Furthering Student Development Through Intentional Extracurricular Involvement

Quality Enhancement Plan

Western Carolina University
2017
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Preface

Our Quality Enhancement Plan, *DegreePlus*, was brought about by the contributions of a great many members of the WCU community and beyond. The Board of Trustees, administrators, alumni, faculty, staff, students and regional employers all played a role in providing ideas as well as suggestions and feedback. Their efforts have helped to shape a new model for student education that incorporates extracurricular activities as a component of a holistic approach to learning.

We are grateful to all those who took the time to submit ideas for a QEP topic in the early stages. We are especially grateful to Shauna Sleight and Ty Marion for submitting the topic that ultimately led to *DegreePlus*. We extend special thanks to the two committees who developed this initiative, the QEP Topic Selection Committee and the QEP Implementation Committee. Key individuals truly championed the QEP by taking on significant leadership roles within their committees including Andrew Adams, Cara Barker, Mike Corelli, Theresa Cruz Paul, Sloan Despeaux, Ann Green, Yancey Gulley, Kevin Koett, Lane Perry, Rubae Schoen, Sara Smith, Wes Stone, Tonya Westbrook, and Shawna Young. Also, Drew Virtue was chiefly responsible for the writing and editing of this proposal.

We are greatly indebted to our University and our QEP team for their dedication to the vision of a program that enhances student education at WCU.

Carmen Huffman  
Chair, QEP Implementation Committee

Arthur Salido  
Director, SACSCOC Reaffirmation
February 9, 2017

Dear Campus Community:

I write to express my commitment and support for the enclosed Quality Enhancement Plan for student learning at Western Carolina University. This plan is a centerpiece of WCU’s decennial reaffirmation of accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), our regional accrediting agency.

*DegreePlus: Furthering Student Development through Intentional Extracurricular Involvement*, is a comprehensive and thoughtful Quality Enhancement Plan. The broad-based campus development process has resulted in concrete and measurable goals, an assessment plan, and identification of resources to support the plan’s implementation. I am confident that this plan will push WCU to impact and enhance student learning in a robust, innovative manner. The holistic approach of viewing student learning as a collection of experiences both inside and outside the classroom will directly benefit students by showing them that learning takes place in all settings, each and every day. The skills of cultural responsiveness, leadership, professionalism, and teamwork that students will attain through their participation in this program will allow them to reach their full potential of life and career success. I am fully supportive of the DegreePlus program and I look forward to watching it develop and evolve over the next several years.

Finally, I applaud and celebrate the work of the many faculty, staff, and students who contributed to the development of this plan, and, specifically, the leadership of Arthur Salido, Carmen Huffman, Sloan Despeaux, and Tonya Westbrook. Their collective devotion of countless hours to improve the experience of students at Western Carolina University is a reflection of our campus community’s paramount priority to put student learning first. I often say that we are in the business of changing lives and this plan is an exemplar of that core vision.

Sincerely yours,

David O. Belcher
Chancellor
Topic Selection Committee

Committee Chair: Sloan Despeaux, Professor, Mathematics and Computer Science

Andrew Adams, Associate Dean, College of Fine and Performing Arts
Larry Arbaugh, Associate Director of Business Development and Media Relations, Office of Athletic Programs
Dan Berk, Director, IT Applications and Systems
Pam Buchanan, Director, Health Services
Cory Causby, Associate Vice Chancellor, Human Resources and Payroll
Channa De Silva, Associate Professor, Chemistry and Physics
Martha Diede, Director, Coulter Faculty Commons
Vicki Faircloth, (former) Associate Professor, Elementary and Middle Grades Education
Samir Hafiz, GA Laboratory Assistant, Economics, Management/Project Management
Billy Hutchings, Social/Clinical Research Assistant, Institutional Planning and Effectiveness
Brian Kloeppel, Dean, Graduate School and Research
Kevin Koett, Dean of Students, Student Affairs
Jon Marvel, Associate Professor, Economics, Management, Project Management
Beth McDonough, Associate Professor, Hunter Library
Steve Miller, (former) SACSCOC Director, Provost Office
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Robin Oliver, Director, University Marketing
Lane Perry, Director, Center for Service Learning
Nory Prochaska, Director, Mathematics Tutoring Center
Brian Railsback, Professor, English
Adam Ray, Graduate Student, College Student Personnel Program
James Scifers, Professor, School of Health Sciences
Wes Stone, Associate Professor, School of Engineering and Technology

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Sloan Despeaux, Professor, Mathematics and Computer Science
Lane Perry, Director, Center for Service Learning
Beth McDonough, Associate Professor, Hunter Library
Adam Ray, Graduate Student, College Student Personnel Program
Implementation Committee

Former Committee Chair: Tonya Westbrook, Associate Professor, Social Work
Committee Chair: Carmen Huffman, Associate Professor, Chemistry and Physics

Technical Writer: Drew Virtue, Assistant Professor, English

Summer/Fall 2016 Subcommittees

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Chair: Lane Perry, Director, Center for Service Learning
N. Yancey Gulley, Assistant Professor, Human Services Department
Stephen LeBeau, Instructional Developer, Coulter Faculty Commons
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Chesney Reich, Director, Writing and Learning Commons
Emily Virtue, Adjunct Faculty, English
Steve Wallace, Director of Assessment, Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness
Shawna Young, Director of Marketing and Assessment, Student Affairs

Former Members and Consultants:
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Annie Hall, (former) Administrative Support Associate, Center for Service Learning
Lorrie Willey, Associate Professor, School of Accounting, Finance, Information Systems and Business Law

Budget Subcommittee
Ann Green, Budget Analyst, Administration and Finance
Carmen Huffman, Associate Professor, Chemistry and Physics
Arthur Salido, Director SACSCOC Reaffirmation & Associate Professor, Chemistry and Physics

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Kyle Smith, Undergraduate Student, Computer Information Systems
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Theresa Cruz Paul, Director, Center for Career and Professional Development
Kyle Smith, Undergraduate Student
PREFACE

Report Subcommittee
Andrew Adams, Associate Dean, Fine and Performing Arts
Arthur Salido, Director SACSCOC Reaffirmation & Associate Professor, Chemistry and Physics
Drew Virtue, Assistant Professor, English

Graduate Student Consultants from the Master of Higher Education Student Affairs Program

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<th>Brandon Hepler</th>
<th>Jessica Resler</th>
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<td>Andrew Johnson</td>
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Jeffrey Hughes, Director, Department of Campus Activities
Brian Gorman, Director of Student Support Services and Summer School
Arthur Salido, Director, SACSCOC Reaffirmation & Associate Professor, Chemistry and Physics
April Tallant, Associate Dean, Honors College

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Nelson Granda-Marulanda, Assistant Professor, School of Engineering and Technology
Yasin Muhammad, Student, Film and Television Production Program
Adrienne Stuckey, Assistant Professor, School of Teaching and Learning

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Wes Stone, Associate Professor, School of Engineering and Technology
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Tony Johnson, Alumni Board Member, WCU Alumnus
Stephen LeBeau, Instructional Developer, Coulter Faculty Commons
Steve Wallace, Director of Assessment, Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness

Student Engagement Subcommittee
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Chair: Kevin Koett, Dean of Students & Associate Vice Chancellor, Student Affairs
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Devan Lalas, Graduate Student, Higher Education Student Affairs
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Johanna Price, Assistant Professor, Communications Sciences and Disorders
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Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

AP       Advanced Placement
API      Application Program Interface
ASP      Academic Success Program
BCSSE    Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement
CCPD     Center for Career and Professional Development
CORE     Campus Organizations Reaching Excellence
ELT      Experiential Learning Theory
GPA      Grade Point Average
IS       Intercultural Sensitivity
LEAD LLC Leadership Living/Learning Community
NACE     National Association of Colleges and Employers
NSSE     National Survey of Student Engagement
QEP      Quality Enhancement Plan
SACSCOC  Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges
UNC      The University of North Carolina (a 17 school system)
WCU      Western Carolina University
Executive Summary

Western Carolina University

Western Carolina University (WCU), a regional comprehensive university member of the University of North Carolina system, has a population of 10,340 students as of Fall 2015. 8,821 of those students are undergraduates and 1,519 are graduate students. WCU maintained an 80% retention rate between Fall 2014 and Fall 2015. Established in 1889, WCU offers students programs at its main campus in Cullowhee, NC as well as programs at Biltmore Park in Asheville, NC and online. There are 120 undergraduate programs and 33 graduate programs in the College of Arts and Sciences, College of Business, College of Education and Allied Professions, College of Engineering and Technology, College of Fine and Performing Arts, and College of Health and Human Sciences. An organizational chart has been provided in Appendix A.

The Quality Enhancement Plan

Overview

DegreePlus is a holistic approach to student education in which students are encouraged to learn transferable skills through participation in extracurricular activities. It is an optional program for all students, but for those who choose to participate, DegreePlus will complement their curricular learning by building on the premise that learning is not restricted to the classroom. The specific goals of DegreePlus are

Goal 1: Increase students’ participation in extracurricular activities that promote transferable skill development.

Goal 2: Enhance students’ cultural responsiveness, leadership, professionalism, and teamwork skills.

