

2018

Putting Experience to Work: Leveraging Student Attributes and Abilities in the Development of an Adult Learner Professional Readiness Experience Program

Erin E. Cook
Gardner-Webb University

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/education_etd



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Cook, Erin E., "Putting Experience to Work: Leveraging Student Attributes and Abilities in the Development of an Adult Learner Professional Readiness Experience Program" (2018). *Education Dissertations and Projects*. 209.
https://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/education_etd/209

This Project is brought to you for free and open access by the School of Education at Digital Commons @ Gardner-Webb University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Education Dissertations and Projects by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Gardner-Webb University. For more information, please see [Copyright and Publishing Info](#).

Consultancy Project Executive Summary

Organization: Gardner-Webb University School of Education

Project Title: Putting Experience to Work: Leveraging Student Attributes and Abilities in the Development of an Adult Learner Professional Readiness Experience Program

Candidate: Erin E. Cook

Consultancy Coach: Dr. Jeffrey Hamilton

Defense Date: July 6, 2018

Authorized by: Dr. Elizabeth Pack, Dean of the Degree Completion Program, Gardner-Webb University

Acknowledgements

“In times of change, learners inherit the earth, while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists.”

–Eric Hoffer

This project has been fostered and developed with care by a village of supporters who provided encouragement, prayer, and tough love throughout the process. The culmination of this work is not simply a product, but the process of learning about organizational culture and program development. Personally, this process taught me much about myself, my resiliency, and tenacity for things I care about. One of those things is helping others develop professionally.

To my mom (my number 1 fan), brother Jonathan, my choir of angels, Laura Huber, wonderful cohort of colleagues, mentors Dr. Elizabeth Pack, Dr. Jeff Hamilton, and Lisa Yerrick – thank you for helping me through all the bends and curves over the past 3 years. I will not forget how much your assistance mattered and appreciate you all more than you know.

Abstract

Putting Experience to Work: Leveraging Student Attributes and Abilities in the Development of an Adult Learner Professional Readiness Experience Program. Cook, Erin E., 2018, Consultancy Project, Gardner-Webb University, Digital Commons/

The purpose of the project was to provide an opportunity for adult learners at Gardner-Webb University to collectively engage in professional development within their program of study. Specifically, the program was designed to harness an adult learner's prior knowledge, skills, and life experiences as an enhancement to his or her future professional work.

At the beginning of the project, no established professional development program was available for adult learners. The development of the Adult Learner Professional Readiness Experience Program (AL-PREP) allowed the aforementioned purpose to align with Gardner-Webb curriculum.

Goals, objectives, and data collection methods were established in order to best discern appropriate avenues forward, which may be reviewed through this executive summary. The conclusion of the project led to the development of a professional development-based course in Human Services as well as a policy proposal for full integration of unified professional development competencies throughout the Degree Completion Program at Gardner-Webb University.

Keywords: adult learning, professional development, career development, professional readiness, curriculum, degree completion,

Table of Contents

| | | |
|----|--|----|
| 1 | Introduction..... | 1 |
| | 1.1 Project Purpose | 1 |
| | 1.2 Associated Documents..... | 1 |
| | 1.3 Project Plan Maintenance | 1 |
| 2 | Project Scope | 2 |
| | 2.1 Outline of Partnering Organization’s Objectives..... | 2 |
| | 2.1.1 Objectives | 2 |
| | 2.1.2 Success Criteria..... | 3 |
| | 2.1.3 Risks..... | 3 |
| | 2.2 Outline of Student’s Objectives | 3 |
| | 2.2.1 Objectives | 3 |
| | 2.2.2 Success Criteria..... | 4 |
| | 2.2.3 Risks..... | 4 |
| | 2.3 Definitive Scope Statement..... | 4 |
| 3 | Deliverables | 5 |
| | 3.1 To Partnering Organization..... | 5 |
| | 3.2 From Student..... | 5 |
| 4 | Project Approach | 6 |
| | 4.1 Project Lifecycle Processes..... | 6 |
| | 4.2 Project Management Processes..... | 7 |
| | 4.3 Project Support Processes | 7 |
| | 4.4 Organization..... | 7 |
| | 4.4.1 Project Team | 7 |
| | 4.4.2 Mapping Between Partnering Organization and Student..... | 8 |
| 5 | Communications Plan | 9 |
| 6 | Work Plan | 10 |
| | 6.1 Work Breakdown Structure | 10 |
| | 6.2 Resources | 11 |
| 7 | Milestones | 12 |
| 8 | Metrics and Results..... | 13 |
| 9 | Risks, Constraints, Assumptions..... | 14 |
| | 9.1 Risks..... | 14 |
| | 9.2 Constraints | 19 |
| | 9.3 Assumptions..... | 19 |
| 10 | Financial Plan..... | 20 |
| 11 | Quality Assurance Plan..... | 21 |
| | Appendix..... | 28 |

1 Introduction

1.1 Project Purpose

Professional development has been a buzz-worthy phrase surrounding higher education as a collective in recent years. Starting with the U.S. Department of Education requiring colleges and universities to report relevant data such as student job attainment after graduation, student loan debt, and more, focused attention has been placed on how higher education is preparing students for the world of work (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

Gardner-Webb University and the Center for Personal and Professional Development were charged with educating and equipping all students with the tools needed to succeed as contributing citizens of the world. While professional readiness programs have been established for traditional undergraduate students, no such program exists for adult learners housed in the Degree Completion Program of Gardner-Webb. This project endeavored to bridge the gap by providing a user-friendly and accessible platform for professional readiness that harnesses practical and applied knowledge through experiential education as a component of the student's overall educational development.

1.2 Associated Documents

The following Associated Documents may be found in the Executive Summary appendices:

- Figure 1: Mission and Vision Statement for the Adult Learner Professional Readiness Experience Program (AL-PREP)
- Figure 2: AL-PREP Policy Proposal
- Figure 3: AL-PREP Communication Plan
- Figure 4: HUS 304 Sample Course Syllabus
- Figure 5: HUS 304 Pre- and Post-Course Survey Results

1.3 Project Plan Maintenance

The Adult Learner Professional Readiness Experience Program went through several iterations as a part of the consultancy process. Throughout each semester, the development of the program was analyzed and reviewed. Updates to the program were discussed and implemented in collaboration with Dr. Elizabeth Pack, Dean of the Degree Completion Program, and Dr. Jeffrey Hamilton, consultancy project supervisor.

2 Project Scope

Impact on Organizations

Gardner-Webb University offers educational opportunities through the main campus located in Boiling Springs, NC in addition to seven active satellite campuses throughout the state and courses fully online. As a result, the university has numerous faculty, staff, and administrators located in various locations rather than all being centrally located.

External organizations were involved in the consultancy program through hosting student interns, employing students who engaged with the program, or shared resources with Gardner-Webb making the program possible, such as technological software.

Impact on Processes and Systems

The development of this program altered the way the Center for Personal and Professional Development engaged with faculty, staff, and students by creating a paradigm shift in how career education was addressed with adult learners at Gardner-Webb University.

For programs with existing professional readiness courses, processes within the business office remained the same. The same is true for Gardner-Webb registrar's office. No change to procedure was required as long as the program incorporated into a current course.

The Center for Personal and Professional Development utilized an array of software programs to provide services to students to provide an online-based program that is accessible to all students across the state. These included Blackboard, assessments like the Dewey Color System, and Zoom for online meet ups.

Certain populations on campus were not impacted by the integration of the AL-PREP program, including traditional undergraduate and graduate students.

Impact of Boundaries

The program developed required informed consent from many offices including associate provosts, DCP council, and faculty. For the HUS 304 course, the process included approval from the department and full faculty as well, because the course was an additional requirement added to the major.

Entities such as the economy or perception of student interns participating in one of the experiential learning opportunities impacted students completing the professional readiness program.

2.1 Outline of Partnering Organization's Objectives

2.1.1 Objectives

The program objectives for the Adult Learner Professional Readiness Program included

- Harnessed student existing experience through recognition of transferable skills and resume development/revision
- Built the AL-PREP concept into a degree completion program course
- Used existing technology and software to develop student learning process and provide greater access to resources
- Built in learning outcome components to monitor student progress as well as recognize student understanding pre and post program completion
- Established training materials for faculty and staff

2.1.2 Success Criteria

The overall success of the program was measured through the analysis and reflection upon program objective execution. Overall, success criteria included

- Did the program reach the intended target audience?
- Did the program assist students in their professional development?

2.1.3 Risks

An analysis of programmatic risks has been explored further in Section 9. These risks include

- Reliance on subscription and web-based tools
- Dependence on faculty and staff support
- Utilization of faculty outside the realm of career development to teach AL-PREP concepts
- Concerns regarding lack of training on web-based tools with students or faculty
- The AL-PREP program outliving its need within the adult learner population

These risks were minimized through consistent communication, researched-based decision-making, and collaborative work efforts.

2.2 Outline of Student's Objectives

2.2.1 Objectives

The student objectives related to the Adult Learner Professional Readiness Experience Program included

- Developed knowledge and acumen about academic program development
- Cultivated awareness and understanding of adult learner needs

- Collaborated with various departments across campus in order to better serve students

The student was responsible for the following areas in this project:

- Initiated option for program development
- Researched and developed program prototypes
- Created buy-in from various departments after demonstrating need for program
- Monitored, revised, and updated project as a result of feedback

2.2.2 Success Criteria

In addition to the program criteria identified in section 2.1.2, success criteria for the student were

- The AL-PREP program was actively put to use
- Adult Learner professional development was a topic discussed more openly within the institution
- Students who completed the program identified as being more professional ready

2.2.3 Risks

In addition to the risks identified in Section 9 for the program, the following risks were associated with the student objectives:

- Lack of willingness to consider program because of faculty/staff dichotomy
- Lack of support from stakeholders involved
- Compromised ability to complete tasks in regular job effectively

These risks were minimized by intentionally on-boarding stakeholders early on and through collaborating with those willing to advocate for the program. Using stakeholders as key voices, any threats of invalidating the program as a result of being developed by a staff member were minimized.

2.3 Definitive Scope Statement

The overall focus of the AL-PREP project was to provide adult learner students with the opportunity to enhance options for personal and professional growth through academic learning and leveraged prior experience.

