Maximizing the Educational Investment with a Required Personal and Professional Development Program for Business Majors

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Maximizing the Educational Investment with a Required Personal and Professional Development Program for Business Majors

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Higher-education institutions have been asked to go beyond the classroom and provide a better return on investment for students. With no line item in the budget, the Pamplin School of Business of the University of Portland linked both formation of the person and professional development by creating a mechanism of a credit-based program designed to marry theoretical, self-assessment, and experiential learning. Students engage in a series of holistic processes and professional development coursework challenging them to find and fulfill their potential while effectively exploring the core question of the university, “Who am I?” Between 2012 and 2016, 93 percent of business students acquired a vocational career position within six months of graduation, maximizing their education investment.

This article is dedicated to the student workers who were instrumental in assisting in the development and implementation of the program. This program could not have been developed without them. These workers include Dani Remy Baker, Jasmine Dudley, Larissa Woods, Brooke Murphy, Cole Preece, and Amanda Stowe. The graphics in the paper are by Cole Preece.

Keywords: Experiential Learning, Employment Outcomes, Pedagogy, College Students, Financial Wellness, Teaching, Professional Development

Disciplines of Interest: Business, Education, Undergraduate Education, Innovation, Entrepreneurship

INTRODUCTION

Higher education costs have soared 1,120% since 1978, four times faster than the increase in the consumer price index. Rising tuition and the trillion-dollar debt that students have accumulated have led to the government recognizing that the current educational system is in need of reform.1 (Jamrisko et al., 2012) Univer-

1Jamrisko, Michelle et al. (2012) Bloomberg News Article.
University stakeholders across the country, in general, are demanding more of a return on investment with collegiate programs, particularly in the areas of postgraduate employment, where an assurance of paying back student debt can be obtained. In 2007, the school understood society’s concern and decided to do something constructive, creative, and innovative to address this challenge. Initially, with no line item in the budget and with help from staff, faculty, and student workers, the school developed a program whose aims were two-fold. The disruptive, innovative program emphasizes personal and professional formation of the whole person by marrying theoretical, self-assessment, and experiential learning within the curriculum. By combining the different types of learning, this program prepares graduates in a comprehensive manner. This mechanism of a credit-based requirement with fees attached to the classes (see Appendix I) are the keys in the program, which enriches the undergraduate collegiate experience and maximizes the value of higher education by ensuring that students are intentional in discerning a path for their lives and finding a right-fit vocation beyond a job or career. The mantra of the program is “a job pays the bills, a career is about self, and a vocation is about self in the context of community” (see Figure 1). The co-curricular program creates a systemized and strategic environment that assists students in their transformational growth through reflection and discernment of educational experiences outside the classroom. Each year, students are required to

Figure 1. Mantra of the P4
complete specific requirements (see Figure 2). Through these experiences, students discern and learn to express their values and passions and develop life-learning skills. This awareness of self, coupled with practical professional development, equips students with tangible and measured outcomes, such as a brand video.
statement that answers the University core questions of “Who am I?” and “Who am I becoming?”

This mechanism of a requirement of personal growth and professional development in the curriculum provides the maximization of extra value that society in general is asking of higher education while aligning with the values of the mission of the University (see Appendix I). This dual impact of a requirement in the curriculum, relative to the resources used, helps students distinguish themselves both as a person and a professional in the community at large and gives the data outcomes that constituents have asked of universities (see Appendices III). With five years of outcome data, this program clearly addresses all of these concerns and maintains the development of the whole person (see Figure 3). From 2012 to 2016, 100% of students in this program successfully participated in one or more internships, 40% of those who interned were offered jobs, 25% accepted those offers, and 93% of business students had acquired their first vocational position within six months post-graduation (see Figure 3). Although it has been tested in a business curriculum, the program may be adapted to any major at any university meeting the expectations of constituents.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Universities and higher-education institutions have traditionally been a source for new talent in the workplace. These institutions have operated autonomously, focusing on theoretical knowledge but not necessarily professional, personal, or
employment outcomes. In general, academic institutions view themselves as networking and development platforms, not employment agencies, and refuse to identify themselves as anything else. Although I agree that universities are not employment agencies, there is more we can do to help with employment outcomes. With the rising cost of education and the inability for students to find jobs with adequate pay that enable them to pay back ever-increasing debt, the stakeholders and the government have a different perspective. The Obama Administration launched a College Scorecard which holds degree-seeking schools accountable for cost, value, and quality to provide families transparency with regard to return on investment. The Scorecard provides clear, concise information on cost, graduation rate, amount borrowed, and employment for every degree-granting institution in the country.² (Obama White House Archives, 2015)