The four transferable skills listed in Goal 2 were selected based on scholarship that pointed out what employers seek in new employees. DegreePlus includes cultural responsiveness due to global trends in the workplace. It is important for students to be able to demonstrate an awareness of key historical and current issues surrounding race, ethnicity, gender, social class, religion, sexual identity, ability, national origin, or other identities, and practicing cultural sensitivity and respect when interacting with others. Leadership continues to be an important quality for any individual, and DegreePlus hopes to provide students with the opportunity to develop leadership skills such as applying knowledge of conflict resolution in difficult situations, generating and accepting constructive feedback, and defining clear and actionable goals. Professionalism addresses the “soft-skills” that are essential to success and includes
applies communication methods appropriate to a specific situation, recognizing the importance of appropriate dress and professional image, and developing methods for building effective work relationships. Teamwork, an essential skill in contemporary environments, correlates with the quality or outcome of a task. In DegreePlus, students will develop the skills to take responsibility for one’s own role within a team, treat others with respect, value others’ contributions, and contribute to the movement of a team toward a common goal. As students progress through DegreePlus, they will be able to track their skill development through an experiential transcript, reflect on their experiences, and ultimately integrate their transferable skills into their own endeavors, be they class projects, work experiences, or other activities.

Implementation

The development of DegreePlus has been carried out by more than 80 individuals, including faculty, staff, students, and alumni. Consultations with other stakeholders on campus has been carried out via forums, meetings, discussion sessions, and email conversations, and the final plan has been received with support and excitement. As the plan moves into a soft launch in Summer/Fall 2017, the program will be housed in the Center for Career and Professional Development (CCPD), but will continue to be supported by faculty and staff across all divisions of the university. Thus far, DegreePlus implementation has included the following steps:

1. The selection of a topic from broad-based input;

2. The development of a QEP with clear goals that focus on student learning, and a framework that can grow and be sustained over the next 10 years;

3. The facilitation of existing and creation of new events and activities across campus that enhance cultural responsiveness, leadership, professionalism, and teamwork skills;

4. The development of experiential transcripts and a special symposium to educate students to articulate and integrate their experiences;

5. The solicitation of financial support for the program via university budget hearing processes; and

6. The creation of a QEP Associate Director position to oversee and coordinate the program.

The final step of the implementation process is a soft launch, which will take place in the 2017-2018 academic year (beginning Summer 2017). This pilot introduces DegreePlus to a limited audience including the Honors College, Academic Success Program (ASP) students, and students in the Leadership Living-Learning Community (LEAD LLC). The focus for this first year of the program will be on the professionalism skill.
Conclusion

DegreePlus is designed to support students’ “whole” university experience in which they focus on the academics of their specific programs while also growing through their involvement in extracurricular activities, and ultimately become prepared to be engaged citizens of the world. The inclusion of extracurricular activities not only fosters growth in skills related to cultural responsiveness, leadership, professionalism, and teamwork, but will also teach students to value the learning opportunities that are all around them. Finally, the development of these transferable skills through DegreePlus will prepare WCU students for post-graduation success, regardless of their anticipated career paths.
Introduction

In Western Carolina University’s Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), *DegreePlus*, students are encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities that enhance their transferable skills. While faculty and staff will designate extracurricular activities as relevant for *DegreePlus*, students will create their own unique path by attending specific events and coordinating them into a unified experience related to one or more skill areas: cultural responsiveness, leadership, professionalism, and teamwork. Through this process, students will be able to experience, reflect, and apply the knowledge they have gained through the program. The first year will begin with a soft launch designed for a specific student population as well as a focus on one specific skill. Afterwards, *DegreePlus* will be refined and expanded to fit the needs of WCU’s entire student population.

The initial phase of *DegreePlus* will begin during the 2017-2018 academic year. Students in the Honors College, the Academic Success Program, and the Leadership Living-Learning Community will be invited to participate in events sponsored by *DegreePlus* that focus on professionalism. After the initial year, more students will participate as *DegreePlus* is scaled up to accommodate all students. Eventually, all students will be able to participate and additional programming that expands the skills will be offered. While *DegreePlus* intends for students to begin participating during their freshman year, and consequently continue their participation throughout their time at WCU, all students will be invited to participate.

The basic structure of *DegreePlus* includes three levels: (1) experience and exposure, (2) reflection and articulation, and (3) integration and application. Students begin their participation by attending events that tie into the skills associated with *DegreePlus*. After attending five events related to one skill, students will compose a reflection that requires them to critically analyze their experiences. Finally, students will be invited to deliver a presentation based on a culminating experience related to one or more specific skills. In this structure, each level leads to higher-level outcomes. Students begin through a participatory nature, transition into a critical analysis of their experiences and skills, and ultimately produce evidence of applying their skills in a new setting. The next section provides a detailed look at the literature associated with the ideas and themes of *DegreePlus*. In examining the literature, the section provides an initial context for how a foundation for *DegreePlus* was created and why it is an appropriate fit for the students at WCU.

Justification for Additional Student Development

The following section provides a general overview of some of the ideas related to *DegreePlus* and narrows the focus to examine the specific skills tied to the QEP: cul-
tural responsiveness, leadership, professionalism, and teamwork. To begin, we examine the idea of student involvement and how that leads to student success, both within and outside of the classroom. Next, we detail the use of gamification/incentivization, such as digital badges, to increase student participation in the university environment. Another incentive for student participation is the incorporation of an experiential transcript for students, which serves as a mechanism to not only track, but also help articulate their extracurricular experiences, many of which incorporate transferable skills. However, students at WCU and across the nation are currently lacking these important skills that lead to success after graduation. In reinforcing the importance of transferable skills, we provide literature that affirms how these skills lead to success within the workplace as well as in students’ daily lives. Afterwards, we analyze each skill (cultural responsiveness, leadership, professionalism, and teamwork) and demonstrate why those were the skills to highlight within the QEP. We conclude by demonstrating the interrelationships between these skills and how they work together to provide our students with the tools to successfully engage with their environments.

**Student Involvement**

One of the goals of *DegreePlus* is to not only support the growth of transferable skills among students but also to get them more engaged with their university. Astin (1984) describes how student involvement includes all the “physical and psychological energy” that students commit to their experiences at school. While students need to commit more time and energy for significant engagement, there are several studies that show how increased involvement produces substantial positive effects for the students and affects the perception of quality of an institution (Quaye & Harper, 2014). For instance, some scholars have performed research that has shown how students “evolve” more through a combination of their extracurricular and academic experiences. This evolution led to environments where increased learning occurred and students achieved more through the connections they made between the classroom and alternate learning environments (Kahu, 2013; Zepke, 2014).

Ultimately, the focus on student involvement feeds into experiential learning theory (ELT), which Kolb and Kolb (2005) define as “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience.” Students can learn in the classroom; however, this type of learning benefits from the supplement of experience. Students who experience applied knowledge may have a better understanding of material, a better idea of how that material is applied in non-academic environments, and a better sense of how that material and application benefit themselves as individuals. Consequently, it should be a goal of universities to find ways to implement more student involvement into the culture of their institutions—engagement that is “mutual and reciprocal across fields and between the university and broader society, collab-
orative in nature, focused on learning with and from partners, and supported by a sense of shared purpose” (Ramaley, 2014, p. 18). One potential way for universities to implement more student involvement is by employing gamification or incentivization to encourage students to participate in extracurricular activities.

**Incentivization**

The initial plan for *DegreePlus* was to incorporate a digital badge system as a means to incentivize student participation in extracurricular activities. However, interviews with student focus groups and faculty indicated that this concept would be poorly received at our institution. The alternative was to develop an extracurricular pathway in which students can track their progress and are provided with both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards along the way. While digital badges were not used, the literature examining digital badges reinforces the importance of gamification in learning environments. One of the strengths in the gamification of learning is a connected learning environment in which “a young person is able to pursue a personal interest or passion with the support of friends and caring adults, and is in turn able to link this learning and interest to academic achievement, career success or civic engagement” (Ito et al., 2013, p. 4). Additionally, the inclusion of digital badges or a similar measurement tool works well with “soft skills” that are not always easy to measure or incorporate into academic curriculums (Casilli & Hickey, 2016, p. 119). This is because digital badges can serve as a tool in which students progress through a series of goals that monitor continual achievement. Consequently, the overall process becomes more “transparent and accessible for the learner” (Gibson, Ostashewski, Flintoff, Grant, & Knight, 2015, p. 407).

However, while students buy into the gamification of learning, it is important to adopt a system in an effective manner. For example, the badge or award system has to present a significant challenge so that students see its value. Providing badges or other awards based on participation or easy tasks devalues the badge as well as the whole gamification system. Instead, each badge or award should represent “meaningful, deep engagement and learning beyond the minimum that would be expected of all learners” (Glover, 2016, p. 452). Consequently, students need to acknowledge a deeper understanding of knowledge or participation within a gamification system to accept it. While students at WCU will not participate in a formalized badge system, they will be able to monitor their progress through a flexible extracurricular pathway with the use of an online software platform that documents their experiences. Student focus groups were especially motivated by a progress bar graphic, which capitalizes on the gamification concept, as well as the experiential transcript, which they can use to document their experiences outside the classroom.
INTRODUCTION

Experiential Transcripts

In addition to students tracking their progress through DegreePlus, they will also see a record of their participation that they could use to reflect on their experiences. This record is referred to as an “experiential transcript.” Universities have begun adopting experiential transcripts as a way to intentionally increase the level of involvement for their students. Typically, the types of involvement include activities outside of traditional coursework and are meant to demonstrate the “value of co-curricular engagement” and help students in “achieving their post-graduation goals” (Coven, 2015, p. 2). Universities have also begun adopting experiential transcripts as a way to supplement the limitations of traditional transcripts. Traditional transcripts consist of course numbers, abbreviated course titles, and course grades; however, this data presents a very limited overview of a student’s academic experiences (Mangan, 2015). For example, an “A” may signify that a student excelled in a course, but the grade does not provide any context regarding the specific knowledge learned or the types of projects or assignments that were completed. Experiential transcripts cannot fill in these specific gaps, but they can provide another lens to measure a student’s accomplishments.