3 Deliverables

3.1 To Partnering Organization

The consultancy project deliverables included

- Student proficiency was assessed through completion of a transferable skills exercise and successful development of an approved resume by the Center for Personal and Professional Development (Spring 2017).
- A video series accompanied by guided reflection was developed to allow students to better understand job search techniques. Students utilized online interview recording software that prompted reflection upon his or her work. The completion of this accompanied a rubric grading format of the recorded interview questions (Spring 2017).
- Students completed a LinkedIn portfolio to capitalize on professional development assessed in the program (Fall 2018).
- Pre and post-surveys with students were developed regarding the material covered in the professional readiness program (Summer 2018).
- Student success was measured through the individual grades assigned for each component (Fall 2018).
- Student Learning Objectives, assessment rubrics, and guiding principles were created in order to provide program standardization (Summer 2017).

3.2 From Student

Deliverables from the student regarding the consultancy project included

- Addition of program development to personal skills
- Facilitation of meetings with groups such as the DCP council and administration
- Developed program assessment and tools that fostered program creation

4 Project Approach

4.1 Project Lifecycle Processes

The process for the Adult Learner Professional Readiness Experience Program included the following:

2015-2016 Academic Year

Stage I: Program Development

- Collaborated with DCP coordinators and administration to fully develop the program
- Conducted research on comparable offerings and other institutions as well as review of relevant data
- Consulted impacted internal organizations such as Information Technology and Digital Learning as well as discerned best approach for developing an online platform

Fall 2016 Semester

Stage II: Program Build

- Consulted vendors of licensed software usage
- Determined best method for integrating coursework into major courses such as Human Services
- Reviewed and determined best options for managing major specific information within program

Spring 2017 Semester

Stage III: Program Proposal Submission

- Developed articulated program proposal for DCP Council
- Created student learning objectives and sample syllabus and successfully passed new professional readiness course in Human Services major, HUS 304 (See Figures 4 and 5)

Summer and Fall 2017

Stage IV: Implementation

- Developed training program for faculty teaching AL-PREP components within major course
- Monitored program through faculty and student input, survey data, and grade assignments

Spring 2018 Academic Year

Stage V: Reflection and Adjustment

- Reviewed data points from first group of students completing program through pre and post-surveys, which included Likert scale questions to provide quantitative data (see Figure 5)
- Initiated adjustments to program based on results and feedback first round of program implementation

4.2 Project Management Processes

Regular meetings discussing the development of the AL-PREP program were completed with the following individuals or groups:

- Dean of the Degree Completion Program/Consultancy Project Advisor
- Associate Provost for Digital Learning
- DCP Council
- Director of the Center for Personal and Professional Development
- Licensed software vendors

Detailed information regarding this communication is detailed in Section 5.

4.3 Project Support Processes

Monthly meetings occurred with the project advisor. On a quarterly basis, the student and advisor were accompanied by the Associate Provost for Digital Learning to provide guidance and prepare information to share with the Provost and Provost's Council.

4.4 Organization

4.4.1 Project Team

The project team consisted of the following:

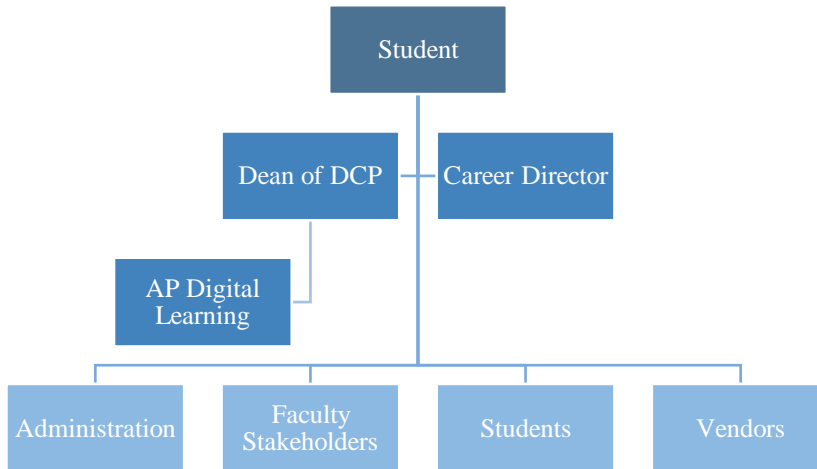
- Student
- Dean of the Degree Completion Program/Consultancy Project Advisor
- Director of the Center for Personal and Professional Development

Additional members were consulted and utilized as collaborators and stakeholders by the core project team. These members are

- Gardner-Webb Administration (Associate Provosts and Provost)
- Vice President of Student Affairs/Dean of Students

4.4.2 Mapping Between Partnering Organization and Student

Chart 1: Organizational Workflow



5 Communications Plan

The following outline provides a detailed look at stakeholder communication, which occurred over the course of the project. A detailed communication plan regarding the project may be found in Figure 3.

Table 1: Stakeholder Communication

| Stakeholders | Information Shared | Rationale | Timeline | Method |
|--|--|---|---------------------|---|
| GWU Administration | Research about adult learners | Gain understanding and buy-in for the need of the program | Spring 2016-Ongoing | Formal document presented to Associate Provost to be passed to Provost |
| | AL-PREP proposal and background | Attempt to gain support for DCP wide program requirement | Spring 2018 | Formal proposal passed through Associate Provost of Distance Education to Provost Council |
| DCP Council | Concept of predecessor program PRE and DCP version | Transparency in communication of impact on adult learners | Fall 2016 | Presentation at monthly DCP council |
| | Updates on progress of program development | Provide progress updates to aid in continued buy-in | Spring 2017-Forward | Updates delivered through Dean of DCP Program/Program Advisor and AP for Digital Learning |
| Departmental Faculty and Overall Faculty | Background and course proposal for HUS 304 | Receive approval for HUS 304 addition to Human Services program | Spring 2017 | Syllabus and student learning objectives presented through Human Services coordinator to department. Upon passing, course presented in faculty meeting by Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC). |
| Students | Information regarding HUS 304 to those impacted by course addition | Understand reason behind course value in overall development | Fall 2017-Ongoing | Course Introduction as well as information shared through DCP success coaches and advisor. |

6 Work Plan

6.1 Work Breakdown Structure

Chart 2: Project Communication and Objectives Timeline

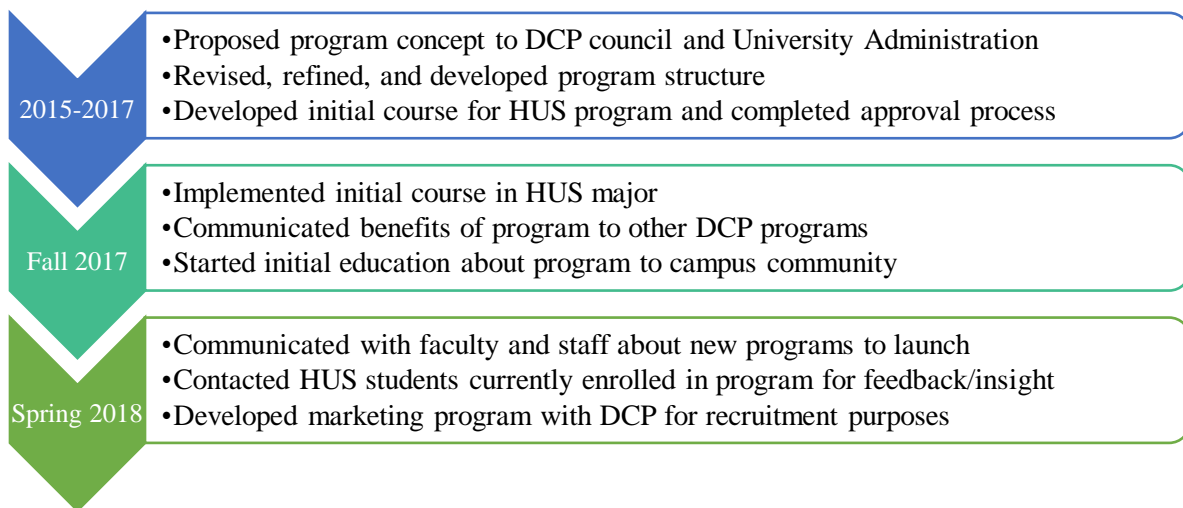
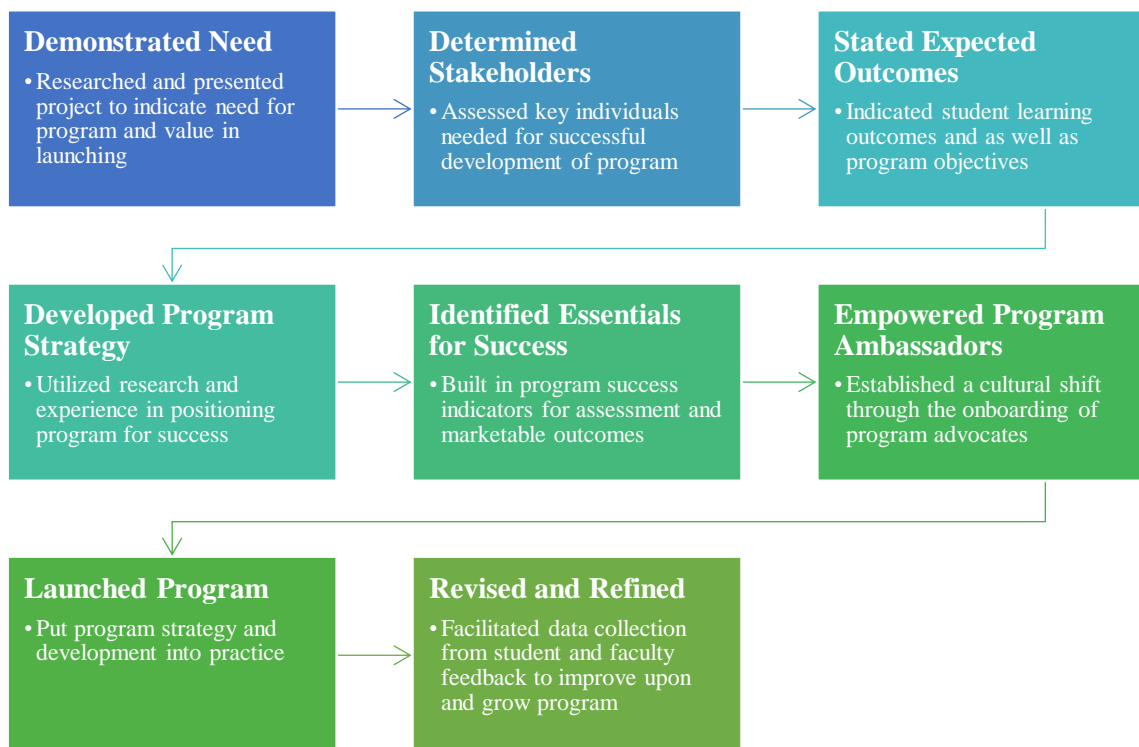


