the deciding factor in whether or not you get an offer.

In trying to understand company culture and whether or not you would be comfortable working there, you should ask "fit" questions as well. Ask the interviewer what they enjoy the most about the company? What do they wish they could change? What is the company policy regarding flexible work hours? Is it possible to work from home? Ask those questions that are important to you when it comes to work environment. In my interview with P&G I asked about company dress. At that time, it was the norm for men to wear ties. My interviewer made it clear, that was the expectation and for years I wore a tie to work. Fortunately, over time P&G adopted a business casual dress-code that I found more comfortable.

Cultural fit matters. Employer and employee will be happier and more successful when there is a good match. When that is combined with technical competence and a demonstrated ability to learn and think critically, a prospective new hire has a very good chance of landing the job.

THE SAGE PROJECT: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE CITIES

Jessica A. Barlow // The Sage Project // San Diego State University

INTRODUCTION

Our society is faced with a number of increasingly unpredictable and critical challenges that require immediate and transformative solutions. Climate change and the associated loss of natural resources, financial stability, and habitability of communities across the planet are real and present challenges that must be addressed creatively and through interdisciplinary collaboration between local, regional, and federal governments, international organizations, and ordinary citizens. Perhaps now more than ever before, higher education has the responsibility >>>

to prepare our youth to tackle those challenges that are already present as well as those future challenges we have yet to predict (Warlick, 2012).

Learning a skill or professional trade in relevant disciplines, such as public administration, city planning, public health, and sustainability (to name just a few) can certainly help prepare those students who are specifically interested in addressing these challenges in society. However, *every* student that passes through higher education should be prepared to address the challenges of a world we cannot yet imagine. Through the general education of *all* our students by engaging them in high-impact practices, such as community engagement, undergraduate research, and international experiences (Brownell & Swaner, 2010), we invest in the critical thinking and problem solving skills they will need to address these challenges. This is a goal that many higher education institutions across the country are trying to achieve through the development of a variety of different programs and initiatives.

Our communities are challenged with great needs and limited resources; across the globe, they face the challenges of climate change, diminishing resources, and expanding populations. The local governments that serve our communities must balance their commitment to responding to effects of climate change without compromising their commitment to maintaining infrastructure and addressing the needs of residents, often on a restrictive budget. Most local governments lack the staff, resources, and access to cutting-edge research to creatively navigate this complicated balancing act.

AN EPIC MODEL OF CAMPUS-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

This is where partnerships between universities and local governments come in. Universities can contribute vast amounts of knowledge and resources towards our communities in a way that is transformative and immediately impactful. The Sage Project (sage.sdsu.edu) at San Diego State University (SDSU) is one such program, which is a replication of the University of Oregon's Sustainable City Year Program (SCYP) (Carlson, 2013; Schlossberg & Larco, 2013). The partnership model, now referred to as the "EPIC-N Model" (following from the Educational Partnerships for Innovation in Communities Network [EPIC-N]; more on this below), is being replicated across dozens of universities within the US and

now internationally. Below I highlight the basic structure of the model and how it is implemented at SDSU. Following that I describe the process that we followed to launch the Sage Project at SDSU.

In keeping with the EPIC-N Model, the Sage Project at SDSU is a yearlong partnership between the university and a local government that focuses on community engagement for sustainability. Specifically, our city partner provides a list of projects that address pressing economic, environmental, and/or social needs for the city, and these projects are matched with SDSU faculty and existing courses. SDSU students enrolled in these courses work with their instructors, the city partner staff, and community members to conduct research and propose recommendations, solutions, and new designs to help improve the livability of the community in a manner that is socially, fiscally, and environmentally sustainable. Ultimately, this helps our city partners accelerate their long-term goals.

Though partnerships between universities and local governments are not new, the EPIC-N Model is unique in a number of ways, most notably in terms of its scale and impact. In a given year, a partnership will tackle 10 to 15 projects and will include 20 to 30 courses, enrolling over 500 students. These students, who come from a variety of disciplines, dedicate tens of thousands of hours of effort toward projects in that single community. This scale of impact is typical for at least those programs at large universities, such as the University

of Oregon's SCYP program, the University of Iowa's Initiative for Sustainable Communities, the University of Minnesota's Resilient Communities Project, and SDSU's Sage Project. Programs may vary across institutions in terms of scale of impact, whereby smaller institutions may take on fewer projects (and therefore engage fewer faculty, classes, and students); the model is adoptable and adaptable according to the specific capacity of institutions and local governments.

The Sage Project follows 12 key tenets of the EPIC-N Model, detailed below, which contribute to the success and the sustainability of our program. (See also (Sustainable Cities Initiative, 2016).)

1. **IT IS A UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP.** SDSU is in a formal partnership with a local community, typically a city (though counties, transit districts, and school districts are also potential partners). The partnership involves effort and collaboration on specific projects that are identified by our city partner as high priority. Only those projects that have undergone an iterative "matchmaking" process between the city, Sage Project staff, and the participating faculty members are selected for the partnership. This iterative process ensures that the city partner's needs are met, but also that the work that is accomplished still aligns with the student learning outcomes for the participating classes.