Experiential transcripts function similarly to a student portfolio, but there are significant benefits to having the transcripts created through the oversight of universities. First, universities have to decide what kind of experiences or values should be included on an experiential transcript. Second, universities must develop a systematic approach to determine how and what extracurricular experiences are relevant to the experiential transcripts (American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers and NASPA: Student Affairs Administrators, 2015). By doing this, universities increase the ethos of extracurricular activities because they attach a value to that type of work—work that students may already be doing but fail to acknowledge or articulate properly. In fact, students have addressed how they often struggle to explain what they learned or achieved in higher education (American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers and NASPA: Student Affairs Administrators, n.d.). Experiential transcripts could serve as one method of helping students articulate their abilities. For example, Elon University has developed five categories that they incorporated into an experiential transcript: “leadership, community service, global education, research, and internships” (American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, 2016). Using these categories, Elon has developed experiential transcripts that further illustrate a student’s experience through an infographic (see Appendix B). Students can use this transcript to reflect on their education beyond curricular experiences and make connections between their skills as well as how to communicate them to others. In fact, Elon has placed so much value on a student’s extracurricular experiences that students are now required to complete two experiential learning activities from the experiential transcript to graduate (Elon...
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Ultimately, students can use experiential transcripts to further illustrate their own accomplishments as well as use them to reflect on and improve their transferable skills, which will contribute to their overall success.

Transferable Skills and Employability

Transferable skills, the non-discipline related attributes that lead to individual success, have become as important as ever to educators, administrators, and employers. For instance, recent scholarship has addressed how educators should implement 21st century skills (a set of skills similar to transferable skills) as early as K-12 systems (McTighe & Seif, 2010). These types of skills are vital to success; however, a limited number of schools have targeted them directly. Yet the lack of transferable skills becomes apparent when there is a clear “discontinuity between skills university graduates have when they graduate and the specific needs of employers” (Calonge & Shah, 2016, p. 69). The “discontinuity” between the skills students possess versus what they need has become more evident among students, too. According to Messum, Wilkes, Jackson, Peters, et al. (2016), recent graduates were asked to rank the order of importance for a set of transferable skills, as well as have each individual rank their skills in relation to the set of transferable skills. In general, the graduates ranked their transferable skills below where they need to be. Consequently, the lack of transferable skills has seen increased awareness from students, universities, and employers.

Although the lack of transferable skills is seen as a problem, there are still disagreements about how to incorporate them in a university setting. Fallows and Steven (2000) describe one university that has adopted soft or employability skills within specific academic courses, while Thompson, Clark, Walker, and Whyatt (2013) point out that extracurricular activities provide a better environment to teach transferable skills. Each option has its merits. By incorporating transferable skills into academic courses, students and faculty have the opportunity to tie transferable skills into specific disciplinary knowledge. However, professors that take a purposeful approach to including transferable skills into their curriculums are taking time away from teaching about disciplinary knowledge. Other universities offer transferable skills programming through extracurricular activities but face challenges getting students to attend. Students have also expressed their view on this issue describing how the “degree subject was less important than the range of transferable skills the degree inferred” and that “extracurricular activity offered the best opportunities to develop teamwork, leadership, and other ‘interpersonal skills’ ” (Baker & Henson, 2010, p. 65). Based on this finding, it may be inferred that students receive some level of transferable skill training within curricular and extracurricular activities. Consequently, universities may want to consider their own contexts to deem what is the most effective way to address transferable skill training (e.g., size of school, location, student demographics, academic programs offered, etc.). The next section builds on this one by providing a
general overview of some transferable skills with a specific focus of the transferable skills that are incorporated into DegreePlus.

Cultural Responsiveness, Leadership, Professionalism and Teamwork

There are a number of transferable skills that have been identified as being relevant to higher education environments. Van Velsor and Wright (2015) identify skills related to problem solving, empathy, and social/emotional intelligence; Tymon (2013) addresses communication/interpersonal, teamwork, and leadership skills; the Association of American Colleges and Universities / National Leadership Council for Liberal Education & America’s Promise (2008) included communication, teamwork, problem solving and a knowledge of human culture (among others) as “Essential Learning Outcomes” in their report, College Learning for the New Global Century; and the National Association of Colleges and Employers (2016b) includes collaboration, leadership, and work ethic as transferable skills that lead to success. That said, a common theme has developed: employers look for candidates with a strong range of transferable skills. Benson, Morgan, and Filippaioi (2014, p. 520) stress this point by arguing that “social skills (particularly communication and team working) and personality [are] more important than the degree qualification.” Based on these views, the remainder of this section examines literature surrounding the specific transferable skills focused on by DegreePlus. Each skill represents a strength that Western Carolina University believes is valuable to the student population during their tenure at WCU as well as their pursuits after leaving the institution.

Cultural Responsiveness

Cultural responsiveness was adopted as a skill into DegreePlus because it benefits students on a personal and professional level. Depending on students’ backgrounds, the college environment may be the first time that they experience a rich sense of diversity—in terms of class, race, culture, ethnicity, as well as several others. This kind of experience provides an opportunity for students to expand their thinking and have a better understanding of the world they inhabit. Similarly, from a professional level, students learn about the importance of cultural responsiveness and how diversity is regarded as important and valuable (Gardner 2010). In fact, several employers address the importance of cultural responsiveness within their job postings.

Cultural responsiveness is an important skill to develop, and university settings provide an ideal environment to learn more about it because they often host a diverse body of students, offer courses that explore diversity through a range of lenses (e.g., sociology, geography, literature, history, etc.), offer various intercultural activities, and encourage students to experience diversity first-hand by studying abroad. To bolster this point, Colvin-Burque, Zugazaga, and Davis-Maye (2007) performed
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pre- and post-tests that showed how students had a better understanding of diversity and race after taking the course entitled Minority Groups. Similarly, Wilkey (2013) provides data that point out that students’ ‘intercultural sensitivity’ (IS) scores were significantly higher for students who had lived or traveled outside of the United States. In fact, diversity in the university setting is so important that it has been identified as a learning objective that is incorporated into specific disciplines and programs (Pillay & James 2015, p. 1). While a university setting has been identified as an ideal place to teach and learn about cultural responsiveness, there is a lot of research that discusses the specific components that are imperative to address.

Perhaps an ideal starting point is for students to develop a sense of cultural competence. Kratzke and Bertolo (2013, p. 1) define cultural competence as a “process of developing cultural awareness, knowledge, and skills.” To achieve cultural competence, students need to question their own values and beliefs in relation to cultural diversity. However, this is only a starting point. De Jesús (2012) extends the idea of cultural competence to something that is not static but an ongoing process of learning and reflection. Specifically, they talk about three strategies: ongoing cultural self-awareness and assessment, developing cultural knowledge and experiences, and adapting and accommodating strategies. Again, this ties into the idea that cultural competence is an ongoing process. Students who pursue cultural competence have to go beyond learning and interacting with other cultures. Instead, they need to demonstrate an “increased awareness of, appreciation for, and sensitivity to intercultural issues” (Wilkey 2013, p. 12). In order for this to succeed, scholars also note that students have to demonstrate a willingness to engage with diversity. Students have to open themselves up to the possibility of cultural differences and what that means as well as maintain an open mindset to truly experience and respect people who are different from themselves. We decided to include the term “cultural responsiveness” because it transitions beyond learning about diversity. Instead, it infers a sense of learning, interaction, and reflection that students must develop and refine over time.

Leadership

Leadership was adopted as a skill into DegreePlus because it provides students with a valuable resource, which can be useful in a variety of contexts. Salisbury, Pascarella, Padgett, and Blaich (2012, p. 303) argue that the idea of leadership has evolved over time, and they describe how modern conceptions of leadership place value on “principles of collaboration, interpersonal effectiveness, process, ethical reciprocity, and affecting positive societal change.” Additionally, they describe how leadership among college students can lead to an increased sense of “purpose” and “commitment” that can benefit students in all of their future endeavors. Despite the benefits of leadership, universities have not found a uniform method to incorporate leadership training into higher education. Likewise, Shim (2013, p. 271) notes that one of the difficulties
that universities face is the changing dynamics of a “postindustrial society” in which individuals have to display leadership skills based on constantly evolving situations. The culmination of these issues stresses the fact that universities “need greater recognition that professional learning and leadership socialisation are important sources of contextually grounded knowledge and understanding and, if anything, the increased complexity of leadership will continue to require greater individualised and contextualised support” (Zhang & Brundrett, 2010, p. 157). While the concept of leadership can be challenging to incorporate into educational settings, scholars have pointed out effective strategies for teaching principles of leadership to students.

