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Faculty Employability Fellows Impact Project

The Value of Essential Employability Qualities: Proposals to Increase Emphasis

March 1, 2020

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Northern Kentucky is an area experiencing tremendous workforce growth and opportunity. In addition to Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare is a top industry of growth. As program coordinator for Gateway Community & Technical College (GCTC)'s Health Science Technology program, Instructor Stroud believes preparing students for employability is critical. As a member of the 2019-20 Faculty Employability Fellows program, Reva Stroud engaged in deep exploration of the QA Commons' [Essential Employability Qualities](#) (EEQs). Instructor Stroud notes that the EEQs are critical to success in the rapidly changing workplace and also that first generation students may have more difficulty mirroring the EEQs needed to maintain employment.

The purpose of this Impact Project is to increase the emerging practices of employability education at the program level, then the division level, then the college level, and eventually the system level.

OPPORTUNITY

Ms. Stroud sent a survey to 20 local employers in the Northern Kentucky region, as well as her program's advisory board members. Survey participants consistently answered that they would like to be more involved with the Health Science Technology program's work, and that the EEQs are important for gaining, maintaining, and growing in employment.

Opportunity exists to put a system in place that:

- Tracks students' exposure to, and mastery of, the EEQs
- Intervenes when students are found to be lacking in exposure and mastery
- Shows employers the skills that students have mastered

Additionally, opportunity exists to develop a more consistent and systematic way for program faculty to work with employers in order to develop curriculum that advances their needs and helps the program achieve its goals.

Implementation of such procedures will help GCTC faculty in adopting a "culture of employability." Without this kind of culture, employers will continue to struggle to fill positions that GCTC students could successfully fill.

PROPOSAL

This Final Impact Project presents five recommendations for enhancing employability within the Health Science Technology program, with plans to expand to the division and college level as success is achieved at the program level:

1. Increase Emphasis on "Employability" in First-Year Courses

Creation of learning outcomes, assignments, and work-based learning outcomes focused on the EEQs within two first-year courses: Health Care Delivery & Management (HST 102) and Nursing Assistant Skills 1 (NAA 100).

This policy has been approved by the Dean and will be in effect by Fall 2020. Outcomes will be measured in Spring of 2021.

This work will serve as a guide for other first-year courses for all divisions.

2. Increase Emphasis on "Employability" by using Performance Planning Evaluation (PPE) document in all HST and Health Professions courses, and eventually all GCTC courses

Creation and utilization of a tool to help students set goals and receive feedback from instructors, as well as resources to aid in working on areas for improvement. GCTC will be asked to adopt a policy requiring every HST and Health Profession course to embed this PPE document. It will require faculty members to meet with students to discuss the goals they have set and whether they have met or failed to meet them. When a student has an area of concern related to the EEQs, faculty members will have resources available to deliver to the student.

This policy has been approved by the Dean and will be in effect by Summer 2020. Outcomes will be measured in Spring of 2021.

3. Increase Emphasis on “Employability” by utilizing Student Success Coaches and Tutoring

Students with areas of concern, identified in the Performance Planning Evaluation exercises, will be linked with a Student Success Coach.

This policy is supported by the Academic Deans and the Provost. A trial is proposed with Health Professions students beginning in Fall of 2020.

4. Increase Collaboration Between Employers, Students and Faculty/Staff

A facilitator of connections between employers, students, and faculty and staff is proposed in order to bridge the current disconnect between employers and educators. Career Services would be charged with a larger role of training GCTC faculty and staff on how to connect with employers, as well as with organizing employers to speak to groups of students, classes or divisions within the college. Ms. Stroud would like to work with Career Services on the creation of a “How-To” guide for program coordinators, faculty and staff on how to communicate with employers.

Additionally, Ms. Stroud proposes that all Career Services staff are trained on the eight Essential Employability Qualities and that the EEQs are embedded into the services offered by Career Services.

The Academic Dean for Health Services has approved work on the “How To” guide for the fall of 2020. Further approval would be needed by college leadership to implement the additional recommendations.

5. Increase Emphasis on “Employability” by the Creation of an Essential Employability Qualities Committee

Ms. Stroud proposes the creation of a committee to focus on:

- Best practices for implementing EEQs within the classroom
- Building relationships with employers
- Working with employers to know what EEQs are important to them
- Assistance in creating a meaningful advisory committee
- Employer and Graduate surveys
- Alumni feedback and roundtable discussions
- Available resources within the college and the community

The college would need to adopt a policy requiring the formation of the EEQ committee with at least one representative from every division. This proposal is supported by the Academic Deans and the Provost. Further approval will be needed by the college leadership team.

IMPACT/IMPLEMENTATION

This Impact Project will immediately increase the emerging practices of employability education within the College of Health Sciences. By serving as an exemplar and engaging in active outreach, there is promise of expanding the reach to other divisions within the college. The ultimate goal is that the “culture of employability” will take hold throughout the college and that these proposals will eventually be implemented on a larger scale across GCTC.