2. IT USES EXISTING RESOURCES. The projects that are proposed by our city partner have already been identified by the city as high priority, and they are projects for which funds (general or grant) are already earmarked. Thus, the city is not expected to find extra funds to support work on lower priority needs. In addition, the projects are matched with faculty members at SDSU who are teaching existing courses that are already project-based. Thus, faculty members do not need to make changes to their teaching loads or even change the way they teach their courses.

3. IT IS SCALED FOR IMPACT. Rather than focus on a single project or engage a single class, our partnerships involve 10 to 15 projects in a given year. Twenty to 30 different classes across disciplines participate over the course of the year, and this involves dozens of faculty and hundreds of students. This ensures that the impact on both the community and our students is large and immediate.

4. FACULTY MEMBERS OPT IN. Only those faculty members at SDSU who are interested in participating in the partnership volunteer to do so. This allows for flexibility from one year to the next in terms of teaching assign-ments, project relevance, sabbaticals, and so on. The model is set up to be a "drop-in" for existing courses to make faculty participation easy – perhaps easier than not participating – because course work is centered on pre-estab-lished community projects.

5. COMMUNITY PARTNERS ARE IDENTIFIED THROUGH A SELECTION PROCESS. Each Sage Project partnership is established through a formal, competitive application process, whereby potential community partners submit a proposal with a list of proposed, high-priority projects. Each November, the Sage Project releases a formal request for proposals, and potential community partners submit proposals that include a list of potential projects to be tackled by faculty and the students in their courses. A review panel consisting of Sage Project staff, faculty, and one student evaluates the proposals for their feasibility, commitment to sustainability, and available resources. The community that submits the best proposal is selected as the city partner for the following academic year.

6. PROJECTS ARE IDENTIFIED THROUGH CONSENSUS BETWEEN THE UNIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY. Once a community partner has been selected through the process described above, there is an iterative matchmaking process where project goals and deliverables are further honed to ensure they meet the needs of both the community and the participating SDSU faculty and their courses. Specific deliverables are identified for each project and each participating course prior to the start of the academic year so that all parties are in agreement and are satisfied with the work that is to be accomplished. This is usually achieved through a series of in-person meetings, emails,

and/or phone calls between the city staff, Sage Project staff, and faculty members.

7. **SUSTAINABILITY, OR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SOCIAL GOOD, IS A CORE PRINCIPLE OF THE MODEL.** The projects proposed must address a pressing social, economic, and/or environmental issue that aims to enhance the resilience and livability of the community.

8. **STUDENTS ARE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN THE PROCESS.** SDSU students are actively and directly involved in the projects on a massive scale. Our students want the work they do to be relevant, impactful, and meaningful. Through this type of partnership, they have the opportunity to provide research, ideas, designs, and solutions that can directly benefit local communities through participation in high impact practices. This model thus engages more of our students, including those who are less likely to seek out these opportunities on their own and who are perhaps the most likely to benefit from such experiences.

9. **THE PROCESS IS MULTIDISCIPLINARY.** Multiple courses from disciplines across the SDSU campus participate in the partnership and collaborate on projects from unique perspectives that are not typically available to our community partners. The participating faculty members identify the specific deliverables that students in their respective courses will provide toward the project effort that can inform the city (e.g., as a final deliverable) and/or other courses that are participating in the project during the same semester or in the following semester. While logistically more challenging, this multidisciplinary effort is achieved through coordination with city staff, Sage Project staff, and participating faculty. In such cases, those who are part of the collaboration will conduct site visits together, attend one another's class presentations, and/or share research findings or design ideas with one another.

10. **THE FOCUS IS GEOGRAPHICALLY DEFINED.** The Sage Project focuses resources and energy to a specific, geographically-defined community, such as a city, a county, a Native American tribal government, a transit district, or a port district in the greater San Diego and US-Mexico border region.

11. **THE PARTNERSHIP IS TIME-LIMITED.** The partnership between SDSU and the community typically lasts for a single academic year, after which time we identify a new community partner for another yearlong partnership. Moreover, the projects proposed by the city must be able to be completed within a semester or across two semesters. Thus, specific deliverables are provided at the end of each semester at which time the project is considered complete, or the work completed during the fall semester can be continued by another class during the following spring semester.

12. THERE IS A MUTUAL INVESTMENT BY THE UNIVERSITY AND THE COMMUNITY.

Collaboration on such a massive scale requires a high level of coordination on both sides. Our community partners pay a fee for the partnership and commit staff time and effort toward the projects so that they have "skin in the game." This ensures that the participating SDSU faculty and students have the input and resources they need to complete the work. The partnership fee is what covers Sage Project program operations and sustains the program from year to year.