Guthrie (2017, p. 50) argues that leadership education can be taught by covering it from three different angles. First, students need to acquire a basic understanding of leadership theory in a “formal education” setting. Second, students need to be able to put theory into practice by being given opportunities for “practical experience.” Third, students need to reflect on their experiences and tie it back to the education they received on leadership theory. In addition to those three elements, Guthrie (2017, p. 50) also stresses the need for a “strong partnership between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs [which] creates a living laboratory for knowledge acquisition, experiences that build upon this discernment and the opportunity for thoughtful insights gained from combining theory and practice.” While leadership is an important skill to bestow on students, curricular or extracurricular environments alone may not offer the ideal context for students to learn and refine their leadership skills. Instead, both environments offer unique opportunities that work well to create a more robust, comprehensive approach to teaching leadership. Shim (2013, p. 285) has found that another component to teaching leadership is the reliance on “interpersonal interactions with faculty and peers.” Shim has found that the effects of interpersonal relationships vary based on gender, but the inclusion of interpersonal relationships still correlates with improved results of leadership education. This evidence is further reinforced by Black and Earnest (2009) who argue about the effects of social learning theory in relation to leadership. Students are influenced more by observing their peers exhibiting a specific behavior (i.e., leadership skills) rather than learning about leadership education solely through formal instruction.

Zimmerman-Oster and Burkhardt (1999) argue that the incorporation of leadership programs are seen as successful not only among the program administrators but the students, too. Based on Zimmerman-Oster and Burkhardt’s work, students who participate in leadership education acknowledged that their experiences led to short and long term benefits. Additionally, Posner (2009, p. 561) measured the development of leadership skills among students participating in a leadership education program versus students who were not enrolled in the program. The findings demonstrated that students who participated in the leadership education program exhibited “greater leadership behaviors” and that the behaviors were a direct result of the pro-
gram rather than “life experience.” DegreePlus incorporates leadership as one of the focal skills because it provides students with the tools needed for them to succeed and because it helps to strengthen and refine skills that they already possess.

*Professionalism*

Professionalism was a natural fit for DegreePlus because it tied in well with the other skills and provided a skill that would benefit students with their curricular experiences. However, we had to consider what components of professionalism were the most appropriate for our students. For example, the [Center for Professional Excellence at York College of Pennsylvania](2015) surveyed recent graduates about the qualities they matched with professionalism. The recent graduates described how strong communication skills as well as being focused, punctual/attentive, humble, diligent were the most important components of professionalism. The [National Association of Colleges and Employers](2016a) reinforced the value of communication skills, in particular noting it as the most important skill an individual can possess from an employer’s perspective. In contrast, the recent graduates described how individuals who lack communication skills or are disrespectful, irresponsible, late/absent, or not ambitious are characteristics that were considered the most unprofessional ([Center for Professional Excellence at York College of Pennsylvania](2015) p. 12). Employers value professionalism because it has “emerged as a mix of activities, affinities and dispositions, that includes exposure to and working with industry practitioners, experience of working in a team, and acquiring a range of technical skills” ([Ashton](2011) p. 553). These qualities are the same type of qualities that can benefit a student both in and outside of the classroom.

Since professionalism has direct ties to the careers students will pursue after graduation, we examined it in relation to career preparation. The [National Association of Colleges and Employers](n.d.) defines career readiness as “the attainment and demonstration of requisite competencies that broadly prepare college graduates for a successful transition into the workplace.” Yet these same “competencies” are relevant to students and their instructors in university settings. ([Clark, Amer, and Ng](2014) p. 35) describe how increasing a student’s professionalism also “facilitate[s] increasingly productive engagement with faculty and the curriculum along the way.” However, educators face a challenge in incorporating professionalism in a meaningful way. For example, ([Wilson et al.](2013) p. 1237) argue that educators need to focus on the right professional qualities, which include “internal” rather than “external standards.” Educators often focus on external standards, including “dress, language and abiding by codes of conduct,” because they are easier to teach, while qualities like “communication skills” and the ability to “focus” are more abstract and require more time to teach. One way educators can concentrate on the “internal standards” is by incorporating mentorship roles. By using mentors, educators can adopt a combined
pedagogy that examines professionalism through verbal instruction as well as experiential based learning through mentorship roles (Hammer, 2000). DegreePlus offers an ideal model because it teaches students about professionalism using multiple types of educational opportunities.

**Teamwork**

The last skill, teamwork, was incorporated into DegreePlus because it was seen as a vital skill for students to develop and tied in to the other three skills. While teamwork is another skill that can be difficult to define, Hughes and Jones (2011, p. 54) describe five general components that feed into the concept of teamwork. First, teams possess a “collective identity” based on a specific context (e.g., students enrolled in the same course or employees who work for a specific company). Second, teams share a common task, which could be based on long or short-term goals. Third, teams are interdependent based on the nature of their common task. Fourth, members of teams maintain specific roles within their teams. Fifth, teams are a part of a “larger organizational context” that affects how they perform their work (e.g., student teams completing a specific assignment based on a prompt created by the instructor). These five components help illustrate the complexities of teamwork and why it is important to approach teaching teamwork in a deliberate, thoughtful manner. Oakley, Felder, Brent, and Elhajj (2004) reinforce this point describing the potential for learning in teams; however, they also address the need for instructors to consider teamwork beyond simply placing students in groups to work on an assignment. Members of student teams need opportunities to receive feedback from their peers and mentors to continually refine their skills as well as learn more about how they function within teams. By developing conscientious ways to teach teamwork, students can experience a “significant and positive impact on both cognitive and skill-based outcomes” (Ellis, Bell, Ployhart, Hollenbeck, & Ilgen, 2005, p. 641), which can lead to transferable skills that can contribute to future success.

Outside of educational environments, employers have continually espoused the value of teamwork in workplace environments. Not only does teamwork help employees contribute toward a shared goal, but it also leads to employees being better at “working with people of different ages, gender, race, religion or political persuasion (Southern Cross University Division of Teaching and Learning, 2013, p. 3). Additionally, McClellan (2016, p. 6) contends that teamwork can foster or reinforce values such as “respect for individual contributions” or “compromising in service to team objectives.” Yet it is important to note the difference in purpose between teams within educational and professional settings. For employers, the primary focus is on the end goal. If employees are a part of a team, the important questions become whether they can contribute to a team’s task, collaborate effectively, and complete an assignment on time. Educators can face a very different model in which they are
still concerned with the end product, but they are also concerned with developing teamwork skills among their students (Neves & Nakhai, 2016, p. 3). Despite the differences in purpose among employers and educators, teamwork may be more important than ever. Wilson et al. (2013, p. 1) describes, “There has never been a time of greater conflict between members of newly formed teams than in today’s world of cyclonic corporate change, where relationships are made and changed through global mergers, demergers, portfolio careers, cost cutting redundancies and a widespread lack of ability in organisations to nurture and retain their home-grown talent.” This exigence has affected the way that we perceive and value teamwork, and it has led to teamwork’s inclusion as a vital skill to teach students in DegreePlus.

Conclusion

DegreePlus focuses on developing skills outside of the classroom that will help students succeed after they graduate. There is a significant amount of research that discusses the need for fostering transferable skills as well as discipline-based learning to ensure success. From a professional perspective, these transferable skills are important to students because of the continually evolving nature of jobs and because graduates often find employment that does not directly relate to their curricular majors (Baker & Henson, 2010). Likewise, the skills that DegreePlus includes provide several areas of overlap in terms of how they are defined, how they are taught, and how they are used by students. This point ties into the holistic nature of DegreePlus, both in terms of how the skills are interrelated as well as how one of the main goals is to get students more engaged at WCU (i.e., at the curricular and extracurricular level). Figure 1 reinforces this point by showing how students learn in multiple environments that extend beyond their curricular experiences (Peck et al., 2016). While students may learn the most in the classroom, Thompson et al. (2013) argue that extracurricular activities help in providing enjoyment and social connections with others, creating a mechanism for coping with stress, finding a way to contribute to society, and developing skills for employment. Finally, it is worth noting that the idea of “employability” extends beyond finding a vocation. Instead, employability is the achievement of the “skills understanding and personal attributes that make an individual more likely to secure employment and be successful in their chosen occupations to the benefit of themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy” (Yorke & Knight, 2006, p. 567). DegreePlus shares a similar sentiment in which the overarching goal is not to secure employment for students, but to provide them with the skills that will ensure their success in future endeavors in all scopes of their lives.

The Context for WCU

DegreePlus strongly supports the mission and strategic plan of WCU. Alignment of
Figure 1: The co-curricular connection: The impact of experiences beyond the classroom on soft skills. (Peck et al., 2016)

DegreePlus goals with the goals of the university is detailed in the Assessment section of this plan, but an outline of the University Mission sets the stage for how and why DegreePlus is a good fit for WCU. This section goes on to describe the current level of student involvement at WCU. Three surveys described herein (two independent and one internal) provided data to support the need for a program like DegreePlus, which encourages increased student involvement, at WCU.

The University Mission

Our Mission

Western Carolina University creates learning opportunities that incorporate teaching, research, service, and engagement through on campus, off campus, online and international experiences. The university focuses its undergraduate, master’s and three doctoral programs, educational outreach, research, creative, and cultural activities to sustain and improve individual lives and enhance economic and community development in Western Carolina and beyond.

Our Core Values and Guiding Principles

- Excellence, Scholarship, Teaching and Learning
- Collaboration with and Respect for our Communities
- Free and Open Interchange of Ideas
Our Vision

To be a national model for student learning and engagement that embraces its responsibilities as a regionally engaged university.

Involvement at WCU

This section details the level of involvement of students at WCU. In order to provide an accurate overview of the level of engagement at WCU, we examined the results from three different sources: the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE), and a sophomore survey that presents the results over a four-year span (2013-2016). These three sources provide an initial framework for examining potential areas we could improve upon at WCU.