Chart 3: Project Activities Flowchart



6.2 Resources

Section 10 details financial information for human and non-human resources required for the project development and execution. These included

- Licensed software systems including Interview Stream Virtual Practice Interview Software
- Internet and webcam access
- Blackboard course management software

7 Milestones

Table 2: Overall Milestones Related to Organizational Goals

| Milestone | Organizational Goal | Completion Date |
|--|--|------------------------|
| Defined Parameters and Scope of Project | | |
| 1 | Statement of Need and Project Purpose | December 2015 |
| 1 | Established collaboration with stakeholders | December 2015 |
| 2 | Created program goals and timeline | March 2016 |
| 3 | Reviewed and discerned scope of program | July 2016 |
| Program Development | | |
| 1 | Established research on background about need for program | December 2015 |
| 4 | Consulted with advisor on creating program budget and contingencies | July 2016 |
| 7 | Created formal program proposal for AL-PREP | November 2017 |
| Program Refinement | | |
| 5 | Presented potential risk and interventions to advisor and DCP administration | November 2016 |
| 6 | Developed comprehensive communication plan | July 2017 |
| 9 | Developed quality assurance plan, mitigation options, and contingencies | October 2017 |

8 Metrics and Results

Metrics and results have been integrated throughout the program development in order to best assess progress and determine how to move in program development. For example, information collected through pre and post-surveys with the HUS 304 course were used to determine if any revisions were needed.

Section 11 discusses the Quality Assurance Plan and addresses some of the metrics and results of the project. Additionally, see Figures 4 and 5 available in the appendices for additional information regarding the program.

Table 3: Overview of Metrics and Results in the Adult Learner Professional Readiness Experience Program

| Performance Requirement | Metrics Collected | Used for | Results |
|---|--|---|--|
| Developed rationale for program development | Research on adult learner education style, skill development | Support program development buy-in with administration | Written literature review presented |
| Surveyed DCP programs regarding professional development in courses | Number of programs with existing professional development components | Support for major-specific professional development in each major | Data collected and reviewed |
| Analyzed NSSE data to determine adult learner high impact practices | Chi Square analysis completed | Understanding of impact on student perception at GWU | Informed and aided in building program proposal |
| Developed pre and post professional development survey for HUS 304 | Likert-scale metrics on student's perception of professional readiness | Assessment of if changes were needed with course | Minor adjustments made between first and second round of course |
| Assessed meetings with administration to discern appropriate next steps | Observed verbal and nonverbal behavior to assess buy-in | Understand progress and support of administration | Adjustments made throughout the program to best fit university climate |

9 Risks, Constraints, Assumptions

9.1 Risks

Table 4: Adult Learner Professional Readiness Experience Program Risk Assessment

| | Risk Category and Description | Un-likely | Maybe | Likely | Comments |
|----|--|-----------|-------|--------|---|
| | Technology Use | | | | |
| 1 | Likelihood of University Network disruption? | | | X | Disruptions were frequent, but often rectified quickly and without major disruption to tasks. |
| 2 | Likelihood of University Blackboard disruption? | | X | | Blackboard has had minor disruptions in the past but has been overall reliable. |
| 3 | Is Blackboard available without network connection? | X | | | As a web-based system, Blackboard was contingent on internet access. |
| 4 | Is customer support available for Blackboard concerns? | | | X | The Center for Digital Learning offered assistance to staff, faculty and students. |
| 5 | Likelihood of University email disruption? | | | X | Disruptions were frequent, but often rectified quickly and without major disruption to tasks. |
| 6 | Are alternatives to University email available if an outage occurs? | | X | | Personal email, phone or text messages were all options but considered more “unofficial.” However, this is contingent on internet access. |
| 7 | Likelihood of University virtual meeting network, Zoom, disruption? | | X | | Contingent on internet access |
| 8 | Are alternatives for virtual meetings available if a Zoom disruption occurs? | | | X | Other web-based platforms like Skype, GoTo Meeting, WebEx, Adobe Connect etc. are available, but all required internet access. |
| 9 | Is customer support available for Zoom concerns? | | | X | The Center for Digital Learning offered assistance to staff, faculty and students. |
| 10 | Likelihood of a WebbWorks disruption? | X | | | The system is reliable but depends on internet access. |
| 11 | Are alternatives to WebbWorks available if a disruption occurs? | | X | | While the system is unique, email and the HotList TV circuit for posting jobs are alternatives. |
| 12 | Is customer support available for WebbWorks concerns? | | | X | For administrators, the system has excellent customer support. For other users, Personal/Professional Development can offer assistance. |

| | | | | | |
|------------------------------|---|---|---|---|--|
| 13 | Likelihood of the career assessment “Dewey Color System” disruption? | | X | | The web-based tools are normally reliable, but the company’s server has crashed before, causing a disruption of several days. |
| 14 | Are alternatives for career assessment tools available if a Dewey Color System instrument has problems? | | | X | Numerous career assessments exist and alternatives are available if needed. |
| 15 | Is customer support available for concerns with assessment instrument? | | | X | For administrators, the system has customer support. For other users, Personal/Professional Development can offer assistance. |
| 16 | Likelihood of career system Interview Stream disruption? | X | | | The web-based tool is reliable but is also dependent in internet access. |
| 17 | Are alternatives for Interview Stream available if a disruption occurs? | | X | | Options that are not as convenient but are alternatives such as Skype, Zoom, or recording interview answers via YouTube can work. |
| 18 | Is customer support available for concerns with Interview Stream? | | | X | For administrators, the system has customer support. For other users, Personal/Professional Development can offer assistance. |
| 19 | Is protocol in place for reporting disruptions to University owned services (ex. Blackboard)? | X | | | Currently, no documented protocol exists. |
| Training Requirements | | | | | |
| 20 | Is the adult learner population knowledgeable with Blackboard? | | | X | Because this program is designed to be mid to late in the student’s experience at GWU, it is expected that they would be exposed to this program already in orientation and through classwork. |
| 21 | Is the adult learner population knowledgeable with Zoom? | | X | | Experience with this system will depend upon the format of student learning and class usage. Training is recommended in case. |
| 22 | Is the adult learner population knowledgeable with WebbWorks? | X | | | This system is new to the student population, launching in Fall 2016. Training will be required. |
| 23 | Are Personal/Professional Development staff knowledgeable with Blackboard? | | | X | Blackboard certification is required for program development. At the time of the assessment completion, 2 of 4 staff are certified and 1 is completing certification. |
| 24 | Are Personal/Professional Development staff knowledgeable with Zoom? | X | | | Cross training is needed for this area as only 1 or 4 career staff is knowledgeable on Zoom at the time of assessment completion. |

| | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|
| 25 | Are Personal/Professional Development staff knowledgeable with WebbWorks? | | | X | All staff and student workers have been trained on basic use of the system. Career Development also has a program administrator with extended capabilities in the system. |
| 26 | Are training programs in place to assist students with Blackboard questions? | | | X | Orientation videos are available on the Blackboard home site for students. |
| 27 | Are training programs in place to assist students with Zoom questions? | | | X | Zoom has a support page with support documents and help videos. |
| 28 | Are training programs in place to assist students with WebbWorks? | | X | | A basic sign in guide with screenshots is available, but additional resources may be required to assist students specifically with the ALPREP. |
| 29 | Are training programs in place to assist students with the Dewey Color System? | X | | | While the system is user-friendly, it does not currently have a help feature. |
| 30 | Are training programs in place to assist students with Interview Stream? | | | X | A help feature is available to walk students through concerns and Personal/Professional Development has an account administrator as well. |
| 31 | Are designated faculty teaching ALPREP trained in Blackboard? | | | X | All faculty and adjuncts have Blackboard training opportunities at orientation and through the Center for Digital Learning. |
| 32 | Are designated faculty teaching the ALPREP trained with Zoom? | | X | | This isn't a standard requirement of faculty but will need to be established of all teaching this program. |
| 33 | Are designated faculty teaching the ALPREP trained in career development and professional readiness and have an adequate understanding? | X | | | This is a training need. Whether taught be Personal/Professional Development staff or through a "train the trainer" option with other faculty, education on tools, techniques and background understanding is required. |
| 34 | Are designated faculty teaching the ALPREP trained with WebbWorks? | X | | | Faculty and staff (other than system administrators) currently are not set up to have access to WebbWorks. |
| 35 | Is there anything being "lost" through online platform methods vs. in person classes? | | X | | Online options aren't always ideal for developing a strong connection; however, they are the most recommended option for reaching students across multiple campuses in the state. |
| 36 | Can the needed content be adequately conveyed through an online method? | | | X | While contingent upon the successful functioning of online systems, relevant content can be conveyed well through an online format. |
| | Professional Readiness Content | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|----|--|--|---|---|---|
| 37 | Is the professional readiness plan for adult learners relevant and timely for the development of the student? | | | X | Currently, we are not in compliance with SAACS requirements by offering a professional readiness program to some undergraduates and not all. While the format will be different, a comparable program is needed for Degree Completion Students. |
| 38 | Does the ALPREP provide value to the University? | | | X | The program is designed to connect student classroom learning and real-world experience. It will assist students with being stronger candidates for jobs or promotion post-graduation. |
| 39 | Is there buy-in for the program from faculty? | | X | | This is an ongoing concern. Some faculty see the importance of this program while others express a concern for adding this in an existing curriculum. |
| 40 | Is there a perception of value-added for adult learners? | | X | | For the most part, yes. However, some explanation is generally required to gain strong support from faculty, staff, and students. Marketing will be an important element. |
| 41 | Is the content of the program reflective of the latest research and best practices regarding professional readiness? | | | X | The development of the program is closely connected with trends and data; however, the modules in the program are general enough to be adaptable based on information fluctuations in future. |
| 42 | Is the content of the program specific to the adult learner population? | | | X | The program has been specifically designed to meet adult learner needs and recognize current contributions of each student. |
| 43 | Is the content of the program customizable for each major/discipline within the DCP program? | | | X | A general module has been built and many of the projects are designed for students to give specific examples related to their field of study. |
| 44 | Is the ALPREP content appropriately rigorous? | | | X | Assessment measures and rubrics have been designed to ensure appropriate rigor. In addition, the program has 1 research project elements, one of which is writing intensive. |
| 45 | Is protocol in place for determining program rigor? | | | X | The program will need to be approved by faculty, DCP Council and individual departments. Student evaluations are also valuable in this determination. |
| | Program Sustainability | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|----|--|---|---|---|--|
| 46 | Is the ALPREP content sustainable within the current course structure? | | | X | Based on everything known, it is. This will need to be periodically reviewed. |
| 47 | Is protocol in place for determining course sustainability? | X | | | Student learning outcomes, course surveys, market trends and the University's strategic plan will need to be consulted. |
| 48 | Are alternative options available if the license cost for Interview Stream is no longer sustainable? | | X | | Interview Stream is the most convenient, but other options as mentioned previously in the technology section could work. |
| 49 | Are alternative options available if the license cost for the Dewey Color System is no longer sustainable? | | X | | Other assessment options are available; however, most have a licensing cost as well. |
| 50 | Are alternative options available if the license cost for WebbWorks is no longer sustainable? | | X | | Other software systems are available; however, these have a licensing cost as well. |