As part of the formal partnership process, a memorandum of understanding and associated project agreements and scopes of work are developed. As well, participating SDSU faculty members are provided with up to $1000 in instructional support for each participating course. Deliverables for our community partners are usually in the form of professionally prepared reports that are provided to the city at the end of the partnership. Typically, at the end of each term, a student is hired from each participating class to consolidate the work into a single report that has been developed carefully with input from the faculty member and Sage Project staff. In other cases, the deliverable may not be a report, but instead a more tangible product, such as a collection of geographic information system layers or specific wayfinding or gateway designs.

The EPIC-N Model is adoptable and adaptable in context-specific ways that have allowed for its successful replication at small liberal arts colleges and large public research institutions, in geographical areas that are highly urban to those that are more rural. Indeed, approximately 30 institutions across the US have replicated the EPIC-N Model, and it is gaining momentum internationally, with a program already established at Technion University in Israel (see, for instance, Carlson, 2013; Fernandez, Barlow, & Bloch, 2015, June; Franklin, Franklin, Barlow, Raulston, & Sebastian, 2014, June; Hartley, 2016; Maynard, 2016, September; Schlossberg, 2016, September; "Smart Communities Initiative working on projects for downtown Lenoir City," 2016; Strandberg, 2015; "Universities lend a hand with sustainability," 2016). Specific funding varies across programs, and is dependent on available resources, the number of projects, and the size of the participating community partners. In any type of partnership, however, it is crucial that the community partner make a significant financial investment to ensure their involvement in the projects.

THE SAGE PROJECT REPLICATION: HOW WE LAUNCHED OUR OWN EPIC-N PROGRAM AT SDSU

The Sage Project evolved from an earlier model aimed at infusing sustainability throughout the curriculum. The Sage Curriculum Project, as it was briefly called, was a university workshop series at SDSU

that helped faculty members identify ways they could incorporate concepts of sustainability into their courses regardless of the discipline. Geoffrey Chase, who was the Dean of the Division of Undergraduate Studies at the time, introduced this workshop to the SDSU campus. Chase had created the Ponderosa Project at Northern Arizona University, which had been replicated across universities through train-the-trainer workshops (Chase & Rowland, 2004), and then brought that model to SDSU. After offering this workshop for several years at SDSU, the number of attendees began to decline and we began to search for other ways to engage faculty from across the campus who were interested in sustainability.

Around that same time, we learned of the University of Oregon's SCYP and invited Marc Schlossberg, Co-Founder and Co-Director of SCYP (along with Nico Larco), to SDSU so that the campus and community stakeholders could learn more about SCYP. This was critical for attracting interest and buy-in from potential community partners and launching our pilot program, and the result of the presentation was a strong interest from the city manager's office of the City of National City. To further pursue the possibility of launching such a program at SDSU, Mariah Hudson-Dula (the campus sustainability coordinator at the time) and I attended the annual Sustainable City Year Conference at the University of Oregon in April 2013. This annual conference provides training, resources, and support for universities

that have launched, are in the process of launching, or wish to learn how to launch an EPIC-N program at their own institutions. We also invited Brad Raulston, Executive Director of Development for the City of National City, to accompany us to this conference, which was critical to the successful launch of the Sage Project. The annual conference provides specific guidelines for launching an EPIC-N program in a context-specific way. Attendees from both sides of the equation (universities and local governments) learn how to get a partnership off the ground. They are better able to understand the value that such partnerships provide to cities, and gain a better understanding of how universities operate as well. This workshop helps to bridge the two sides for mutual understanding and a common language.

While at the conference, the three of us began brainstorming potential projects that we could tackle for the City of National City, and we created a list of 10 potential disciplines and faculty members at SDSU that might fit well with these projects. Upon return to San Diego, we sent an email announcement to all campus faculty members about the launch of the partnership and the opportunity to participate. We had hoped to receive enough interest to get about five classes involved for the fall semester. In fact, we received an overwhelming response from over 30 different faculty members – many on the same day that the message was sent (in mid-June, well after the summer had begun)! So many faculty members

were interested that the five-course pilot year exploded into a full-scale partnership involving 15 projects, 33 faculty members, 30 courses from 17 disciplines, enrolling nearly 1,000 students.

We focused on projects that included redesigning streets in the downtown/civic center of the city, creating sustainable development solutions for city parks, creating the city's long-range property management plan, designing a wayfinding system for the city, designing branding for the city's distinct neighborhoods, evaluating industry and freeway impact on air quality and noise pollution, developing of a disaster preparedness and response plan, proposing budget solutions in anticipation of a possible loss of local sales tax, and recommending ways to enhance programs and services for seniors. Undergraduate and graduate students from across the SDSU campus participated in the partnership. Disciplines included anthropology; audiology; business of craft beer; city planning; civil engineering; communication; construction engineering; finance; geography; graphic design; homeland security; international securities and conflict resolution; marketing; political science; public administration; public health; and speech, language and hearing sciences. Refer to Table 1 for a list of courses, disciplines, and projects associated with the first year of the program.