In looking at the level of engagement measured by the 2015 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), WCU performed well among first-year students and a little better than average among seniors [Western Carolina University, 2015]. The NSSE measured the level of engagement around four themes: academic challenge, learning with peers, experiences with faculty, and campus environment. Each of these broad themes was then broken down to additional sub-themes. WCU’s first year students performed significantly higher than the UNC system average among the “reflective and integrative learning” and “learning strategies” engagement indicators of the Academic Challenge theme. However, there were no significant differences among “higher-order learning” and “quantitative reasoning.” WCU also scored significantly higher among all four engagement indicators compared with public master’s degree programs and similarly participating peers. Additionally, WCU’s first year students produced significantly higher averages among the three remaining themes (learning with peers, experiences with faculty, and campus environment) compared to the UNC system, public master’s degree programs, and participating peers. Despite WCU’s generally good performance in student engagement, the survey also showed that 29% of first-year WCU students and 44% of seniors responded that personal participation in co-curricular activities totaled zero hours per week. Also, 21% of seniors reported that they “do not plan to” participate in an internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement before graduation. The QEP Implementation Committee believes that DegreePlus would bolster the level of student engagement at WCU by building a “culture” around extracurricular activities. Students would
view extracurricular activities as valuable experiences that lead to transferable skill development and a path to achieving their goals.

The purpose of the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE) is to measure first-year students’ pre-college/high school co-curricular and academic experiences, as well as their attitudes and expectations for participating in those activities during their first year in college. The BCSSE information regarding student’s past co-curricular and academic experiences and expectations for future engagement provides important data to better understand retention. Moreover, BCSSE provides a motivation for reflection on what the institution does well and areas for improvement. The report provides important information for advisors, faculty, and staff that work one-on-one with first-year students. The BCSSE (Western Carolina University, 2008) shows that 95% of high school students participated in an extracurricular activity during high school. Additionally, 96% of the students surveyed reported that they plan on participating in an extracurricular activity their first year of college. In comparison to the NSSE survey from 2009, however, the level of participation among first year and senior students in extracurricular activities was nowhere near 96%. Instead, 78% of first year students reported participating in an extracurricular activity, while only 50% of seniors reported participating in an extracurricular activity during their last year at WCU. Again, DegreePlus intends to bolster the amount of participation from students by creating a program that encourages participation and learning through extracurricular activities.

WCU also deploys a survey that measures the level of student involvement among sophomores. Figure 2 provides a detailed look at the results from this survey between 2013-2016. The figure shows the amount of student involvement in workshops, seminars and speakers outside of class; intercollegiate athletic events, community service or volunteer work, university sponsored art events, and extracurricular activities. Based on each of these categories, students respond to whether or not they demonstrate high involvement, moderate involvement, low involvement, or are not involved. While the figure shows a growing trend in moderate involvement among sophomore students, there is also an increasing trend of students not being involved. For instance, student responses show that the number of sophomores who are not involved has continued to grow among community service or volunteer work, university sponsored art events, and extracurricular activities. Our intent with DegreePlus is to maintain and encourage further growth among students who are moderately to highly involved in campus activities as well as foster new interest among students who have little to no involvement. Additionally, we believe DegreePlus will strengthen the student experience by stressing how the different facets of university life are interdependent—and that students will benefit from seeing their own experiences from a holistic perspective.
Among many other things, the survey asks students to report on their involvement in campus activities and their satisfaction with their opportunities to be involved.

WCU administers the UNC-GA Sophomore Survey each spring to students who have completed 45-60 credit hours and reports the data to UNC-GA every three years.

### Data Matters

**Student Self-Reported Involvement (Sophomore Survey)**

How satisfied are students with their opportunity to be involved? (2016 survey results satisfied or very satisfied)

- With the ease in which they can get involved in campus organizations: **76%**
- From 2015

- With opportunities on campus to develop leadership skills: **75%**
- From 2015

- With availability of weekend activities on campus: **55%**
- From 2015

- With opportunities to interact with/learn from people from diverse backgrounds: **65%**
- From 2015

Between 2013 and 2016, results show:

- General trend showing a growth in moderate involvement in campus activities.
- Increasing trend of students reporting that they aren’t involved in community service/volunteer work, student organizations/SGA/Greek life and university sponsored art events.

**Figure 2:** Infographic depicting WCU involvement survey results for 2013-2016.
Development

Selection of the QEP Topic

In August 2014, a QEP Topic Selection Committee was formed. The committee established and carried out a selection process between August 2014 and September 2016. First, the QEP Topic Selection Committee developed a call for proposals that invited students, faculty, staff, and alumni to submit a proposal of 300 words or less to propose a topic for the QEP. In addition to university-wide emails, a kick-off forum, and a publication in our own Reporter, the institution was plastered with posters soliciting proposals, and an article in the Asheville Citizen Times was used to encourage proposals from the community. Fifty-five proposals, more than a third of which came directly from students, were submitted and assessed by how they:

- Impact student learning
- Align with WCU’s 20/20 Vision strategic plan
- Build upon strengths or improve weaknesses at WCU
- Inspire broad user participation
- Address opportunities for the inclusion of various academic and non-academic units across the university
- Include measurable student learning outcomes

A subcommittee met throughout November 2014 to develop a rubric for evaluating the proposals. Out of the 55 proposals submitted, eight were selected as finalists, and the authors presented the proposals in a “3-Minute Thesis” format at an open-forum on September 1, 2015. The event was promoted through a variety of media, and the final vote took place using an electronic survey. (Each of the eight presentations were recorded and are available to view on the DegreePlus website: [http://DegreePlus.wcu.edu](http://DegreePlus.wcu.edu)). Faculty, staff, students, and alumni provided nearly 1000 votes and Courses to Careers: Psychosocial Competency, The Purposeful Pursuit to Grow the Whole Person was selected. It’s significant to note that this was the overwhelming first choice of students and alumni. After some further discussion, the main premise of Courses to Careers was kept; however, the plan was rebranded as DegreePlus: Furthering Student Development Through Intentional Extracurricular Involvement to emphasize (1) the importance of educational achievement rather than the development of vocational skills and (2) the focus on engagement in activities outside the classroom. The abbreviated name, DegreePlus, stresses that students participating in this program will graduate from WCU with more than just their degree. They will have a set of transferable skills that will help them to be successful in their post-graduation endeavors.
Development Approach

After selecting a topic for the QEP, a QEP Implementation Committee was formed that included more than 40 faculty, staff, alumni, and student members. After about a year of big picture planning, the committee was broken into eight subcommittees that included Assessment, Budget, Definitions, Evidence, Marketing, Pilot, Platform, and Report. These committees were formed during the summer of 2016 and met throughout the Summer and Fall 2016 semester. A description of the responsibilities of these subcommittees is provided in Table 1. In addition, a group of graduate students from the Higher Education Student Affairs program consulted with several of the subcommittees and also interviewed over 25 departments across campus about the activities they offer for students. This work was instrumental in developing our list of extracurricular activities. (See Appendix C.)

At the end of the Fall 2016 semester, the QEP Implementation Committee agreed that the purpose of some of the subcommittees had been met and that the committee would need new subcommittees going forward. Consequently, new subcommittees were formed for the Spring 2017 semester that included an expansion of the assessment committee into separate Student Evaluation and Program Assessment groups, as well as Employer Engagement, Event Management, Faculty and Staff Engagement, On-Site Visit Planning, Platform, Associate Director Search, and Student Engagement subcommittees. The subcommittees have met approximately every two weeks and will continue to meet until Summer 2017. Detailed descriptions of each subcommittee are provided in Table 2. Once an Associate Director is hired to oversee DegreePlus (anticipated July 1, 2017), the QEP Implementation Committee foresees the formation of a permanent, smaller committee of faculty, staff and students to serve in an advisory capacity for the program, as well as an additional resource for the Associate Director.