Although the University has always provided value in most areas covered by the Federal Government College Scorecard, the timing of this program has enabled a greater maximization of return on the educational investment for students by going a step further and reporting higher-employment outcomes. In 2013, national thought leaders Andy Chan and Tommy Derry of Wake Forest University were primary editors of a crowdsourced paper entitled, “Rethinking Success from the Liberal Arts to Careers in the 21st Century.” The crowdsourcing paper was written after a conference attended by representatives from 74 premier, higher-education institutions challenged universities to re-examine existing models of career development. The discussion centered on how to maximize value proposition through enhanced personal and career development for students and how to be the catalyst for transformational change, a topic at the center of higher education’s future. “Many regard postgraduate employment as the primary measure of value provided by higher education.”³ (Chan and Derry, 2013) The authors suggest that critics accuse liberal arts institutions of not adequately providing this return on investment amidst higher tuition costs and weak job markets for graduates. Also, they worry that “despite the challenging trends indicated by the data, many schools seem to be evolving slowly.” They worry that current systems in universities have remained static while the world of work has transformed.⁴ (Chan and Derry, 2013) Most universities ask their career centers to get the results for which constituents are asking, but since they are not academic units, they cannot require students to participate in their programming. With four years of outcome data, this program clearly addresses all of these concerns and maintains the development of the whole person (see Figure 3).


Other entities associated with universities agree that solutions need to be more value focused. The professional organization for career services at universities, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), states in its new standards and protocols, “In light of escalating higher-education costs and perceived returns on the significant investment of time, effort, and resources extended by students and their families, NACE recognizes the critically important public discourse concerning the value and effectiveness of higher education as it relates to preparing the next generation work force. NACE further recognizes the growing importance of institutional outcome assessment efforts as they relate to improving higher-education performance and achieving institutional and academic program accreditation standards.”⁵ (NACE, 2014)

In 2007 with these concerns in mind, the school saw an opportunity to develop a new and different model that addresses these issues. By developing a program that marries self-assessment with theoretical and experiential learning in a holistic fashion, a new unique value proposition was created. The key to the success of the program is the fact that its completion is a graduation requirement for every business student. These types of requirements in the program become a mechanism for students to leave campus as students for various learning experiences allowing them to become comfortable in an industry environment. Through required site visits, mock interviews, speed networking, and an internship experience, students connect and network in the community at large. Students would not do this process on their own if it were not for the requirement. Scholars agree that a mechanism is important. “In Organizational Strategy, Structure, and Process”, researchers Raymond E. Miles, Charles C. Snow, Alan D. Meyer, and Henry J Coleman, Jr. state that “an organization is both an articulated purpose and an established mechanism for achieving it. Efficient organizations establish mechanisms that complement their market strategy, but inefficient organizations struggle with these structural and process mechanisms.”⁶ (Miles et al., 1978)

Many constituents agree that by making experiential learning required, the program aligns more with the millennials’ generational need for structure. Richard Sweeney writes in “Demographics Millennial Behaviors” that students strongly prefer learning by doing and interacting. Millennial students are also more engaged through active learning and effective experiential processes, such as hands-on experiences. Sweeney comments that “there are wide arrays of new learning opportunities that can be employed to better engage millennial students if universities are willing to take some risks and innovate.”⁷ (Sweeney, 2006) Neil Howe and William Strauss

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state in *Millennials Go to College: Strategies for a New Generation on Campus: Recruiting and Admissions, Campus Life, and the Classroom*, “if pre-workplace courses are made mandatory, perhaps for credit, no students will slip through the cracks. Parents and local employers will appreciate knowing that no collegian will miss out on basic workplace orientation. If such courses are left as being optional, a number of students can be expected not to take advantage of them.”\(^8\) (Howe and Strauss, 2007) Others, such as Ben Carpenter of the *New York Times*, who states in “Is Your Student Prepared for Life”, are in agreement. “The answer is simple: colleges need to create, and require for graduation, a course in career training that would begin freshman year and end senior year;”\(^9\) (New York Times, 2014) and this is how the program is designed.

Maximizing Value Giving a Competitive Advantage

Although there is *strong recognition* that schools are not businesses, it is important to recognize that they need to act as such to remain viable in the current market climate while maintaining the role of formation and growth for students. The university industry can no longer consciously make a decision to deny responsibility for assisting students in finding employment. If the university setting ignores the demand for employment outcomes, the industry will allow others, particularly online and less-expensive forms of educational systems, to dominate the market. Universities, in general, must figure out how to stay relevant while maintaining their mission of holistic education in an ever-changing landscape by developing new programs, like this one, to maximize a greater return on a student’s educational investment of tuition and time. This program steps out of the normal status quo of education, where researchers such as W. Chan Kim and Renee Mauborgne, state in “Blue Ocean Strategy”: “Cirque [Du Soleil] did not make its money by competing within the confines of the existing industry or by stealing customers from others. Instead, it created uncontested market space that made the competition irrelevant. It pulled in a whole new group of customers who were traditionally noncustomers of the industry.”\(^10\) (Kim and Mauborgne, 2004) The School chose to be innovative and developed a new blue-ocean strategy within a “mature” red-ocean industry. The dean attributes much of the significant growth of the school, 450 to 705 students, during the time period of 2010 to 2015 to the inception of the program.