Table 5: Identified Risks Associated with the Adult Learner Professional Readiness Experience Program

| | | | |
|-----------------|---|--------------------|---|
| Likely | Utilization of faculty outside Professional Development to teach the ALPREP | | |
| Possible | Possibility of major concerns arising because of lack of training on web-based tools with students or faculty | | Reliance on web-based tools to implement the ALPREP |
| Unlikely | Possibility of the ALPREP outliving its need within the DCP population | | Resistance to the concept of the ALPREP from faculty, administration or DCP Council |
| | Low Risk | Medium Risk | High Risk |

Mitigation Plan Associated with Risks

1. Reliance on web-based tools presented the possibility of disruption.
 - A plan was developed that offered flexibility using other tools such as Dropbox, Skype, YouTube, or alternative email.
 - Ensured communication channels were optimized through student reporting concerns, students utilizing help tools, faculty utilizing IT resources, and being connected with Center for Personal and Professional Development.
2. Additional faculty utilized outside the realm of Career Development to teach the program.
 - Provided Career Development resources such as articles, worksheets, videos, and manuals

- Offered web-based training videos and tutorials for faculty as options for review or as additional resources
3. Resistance to the program within the faculty, administration, or DCP Council (all of which are required to approve new courses).
- Strategically aligned ADPRP with administrative, departmental, and faculty support
 - Ensured all information gained and insight provided was taken into account with the implementation of the program

9.2 Constraints

The program had limited resources available in the development and initiation process, which have been described in Sections 2, 4, 6, and 9. An overview of the project constraints included

- All individuals who worked on the program had primary responsibilities other than the project's development.
- Program development was contingent on many factors including buy-in from faculty and administration.
- The program heavily relied on technology, which had the potential of not consistently being available.

9.3 Assumptions

The following assumptions were identified as part of the project. They are

- The Adult Learner Professional Readiness Experience Program was supported by student development leadership, university administration, and faculty.
- The necessary funding to facilitate the Adult Learner Professional Readiness Experience Program was available including adjunct faculty support and funding for necessary resources.
- Student Development Leadership and University Administration understand the Adult Learner Professional Readiness Program is a process and will take multiple semesters and revisions.
- Student Development Leadership and University Administration understood the Adult Learner Professional Readiness Experience Program required input and approval from various faculty committees in accordance with university standards.
- The Adult Learner Professional Readiness Experience Program would improve the adult learner educational experience and overall professional preparation.
- Gardner-Webb University would continue the Degree Completion Program (DCP), which provides adult learner educational opportunities.

10 Financial Plan

The following budget indicated what funding was involved to successfully plan and deliver the Adult Learner Professional Readiness Experience Program.

Table 6: Consultancy Project Budget

| Description | Funding Needed |
|---|-----------------------|
| Annual Budget | |
| Human Services Adjunct Faculty (5 sections) | \$11,000 |
| Candid Career Subscription (per year) | \$1,200 |
| Interview Stream Subscription (per year) | \$1,800 |
| Total (and ongoing): | \$14,000 |

The consultancy project budget reflected what approximate costs look like on a yearly basis. These include annual subscriptions to software systems utilized in the program as well as the cost for faculty to teach the course.

Financial assumptions regarding the Adult Learner Professional Readiness Experience Program:

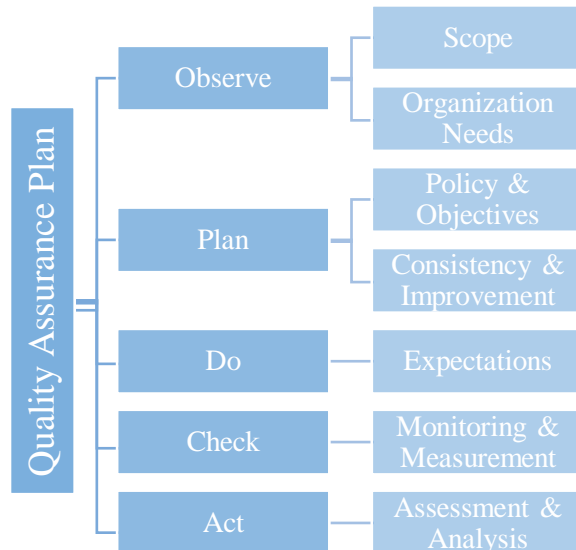
The following are key points considered in the successful integration and operation of the program on an annual basis.

- Gardner-Webb University continued to offer adult education opportunities and enrollment of adult learner was ongoing.
- Gardner-Webb University continued to offer existing majors.
- Funding for adjunct faculty was made available for classroom instruction.
- The Center for Personal and Professional Development continued to pay the annual subscription or licensing fees for each of needed software options.
- The program was designed to be predominantly online and budget was developed accordingly.

11 Quality Assurance Plan

Chart 4 demonstrates the stages of the quality assurance plan stages.

Chart 4: Detail of Quality Assurance Plan Elements



Quality Assurance Stage 1: Observation

The strategic plan for this project included several states for review, which were utilized in the quality assurance plan. These are:

- Demonstrated Need
- Established Stakeholders
- Stated Expected Outcomes
- Developed Program Strategy
- Identified Essentials for Success
- Empowered Program Ambassadors
- Launched Program in Stages
- Revised and Refined Program Development

Over the past several years, Gardner-Webb University has experienced decreased enrollment in the Degree Completion Program. As a result, the institution has looked for ways to diversify programmatic offerings, increase online courses, and consider certificate programs outside a formal degree track. The addition of the professional readiness program offered with AL-PREP provided another opportunity to drive enrollment through the combination of student life experience, education in a specific program of study, and professional development.

Quality Assurance Stage 2: Plan

The overall objective of the AL-PREP program was to provide professional development experience in a college degree completion program so students can capitalize on previous career experience, information gained in a program of study, and professional readiness to best prepare students for the world of work.

Quality Assurance Stage 3: Do

For students, the expectation was to gain valuable understanding of real world experience that was relevant and does not cost any additional time or financial resources than originally expected. For administrators, the expectation for the program was for consistent implementation. For faculty, the expectation of the program was to integrate programmatic elements into existing coursework rather than creating new courses.

Quality Assurance Stage 4: Check

Several opportunities for measurement were embedded throughout the AL-PREP program. First, the course designation process has built-in monitoring and measurement tools to ensure the structure of the program meets specific guidelines such as student learning objectives. Second, students must meet specific learning objectives within each course, so although each program of study and each student is unique, the program has a common purpose and product.

Quality Assurance Stage 5: Act

The needs and vision of the University, relevant research in the fields of adult learning and professional development as well as economic and social factors all played a role in how the AL-PREP program has been assessed.

Table 7: Strategic Plan Stages and Accompanying Quality Assurance (QA) Steps

| Strategic Plan Stages | QA Goals | QA Objectives | QA Strategies | QA Activities |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|--|---|
| Demonstrate Program Need | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed stakeholders and support for the program Researched and gather data to document need | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicated benefits of the program to administration Harnessed resources of National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) to survey institutions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educated faculty and administration Shared benefits of program through documented research and vision | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Held 1 on 1 and committee meetings with DCP Council, DCP administration Developed resources to illustrate/share vision |
| Determine Program Stakeholders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluated organizational structure and | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-boarded stakeholders in | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requested additional guidance and support from | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Created a marketing pitch and materials to |

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|---|
| | <p>culture to determine best advocates for program development/initiation</p> | <p>order to best use common language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed targeted timeline for program development | <p>existing stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed/assessed additional options for assistance | <p>ensure each meeting with stakeholders had specific content addressed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requested a call-to-action from stakeholders for next steps |
| State Program Expected Outcomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided clear and concise outcomes that were understandable to students, faculty, and administrators | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capitalized on previous development of traditional undergraduate PRE to provide a launching point | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used student experience as an adult learner to leverage learning outcomes Developed student learning outcomes and program level outcomes with stakeholders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used website, intraweb and marketing materials to communicate outcomes |
| Develop Program Strategy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connected with stakeholders and faculty course designation committee Consulted DCP administration to ensure program alignment on all fronts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified and brought together all stakeholders to the table for buy-in and quality assurance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established regular meetings to document strategic process | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remained transparent about strategy in order to be inclusive to all stakeholders Passed strategy by as many program coordinators, key faculty, and administration as possible to continuously review/revise |
| Identify Essentials for Success | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Built program goals that required specific program objectives for quality assurance but did not limit the addition of other specific opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed relevant literature regarding adult learner professional readiness Consulted DCP administration for specifics on the GWU program values and requirements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed and consulted mission and vision of program with each revision or proposed change Created specific student and program learning objectives that focused on what needs to be addressed with professional readiness rather than how to accomplish it, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Created course application and learning objective worksheets that demonstrated essential components of program Used tools like website, intraweb etc. to communicate program information Focused on ways to empower program |

| | | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| | | | thereby building in academic freedom | ambassadors to share benefits of program |
| Empower Program Ambassadors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informed, educated, and appropriately resourced advocates for program in order to spread the word | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided training sessions and resources through a variety of formats | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hosted CETL sessions and created a training video introducing the program Proactively engaged each DCP major and department to share information about the AL-PREP program | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was available for feedback, suggestions, and concerns to be addressed Enabled ambassadors to also answer anticipated frequently asked questions |
| Launch Initial Program | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used initial program phase as a pilot to test and gain feedback on success of program | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connected with stakeholders to identify and resource initial program phase | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborated to develop learning objectives that meet program standards Created pre-test and post-test assessment for data collection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marketed pilot program to other DCP majors and departments Gathered student testimonials and stories as a part of marketing “toolkit” |
| Revise and Refine Program | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed pilot program with key stakeholders to assess and revise program objectives as needed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared instructor and student feedback with stakeholders and faculty committee Consulted provided feedback and program objectives to make needed changes/ adjustments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used information gained and lessons learned to propose any changes to program format, method of delivery, or language used Ensured program mission and essential traits remain intact when considering changes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brought suggested changes to appropriate stakeholders/ committees to gain approval, inform, and continue program momentum |