Learning Outcome Development

While most aspects of the committees’ work are addressed in other sections, the methodology for the development of learning outcomes that support Goal 2 deserves special mention here. The skills that were selected for DegreePlus (cultural responsiveness, leadership, professionalism, and teamwork) provided the foundation to identify specific learning outcomes related to each skill. A special retreat was held in the summer of 2016 that brought together all the members of the QEP Implementation Committee who could attend. The main goal of the retreat was to identify the characteristics that embody each of the four skill areas. Committee members wrestled with defining the individual skills as well as brainstormed events and activities that are regularly held on campus that can incorporate transferable skill development in our students. This retreat was critical to the development of the learning outcomes.
Table 1: Descriptions of Summer and Fall 2016 QEP implementation subcommittees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subcommittee</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>Created a means of assessing students’ work as they progress through <em>DegreePlus</em> (For example, the Assessment Subcommit-tee designed rubrics for each of the four skill areas that detail what students need to accomplish at the three different performance levels.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>Created a budget for the first five years of <em>DegreePlus</em>, including detailed information about purchasing the necessary materials, hiring the necessary personnel, and having the resources to guarantee the success of <em>DegreePlus</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitions</td>
<td>Developed the student learning outcomes for the four skill areas (cultural responsiveness, leadership, professionalism, and teamwork), which serve as a resource for designating events as “<em>DegreePlus</em> qualified” as well as provide students and mentors with a resource they can use throughout the <em>DegreePlus</em> program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence</td>
<td>Researched literature that examined student engagement, cultural responsiveness, leadership, professionalism, and teamwork, which provided a foundation for the QEP Implementation Committee to understand the key ideas of <em>DegreePlus</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>Developed ways to teach students, faculty, and staff about <em>DegreePlus</em> and incentivize their participation, and created materials to promote <em>DegreePlus</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td>Identified student population, timeline for soft launch, and questions to be addressed by the pilot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Platform</td>
<td>Researched what technology would be needed to support <em>DegreePlus</em> and how it would work, recommended add-on purchases for OrgSync by Campus Labs that would improve its usefulness for <em>DegreePlus</em>, monitored the merger between corporate OrgSync and CollegiateLink platforms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report</td>
<td>Compiled the QEP proposal based on the work of the other subcommittees, provided an overview of <em>DegreePlus</em> along with detailed information about its design, implementation, assessment, and other relevant materials</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 2: Descriptions of Spring 2017 QEP implementation subcommittees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subcommittee</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Associate Director Search</td>
<td>Conduct a search for an Associate Director for <em>DegreePlus</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer Engagement</td>
<td>Solicit feedback from Employee Advisory Board, collect data related to employer perceptions of WCU alumni employees, solidify the role of the Employee Advisory Board in <em>DegreePlus</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event Management</td>
<td>Expand the list of <em>DegreePlus</em> activities, construct a calendar of events, create forms for registering <em>DegreePlus</em> events, compose forms or letters for students’ self-reporting activities, develop post-event surveys, and design a set of instructions for how to host <em>DegreePlus</em> events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty and Staff Engagement</td>
<td>Educate faculty and staff about <em>DegreePlus</em> by developing pitches and cultivating <em>DegreePlus</em> leaders within various campus units; recruit mentors; develop mentor training with the WCU Coulter Faculty Commons; and build a website targeted to faculty and staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-Site Visit Planning</td>
<td>Prepare for the on-site visit from SACSCOC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Platform</td>
<td>Continue the work of the previous Platform Subcommittee by preparing technology to meet the needs of <em>DegreePlus</em>, such as designing a progress bar that students can view, incorporating an opt-in “registration” for students interested in <em>DegreePlus</em>, continuing to setup OrgSync, linking with our internal student information portal (myWCU) and advising software (GradesFirst), and collecting current students’ attendance data from events that will become <em>DegreePlus</em> qualified in the pilot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Assessment</td>
<td>Collect baseline data for assessing <em>DegreePlus</em> goals and address any changes that need to be made to the program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Engagement</td>
<td>Market <em>DegreePlus</em> to students (current and future) by planning orientation sessions, transition course promotions, kick-off events, and <em>DegreePlus Day</em>; develop the <em>DegreePlus</em> website and promotional materials; and define and purchase tangible incentives for students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Evaluation</td>
<td>Create one-page outcome sheets and examples of reflections and capstone reports/posters; generate reflection prompts for the reflection and capstone products</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
because it utilized a working knowledge of our students and their environment to customize the resulting learning outcomes for WCU.

Following the retreat, the Definitions Subcommittee used the results of that work session to fine-tune the learning outcomes during the Fall 2017 semester. The complete list of learning outcomes for each skill is provided in the Assessment Section of this document. Here, we describe the framework that was used to develop those outcomes from the broad ideas put forth at the retreat. The Definitions Subcommittee recognized the importance of developing outcomes that were attainable. Outcomes were considered in terms of the activities students would take part in, rather than lofty definitions that were too theoretical. Also, the subcommittee decided to limit the number of learning outcomes related to each skill to make assessment manageable. Consequently, each skill was limited to 5 learning outcomes. The learning outcomes also required a certain amount of breadth so they could be applied to a wide range of events, workshops, and activities. Finally, the subcommittee constructed the learning outcomes using clear language that undergraduate students would be able to understand.
The Student Experience

*DegreePlus* is meant to cultivate a rich set of experiences for each student as they participate in the program. Additionally, students take an active role in the program by customizing it through the extracurricular events they attend, their reflection on their experiences, and a presentation that highlights a specific capstone experience. Through this process, students are provided with a flexible model that provides scaffolding through each step in *DegreePlus*. The following content provides a detailed look at how students will progress through the program including information about registering for *DegreePlus*, attending *DegreePlus* events, reflecting on the experience, and creating a capstone project. These steps are broken down into “levels,” which capitalizes on the benefits of gamification of learning. Example scenarios of how a student might progress through *DegreePlus* are provided in Appendix D. It is important to note that each skill area is treated separately, so students can be in a different level for different skills at the same time.

Registering for *DegreePlus*

Students will register to participate in *DegreePlus* at any point during their time at WCU; however, there will be a more focused effort on informing and recruiting students during their freshman year. First year students will learn about *DegreePlus* through traditional marketing strategies such as print and digital media as well as at events like freshmen orientation and first year transition courses like USI 130: University Experience. Additionally, *DegreePlus* will be advertised at various events throughout the year, like Valley Ballyhoo and CAT Fair (student-centered clubs and organizations fairs), to market to all students at WCU. *DegreePlus* must create enough marketing and student buy-in that participation becomes a part of campus culture.

The QEP Implementation Committee expressed mixed feelings about requiring a registration. The invitation to register will be an opportunity to convey positive messaging: “This is important for you. We know you can do it, and we’re here to help you along the way.” As an added benefit, the QEP Implementation Committee anticipates that students who register for the program will be more likely to take it seriously and have a higher completion rate. On the other hand, students who do not register should not be excluded from the opportunities *DegreePlus* has to offer. A compromise was to require registration for the pilot, where student participation of registered and unregistered students will be tracked. Student participation and completion rates will be tracked, and this data will guide a future decision regarding the need for registration.
Level 1: Experience and Exposure

After students register for DegreePlus, their first goal will be to attend extracurricular events linked to DegreePlus. Examples of qualifying events and activities are provided in Appendix C. These activities meet at least one of the learning outcomes for a particular skill. In order to complete the first level, students will be required to attend a minimum of five events in at least one of the highlighted skill areas: cultural responsiveness, leadership, professionalism, and teamwork. In other words, students would be required to attend five events related to “leadership” before they would be able to move on to level two for that specific skill. Some events or activities may count toward more than one skill area based on how the event aligns with the learning outcomes for the skill.

Students’ attendance will be tracked by swiping their student ID cards at each event though other tracking technology is being considered. Data from the card-reading device will then be linked to the event item in OrgSync, which is an event organization platform. OrgSync will document students’ event attendance for the experiential transcript, and it will provide a tracking mechanism so that students can monitor their progress in fulfilling Level 1 attendance requirements for each skill area. OrgSync will also record data for students who attended events but are not registered in DegreePlus. The rationale for this is that students can register for DegreePlus at a later date and still receive credit for events that they previously attended. Once students have attended five events, they will be invited to participate in DegreePlus Day, where they will receive guidance on the steps for completing Level 2.

Level 2: Reflection and Articulation

Upon attending five events from the same skill area, students are invited to attend DegreePlus Day, which will be held during each spring semester. This major event will be a celebration of students on the DegreePlus path. Students’ progress will be publicly announced and rewarded with recognition, a meal and prizes. A keynote speaker will offer his or her own reflections on one or more of the skill areas. Most importantly, students will meet in small groups for guided discussion led by a trained faculty or staff mentor, who will be paid a small stipend for their service. Discussion will revolve around sharing experiences from the five activities they attended and how those activities tied into a given skill area. For example, a mentor may inquire about how attending a campus event, like an Etiquette Dinner, ties into the “professionalism” skill area. The mentors’ main goals are to get students to think critically about their experiences and how they tie into the learning outcomes related to each skill as well as the students’ own academic or career goals. Lastly, the discussion will focus on pedagogical strategies for helping students complete reflections on their experiences. Students will be provided with guiding questions, a sample reflection statement, and...
a rubric to help them prepare their own reflection piece.

A goal of DegreePlus Day is to offer extensive support for students to reflect and articulate on their experience and their skills. While we feel the DegreePlus Day event is a major component of DegreePlus in terms of experiential learning, we also recognize that extenuating circumstances may prohibit all qualified students from attending. Also, some students, such as transfer students, may be on a different timeline than most, and will need an alternative to the spring only offering. The committee is planning a smaller scale “make-up” event, likely held in the fall or perhaps on an as-needed basis.

After attending DegreePlus Day or a make-up event, students will independently compose a reflection that is submitted to mentors for feedback and a pass/fail grade based on a predetermined grading rubric (see Appendix G). Students who fail to write the reflection successfully will be able to rewrite their reflections until they pass. After successfully completing at least one reflection, students will be rewarded with an official note on their academic transcript designating them as a “DegreePlus participant,” and they will earn acceptance to the third level of DegreePlus, which entails the presentation of a capstone project.