By doing more than teaching, the program provides enhanced value creation by parting with traditional boundaries of voluntary professional development models through their career centers. Peter Drucker in “The Objectives of a Business”

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states that the only fruitful way to determine objectives is what is measured in each area and what the measurement should be, for the measurement used determines what one pays attention to by making things visible, tangible, and relevant. In terms of setting objectives for management, Drucker states that once goals and objectives are clear, it can be determined if they are being obtained or not.\(^{11}\) (Drucker, 1954) Most importantly for the school, and thus the University, the four-year curriculum requirement model in the academic units allows the development of quantitative and qualitative vocational and employment outcomes for our constituents that would not be able to be collected if students were asked on a volunteer basis. Mark W. Johnson, Clayton M. Christensen, and Henning Kagermann, say in “Reinventing Your Business Model,” that new models can reshape entire industries, and chief executive officers (CEOs) are looking into business model innovations to address permanent shifts in their market landscapes.\(^{12}\) (Johnson et al., 2008)

This new way of seeing where mandates are made of students in regards to experiential activities outside the classroom can change how educational institutes think about their responsibility to society in general. This pragmatic program provides a service that is attractive to the extended community at large because they desire the outcomes and a greater return on educational investment. Michael Porter would call this change a “public good,” because it will benefit the community and every firm in the industry.\(^{13}\) (Porter, 2008) Peter Drucker elaborates on the importance of public responsibility for a program like this one. “To strive to make whatever is productive for our society, whatever strengthens it and advances its prosperity, a source of strength and prosperity for the enterprise.”\(^{14}\) (Drucker, 1954) Through these graduation requirements and a new strategy of connection from educational process to the professional world experience, students are provided the tools and network that will allow them to become preferred candidates in the field and be intentional in finding their first vocation.

The Secret Sauce of Alumni Participation in the Program

According to Forbes Magazine, it is seven times less expensive to keep a customer than to acquire one.\(^{15}\) (Forbes, 2013) In creating a formalized program required of all business students, the school systemized an underutilized resource, its alumni. Bringing alumni back to campus regularly through organized activities engages them and simultaneously helps students develop professionally. Activi-
ties, such as speakers in the professional development classes or mentors for mock and informational interviews, help them unite and reconnect with the brand of the University as a whole. These relationships with our alumni are intangible assets and are difficult to measure. However, since the inception of the program, there has been an average of 250 alums helping in the program each year, with a simultaneous increase in giving from alumni and parents. Because they are engaged by using their time and talents, their treasures follow. In “Transforming the Balanced Scorecard from Performance Measurement to Strategic Management: Part I,” Robert S. Kaplan and David P. Norton emphasize measures of intangible assets, such as the university alumnus by stating, “improvements in intangible assets affect financial outcomes through chains of cause and effect relationships. The value cannot be separated from the organizational processes that transform intangibles into customer and financial outcomes. The value does not reside in any individual intangible asset. It arises from creating the entire set of assets along with a strategy that links them together. The value-creation process is multiplicative, not additive.”16 (Kaplan and Norton, 2001)

Jay Barney states that a “firm that exploits its resources has the advantage simply by behaving in an efficient and effective manner.”17 (Barney, 1991) The networking with alumni is a major aspect of the program and is an integral part of the student experience that adds value. Enabling powerful relationships to be utilized, nourished, and maintained in a systematic fashion gives alumni a feeling and sense of value and belonging. This is considered an experience economy, thus differentiating the school and giving it a competitive advantage. Ultimately, more formalized partnerships emerge as a value-added benefit, just as Goldman Sachs differentiated their company by “providing unparalleled service by maintaining close relationships with client executives and coordinating the array of service it offers.”18 (Hambrick and Fredrickson, 2005) The identification of a core competency, such as the alumni, enables leaders to develop what Hamel and Prahalad and call “strategic architecture.”19 (Hamel and Prahalad, 1990) This new architecture creates a maximization of return on investment for students by better utilizing this type of resource and thus creating a network for them. Niraj Dawar states in “When Marketing is Strategy,” “people who want to connect want to be where everyone else is hanging out. The very nature of network effects is that it is accumulative.”20 (Dawar, 2013) David Collins and Cynthia Montgomery state in “Competing on Resources” that “valuable resources can take a variety of forms.

18Hambrick, Donald C. and James W. Fredrickson “Are You Sure You Have a Strategy?” Academy of Management Executive 19, no. 4 (2005), 55.
including some overlooked by the narrow conception of core competence and capabilities.” By looking at current existing relationships in schools, Collins and Montgomery (2008) suggest that the capabilities and resources become the heart of a company’s competitive positions.21 Jay Barney (1991) states, “positive reputations of firms among customers and suppliers have been cited as sources of competitive advantage.”22

Connecting alumni and students through required experiences provides meaningful opportunities and networking for job seekers to discern and find the right-fit vocation, assisting them in making a successful transition from college to the workplace. The employment outcomes that result allow the family unit to have an experience economy which aligns and meets their expectations of the money they invested in the education. Jasmine Dudley, a prior student worker, states, “the amount of engagement from alums, local and non-local businesses have been a huge accomplishment for the program. All of the outside interest and support has not only opened up more opportunity for graduates, but it has helped provide funding for the progression of the program. It has allowed students to learn through experience, and made it possible for companies to become interested in what the school is doing.” (see Appendix III). Michael Porter (2008) states, “At the most fundamental level, firms create competitive advantage by perceiving or discovering new and better ways to compete in an industry and bringing them to market, which is ultimately an act of innovation.”23 “Companies that create blue oceans usually reap the benefits without credible challenges for 10–15 years, as these types of programs are easier to imagine than to do.”24 (Kim et al., 2004).