Bibliography

- Bolboaca, S. D., Jantschi, L., Sestras, A. F., Sestras, R. E., & Pamfil, D. C. (2011).
Pearson-Fischer chi-square statistic revisited. *MDPI Information*, 2, 528-545.
- Chegg (2015). *Bridge that gap: Analyzing the student skill index*. Retrieved from
<http://www.chegg.com/pulse>.
- Chen, P. D., Gonyea, R. M., Sarraf, S. A., Brcka-Lorenz, A., Korkmaz, A., Lambert, A.
D., and Williams, J. M. (2009). Analyzing and interpreting NSSE data. *New
Directions for Institutional Research*, 141, 35-54.
- Dolling, L. M. (2015). To help students success professionally and personal, teach the art
of being human. *Chronicle of Higher Education* [Web log post]. Retrieved from
<http://chronicle.com/article/to-help-students-succeed>.
- El-Khawas, E. (2003). Using NSSE data for assessment and institutional improvement:
National roundtable series. Retrieved from
<http://www.aahe.org/DEEP/assessment%20rountable%20summary.pdf>.
- Elon University (2012). *Experiential learning requirement*. Retrieved from
<https://www.elon.edu/u/academics/core-curriculum/experiential-learning/>.
- Evans, N. J., Fourney, D. S., Guido, F. M., Patton, L. D., & Renn, K. A. (2010). *Student
development in college: Theory, research, and practice* (2nd ed.). San Francisco,
CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Gardner-Webb University (2015). *Strategic plan for 2016-2020 outline and notes*.
Unpublished raw data.

- Hart Research Associates (2014). *Falling short? College learning and career success*. Retrieved from <http://www.aacu.org/leap/public-opinion-research/2015-survey-results>.
- Knowles, M. (1990). *The adult learner: A neglected species* (4th ed.). Houston, TX: Gulf.
- Kuhn, G. D. (2009). The national survey of student engagement: Conceptual and empirical foundations. *New Directions for Institutional Research*, 141, 5-20.
- Lunenburg, F. C. (2011). Understanding organizational culture: A key leadership asset. *National Forum of Educational Administration and Supervision*, 29(4), 1-12.
- NACE (2017). Career readiness for the new college graduate: A definition and competencies. *National Association of Colleges and Employers*. Retrieved from <http://www.naceweb.org>.
- Perl, E. J., & Noldon, D. F. (2000). Overview of student affairs research methods: Qualitative and quantitative. *New Directions for Institutional Research*, 108, 37-49.
- Pittaway, L., & Cope, J. (2009). Simulating entrepreneurial learning: Integrating experiential and collaborative approaches to learning. *Management Learning*, 38(2), 211-233.
- Ross-Gordon, J. M. (2011). Research on adult learners: Supporting the needs of a student population that is no longer traditional. *Association of American Colleges and Universities*, 13(1). Retrieved from <https://www.aacu.org/publications-research/periodicals>.
- Salkind, N. J. (2016). *Statistics for people who (think they) hate statistics: Using Microsoft Excel 2016* (4th ed.). Los Angeles: Sage.

- Sellingo, J. (2015). *Why are so many college students failing to gain job skills before graduation?* Washington Post Higher Education News Blog. Retrieved from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/grade-point>.
- Southern Association of Colleges and Employers (2011). *Handbook for institutions seeking reaffirmation*. Decatur, GA.
- Southern Association of Colleges and Employers (2011). *The principles of accreditation: Foundations for quality enhancement* (5th ed.). Decatur, GA.
- Syddansk University (2017, March 18). Better thesis: Your online support. Retrieved from <http://www.betterthesis.dk/research-methods>.
- U.S. Department of Education (2008). *Federal higher education opportunity act*. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/HEOA>.
- The Video Factory (Producer). (2007). *Gardner-Webb University goal program at 30*[DVD].
- Visionpoint Marketing (2014). *Gardner-Webb University professional readiness pledge*. Raleigh, NC: Author.
- Yerrick, L. (2014). *Gardner-Webb University career development mission statement*. Unpublished raw data.

Appendix

Figure 1: Mission and Vision Statement for the Adult Learner Professional Readiness Experience Program (AL-PREP)

Mission Statement

In alignment with the mission and vision of Gardner-Webb University, the Adult Learner Professional Readiness Experience Program seeks to provide professional development skills and major-specific job training for all students in the Degree Completion Program through the utilization of student work experience and existing content knowledge with new skills, knowledge acquisition and reflection gained in the student's degree program of choice.

Vision Statement

The Adult Learner Professional Readiness Experience Program will serve as a signature experience for the Degree Completion Program, providing Gardner-Webb University a valuable marketing initiative in the recruitment and retention of Degree Completion Program students.

Figure 2: Policy Proposal for Adult Learner Professional Readiness Experience Program



Policy Proposal:

Adult Learner Professional Readiness Experience Program Core Competencies

Section I: Policy Background

A. Background Requirements

The Adult Learner Professional Readiness Experience Program (AL-PREP) at Gardner-Webb University is a companion program to an existing graduation requirement for traditional undergraduate students. AL-PREP is designed to assist adult learners in the Degree Completion Program (DCP) with the development of professional readiness skills through acquisition of professional development content partnered with the student's life experience and knowledge gained in the specific program of study.

The counterpart of the AL-PREP program is called the Professional Readiness Experience (PRE), which is a graduation requirement for traditional undergraduate students at Gardner-Webb University. This program has been in place since Fall 2016, which means one section of undergraduates are currently required to complete the PRE graduation requirement while another section of undergraduate students (DCP students) do not have the same requirement.

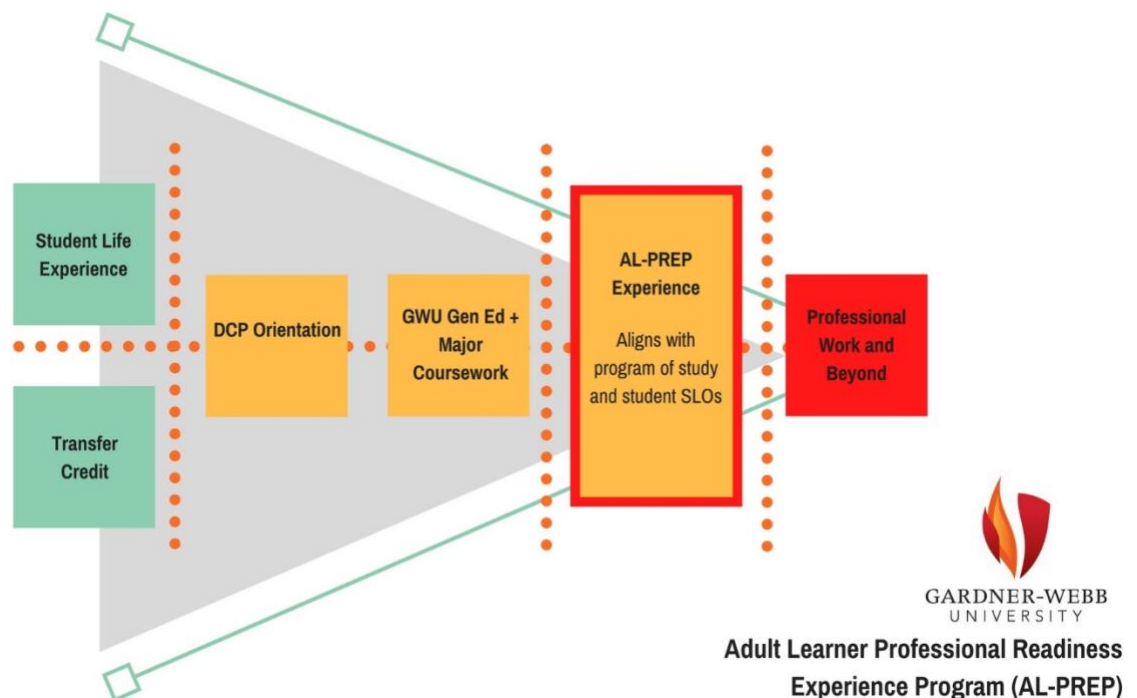
Additionally, the Human Services program has developed and implemented a HUS 304 course that combines an introduction to the profession as well as professional readiness competencies. Human Services is an exclusive program of study for DCP students and is currently the largest program offered. While other majors within DCP may have elements of professional readiness, none have been formally developed with the intention of professional readiness like the HUS 304 course. As a result, common themes and consistent methods of analysis as discussed in this policy proposal will assist in creating a common foundation for all undergraduate student professional readiness.

Common themes from the traditional undergraduate Professional Readiness Experience that also connect with Adult Learner Professional Readiness Experience are indicated below. The traditional undergraduate experience focuses more on the development of these practices; however, an adult learner may be concentrating more on the expansion of or building upon basic developmental concepts, such as how to:

- Demonstrate intellectual and academic competence
- Gain in academic skills and critical thinking
- Explore and expand upon professional identity
- Recognize career goals
- Clarify values and beliefs
- Strengthen oral/written communication
- Build teamwork/collaboration skills
- Harness leadership ability
- Increase multicultural awareness
- Recognize a sense of civic responsibility
- Articulate intellectual and practical skills

The unique characteristics of the AL-PREP program allow for integration of student experience and Gardner-Webb education as demonstrated in Diagram 1. The placement of the AL-PREP option provides a culminating experience prior to entering in the professional world of work post-graduation.