While overwhelming, this scale of engagement created incredible momentum that attracted the attention of the California State University Chancellor's Office, other high-level campus administrators, faculty, students, and alumni, as well as the university's marketing and communications department, the *San Diego Union-Tribune*, other news organizations, other local communities, and other universities during that pilot year. This attention created incredible momentum for the program that energized city staff and councilmembers and drew more faculty interest. Students began contacting us to find out what other opportunities there were for them to get involved with the partnership with National City. This momentum helped move the program along into the following year.

As part of the partnership with the City of National City, we agreed to partner for two years (rather than one) so that we could further evaluate how the model could be implemented locally. This gave us a full year to identify key faculty who would likely want to be involved in the program from year to year; it allowed us to better understand the cost of running the program; and it helped us to better understand local city government. The two-year partnership with the City of National City ended with a total of 18 projects completed, involving 55 courses (30 the first year, 25 the second) taught by 35 different faculty members from 24 different disciplines and nearly 2,000 students. Some projects, such as the Marina District, Craft Beer Industry, and

Table 1. Courses, Disciplines, and Projects for the 2013-2014 Academic Year

Course No.	Title	Discipline/Department	Project
ANTH402	Honors Dynamics of Biocultural Diversity	Anthropology	Corner Store Project
ANTH531	Methods In Applied Anthropology	Anthropology	Sage Project Partnership Documentation
ART341	Graphic Design II	Graphic Design	Neighborhood Branding
ART454	Environmental Graphic Design	Graphic Design	Wayfinding System
ART541	Graphic Design IV	Graphic Design	Branding
AUD899	Doctoral Project (Fall)	Speech, Language, & Hearing Sciences	Port Industry and Freeway Mitigation
AUD899	Doctoral Project (Spring)	Speech, Language, & Hearing Sciences	Port Industry and Freeway Mitigation
CB003	Marketing of Craft Beer	Business of Craft Beer	Craft Beer Industry
CIVE495	Capstone Design Project (Fall)	Civil, Construction, & Environmental Engineering	Various
CIVE495	Capstone Design Project (Spring)	Civil, Construction, & Environmental Engineering	Downtown Green Streets
COMM721	Seminar in Health Communication	Communication	Corner Store Project
CONE301	Construction Ethics Law & Contracts	Civil, Construction, & Environmental Engineering	Sustainable Development
CP670	History of Urban Planning	City Planning	Various
CP700	Urban Design & Land Use Planning Studio	City Planning	Marina District
FIN498	Investigation & Report	Finance	Property Management Plan
GEOG354	Geography Of Cities (Fall, sect. 1)	Geography	Sustainable Development
GEOG354	Geography Of Cities (Fall, sect. 2)	Geography	Sustainable Development
GEOG354	Geography Of Cities (Spring)	Geography	Port Industry and Freeway Mitigation
GEOG572	Land Use Analysis	Geography	Marina District
HSEC602	Sem. in Science Tech. & Homeland Security	Homeland Security	Disaster Preparedness and Response
ISCOR310	Our Global Future (Fall)	International Securities & Conflict Resolution	Kimball Park
ISCOR310	Our Global Future (Spring, sect. 1)	International Securities & Conflict Resolution	Kimball Park
ISCOR310	Our Global Future (Spring, sect. 2)	International Securities & Conflict Resolution	Kimball Park
MKTG371	Consumer/Buyer Behavior	Marketing	Corner Store Project
MKTG372	Retail Marketing Methods	Marketing	Craft Beer Industry
PA350	Contemporary Urban Issues	Public Administration	Various
PA660	Administration & Public Policy Development	Public Administration	Budget Solutions
PH632	Air Quality	Public Health	Port Industry and Freeway Mitigation
POLS422	Urban Politics	Political Science	Property Management Plan
SLHS580	Communication Processes & Aging	Speech, Language, & Hearing Sciences	Senior Center

Branding projects, continued across the two years. Other projects, such as the Corner Store and Wayfinding projects, were completed the first year; the second year included addition of Homelessness, Strategic Planning, and Public Records Act projects, to name just a few. Similarly, 12 faculty members participated across both years, while 11 participated in the first year only and 12 participated in the second year only. Faculty engagement was (and continues to be) dependent on the nature of the projects and faculty teaching assignments.

We held our Sage Project Symposium in April of 2014 and again in 2015, which included celebratory remarks by SDSU Provost Nancy Marlin (in 2014) and SDSU President Elliot Hirshman (in 2015) and City of National City Mayor Ron Morrison, among others. These remarks were then followed by a poster symposium where approximately 30 different presentations were made by students who had participated in Sage Project courses. Reporters from the *San Diego Union-Tribune*, Univision, and SDSU's marketing and communication department covered the event. A highly-popular video was also created to highlight particular efforts in the National City Marina District (Chatowsky, 2014). The video features footage of a visit made by US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Chief Administrator Gina McCarthy, who came to National City to specifically learn about the Sage Project and our partnership with the city.