BACKGROUND – CREATION OF PROGRAM

In 2007, the faculty in the school, and particularly the dean, were frustrated by the inability to answer constituents’ questions with regard to job outcomes. At the time, University did offer some services, but any information that was collected on campus was made confidential and assessed mostly voluntary student participation. As director of the creation, development, and implementation, I viewed any new program that would be created from a unique three-fold perspective of a parent, student, and staff member. As the parent of a 2007 business major, I knew the school had done a marvelous job in teaching theoretical learning, but when it came to determining what type of vocation or career my son would have upon graduation, there was no program that had prepared him. As a liberal arts major myself at the University, I knew firsthand the challenges my classmates faced.

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22Barney, 116.
23Porter, 30-36.
had regarding their lack of preparation for a career. Additionally, as a business school staff member, the dean and I listened to our constituents, including businesses, faculty, staff, and potential students at regular visitation days, and it was very clear that we needed a different path in the areas of personal and professional development. The family units wanted to know if their sons and daughters would be working upon graduation. With the growing expectations from these constituents and recognizing consumer trends in a dynamic market, action needed to be taken.

As Ron Albertson said in “A Roadmap for Transforming the College to Career Experience,” *dream big*. The school did dream big with the constituents’ demands in mind and recognized that current resources could be used more effectively. Albertson goes on to state, “it’s amazing how one’s perspective and posture can change when you shift from a limited resources mentality to one that allows you to dream and extol the importance of the college-to-career conversation.”

(Chan and Derry, 2013) Through an internal review and many off-campus retreats, the school realized that the current system was not working well enough to get the results demanded, so a creative rethinking of normal processes was evaluated. As new pathways were discussed and implemented, many challenges occurred with existing systems. In *Finding the Right Path*, Laurence Capron and Will Mitchell see that as a regular pattern in their research; “even when developed internally, new resources and capabilities that threaten to make current ones obsolete will meet with resistance from anyone invested in old practices, culture and processes. Bounds of tradition and in-the-box thinking subscribe only to traditional best practices.”

(Capron and Mitchell, 2010) The school did not look to current best practices, because they knew they needed a new perspective with an ever-changing work world. Christine Oliver states in “Sustainable Competitive Advantage: Combining Institutional and Resource-Based Views” that “firms will be willing to defy tradition when declining performance, economic crises, or increasingly outdated processes or practices make the need for change more obvious or urgent. Resources and capabilities that are developed and sustained over time are vulnerable to cognitive sunk costs because individuals find it difficult for reasons of loyalty, fear, or habit to replace or abandon long-standing traditions and routines.”

(Oliver, 1997) The rethinking of how the school operated was necessary to ensure that students find success with a new path. Gary Hamel and C. K. Prahalad in “The Core Competence of the Corporation” suggest that a rethinking of the corporation helps one to reform the principles of management and develop a new engine for business development. By shifting resources and identifying possible core competencies, an organization can strengthen its position, developing what they call strategic architecture, and then

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25 Chan and Derry, 9.
communicate the intent both inside and outside the organization.28 (Hamel and Prahalad, 1990)

At the retreats, faculty and staff reviewed the latest accreditation report from the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), resulting in the identification of curriculum and program gaps. Faculty comments included a desire to:

- bridge build and collaborate with local organizations;
- match classes to organizations in long-term strategic relationships;
- create a better brand and better positioning of the school of business and its students in the marketplace;
- create career placement credit classes where the millennial student who appreciates more structured courses would be required to complete certain reflection and formation development;
- assist students in engaging in a career in the form of a vocation that will fulfill their lives by asking them what is their purpose, passion, and calling;
- work closely with career services to improve and increase opportunities for students;
- and strengthen career preparation and placements through networking, interviewing skills, and teaching students how to sell themselves as serious candidates for the workplace.

In December 2007 and with a collaborative spirit, the dean proposed the co-curricular Professional Development Program that the business faculty and staff had created as a result of AACSB feedback, faculty and student recommendations, and subcommittee discussions. The logistics would continue to unfold as systems could be implemented and evolve on campus. Beginning with the class of 2012 (entry level, August 2008), all students in the school of business would be required to go through the program. An outcome of the collaborative development of the program, the dean was encouraged to develop business advisory councils in different cities. These boards would be an instrument that would assist in the professional development needed as well as give continual feedback about how the program should progress. Since January, 2008, the dean has developed three advisory boards in Portland, Seattle, and San Francisco.

With no line item in the budget, staff and student workers began the development of the program. Students, with the ability to remove themselves from old processes, were fully engaged in the development of the program. By allowing an honest evaluation and critique of the roll out of the program, creative disruptive innovation occurred. This process was a key component in understanding our students better, and it enabled the school to achieve the outcomes that our constituents wanted and needed. (See tribute to the student workers in beginning of the paper.)