Diagram 1: Adult Learner Professional Readiness Experience Program Placement in Student Experience



B. Background Conditions

Through the review of research, a discrepancy is evident between student readiness and employer expectations, making the development of professional readiness initiatives at

Gardner-Webb even more vital. A study completed by Chegg (2013) shows a gap between skills students believe they have mastered and the employer's perception of that mastery. This insight is backed by further research from Sellinger (2015), who explored the percentage of discrepancy in these figures. For example, 62% of recent graduates in the study indicated having proficiency with oral communication skills compared to the 28% considered by employers. Critical thinking and applied knowledge in the real world figures were similar, employers rating at 66% vs. students at 26% and employers rating 59% vs. students at 23% respectively. Sellinger (2015) concludes, "the best preparation for the job market is a mix of classroom learning that can be applied in real world experience or a combination of academic and practical experience." Such opportunity fits well with balancing the experiences brought to the educational setting by adult learners with the need to address adult learner class requirements of distance, online, or evening program learning.

Additionally, one landmark study presented by Hart and Associates documented student learning and employer perception. Hart (2015) indicates "the majority of employers think that having both field-specific knowledge and skills and a broad range of skills and knowledge that apply to a variety of fields can be important for recent college graduates to achieve long-term career success in their company." The combination of both types of skill development partnered with student life experience is the basis for the AL-PREP program.

Furthermore, Hart (2015) indicates "fully 80% of employers say that during the hiring process it is very important to them that recent college graduates demonstrate the ability to apply learning in real-world settings. Yet, just 14% of employers think that most of today's college students are prepared with the skills and knowledge needed to complete a significant applied learning project before graduation." While the acquisition of career-specific knowledge is essential, so is the ability to practically apply this knowledge in a professional setting.

As the AL-PREP program was conceptualized, the initial model utilized in the formation of Gardner-Webb's program was Elon University's Experiential Learning Requirement. Elon's ELR2 "prepares students for lives of meaningful work and services. By engaging students in opportunities that integrate knowledge and experience, the ELR fosters and understanding and life-long appreciation of learning" (Elon University, 2012). This purpose mirrors that sought by Gardner-Webb in the development of a professional readiness program.

C. Background Events

- The Professional Readiness Pledge (PRP) is adopted by Gardner-Webb University: September 2014
- The Integration Task Force begins meeting to develop methodologies for implementing PRP: November 2014
- Professional Readiness Experience (PRE) for traditional undergraduate students proposed and passed by faculty: March 2016

- PRE Course Designation Faculty Committee proposed and approved by faculty: March 2017
- Initial courses requesting PRE submission for approval by PRE Course Designation Committee: April 2017
- Human Service course HUS 304 developed for adult learner professional readiness: Developed in Spring 2017; approved in April 2017; initial sections started Fall 2017.

Section II: Policy Rationale

A. Overall Rationale

Student outcomes may differ for an adult learner compared to a traditional undergraduate student. Inherently, adult learners bring to programs a variety of experiences and needs that should be celebrated and utilized as a part of the program rather than being provided only one method of completion. Because of this distinction, any Adult Learner Professional Readiness Experience must focus on what elements are essential to the desired outcome of professional development. While rigor and consistency are important elements, the specific methods in which these are accomplished may vary based on the program of study and the student. In other words, AL-PREP's main focus is on "what" rather than "how." Beyond this, there are financial, accreditation and technological rationale impacting the AL-PREP policy development process.

B. Financial Rationale

Degree Completion Program students do not receive additional need-based grants and scholarships of receiving a discounted rate. The total cost of the program is covered through loans or payment plan options by students. Because cost is a consideration, it is beneficial to students for the AL-PREP components to be kept inside the current 64 credit package completed at Gardner-Webb University towards a bachelor degree rather than adding an entirely new course for which the student must pay. While this might vary as a result of the student's specific program and needs, collaborating to incorporate AL-PREP in existing infrastructure is a more student-friendly option that adding additional coursework.

C. Accreditation Rationale

In the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) hand book, item 2.10 addresses that the "institution provides student support programs, services, and activities consistent with its mission that promote student learning and enhance the development of its students" (2011). This statement is interpreted by Gardner-Webb University as providing an equitable education experience for all undergraduate students regardless of program or mode of delivery.

D. Technological Rationale

Technology is an essential component in adult learner offerings at Gardner-Webb as some courses are taught full online, in a flipped-classroom where the class meets virtually with another class or professor in a separate location, and some classes are hybrid, offering some online and some face-to-face components. As a result, the creation of a

policy that is adaptive to meet the needs of students no matter the style of course delivery is important.

Section IV: Scope of the Policy

A. Direct Audience

- The Adult Learner Professional Readiness Experience Program is designed for students currently enrolled in the Degree Completion Program (DCP)
- Faculty teaching courses designated as Adult Learner Professional Readiness Experience Program appropriate or faculty preparing new offerings with the ALPREP

B. Indirect Audience

- DCP administrators
- Full-time Gardner-Webb faculty and DCP council members for passing a formalized proposal
- Accreditation organizations such as SACSCOC
- Families and employers connected to students completing the Professional Readiness Program.

Section V: Policy Stakeholders

A. Stakeholder Meetings

The proposed policy has been reviewed with the Associate Provost for Extended Campus Programs, Associate Dean of DCP Management, (November 9, 2017) and Director of the Center for Personal and Professional Development (November 16, 2017).

B. Indicated Stakeholders

- DCP Students
- Center for Personal and Professional Development Staff
- DCP Administration
- DCP Council
- DCP Success Coaches who advise DCP students (all DCP majors except nursing and education)
- Faculty advisors for DCP students in nursing and education programs
- Members of the EPSC faculty committee
- Faculty, with specific regard to DCP faculty and full-time faculty involved in approving new policy

Section VII: Policy Procedures

A. Courses/Experiences Approval Process

- In order to seek fulfillment of the AL-PREP initiative, courses and experiences must apply for approval.
- An application, similar to the PRE course designation application for traditional undergraduate students will be utilized, but will distinguish AL-PREP.
- Applications for program designation will be reviewed by the existing faculty PRE Course Designation Committee.

- The PRE Course Designation Committee will determine program designation or table the application in order to suggest changes.

B. Student Completion Process

- Students must apply to complete an AL-PREP program through course registration or application for an AL-PREP experience independent of a course.
- A passing grade of C or better will satisfy the AL-PREP graduation requirement.

Section IX: Policy Statement

A. Required Information

The Adult Learner Professional Readiness Experience Program provides an opportunity for students to combine existing education and life experience with Gardner-Webb coursework to maximize their learning prior to graduation. In order to assist in overall the development of AL-PREP, guidelines have been developed to shape experiences that are both formative and inclusive of adult learners' specific needs.

To be considered, these programs must provide evidence of both the Program Level Outcomes (PLOs) as well as the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). Additionally, PLO and SLO information must be documented in the course syllabus and/or program handbook. Without such documentation, AL-PREP designation will not be considered.

I. Student Learning Outcomes: *Programs must demonstrate the following:*

- At least one element from the Student Learning Outcome (SLO) Career Management section demonstrated in the course syllabus or project description (see Appendix A).
- Documented integration and reflection on how each student's prior professional experience connects with his or her overall professional readiness.

II. Program Level Outcomes: *Programs must demonstrate a minimum of one of the following as a part of the course/experience (See Appendix B):*

- Student will integrate theory and practice into professional education.
- Student will obtain information that can be used as a basis for making choices in relation to future jobs, areas of specialization, and/or further study in their field
- Student will be provided resources/equipment/facilities that offer support toward the learning goals and objectives.
- Students will receive routine feedback provided by a supervisor.
- Students will be able to recognize personal strengths and weaknesses and intentionally address those moving forward in their academic, professional, and personal goals/endeavors.

Appendix A: Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)*

| Theme | Learning Objectives |
|---|--|
| Career Management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will identify and articulate their skills, strengths, knowledge, and experiences relevant to the position desired and career goals. • Student will be able to identify areas necessary for professional growth. • Student will be able to navigate and explore job options. • Student will demonstrate understanding and take steps necessary to pursue opportunities. • Student will articulate and demonstrate an understanding of how to self-advocate for opportunities in the workplace. |
| Critical Thinking/ Problem Solving | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student will exercise reasoning to analyze issues, make decisions and overcome problems. • Student will <i>obtain</i> knowledge, facts, and data in this process, and may demonstrate originality and inventiveness. • Student will <i>interpret</i> knowledge, facts, and data in this process, and may demonstrate originality and inventiveness. • Students will <i>apply</i> knowledge, facts and data in the process, and may demonstrate originality and inventiveness. |
| Information Technology Application | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student will demonstrate ability to select and use appropriate technology to accomplish a given task. • Student will demonstrate ability to apply computing skills to solve problems. |
| Leadership | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student will demonstrate ability to leverage the strengths of other to achieve common goals. • Students will demonstrate use of interpersonal skills to coach and develop others. • Student will demonstrate ability to assess and manage his/her emotions and those of others. • Student will demonstrate ability to use empathetic skills to guide and motivate others. • Student will organize, prioritize and delegate work. |
| Oral Communication | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student will articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively in oral forms to persons inside or outside the organization. • Student will demonstrate public speaking skills in speeches, presentations and video, such as: Organization, Language, Delivery, Supporting Material, and Central Message. |
| Professionalism/ Work Ethic | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student will demonstrate personal accountability and effective work habits, such as punctuality, working productively with others and time-workload management. • Student will articulate understanding of the impact of non-verbal communication on professional work image. • Student will demonstrate integrity and ethical behavior, act responsibly with the interests of the larger community in mind, and be able to learn from his/her mistakes. |

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Teamwork/ Collaboration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student will build collaborative relationships with colleagues and customers representing diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, religions, lifestyles, and viewpoints. • Student will demonstrate ability to work in a team structure, and can negotiate and manage conflict. |
| Written Communication | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student will articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively in written forms to persons inside or outside the organization. • Student will demonstrate ability to write/edit memos, letters, and complex technical reports clearly and effectively. |

*Competencies from NACE (2017).