Since our partnership with National City, we have taken on projects in partnership with the Cities of Santee, San Diego, Tijuana, and, most recently, Lemon Grove. Projects with Santee, San Diego, and Tijuana were different in that they happened simultaneously and on a smaller scale during the 2015-2016 academic year. That year, the original plan was to have a full yearlong partnership with the City of Santee; however, leadership changes and budgetary cutbacks necessitated an unfortunate and last-minute scaling back of the partnership to just two projects: mapping of park assets, storm drains, sidewalks, and pedestrian ramps; and assessing water quality along the San Diego River. As mentioned, Sage Project operations are supported by the fee paid by the community partner. With so few projects, funding was not sufficient to sustain the program. Thus, to keep momentum over the course of that year, we took on individual projects through partnerships with the Cities of San Diego (focusing on homelessness) and Tijuana (addressing park improvements in underserved areas). Program operations were further supported through those partnership projects as well as through one-time funds provided by the university. However, because the work was diffused across these different communities, our presence and impact were not as apparent. Fewer people from the respective communities were aware of the partnerships, and fewer city staff and community members from each partnership were involved. This attests to the importance of scale of the EPIC-N Model.

As of the 2016-2017 academic year, we have launched a yearlong partnership with the City of Lemon Grove. Projects include addressing homelessness outreach resources; parks and recreation programming; place-making and tactical urbanism; image development, branding, and gateway improvements; infrastructure maintenance; and public art. We are also assisting the city with their climate action planning process in collaboration with the United Nations (UN) Habitat program by using their Guiding Principles (UN-Habitat, 2015) Toolkit. This collaboration came about through efforts to promote the EPIC-N Model internationally, and will be discussed further below.

In addition to our partnership with the City of Lemon Grove during the 2016-2017 academic year, we are continuing our collaboration with the City of Tijuana on the park restoration project, referred to as *Comuniparques*. The goal of this project is to improve the safety, accessibility, and environmental sustainability of parks in underserved areas of Tijuana. Geography, graphic design, and Latin American studies students from SDSU are collaborating with one another and with the City of Tijuana, other university students in Tijuana, and community members to develop park designs and programming that help to maintain the parks and the community investment in them for the long-term. Key stakeholders and community partners involved in this project currently include the Sage Project at SDSU; the Department of Environmental Protection for the City of Tijuana; Ecoparque, which is a project of El Colegio de la Frontero Norte (El Colef); the San Diego Padres Foundation; Universidad Autónoma de Baja California (UABC); Pro-Salud; and Universidad de las Californias Internacional (UDCI). Together, we work directly or indirectly with community members and leaders at each park location to determine how best to improve the individual parks in a manner that is socially, fiscally, and environmentally sustainable. There are 13 parks in total, and we have collaborated on three parks thus far. An anthology featuring a collection of chapters written by different stakeholders in this project will be published and will include two chapters contributed by Sage Project students, faculty, and staff (De La Parra & Patrón Soberano, forthcoming).

Crossing the international border creates additional logistical challenges, as all who cross the border must have a valid passport or visa. For those students who are unable to cross, alternative options must be provided to them. Fortunately, not all projects require that students physically visit the partnering community, though doing so tends to make the experience more meaningful for the students and faculty. Moreover, international partnerships also have the advantage of giving students international experiences that meet degree requirements for some majors at SDSU. Thus far, SDSU's Sage Project is the only EPIC-N program that has created an international partnership.

The Sage Project at SDSU is fortunate to be located in a highly urban area. There are 18 incorporated cities within San Diego County, all of which are within an hour's commute from SDSU. Our hope is that we have the opportunity to partner with all 18 municipalities, perhaps more than once; however, we do not wish to limit ourselves to just those 18 cities. There is the possibility of partnering with unincorporated towns throughout San Diego County, as well as further afield, with cities in neighboring counties, Native American tribal governments, and with other border cities in Mexico. Partnerships with such entities could create logistical challenges due to distance, but this is an issue that other EPIC-N programs in more rural locations overcome on an annual basis.

IMPACT: STORIES OF SAGE PROJECT SUCCESS

Since the fall of 2013, the Sage Project at SDSU has worked with five community partners on 37 different projects. Our campus-wide engagement has included 46 faculty members from 28 different disciplines, 110 courses, and nearly 3,000 students. Together, we estimate that these students have dedicated over 150,000 hours of effort toward local communities since the launch of our program in 2013. Again, these hours of effort are part of students' overall effort in their courses, as required by the projects that are built into their coursework. Moreover, while the number of faculty members (and therefore

courses) participating each year has remained relatively steady, there is a growing cohort of faculty members that are interested in participating in the Sage Project, and several of them elect to participate each year. We make efforts to recruit new faculty participants through SDSU's new faculty orientation, email announcements, and presentations at SDSU's Center for Teaching and Learning luncheons. Each year, the number of faculty members and courses that participate is dependent on the number and types of projects proposed by our city partner, as well as the faculty members' teaching assignments, as mentioned above. As the program grows, so will the number of faculty members and courses that participate.