Level 3: Integration and Application

The final component of DegreePlus will require students to complete a capstone project; however, the parameters of the project will be relatively open. Students can choose any experience (either extracurricular or curricular) that they feel exemplifies the application of one of the four skill areas. The loose structure encourages students to be mindful and intentional of their choices, rather than having DegreePlus dictate their experiences. A “call for papers” will invite students who have completed the Level 2 reflection to submit an “intent to present,” which is a brief description of an activity or experience they’d like to present in a poster presentation format at DegreePlus Day. Having the presentations at DegreePlus Day provides an opportunity for students at different levels of the program to interact and discuss (reflect and articulate) their experiences, skills and goals. While the capstone projects are relatively open, the presentations will be assessed by trained faculty or staff mentors using a standard set of criteria in a rubric (see Appendix G). Mentors should expect to see a short description of the activity, but the focus will be on anecdotal evidence of the students applying the learning outcomes of the skill at the high end of Bloom’s taxonomy. As an example, for the professionalism skill, students might share specific examples of ways they communicated effectively, conformed to a dress code, faced an ethical dilemma or developed a professional relationship. Even more meaningful might be the sharing of how students overcame obstacles for achieving these outcomes.
While the plan for preparing students to compose the reflection is solid, the Student Evaluation Subcommittee continues to develop mechanisms for training students for the capstone presentation. One option is to include it with the initial DegreePlus Day small group session. Another is to have a separate small group session with students who have expressed an “intent to present,” so the training is congruous with their presentation. Additionally, throughout the program, students will need training on how to portray their participation in DegreePlus. This is an opportunity for the Center for Career and Professional Development (CCPD) to be involved in training sessions during DegreePlus Day. While students will have a note on their academic transcript and a separate experiential transcript, they will require a toolkit, of sorts, to explain DegreePlus and its value to others. Employers may not be interested in viewing an experiential transcript, so students will have to be taught how it can be used successfully, whether that is highlighting certain experiences in a cover letter, listing items on a resume, or discussing them at an interview. DegreePlus Day provides an opportunity to work with students on these concepts. The Advising Center and the CCPD could also serve as a resource. A goal of the QEP Implementation Committee is to finesse this aspect of the plan over the Spring 2017 semester.

Summary

The way in which students progress through DegreePlus is summarized by some guidelines and a graphical representation (Figure 3) below.

- Students can be at different levels for different skill areas at the same time.
- Students must attend at least five events in a single skill area to complete Level 1.
- Students must complete Level 1 in at least one skill area to trigger an invitation to DegreePlus Day.
- Students must attend DegreePlus Day (or an equivalent “make-up” version) to submit their first reflection.
- Reflections must be related to experiences in a skill area for which Level 1 has been completed. A “passing” reflection in that skill area completes Level 2 for that skill.
- Successful completion of Level 2 in any skill area results in official “DegreePlus Participant” designation on the academic transcript.
- Students who have a passing reflection in one skill area can submit additional reflections in the remaining three skill areas without being required to attend DegreePlus Day again.
**Figure 3:** A summary of the students’ *DegreePlus* pathway.

- Students who have completed Level 2 in at least one skill area will be invited to submit an “intent to present” at *DegreePlus Day* to describe their capstone experience.

- Successful presentation of the capstone experience marks completion of Level 3. Students can address multiple skill areas, but at least one must be in an area in which they’ve completed the Level 2 reflection.

- Students who have completed Level 3 in at least one skill area will be awarded with graduation cords and possibly a special ceremony before graduation.

- The Experiential Transcript will be the official record of all checkpoints throughout the *DegreePlus* experience.
Impacts for Stakeholders

Besides students, there are several stakeholders interested in the success of DegreePlus due to how it can impact them. These groups include faculty and staff, degree programs, administration and alumni, and employers. The ways in which these stakeholders have been educated about DegreePlus and how the QEP Implementation Committee foresees they will be impacted are described below.

Faculty and Staff

Faculty and staff are essential to the success of DegreePlus. The first step in establishing DegreePlus at WCU is educating faculty and staff about its purpose and goals. The QEP Implementation Committee has used several strategies to educate faculty and staff during its development. Not only is the QEP Implementation Committee composed of mainly faculty and staff that can bring developments back to their own units, a Spring 2017 subcommittee is focused on meeting individually with units across campus to share DegreePlus. Additionally, the QEP Implementation Committee has hosted faculty/staff forums, created an informative website about DegreePlus, and composed regular update emails, and articles for the Provost Office and Academic Affairs newsletters to inform the university of its growth and development. While these efforts have served as an initial step, the QEP Implementation Committee recognizes that students’ participation will be affected by the visibility of DegreePlus on campus. Therefore, the QEP Implementation Committee hopes to increase the visibility of DegreePlus by teaching faculty and staff more about the process and structure of the plan during the Spring 2017 semester. The QEP Implementation Committee has also considered using additional strategies to educate the university including the following: using a Blackboard Shell to train faculty and staff about DegreePlus, selecting individuals to serve as DegreePlus liaisons that educate faculty and staff at the college/departmental/organizational levels, and creating multimedia (e.g., social media, website, podcast, etc.) that detail the overall process.

A primary goal of the Faculty/Staff Engagement Subcommittee is to meet face-to-face with individual units in both Academic Affairs and Student Affairs to not only educate them about DegreePlus and its goals, but to also convey the many ways in which they can participate. There are multiple ways faculty and staff can engage with students in DegreePlus. In their traditional roles as advisors, faculty and staff can talk with their advisees about what it is, what students have to do, and how it benefits them. A quick look at an advisee’s experiential transcript can open the door to meaningful conversations about a student’s strengths and weaknesses, post-graduation aspirations, and long-term planning for career goals, and these discussions may support student success.
Faculty and staff can also volunteer to host a DegreePlus event. There are many existing activities that fit within the student learning outcome framework for each skill, and faculty or staff simply need to bring those activities to the attention of the DegreePlus program to be included. There are likely other existing activities that do not currently fit the outcomes, but with modification, could be enhanced to incorporate one of the four skill areas. And of course, we anticipate faculty and staff will be inspired to create new opportunities to fit within the DegreePlus outcomes.

Finally, faculty and staff can become DegreePlus mentors. As mentors, faculty and staff would receive additional training for which they would receive $500 in compensation. The mentors would work with Coulter Faculty Commons to learn about leading small group reflection sessions and the assessment component of DegreePlus (e.g., assessing student reflections and capstone project presentations). DegreePlus includes multiple incentives for faculty and staff to participate in the program. In addition to the monetary compensation for being a mentor, here are some additional incentives to participate:

- Hosting DegreePlus events will count toward university level service;
- DegreePlus events will provide technology to track student attendance;
- DegreePlus events could tie into curricular subjects/units;
- Training will be provided to faculty and staff to make it easy to host, advise, or track DegreePlus events;
- Mentor training will provide valuable professional development;
- DegreePlus could lead to increased attendance at events on campus;
- DegreePlus could provide an implicit benefit to students that may positively impact their curricular performance;
- DegreePlus could foster skills in students that contribute to increased employability.

Thus far, DegreePlus has been received with great enthusiasm by faculty and staff. Some faculty and staff have already volunteered to become mentors, and others are excited to encourage their students to participate, knowing this program will provide them with skills that make them prepared for life after college.

Degree Programs

Not only can DegreePlus provide benefits for individuals on campus, there may be benefits for academic programs and other units on campus, particularly those within
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Student Affairs. For instance, some academic programs have specific goals that align with the skill areas of DegreePlus. The Department of Engineering and Technology has teamwork as a component of their external accreditation requirements, and programs in the College of Education and Allied Professions have a diversity component in their curriculum, as required by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. These program goals overlap with the teamwork and cultural responsiveness learning outcomes of DegreePlus, and formally incorporating DegreePlus into their curricula could assist those programs in achieving their program goals.

Many units in both Academic and Student Affairs are already offering programming that aligns with the DegreePlus learning outcomes. Not only will the framework of DegreePlus encourage students to participate more, the DegreePlus program requires tracking of attendance and learning outcomes, and the analysis of that data that will provide insight into which events are highly successful and serving their purpose and which activities might benefit from improved marketing.

Administration and Alumni

Like all those with a vested interest in WCU, the administration and alumni care chiefly about the education of our students. However, the individuals charged with managing the university and those who have graduated from it are also concerned with the institution’s reputation. DegreePlus is poised to serve WCU well in this regard. It is a special program designed to help students develop the skills they will require after they graduate from WCU, thus making it a great recruiting tool for future students. Understandably, students (and their parents) are looking for an institution with an edge that will make them employable. DegreePlus is that additional component that will help WCU graduates stand out from their peers because it provides documented experience in important, transferable skills employers are seeking. Multiple presentations to the WCU Board of Trustees have exhibited high praise for DegreePlus. Several members who are alumni of WCU claimed they wished a program like this had existed when they were students here. They agree that the program will be an exciting opportunity and benefit for the students at WCU and for the institution as a whole.

Employers

The QEP Implementation Committee has relied on literature pointing to the idea that transferable skills are important for employability. However, the formation of an Employer Advisory Board has provided an opportunity to have direct conversations with regional employers who hire WCU alumni about the significance of these skills. The Employer Advisory Board consists of the following members:

- Ann Ashley, VP Staffing and Professional Development, The Biltmore Company
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- Lucinda Austin, Certified Employment Consultant III/Assistant Vice President, BB&T
- Leah Crisp, Human Resources Manager, Lowe’s Home Improvement
- Tommasanne Davis, Director of Talent Acquisition and Career Exploration, Mission Health
- Jeff Hayes, HR Manager, AvL Technologies
- Cynthia Lopez, Human Resources Director, Buncombe County Schools
- Jon Snover, Executive Director, Western Office of the North Carolina Biotechnology Center
- Sloan Wilson, Human Resources, Drake Software
- Danielle Wittekind, Human Resources Director, Jackson County

The current role of this Board is to provide feedback on the value of DegreePlus. A recent (Feb. 8, 2017) phone conversation with members of this group indicated they perceived DegreePlus would be highly beneficial to students when preparing them for the workforce. Lucinda Austin commented that a program like DegreePlus would help her company to discern whether or not a potential employee is the right fit for the culture of her workplace, and that’s extremely important to BB&T. When asked about the usefulness of the experiential transcript, she said, “I think it’s fabulous. It makes me do my happy dance! You can really see the commitment level of the student[s as they] really [try] to grow and develop so that they can be better prepared. [DegreePlus] will help groom them and be better prepared for an interview.” Also, Leah Crisp commented specifically about the incorporation of the cultural responsiveness skill: “[Lowe’s is] a very diverse organization and I like that piece of this program to maybe expose someone to different cultures or different things, different ideas that maybe they have not been exposed to before, just that open-mindedness, I just think that’s huge to someone’s success.”
Execution

The QEP relies on the combined efforts of various groups across campus. As the QEP progresses, we hope to increase its visibility on campus and grow the number of students, faculty, staff, and administrators involved with its progress. The following sections provide details on how we plan to implement DegreePlus at WCU by examining the oversight of the plan, the implementation technology, and a look at how we will run a soft launch and expand it to the entire university. This section also includes a marketing plan, a timeline, and proposed allocation of resources.