Appendix B: Program Level Outcomes (PLO)

| Theme | Learning Objectives |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Program Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student will integrate theory and practice into professional education. • Student will obtain information that can be used as a basis for making choices in relation to future jobs, areas of specialization, and/or further study in their field • Student will be provided resources/equipment/facilities that offer support toward the learning goals and objectives. |
| Reflection and Feedback | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will receive routine feedback provided by a supervisor. • Students will be able to recognize personal strengths and weaknesses and intentionally address those moving forward in their academic, professional, and personal goals/endeavors. |

Figure 3: Communication Plan

GARDNER-WEBB
UNIVERSITY

**Social Media Implementation Plan
Adult Learner Professional Readiness Experience Program**

Section I: Monitoring, Evaluation, and Key Performance Indicators

A. Monitoring

For purchased social media marketing, analytics are available to assist in reviewing likes, click through rates, and other statistical information. However, regular posts offer similar monitoring options with likes, comments, views and clicks as well.

- **Facebook:** Likes and reaction options, comments, clicks on videos, shares
- **Twitter:** Likes, comments, retweets
- **Instagram:** Likes, stories with analytics on the people who watched, reports
- **Snapchat:** Comments
- **YouTube:** Likes and comments, video sharing
- **LinkedIn:** Likes, comments and shares
- **Pinterest:** Reposts

B. Evaluation

The reach and reaction to posts helps determine the future direction of additional posts. For example, if student success stories are reacted to at a higher frequency than photos, this analysis may help to encourage more success stories in the future.

C. Key Performance Indicators:

- **Name recognition:** Social media branding for the adult learner recognition program should provide additional recognition to Gardner-Webb. However, a key performance indicator of the Adult Learner Professional Readiness Program is for internal and external constituents to recognize the name of the program.
- **Comments/Likes:** Reaction to a post strong enough to elicit a like or comment provides information about the success or direction of the post.
- **DCP Recruitment Events and Orientation:** Recognition of the program's importance comes in many forms, including sharing information at the beginning of a student's GWU journey about the process involved in completing the program.
- **Social Media Following in Specific Age Demographic:** Adult learners are defined as being 24 years or older. Increased following from this demographic would be a key performance indicator of the social media plan success.

- **Commitment from GWU Administration:** Success of the Adult Learner Professional Readiness Experience Program will lead to future development of similar programs in other DCP programs.

Section II: Project Strategies

A. Project Objectives

- **Objective 1:** Share pertinent information about the Adult Learner Professional Readiness Experience Program objectives and learning outcomes to students in the Degree Completion Program.
- **Objective 2:** Inform and educate the campus community about the Adult Learner Professional Readiness Experience Program.
- **Objective 3:** Communicate benefits of the Adult Learner Professional Readiness Experience Program to prospective students, alumni, and the community.

B. Target Audiences

The primary audience for the Adult Learner Professional Experience Readiness Program is current students in the Degree Completion Program, with the program being incorporated into the Human Services major starting in Fall 2017 and other majors coming online in phases.

However, because the Adult Learner Professional Readiness Experience Program impacts more than just the students involved in the course, additional target audiences should be verified and informed as well. First, faculty and staff are impacted by this program as it involves additional teaching loads, credits for graduation, and student advisory planning. Therefore, a secondary target audience should include departmental faculty and support staff, DCP success coaching staff, and the DCP council.

C. Program Mission and Vision Statement

Mission Statement

In alignment with the mission and vision of Gardner-Webb University, the Adult Learner Professional Readiness Experience Program seeks to provide professional development skills and major-specific job training for all students in the Degree Completion Program through the utilization of student work experience and existing content knowledge with new skills, knowledge acquisition and reflection gained in the student's degree program of choice.

Vision Statement

The Adult Learner Professional Readiness Experience Program will serve as a signature experience for the Degree Completion Program, providing Gardner-Webb University a valuable marketing initiative in the recruitment and retention of Degree Completion Program students.

D. Positioning Statement

Adult learner-centered professional development is not an incorporated or marketed program by any of Gardner-Webb University competitors or indeed across the board in

most colleges and universities in the country. As a result, the institution has an opportunity to make a significant impact in professional readiness tailored to the needs of an adult learner. This educational benefit is different than offerings within the University for traditional undergraduates as it combines a student's previous work experience and skills with newly acquired knowledge to deliver a comprehensive approach to professional readiness.

E. Desired Actions

Desired Action 1: Develop name recognition strategies for current students, faculty, and staff using branding and logo development in communication.

Desired Action 2: Implement a marketing strategy in collaboration with the DCP program in order to utilize the Adult Learner Professional Readiness Experience Program as an enrollment tool for recruitment team and success coaches.

Desired Action 3: Encourage upward momentum of the Adult Learner Professional Readiness Experience Program through benefits-driven information shared to current students, faculty, and staff.

F. Roles and Responsibilities

Program Coordinator

The program coordinator invests time and energy in the development and advocacy of the program. The program coordinator serves as a navigator for the program and point of contact. Responsibilities include program development, compliance, and regulation.

University and Degree Completion Program Administration

The administration of the University and DCP program provide direction and insight into program value on campus. These parties may serve as advocate or deterrent for the program based on overall University needs and strategy.

Faculty

Overall faculty serve as gatekeepers for academic and programmatic integrity in the course approval process. Additionally, faculty directly teaching courses directly influence and have direct knowledge of program success and student development. The responsibility of the faculty teaching the program courses is to uphold the intent and integrity of the program and collaborate with the program coordinator in providing insight into future revisions.

G. Key Project Stakeholders

Students

Student development and professional readiness is the intent of the Adult Learner Professional Readiness Experience Program. Successful student completion of the program is essential in ensuring program value and worth.

University Faculty and Staff

Input from the campus community ensures all perspectives are considered and each course within the DCP program has a customized professional readiness program.

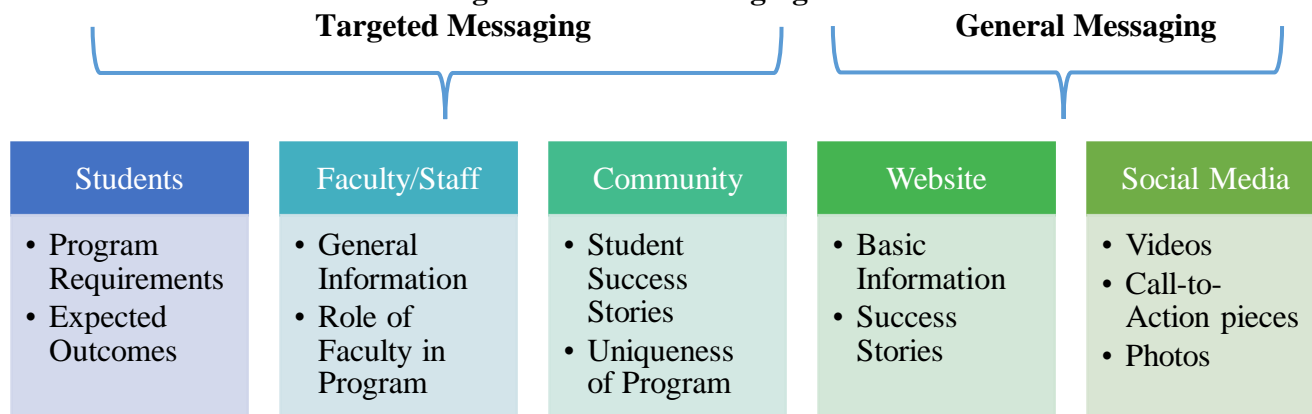
Accrediting Bodies and Professional Organizations

Organizations such as SACS-COC and the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) define operating standards and best practices. Based on the rules and regulations provided by these guiding entities, the program must fit within set parameters to be relevant.

Table A: Adult Learner Professional Readiness Program Communication Plan

| Strategy | Purpose | Method | Audience | Frequency | Message |
|--|---|---------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Announce Program | Share information with campus | Email, Website | Students, Faculty, Community | August 2017 | Adult Learning for the real world |
| Market benefits of the program | Use program as a recruitment tool | Website, Social Media, Viewbook | Prospective Students | Spring 2018 forward | Maximize existing experience with essential professional readiness |
| Market value of the program | Gain support for additional program courses | Meetings, emails | Faculty and Staff | Spring 2018 – Fall 2019 | Learn more about the great things happening with the program and how you can get involved |
| Educate about student learning objectives | Help students recognize value | Email, website, word of mouth | Students | Spring 2018 forward | Let us share with you all that you will gain from this program |
| Share logistical information with staff | Provide transparency and gain advocacy | Email, meetings | Staff | Summer 2017 forward | Basic understanding for rationale and benefit of program, how it fits with student degree evaluations |
| Student Success Stories | Recruitment, prestige | Website, Press Releases | Community | Summer 2018 forward | See what amazing things our students are doing |

Table B: Adult Learner Program Overall Messaging Plan



Communication Campaigns

A. Program Announcement

- Share expected program benefits using clear and consistent messaging
- Inform campus community about new program via email, word of mouth, social media, and website
- Invite opportunity for future program course development with DCP Program Coordinators

B. Program Progress

- Share relevant data from Phase I group to DCP Council
- Invite opportunity for future program course development with DCP Program Coordinators

C. Phase II Launch

- Market program to prospective students with included majors to date
- Reintroduce program to campus community through website
- Develop advertising strategy for GWU using program as selling point

Communication Targets and Anticipated Results

A. Social Media

- Increase likes, reactions, and comments by 10% on GWU Main, Center for Professional Development, and DCP accounts using Adult Learner Professional Readiness Program content
- Encourage through photos, videos, and message tone for participants to complete a call-to-action to promote engagement with a 40% click through rate

B. Website

- Increase traffic to DCP and Adult Learner Professional Readiness Program information by 20% through social media and marketing efforts
- Host at least 2 sliders on main website page per academic year to promote program

C. Meetings

- Attend at least 2 DCP Council meetings to inform and share future opportunities with program coordinators
- Meet with program coordinators in 2017-2018 academic year to discuss program development specific to each DCP major

Figure 4: HUS 304 Course Syllabus

HUS 304: Professional Readiness in Human Services Spring 2018 Syllabus

Part 1: Course Information

Instructor Information

Instructor: Erin E. Cook, MA, LPCA, CDF
 Office: Tucker Student Center Suite 157
 Office Hours: M-F 9am-6pm (appointment encouraged)
 Office Telephone: 704-406-2170
 E-mail: ecook2@gardner-webb.edu

Course Description

An introduction to the human services profession, service delivery, and systems theory as well as professional development in the career field of human services. Areas of learning include the helping process, professional skill acquisition and articulation, and self-reflection. Fall, Spring and Summer. 3 credit hours.