We launched the Sage Project in the fall of 2013, and I have served as the primary person overseeing the entire program, though I receive assistance of the Division of Undergraduate Studies resource coordinator (to manage budget needs) and the input and support of the dean's office. As director of the Sage Project, I have a half-time buyout from my tenured position with the School of Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences. Over the last three years, our program has expanded to include a graduate student assistant at 10 to 20 hours per week, a graphic design intern at 10 hours per week, and a social media intern at 5 to 10 hours per week. As of the 2016-2017 academic year, we have hired a program administrator to help manage day-to-day

program operations. In addition to these staff members, we regularly hire report writers from each participating class to consolidate the students' work into professional reports that serve as the official deliverables for the city partner.

Our program has enjoyed a great deal of success, media attention, and recognition, not only locally, but also nationally and internationally as part of our efforts to help spread the EPIC-N Model. Since we first launched the program, the Sage Project has been featured in numerous news stories through the *SDSU NewsCenter* (Elko, 2015; Esterbrooks, 2016; "High-Stakes Learning," 2013; Jacobs, 2013, 2014; "Music Education," 2015; White, 2016), *360 Magazine* (SDSU alumni magazine; Geraghty, 2014), and *The Daily Aztec* (SDSU student newspaper; Burkhart, 2013; Navarro, 2014; Valdez, 2014), as well as the *San Diego Union-Tribune* (Pearlman, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c; Rowe, 2014a, 2014b; Sampite-Montecalvo, 2013, 2014; Warth, 2015a, 2015b, 2016), *Uniradio Informa* ("Ayuntamiento Fomenta Conciencia Ambiental," 2016; Merlo, 2015), *San Diego Red* ("Ayuntamiento Lanza el Programa 'Comuniparques'," 2016; "Municipio Lanza Programa," 2015), *Diario Tijuana* (Santillán, 2015), *East County Magazine* (Goetz, 2016), and *West Coaster* (Quintero, 2014), plus newsletters and blogs of other EPIC-N programs, the EPIC Network, and the EPA ("Universities lend a hand with sustainability," 2016). These laudatory stories have brought

positive attention to SDSU and the partner cities and have garnered interest in the program from potential community partners.

Still, recruiting new community partners requires ongoing effort, such as regular contact with city managers throughout the county, presentations at meetings of the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) and at conferences and community events. These efforts are critical to maintaining interest in and drawing further attention to the program. In addition, we work with the university's marketing and communications department to send out press releases announcing new partnerships, our annual request for proposals, and our annual symposium. We also actively promote our program through our newsletter, *Sage Words*, as well as through our website (sage.sdsu.edu) and social media, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube.

We have also received awards and recognition for the program that help further our efforts. We received an award from the Aztec Parents Fund to support our collaboration with A Reason To Survive, a non-profit organization in National City, so that SDSU music students could provide violin lessons to at-risk youth ("Music Education," 2015). This was later supported by a grant from the Parker Foundation that has allowed the partnership to expand. The National City Chamber of Commerce nominated SDSU for the Green Business Award in 2015 for their

partnership with National City through the Sage Project. That same year, the Chamber nominated the Sage Project for the Community Leader Award. Finally, I was honored to be awarded an SDSU President's Leadership Fund Faculty and Staff Excellence Award, which provided additional monetary support for Sage Project program operations.

For our students, participating in a course that is part of the Sage Project partnership is often impactful enough that they will list such participation on their resumes and LinkedIn profiles. Moreover, many students are presented with unique opportunities as a direct result of participating in a Sage Project course. As of writing, the Sage Project has provided assistantships and internships to 65 students since Fall 2013. Thirty-six of these students were hired as report writers to consolidate the work from their courses into reports for the city partners (http://sdsu-dspace.calstate.edu/handle/10211.3/165566). In addition, our city partners have hired numerous students after their participation in a Sage Project course to work as interns on additional projects. Two such students eventually landed full-time jobs with the City of National City and remain employed there as of the time of writing. (Note that this was the result of enrolling in a *single undergraduate class* that participated in the Sage Project.) A team of civil engineering students who participated in a capstone design course through the Sage Project was awarded the Outstanding SDSU Design Day Project of Transporta-

tion Engineering and received special recognition during the American Society of Civil Engineers' San Diego June 2014 Luncheon for their "Green Streets Improvement Project" for the City of National City. The City ultimately implemented aspects of the students' designs that same year. Another student from SDSU's School of Music and Dance was hired by A Reason To Survive to continue providing string lessons to National City youth after the original funding for that program expired.