28Hamel and Prahalad, 3.
PROGRAM CONTENT

Students engage in a series of professional development activities in credit-based classes throughout their four-year academic career. By providing yearly milestones integrated into the academic undergraduate program, students align their academic experience with the professional world. This program emphasizes why the formation of the person in a holistic fashion is valuable in creating future employees, civic leaders, and good citizens. The program integrates advising, self-assessment, leadership, ethics, professional development, site visits or job shadows, internships, and networking with businesses and alumni, as well as other activities that assist in the student’s development (see Figure 2). This curriculum challenges and develops students beginning in the first week of school to determine their interests as well as to find and fulfill their full potential through deep self-reflection and creativity. With a strong emphasis on Gallup-based strengths, the individualized self-assessment process allows students to discover innate talents and hone in on their strengths by means of tests that compel them to learn more about themselves. It also provides a common language and positive psychology, which assists students as they think about their professional goals and how to actualize them after graduation. Combined with the knowledge gained in the classroom, one’s individual and soft-skills talents become strengths that can greatly benefit the community at large and contribute to vocational success.

Four classes in the program include the following. See complete curriculum in Figure 2.

1. Freshman Year - BUS 100 Introduction to Leadership Skills — 3 credit hours.
2. Sophomore Year - BUS 202 Professional Development — 1 credit hour.
3. Junior Year - BUS 302 Professional Development Internship — 3 credit hour. Students will complete a LinkedIn portfolio.
4. Senior Year - BUS 402 Professional Development Leadership — 1 credit hour.

These classes provide an environment where students develop habits of life-long skills of reflection and discernment of their professional and personal life. “We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.” These words by Aristotle encapsulate the school’s approach to teaching students to organize their thinking and to be successful in their daily actions by instilling habits of the heart and mind that lead their development. All of these reflective documents are kept in a portfolio system that can be seen by other educators, advisors, and mentors to continue a conversation about the student’s development during college (see Appendix IV). The students then can choose to transfer pertinent work samples to their LinkedIn profile for the community outside college.
In the first two years of the program, students spend time assessing themselves in their formation as a budding professional through several activities:

- Strengths Quest
- Résumé and cover letter building
- O*Net (United States Government Labor-Bureau personality test)
- 360-communication assessment (allowing students to understand how their style of communication is perceived by others)
- A service practicum (students learn a sense of engagement in their community)
- Site visits at companies
- Informational and group mock interviews
- Writing a professional development plan (assists students in setting their short and long-term goals)
- Create an electronic portfolio (students can show tangible demonstration of skills and achievements)
- Development of a draft of personal brand statement
- Dress for success seminar
- Network and connect with alumni and businesses

In their last two years of school, students work on the following:

- Servant leadership
- Identifying a right fit employer whose values reflect their own through an employer profile.
- Formalizing their LinkedIn profile
- Develop a personal brand video from their draft
- Attend speed-networking events
- Participate in an etiquette meal
- Participate in an individual mock interview
- Learn financial literacy through budgeting
- Find and complete an internship and reflection
- Develop leadership skills for their teams and how to manage their boss
- Seminars in business ethics and the transition from a student to a professional
- Students consult for small business and non-profit organizations as part of their service learning

The program participants leave knowing how to manage their career or what the school calls vocation and act as a professional. They develop professional skills and learn to recognize the responsibility of professionalism in order to better the community around them.

OUTCOMES OF THE PROGRAM

The program’s ultimate goal is student success realized through measurable outcomes. For four years, the school of business has determined the following results:

Spring 2018

155
Data, 2012–2016 (Five Years of Statistics)

1. 100% of business students had at least one internship
2. Average of 40% of the internships turned into job offers
3. Average of 25% of students accepted jobs from internships
4. Average of 93% of job placements six months out after graduation

Other important outcomes that are not always measureable are the students’ ability to articulate their own brand statements through video. This tangible item shows our students can answer the University core questions of “Who am I?” and “Who am I becoming?” By utilizing Strengths Quest and other personal assessment tools, students meet with the program faculty member who mentors them as they learn to express who they are as a person in a 30-second draft brand statement. Students continue to build and reflect their draft brand statement between their sophomore and junior years. In the beginning of junior year, students create a video to communicate their reflected developed personal brand, unique personhood, and best self. They cannot video tape their brand and be themselves unless they truly believe in what they are saying. The skills involved in creating these videos, such as telling their story, are also transferrable to interviewing. Students gain digital literacy by organizing, understanding, evaluating, analyzing, creating, and communicating information. According to “The State of Video in Education 2015: A Kaltura Report,” “Video improves the learning experience, as it is a useful form of personal feedback. Students are able to critique themselves when they produce videos showing themselves performing.”29 (Kaltura, 2015) Additionally, videos “teach students media literacy and fluency where they learn to communicate in multi-modal format intended for wide audiences.”30 (Kaltura, 2015) Over 700 students have completed the process, and there has not been one student who reported not feeling more confident and prepared by expressing who they really are in the personal brand statement and video project.

One of this co-curricular program’s goals is to utilize existing resources that were once underutilized on campus by driving students to them. Students use existing resources on campus at the Library Digital Lab to produce these videos. Other departments that are better utilized include Career Services. Even though the school houses approximately 19% of the university student population, Career Services presented 47% of their class presentations in 2014–2015 to the school of business, showing that intentional co-curricular systems work. See chart of Career Center presentations.