Textbook & Course Materials

Required Texts:

Woodside, M., McClam, T. (2015). An introduction to human services (8th ed.). Cengage Learning: Stamford, CT.

- ISBN: 978-1-285-74990-7

Supplementary Texts, Other Readings or Materials

- Additional articles will be made available in the Blackboard

Course Requirements

- Internet connection (DSL, LAN, or cable connection desirable)
- Access to Blackboard
- Webcam and audio capability

Course Structure

- This course is fully online with class meetings and discussions occurring virtually. All work will be submitted through Blackboard unless otherwise noted.

Online Resources

- Students will be expected to utilize a variety of online resources, including: Blackboard, ProQuest research, the GWU Center for Personal and Professional Development (gardner-webb.edu/career) and other website resources as noted.

Part 2: Student Learning Outcomes

Students will be about to demonstrate the following outcomes upon completion of the course:

Student Learning Outcome 1: Distinguish relevant human services theory, skills, and competencies.

Objective 1a: Students will be able to identify and explain key attributes of human service practice through research, reflection and examination.

Objective 1b: Students will be able to identify various human service roles through analysis of skill, reflection and examination.

Objective 1c: Students will be able to connect the role of the helping professional with personal skills and attributes through self-reflection, assessment, and portfolio development.

Student Learning Outcome 2: Connect learning with job search strategies.

Objective 2a: Students will be able to successfully articulate professional skills and human service career goals in interview and networking through online practice modules, self-analysis, and feedback.

Objective 2b: Students will be able to demonstrate awareness of ethical considerations within the profession through reflection and examination.

Student Learning Outcome 3: Demonstrated understanding of profession and personal connection to human services.

Objective 3a: Students will be able to demonstrate relevancy of human services profession in an approved topic through research and written reflection.

Objective 3b: Students will be able to successfully articulate professional skills in by providing a resume specified for human services.

Part 3: Topic Outline/Schedule

| Week | Topics of Discussion | Readings | Assignments/ Activities | Due Date by 10pm |
|--------------|---|---------------------------|---|------------------|
| Jan 15-19 | Introduction to Course, Assignments | Start on Woodside Ch. 1 | -Course verification -Complete Pre-Survey -Discussion Board 1/Intro | Jan 23 |
| Jan 22-26 | Human Services Theory and Delivery | Woodside Chapters 1 and 2 | -Review Chapter Videos | Jan 30 |
| Jan 29-Feb 2 | Human Services Prevalence and Personal Strength | Woodside Chapter 6 | -Review Chapter Video -Workplace Options Assignment | Feb 6 |
| Feb 5-9 | Helping Process Competencies | Chapter 6 continued | -Discussion Board 2/ Transferable Skills | Feb 13 |

| Week | Topics of Discussion | Readings | Assignments/ Activities | Due Date by 10pm |
|---------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| Feb 12-16 | The Helping Process | Woodside Chapter 7 | -Resume I Draft Due -Review Chapter Video | Feb 20 |
| Feb 19-23 | Ethical Considerations | Woodside Chapter 9 | -Exam on 1,2,6,7 -Review Chapter Video | Feb 27 |
| Feb 26-March 2 | Job Search Strategies | Practice Job Interview Instructions | -Practice Job Interview Assignment and Reflection | March 6 |
| March 5-9 | Models of Service Delivery | Woodside Chapter 4 | -Mid Term: Interview of a Human Services Professional and Reflection -Review Chapter Video | March 9 |
| SPRING BREAK: March 12-16 | | | | |
| March 19-23 | Digital Learning and Human Services | Woodside Chapter 3 | -Review Chapter Video -Resume Draft II and Cover Letter I Draft | March 27 |
| March 26-30 | The Client | Woodside Chapter 5 | -Review Chapter Video | April 3 |
| EASTER BREAK: March 29-April 2 | | | | |
| April 3-6 | Professional Marketing | Start review of Capstone work | -Exam on 3,4,5,9 | April 10 |
| April 9-13 | Impact of Personality on Professional Development | MBTI Workplace Profiles | -Discussion Board 3/MBTI | April 17 |
| April 16-20 | Developing a Professional Network | Networking Instructions | -Discussion Board 4/ Networking | April 24 |
| April 23-27 | Trends in Human Services | Supplemental Reading | -Discussion Board 5/ The Helping Professional in You | May 1 |
| April 30-May 3 | The Human Services Profession | Capstone Reading | -Resume and Cover Letter Final | May 3 |
| May 7-9 | Professional Readiness | | -Capstone Project -Post-Survey | TBA- due by final exam time |

Extra Credit Options

Any students seeking extra credit options may choose to complete up to 2 of the following, each worth 2% of your overall grade, 4% total. **See extra credit folder under course assignments folder for detailed information and instructions about each option.

- Complete and extra interview and reflection with a human services professional
- Complete the Dewey Color System assessments (2 total) and reflect upon results
- Review information about digital presence and complete a social media audit. Reflect upon what you learned in this process.
- Review Job Description in Woodside Chapter 8, pg. 240. Identify key skills indicated in the job description and match with your skills. Create a cover letter to address specific job listed.

Part 4: Grading Policy

Graded Course Activities

Visit the Assignments link in Blackboard for details about each assignment listed below.

| Percentage | Description |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| 25% | Discussion Boards 1-5 (5% each) |
| 20% | Examinations (2 total at 10% each) |
| 5% | Workplace Options Assignment |
| 10% | Resume and Cover Letter Drafts |
| 10% | Finalized Resume and Cover Letter |
| 10% | Mid Term Professional Interview |
| 5% | Practice Job Interview Assignment |
| 15% | Course Capstone Project |
| 100% | Total Points Possible |

Late Work Policy

It is important to pay close attention to deadlines as there will be no make-up assignments or quizzes, or late work accepted without a serious and compelling reason and instructor approval.

Letter Grade Assignment

Final grades assigned for this course will be based on the percentage of total points earned and are assigned as follows:

| Letter Grade | Percentage |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| A | 90-100% |
| B | 80-89% |
| C | 70-79% |
| D | 60-69% |
| F | 0-59% |

Part 5: Course Policies

Attendance, Participation and Preparation

Students are expected to attend all classes and participate often in class discussion by offering constructive comments, examples, and questions. Students are responsible for all the information, materials, and activities that occur as part of the class. If you are absent, you will need to contact me or a classmate to obtain the material.

Students are responsible for all course work conducted in class meetings and are required by University policy to attend a minimum of 75% of the scheduled class meetings. Failure to meet this attendance requirement will result in a grade of @F in the course.

This is the equivalent of missing (Fill in the number of courses that can be missed based upon how often your class meets) of scheduled class meetings.

Drop/Add Period and Withdrawal Period

It is the student's responsibility to understand when they need to consider disenrolling from a course. Refer to the Gardner-Webb Registrar's online site for dates and deadlines for registration, drop/add or withdrawal from course (<http://www.gardner-webb.edu/admissions-and-financial-aid/degree-completion-program/academic-advising/course-registration/index>).

Incomplete Policy

Under emergency/special circumstances, students may petition for an incomplete grade. An "I" is assigned where course work is not complete because of circumstances beyond the control of the student. The student has up to 90 days to complete the course work and remove the "I"; otherwise an "F" will be automatically assigned by the Registrar's Office.

Smarthinking

In order to enhance your academic experience, Gardner-Webb University has partnered with [Smarthinking](#), an online tutoring program, to provide you with online tutoring 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Tutoring for a variety of courses include, but are not limited to: Math, Business, Computers and Technology, and Writing. To access Smarthinking: Please log into webbconnect, click on the Academic Support folder, click on the Smarthinking Online Tutoring link, and create your Smarthinking account. As a student enrolled in the Degree Completion Program, you have access to a total of four free hours of Smarthinking online tutoring. If you find that you need more than four hours of online tutoring, please contact Jessica Herndon (Interim Director of LEAP) at 704-406-2297 or jherndon@gardner-webb.edu.

Noel Program for Students with Disabilities

If your learning or participation in this class might be affected in anyway by a disability recognized under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), you will need to do the following; (1) register with the Noel Center for Disability Resources (704-406-4270); and (2) notify me as soon as possible preferably within the first week so I can work with you and the Noel Center to arrange necessary accommodations.

All students needing accommodations to participate fully in class activities and to fulfill requirements of the class should be registered with the Noel Center for Disability Resources and notify the instructor of this need preferably during the first week of classes.

Writing Center

The Writing Center is a resource for all students, regardless of major or level of study. Writing Center consultants are fellow students who have a solid grasp of the English language and writing who also enjoy assisting others. They will help you with developing and revising your ideas as well as polishing your final draft. You can make an appointment for a consultation in Webb Connect to see if there's an available appointment. Visit gardner-webb.edu/writingcenter for important information like semester hours of operation.

Academic Dishonesty Policy

The Gardner-Webb University Honor Code will be enforced. You are expected to perform the work of the class in accordance with the requirements of the Gardner-Webb Academic Honor Code. Detailed descriptions of Academic Violations of the Honor Code can be found in the Student Handbook on page 46. Any infraction of the honor code may lead to a student receiving an F in the course and notification of the office of the University's Vice President for Academic Affairs. Any subsequent infraction may lead to expulsion from the university.

Figure 5: Survey Data for HUS 304 Course

Pre-Survey Analysis (n=51)

| Percentage Response | Survey Question |
|---|---|
| Current and Future Employment | |
| 92.16% | Working full-time or part time while completing coursework |
| 39.22% | Plan to stay in the same position or seek a promotion within the organization after degree completion |
| 49.02% | Are working in a related field to their major |
| Work/Life Balance | |
| 98.04% | Are balancing school, work, and family obligations |
| Perception of Professional Readiness | |
| 52.94% | Have an updated resume |
| 25.49% | Are confident in current resume |
| 54.9% | Expressed need for practice networking |
| 54.9% | Expressed lack of confidence in interviewing |

Post-Survey Analysis (n=38)

| Percentage Response | Survey Question |
|---------------------|--|
| 100% | Indicated greater understanding and clarity about possibilities within chosen major after completing program |
| 88% | Felt more confident about resume because of program |
| 60% | Felt more comfortable networking because of program |
| 62.50% | Felt more confident with ability to interview well because of program |
| 76% | Felt more confident in ability to share professional strengths and skills related to chosen field of study |

Pre-and Post Comparison of Professional Readiness Experiences