Approximately 100 students have had the opportunity to present their work at our annual Sage Project Symposium, which serves as our culminating event for the yearlong partnership with our community partner, as described above. This is an expo-style symposium where students present their research, designs, solutions, and recommendations as poster presentations. The symposium is open to the public; university administrators, participating students and faculty, city staff and elected officials, and community members are especially encouraged to attend. Thus far, we have limited the number of presentations, with faculty members selecting their top students to present on behalf of their participating courses. As we build capacity, we expect to increase participation by students. Other students have had the opportunity to present their work at the larger, university-wide SDSU Student Research Symposium (e.g., McKinstry, 2016; Monteverde & Novak, 2016), as well as at city council meetings, at the annual

Sustainable City Year Conference, and for other opportunities that arise that involve highlighting the partnership and student work. One graduate student was invited to serve on SDSU's Climate Action Planning Council because of his efforts with the Sage Project. Finally, some students expand their work with the city partner into graduate thesis or doctoral projects (Brennan, 2016; Cao, 2015; Penunuri, 2015). Experiences such as these help prepare our students for the workforce, and help to make them more knowledgeable about and invested in local communities.

For our faculty, participating in the Sage Project affords opportunities for professional growth by establishing new connections in the community and new directions for research, scholarship, and creative activity, including grant funding from local foundations and federal agencies. Some faculty members elect to involve additional students from their research labs, often leading to undergraduate honors and master's theses, as mentioned above. For instance, SDSU faculty members have presented results of their work with the Sage Project at national conferences, often in collaboration with Sage Project and/or city partner staff (Appleyard, Barlow, Flanigan, & Raulston, 2016, March; Blumenfeld, Barlow, & Manriquez, 2016, March). Many participating faculty members list their affiliation with the Sage Project on their curriculum vitae and highlight their work with the Sage Project on their periodic reviews as evidence of teaching excellence.

For our city partners, the partnership can help advance stagnant projects, re-energize city staff, and bring positive attention to the city. Documenting the immediate impact of the partnership can be a challenge because it may take several years before designs or recommendations can be implemented. Nevertheless, there is anecdotal evidence of the benefits of the partnership. For example, SDSU's environmental graphic design students developed a wayfinding system for the City of National City in Spring 2014, and this effort helped National City to obtain numerous grants to implement a wayfinding system in the city. To date, the city has obtained over $1 million in grant support for their wayfinding improvements, and Brad Raulston (Executive Director of Development for the City of National City) cites the partnership as a key factor in this success. In addition, as part of our partnership with the City of National City, an interdisciplinary team of SDSU students developed a preliminary draft of the city's long-range property management plan, which the city ultimately submitted to the State of California. As well, a graphic design student's design for the new branding of the City of National City's youth center, Casa de Salud, has already been installed as part of a renovation of the facility.

EXPANSION OF THE MODEL: THE EPIC NETWORK

The Sage Project is a member of the EPIC Network (www.epicn.org). This is a fledgling network of institutions that work

together and with key stakeholders, such as the US EPA, to serve as a resource for existing EPIC-N programs and to help promote the EPIC-N Model nationally and internationally, through conference presentations (Fernandez et al., 2015, June; Franklin et al., 2014, June; Ibrahim et al., 2016, July), as well as through workshops, newsletters, podcasts, and weblogs. The Network hosts the annual Sustainable City Year Conference, which originally was hosted by the University of Oregon, but now is hosted regionally at member institutions (University of Minnesota, 2015; San Diego State University, 2016; Texas A&M University, 2017).

As representatives of EPIC-N, Marc Schlossberg and Nico Larco (Co-Directors of University of Oregon's SCYP) and I have led efforts to promote the model through conference presentations, as well as workshops, colloquia and site visits (Barlow, 2015, October, 2016, May, 2016, October; Fernandez et al., 2015, June; Franklin et al., 2014, June; Ibrahim et al., 2016, July; Schlossberg, 2013, June). With support from and collaboration with the US EPA, a two-day replication workshop was held at the annual California Higher Education in Sustainability Conference (CHESC) in 2015, in order to promote the EPIC-N Model to California institutions. Seven California State University (CSU) institutions have launched EPIC-N programs as a direct result of that workshop, bringing the total number of CSU EPIC-N programs to nine. The EPA has been heavily engaged

in efforts to promote the EPIC-N Model because they also see it as an opportunity to make their own resources for local governments more accessible and useful. As part of the two-day CHESC workshop, EPA representatives presented a series of EPA tools (https://www.epa.gov/research/ methods-models-tools-and-databases) to help cities address sustainability-related goals. A similar EPA/EPIC-N workshop was held in the Midwest in November 2016.