The university is already a good value, especially with its significant discount rate through numerous merit-based scholarships. The university received an

award for each year in the past five years by Kiplinger’s Personal Finance as the number 1 in the state for “best value” among private colleges and universities. Additionally, Bloomberg Businessweek rates the university as number 1 in the state for “best return on investment.” This program adds extra value that helps to brand the school, and thus, the University. The University, in its institutional research brief, states, “As college costs become increasingly burdensome, families and students are focusing on value added from college. Consequently, it will become more important for institutions to distinguish themselves in specific disciplines and opportunities, and be able to show student outcomes that convince families the investment will be worthwhile.” (University of Portland, Institutional Research, January 2014) The discerned learning experience and the development of an intentional network that participants can tap into for potential employment upon graduation allow students opportunities to pay their federal student loans back at a quicker pace. These outcomes give an opportunity for the school to capitalize on and enhance its brand. Since these consumers already know that they are saving opportunity cost monies by attending an institution that focuses on students graduation with a four-year period, they are willing to pay more.
CONCLUSION

This required credit-based professional program is a unique, added-value proposition in higher education for students. Relative to the cost of the program, the impact of the outcomes of personal and professional development maximizes the return on educational investment. (Appendix II) While continuing to align with the university’s mission, the curriculum guides them to engage in their personal growth formation and professional development. Students learn to become more strategic in their planning of leading self while marrying theoretical, self-assessment, and experiential learning. Engaging early in their academic career, students benefit greatly by assessing who they are as a person and learning to develop a network with alumni. Many institutions nationwide implement parts of the program, but usually, you will see that it is not required. (Chan, 2013) Traditionally, academia asks career centers to provide outcomes, but they have the disadvantage of not being able to require the programming necessary to obtain the necessary outcomes and results. Although difficult to get started in a red-ocean industry like academia, it is doable. This mechanism of a credit-based professional development requirement is the key in the program that enriches the undergraduate collegiate experience and increases the value of higher education by ensuring that students are intentional in discerning a path for their lives and finding a right-fit vocation beyond a job or career (see Figure 1). While the students benefit, the school leverages a unique nature of a holistic education and in the end gives the outcomes that society is asking. Chan’s paper discussed how the topic of higher education should be that “many regard post-graduate employment as the primary measure of value provided by higher education.”3 (Chan and Derry, 2013) This program is the catalyst for transformational change and adequately provides a greater return on investment amidst higher tuition costs for graduates. With five years of outcome data, this program addresses these concerns (see Figure 3).

REFERENCES


APPENDIX I

MISSION

The University of Portland is located in a highly sought-after area by both faculty and staff in the geographic location of Portland, Oregon. Created in 1939 by the Congregation of Holy Cross priests and governed by an independent board of directors, the University of Portland provides an excellent holistic Catholic education in which the formation of the whole person is the focus. These students receive a value-based education that develops and prepares people who will have opportunities to respond to the needs of the world and its human family, thus benefiting society. This education assists them in finding their “right-fit” vocation. Blessed Basil Moreau, founder of Holy Cross, stated, “We shall always place education side by side with instruction; the mind will not be cultivated at the expense of the heart.”

Within the university, the mission of the Robert B. Pamplin, Jr. School of Business Administration includes the development of student competence, leadership abilities, a sense of social responsibility, and global perspectives through educational excellence. Their stated goal is to provide students with innovative, challenging educational experiences that go beyond business fundamentals to develop the leadership skills and knowledge required for successful careers. This mission challenges the school to provide each student with opportunities to obtain a comprehensive understanding of business and the leadership skills needed to manage organizations: communication, problem solving, teamwork, utilization of technology, and professional development taught in global and ethical contexts. Associated with the accreditation body of the AACSB, a continual review and self-evaluation ensure that the school stays in the mode and spirit of constant improvement and innovation.

APPENDIX II

Affordability of the P4

Ropes Course: $100
Networking Events: 45
Etiquette Dinner: 30
StrengthsQuest Access: 10

4 years cost for 1 student: $185.00

- Utilizes University resources more efficiently
- Alumni are willing to volunteer their skills and connections
- No extra time commitment from faculty
APPENDIX III

Commentaries from Students & Business Community

**Kylie Penn**, Human Resources, previously employed by Adidas and now at Columbia Sportswear, writes, “The students at U of P who have interviewed and have been hired have been some of the most prepared for the workplace straight out of school that I (and my hiring managers) have seen. Their level of professionalism, business acumen and interviewing skills are far beyond other graduating seniors. In addition, once on the job, their technical skills are on par with being able to smoothly transition into the workplace.”

**Brian Klemsz**, parent and provider of internships, writes “thank you for helping all of the business students with the P4 program. I know that students may not always appreciate the help that you are giving them, but when they go out into the business world and interview, they have a substantial advantage versus their competition. We see the advantage each year as we interview for interns and the UP students compete against other students.”