Efforts to promote replication of the EPIC-N Model internationally began in the summer of 2016, at the Resilient Cities 2016 conference in Bonn, Germany, where I presented the model as part of a panel with representatives from the EPA, the UN Environmental Program, the National Science Foundation, and other agencies that highlighted partnerships between local governments and different organizations (Ibrahim et al., 2016, July). This brief presentation about the Sage Project specifically and the EPIC-N Model more generally drew great interest from representatives from several different UN programs, particularly the UN Habitat program. Like the US EPA, the UN Habitat representatives saw these campus-community partnerships as an opportunity to help cities make use of resources and toolkits they have developed to guide the climate action planning process.

Thanks to this connection, the Sage Project and the City of Lemon Grove are working together on the city's climate action planning process for the current academic year. Undergraduate students in

public health will propose mitigation and adaptation solutions for reducing greenhouse gases in Lemon Grove and will apply the UN Habitat's Guiding Principles (UN-Habitat, 2015) Toolkit to guide and evaluate the city's climate action planning process. A subset of these students will have the opportunity to directly interact with UN Habitat representatives as part of this project. I presented our work thus far at the United Nations Habitat III conference in Quito, Ecuador (Barlow, 2016, October), in effort to continue to spread the EPIC Model internationally and to highlight how such collaborations can be mutually beneficial.

Another focus of the EPIC Network is the development of evaluation and assessment methods for the purpose of documenting the impact of such programs on student learning and on the community partner's short- and long-term goals. This is important at a local level, so that university administration can reliably evaluate the impact that such programs have on student learning, graduation and retention rates, faculty teaching, and community engagement. As well, documentation of the impact of such partnerships on the community partner, with respect to enhancing livability of the community and helping the city to advance projects, is also needed for promotion of the model both locally and globally. Evidence that such programs can make a positive and meaningful impact on all those involved is thus far based on anecdotal evidence, or based on counts (number of cities, projects, faculty,

courses, students), which are interesting and useful but also limiting. For instance, anecdotal evidence is not sufficient for applying for grant funding to support expansion of these types of partnerships. Thus far, each individual EPIC-N program has made attempts to evaluate and assess themselves using resources and strategies developed at their own institutions. However, there is an advantage to developing a more standard set of tools to evaluate the programs, should the EPIC Network wish to seek out grant funding, or even become an evaluative ("accrediting") entity itself. Members of the EPIC Network, including those whose expertise is in service learning, applied research, and impact evaluation have begun work on this, and have led presentations at the annual Sustainable City Year Conference to guide current programs and discuss directions as a Network (Ellenberg, Schlossberg, & Vargo, 2016, March; Moon, Avin, Farrell, & Slotterback, 2015, April). However, currently, those of us spearheading EPIC Network efforts are doing these things above and beyond our current responsibilities at our own institutions. As such, progress is slow. As the Network expands and further establishes itself as a more official entity, the goal is to have paid staff members or outside entities to oversee efforts such as these.

JUST START: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LAUNCHING AN EPIC-N PROGRAM

A mantra of the EPIC Network is to "just start". Many institutions are eager to launch such large-scale programs, but are

intimidated by the high level of coordination that is required, often in the absence of sufficient funds to start a pilot program. Those who are interested in replicating the EPIC-N Model locally are encouraged to contact EPIC-N member institutions, attend the annual Sustainable City Year Conference, and host a site visit by representatives of established programs. Buy-in from university administration is key, as is having a good working relationship with a local government representative willing to launch the (pilot) partnership. Start-up funds from the university can allow for a successful launch of the pilot year, and then through the fee paid by the city partner, the program can be self-sustaining. Regular promotion of the program is also key to its long-term success and recruitment of city partners.

The collective effort to sustain the Sage Project relies on ongoing development of and collaboration on events, activities, and communication between diverse participants, a specific goal of SDSU's Strategic Plan (https://go.sdsu.edu/strategicplan/). In addition, by participating in real-world projects, our students have more opportunities to engage in research and creative activities, by working on complex problems that require a great deal of prospective community research, as well as critical thinking and problem solving, in order to develop designs, solutions, and recommendations for our community partners. These opportunities afford our students innovative and transformational international and community engagement experiences, which are also important goals of SDSU's Strategic Plan.

These goals also align well with the Degree Qualifications Profile (DPQ; Adelman, Ewell, Gaston, & Geary Schneider, 2014), which emphasizes that the fundamental knowledge and skills necessary for postsecondary education must include specialized knowledge, broad and integrative knowledge, intellectual skills, applied and collaborative learning, and civic and global learning (2014, p. 5). Institutions of higher education use the DPQ to enhance their general education requirements or to strengthen student-learning outcomes in specific disciplines or degree levels. Perhaps institutions could adopt and adapt their own EPIC-N program to help achieve DPQ goals.

The Sage Project has been referred to as a "marquee program" by SDSU administration, and this reputation came about very quickly, as we are only in our fourth year. Implementing the EPIC-N Model at all university and college campuses has the potential to transform higher education in a way that can have a profound impact on not only our students and future leaders, but also communities across the globe.

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EXPERIENCE

PRACTICE + THEORY