**Michelle Schwartz**, Manager, Diversity and University Programs of Cambia, writes, “As an employer, I have had the opportunity to observe how different universities approach preparing students for their career path. I have been consistently impressed with the approach taken by the Pamplin School of Business and wanted to highlight a few of the strengths I have observed. First, I really appreciate how early faculty and staff begin speaking with students about career preparation. Unfortunately, academia can sometimes move slowly to respond the changing needs of employers and graduates in terms of preparation for a competitive job market. Starting the conversation early is key to success, both for students and for university programs to be effective. It is imperative for universities to link outcomes to learning objectives. In my experience, the competitive advantage for the University of Portland is that you know what you want a UP graduate to look like and you have designed the curriculum to deliver that.

“When recruiting students, they and their families often want to know why they should pick one school or program over another. Part of recruitment effectiveness has to do with telling your story. What is innovative about the approach taken at the Pamplin School of Business is that you actively engage students in helping to tell that story through requiring them to complete a personal brand statement and video. Faculty and staff have designed this project in a format that speaks to their generation. You help them leverage technology in a fun way that helps build their skill set so that they are reflective on what makes them stand out as individuals and UP students/graduates.

“The personal branding project is also especially helpful when working with a diverse student population. Each year, I meet more international students on campus. These students are often challenged by cultural differences in the U.S. job market and hiring process. They are often asked to speak at length about their experience and what differentiates them as candidates. For students from other
cultures, this can often be a challenge. By completing their personal brand statement, they are given the opportunity to build skills in an area where they might have some discomfort. By creating a safe environment and helping them to explore this topic with other students, you are also helping them to prepare for the future. I am proud to have the opportunity to work with UP students, staff and faculty. Our corporate partnership reflects in part our commitment to support the work you do to prepare students for their next professional journey.”

**Balki Kodarapu**, Director of Marketing at DreamPath, confirms this by working with other universities. He states, “For the past year or so, we’ve been working on our software product that helps college students find a better path to their future careers. We work closely with dozens of college career offices throughout the Northwest. It took us a while, but recently we realized that the best way to help students is by integrating this career education right into their required academic curriculum. No matter how much expertise the career offices have or how sophisticated the software tools are, students are too busy to pay attention to anything that is ‘optional.’ We are seeing much better adoption and results after we expanded our tool to include a holistic curriculum.”

**Kirill Grinko**, alum, writes, “When I came to the University of Portland, I was very excited and overwhelmed. The curriculum was tough and required additional participation outside of the degree. Being a non-traditional student, I said to myself, ‘the last thing I need is professional preparation; I’m here for the degree.’ Furthermore, I wanted to opt out from the P4 program. The result of this mindset brought forth many unsuccessful interviews and lost job opportunities. The turning point came when Gwynn Klobes, the Director of the P4 program told me to ‘get into the spirit of the program.’ At that moment, I realized that the Pamplin Professional Preparation Program should not be viewed as a graduation requirement but instead, a very valuable and fundamentally constructive resource. Our university cares not only about the technical degree, but wants us to be successful, living a purpose-driven life. Having realized the importance of the program, I chose to embrace it and ‘get into the spirit.’ The outcomes of the knowledge and skills gained via the P4 program have been incredible. I discovered more of who I am as an individual, my professional passions and goals, built-up my professional profile, and received a full-time offer from a reputable global firm.”

**Lindsey Frilot**, student, writes: “While working at Fisher Investments, I have gained professionalism that I would have never learned by sitting in a classroom. I learned not only to value business practices, but I also gained information about the investment industry, which I would love to continue working for in the future. I was so fortunate to be given such an amazing opportunity, but I believe it was possible with the proper training that was learned through P4 and the Pamplin School of Business Administration, such as mock interviewing, résumé workshops, and overall experience of speaking with professionals during job shadows. I know that I stood out as a candidate to Fisher Investments because of the attributes
I learned from P4 and PSOBA, and I know I will stand out as an employee after receiving the experience I did at Fisher Investments.”

**Charyn Colvin**, student, writes, “Something I’ve noticed in past service projects that were also reflected in this service project is that walls and barriers start to disappear between students as we all work towards a common goal. Many of these students I have never interacted with before, but while we worked together on this project, we started interacting on a level that was comfortable and sincere.”

**Olivia Muller**, student, writes, “PSOBA rightfully prepared me for my internship at Comcast SportsNet. When I went into the interview, I was well equipped with the right professional outfit, proper interview etiquette and technique. I was able to recognize opportunities beyond basic duties.”

**Jasmine Dudley**, student, writes, “I think, as a student, we are prepared for job hunting really well. We have so much help with our résumés and cover letters; we have opportunities to get them looked over by professionals, faculty and staff. With all of those resources right from the get-go, students can be comfortable applying for jobs and internships knowing their first impressions (résumé and cover letter) are up to par. There has been a ripple effect by my being prepared through the P4 program. It has come in handy for my friends. The other schools within the university have yet to truly encourage professional development through a program like ours, so I find them coming to me to ask questions regarding their résumés, cover letters, job openings, LinkedIn profiles, etc., all of which I have had the opportunity to learn in school. The program is not only helping the participating students but their friends as well. I have had great experiences with the advising and mentoring aspects of the program. Professionals that involve themselves with this program truly want to help! For example, during my individual mock interview, I was matched with an interviewer, Madeline Miller, who noticed that my résumé could use a bit of work; she then took my résumé home with her and wrote changes and ideas all over it, giving me the opportunity to make any changes I would agree with. I was so thankful that she took personal time to help further prepare me for upcoming interviews.”

**Ben Paul**, student, writes, “The P4 program deserves credit for my internship at Nike. The P4 brand statement video helped prepare me to make an introduction video to Nike. The brand statement helped me clarify and describe my greatest strengths.”

**Gavin Flynn**, student, writes, “I just wanted to let you know that I got an internship position at Mind the Gap! I am really excited for this opportunity and can’t wait to start getting some real world experience this coming summer. I wanted to thank for all the help you provided over the past few months. You did a great job of getting me focused and proactive in the search process. It definitely paid off!”

**Linh Tran**, student, writes “I am a fan of the P4 program; it provides so many activities that enable me to discover myself and then helps me transfer my style into words, which is useful for both me and employers in the process of finding good fit for a job position. It helps me to realize what my strengths are and to focus on it as well as how to eliminate my weaknesses. The experiences I have in
business world have confirmed the accurate description that the P4 program’s test had given. I found myself growing into the directions of those. The P4 program has equipped me well for the future and I am excited for those who are going into the process of discovering themselves and so they will be ready for the professional business environment.”

### APPENDIX IV

**Pamplin School of Business - Advising Procedures**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Faculty Advisors</th>
<th>Staff</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Planning</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Begin process of personal development by considering interests, strengths, and personal goals and brainstorming with faculty advisor and others as to majors to explore.</td>
<td>· Help students select classes appropriate for their careers and interests.</td>
<td>· Meet with students for individual and group advising. Remember the whole person in the advising process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Choose a major, possible minors, and study options.</td>
<td>· Assist student registration for next semester courses.</td>
<td>· Assist students in the registration process, transfer of credits, course waitlists, and other documents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Understand the classes and requirements to complete their degree.</td>
<td>· Monitor academic warnings of their advisees.</td>
<td>· Create a four-year degree plan with students and monitor progress toward its completion.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Career Development</th>
<th>Career Advising</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>· Continually assess personal, professional, and educational goals, including graduate school.</td>
<td>· Assist students in P4 process by helping them discern personal, professional, and educational goals.</td>
<td>· Work with faculty in coordinating all elements of the P4 program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Update résumé and P4 portfolio.</td>
<td>· Advise students in pursuit of a career by assessing skills, values, and experience needed to attain their goals.</td>
<td>· Help connect students to internship, service, and other career opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Meet regularly with advisor, bringing the updated résumé and P4 portfolio to all meetings.</td>
<td>· Encourage students to assume leadership roles in business clubs, service activities, and other organizations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Consult with advisor, other faculty, and mentors about internships and professional opportunities.</td>
<td>· Help students identify business contacts, internships, and other career opportunities.</td>
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*Journal of the Academy of Business Education*
APPENDIX V

P4: Taking care of business

But the Pompeii School of Business is trying to give its students an edge with the Pompeii Professional Preparation Program (P4), now in its third year. Next year’s seniors will be the first class to complete the program.

“We were hearing feedback from employers saying that our graduates were academically good but lacking in some areas of professional development,” Owyen Kibbee, director of Professional Development, said. The program seeks to help students begin to identify their goals early and gain their own strengths to help them achieve those goals, according to Kibbee.

“The P4 program is a holistic program,” Kibbee said. “It is designed to help students discover who they are as people.”

Over their four years at UP, business students must complete a number of requirements as part of the program.

“The program is coupled closely with Career Services,” Kibbee said. “And students also complete program requirements as part of their business classes.”

Sophomore year: Planning for success

During their sophomore year, students begin to plan how they will reach those career goals. They must complete a five-year graduation plan with a member of the dean’s office staff.

“Getting their first experience with a professional is their potential career,” Kibbee said.

Sophomores also begin practicing for job interviews. During their sophomore year, students participate in a group interview with UPS.

“The group interview is a great first step,” sophomore Kevin Miko said. “It was really successful, and it was definitely good to be able to hear what your peers went through.”

Students also begin developing their personal brand during their sophomore year.

“Your personal brand is everything that makes you into a whole individual and makes you stand out,” junior Aaron Brown said. “If you want people to think of you, then they have to think of you.”

An important part of each student’s personal brand is a resume, which students create during which each student must determine what they believe makes them unique and what others may be trying for the same job, according to Brown.

Junior year: Gaining experience

Many students during their junior year learn what they like and don’t like through various internships. Internships are done with local firms and other professional organizations with UP students.

“Students are supposed to go out and find companies with internships that they would be interested in doing in the future,” said UPRC senior intern Chris Ditzen.

Many students also complete a minimum of 20 hours of community service. The number of hours needed to complete the program is set by the program, the number of hours may vary based on the number of students completing the program.

Senior year: Learning to navigate the professional world

The goal of the service projects is to teach students to be leaders and to continue with the community in which they live,” Owyen Kibbee, director of Professional Development, said.

Service projects in the past have included painting at Holy Cross Catholic School and pulling ivy in Pauoa Park.

“The service projects were really fun,” sophomore Kevin Miko said. “It was good to do something you can see. Most of the things we do in business aren’t necessarily visible.”