Oversight

Management of DegreePlus will require a unit of dedicated individuals who are not only passionate about the mission of DegreePlus but who are also committed to working with students, faculty and staff in a supporting role. An advertisement is currently posted to hire an Associate Director for DegreePlus. The full advertisement is reproduced in Appendix E. Briefly, some of the most important qualifications of this individual are a passion for student development, experience with event planning, and prior experience in both teaching and student services.

The Associate Director will serve in the Center for Career and Professional Development (CCPD) under the direction of the Director for CCPD. In addition, a small committee of approximately ten faculty, staff and students will be selected to serve in an advisory capacity for DegreePlus. The Associate Director will be responsible for hiring a Program Specialist, and Administrative Support Associate, and a graduate student or undergraduate student worker to support all the components of DegreePlus, including management of the event and tracking technology, communicating with faculty, staff, students and employers, organizing events such as DegreePlus Day, assessment and marketing.

Technology

DegreePlus will require the use of technology for students to successfully complete the program. This section details the technology that will be used and how it functions in relation to the overall program. For the pilot year, DegreePlus will use OrgSync to monitor student progress. WCU already uses OrgSync as an event organization software platform, so it is an ideal tool to manage events related to DegreePlus and keep track of student involvement. OrgSync’s primary function will be to tracks students’ progress through DegreePlus and build experiential transcripts for students. Additionally, WCU has purchased multiple add-ons for OrgSync that make it more effective. The first add-on is an application program interface (API) that allows OrgSync to communicate with Banner, the registrar’s database that maintains stu-
dent records. The second add-on was the purchase of card swipe technology that allows students to use their Cat Cards to “check-in” at DegreePlus events. The third add-on was a link to R25, an online room scheduling system, so that faculty and staff can designate events as being tied to DegreePlus.

In March 2016, OrgSync was purchased by Campus Labs, which has a similar student engagement platform called CollegiateLink. These two programs will merge, and a new, as yet unnamed product will be released in Summer 2017. WCU plans to migrate to the new platform during the following summer of 2018, so OrgSync will be the primary software platform for the pilot, but the new platform will have extensive features that will support DegreePlus. For example, students will clearly see what events and activities can be attended for DegreePlus credit in an “extracurricular pathway” built into the software. A screenshot of this feature from the CollegiateLink platform is shown in Figure 4. Note that instead of the “Campus Experience” category, WCU students would see a skill category, such as teamwork. In the events listed below, instead of “Become a Campus Ambassador or Mentor,” WCU students would see extracurricular activities related to the skill category. With this simple interface, students will clearly be able to track their progress through DegreePlus.

Another feature of the co-curricular management software is a progress bar graph that can potentially be linked to other current campus platforms such as myWCU, our internal student information portal, and GradesFirst, our advising platform. A sample progress bar is shown in Figure 5 and it will act as a pulse for students and advisors to rapidly assess their progress in DegreePlus. In addition, student focus groups have responded very positively to the progress bar image, citing that a graphic like this would encourage them to click to learn more about how they can get involved.

**Soft Launch**

In order to ensure the success of DegreePlus, a “soft launch,” referred to as a pilot, with a limited population and just a single skill will take place in Summer/Fall 2017. The intent of the pilot is to grow DegreePlus in a controlled manner so that any issues that need to be addressed can be done well before it is open to all students.

The initial student population will be limited to students in the Honors College, the Academic Success Program (ASP), and the Leadership Living-Learning Community (LEAD LLC). These groups were chosen for a few reasons. First, students in these programs are a cross-section of the campus community in that there are students in all academic colleges and disciplines. Also, these students enter WCU as cohorts in a living community, which may be helpful in promoting DegreePlus. Lastly, these cohorts have a strong support network of faculty, staff and fellow students. This will be useful in providing a structure of encouragement to participate. For example, a
Figure 4: Sample extracurricular pathway from the CollegiateLink software platform.

Figure 5: A progress bar graphic for DegreePlus participants.
focus group of ASP students indicated that they are hesitant to attend events for fear of not knowing other attendees. Yet, the students in the focus group appeared to be comfortable with one another, so if they know that members of their cohort are participating, that would encourage their own participation.

In addition to limiting the student populations, the first year of DegreePlus will focus on one skill: professionalism. A number of specific professionalism activities have already been identified for the professionalism skill in the pilot study. For example, the Etiquette Dinner, attendance at the Catamount Career and Networking Day, Atlanta/Asheville Job Shadowing Day, are some of the activities offered by the Center for Career and Professional Development (CCPD) that support the learning outcomes of the professionalism skill. Students could also attend a mock interview or a resume critique at the CCPD. Since DegreePlus will be housed in this office, these activities will have the support of an office tied directly to DegreePlus, which will be particularly helpful for getting DegreePlus off the ground.

Another advantage of using professionalism for the pilot is that many student affairs units and academic units have existing programming tied to developing professionalism in students. For example, the Office of Leadership and Student Involvement (Student Affairs) offers C.O.R.E. (Campus Organizations Reaching Excellence) training for students in campus clubs and organizations. Also, Residence Life offers programming during Extremes Week that helps students develop and apply skills that contribute to building community with peers, staff, and faculty. Most Colleges send students to professional conferences to give presentations. There are also several conferences on campus where students are able to gain professionalism skills, such as the Undergraduate Expo and the Humanities and the Nomad Conferences sponsored by the English Department. The College of Business Assurance of Learning program offers student workshops throughout the academic year related to professionalism topics. This college also offers several networking events and workshops such a Pitch Party and Dress for Success. Faculty involved in these programs have expressed an interest in opening up these activities, which have been traditionally marketed to students within the College of Business, to the campus community at large. This list is a short example of the current offerings related to professionalism. A more extensive listing along with activities related to other skill areas is provided in Appendix C.

A limitation associated with the soft launch of a four-year program will be piloting each level of DegreePlus. The Pilot Subcommittee has developed some creative mechanisms for working around this limitation. First, Honors College students at all levels (freshmen through seniors) will be included in the pilot. Staff supporting DegreePlus will work with event sponsors to collect attendance data from event offerings that occurred before the pilot to build in credit for upper level students. This credit from earlier semesters will allow higher level students to move through the
program at an accelerated pace. (i.e., they won’t have to complete five events during
the pilot to complete Level 1 since they will already have some events counting from
before the pilot began.) A small scale DegreePlus Day will be held in the Fall 2017
semester to help these students get through the Level 2 reflection phase and prepare
for the full DegreePlus Day Level 3 presentation in the spring. In this way, those
assessing DegreePlus can observe all the components of the program and determine
if any changes need to be made before expanding the program in successive iterations.

As mentioned previously, the main goal of the pilot is to determine how DegreePlus
could be improved for the 2018-2019 academic year. In addition to implementing the
assessment plan (detailed in a later section) to see if the goals of DegreePlus are being
met, the pilot hopes to address some specific operational questions:

- Are there benefits to having students register for DegreePlus?
- Are there enough activities being offered for students to complete the program?
- Is there enough variety in the activities being offered to reach a broad audience?
- Is a single annual DegreePlus Day sufficient? What time of year should it occur?
- Is a “make-up” DegreePlus Day necessary? If so, what should that look like?

Essentially, the pilot will serve to provide a significant amount of information in the
first year to monitor the operation of DegreePlus and establish what logistical plans
worked well and what might need modification before scaling up.

Expansion

In Fall 2018, DegreePlus will expand to incorporate additional students. The cur-
rent plan is to make DegreePlus available for every student, but depending on the
results of the soft launch, the DegreePlus Advisory Committee may opt to scale more
gradually by adding just one or two academic colleges. This might be the case if,
for example, the data management is challenging due to the OrgSync/CollegiateLink
merger. Also, to manage the scale up, DegreePlus will focus on just one additional
skill in the second year instead of all four. By year three, we anticipate a complete
implementation for all students and all four skills.

Throughout the planning process, careful consideration has been given to how
DegreePlus can be an inclusive program for all students. The structure of the program
is well-suited for residential undergraduate students who start at WCU as freshmen
and stay for a four-year timeframe. However, this structure might pose a challenge
for transfer students, distance students, part-time students, commuters and graduate
students to fully participate. Several conversations with student focus groups, advising staff, outreach and distance education, and the Graduate School have helped to shape a flexible program for these students.

First, students who do not spend a lot of time on campus (mainly part-time students, non-traditional students, commuters, and distance education students) expressed concerns about either not being able to participate in events or not being interested in the activities we might offer. This led to the concept of students being able to self-report activities that are either not sponsored by WCU, or activities that are on-campus activities but are not designated as DegreePlus activities. We anticipate students might self-select activities they believe tie into the learning outcomes of a particular skill, such as duties they perform at their job or volunteer activities. Students might also select their roles in campus organizations or a study abroad experience. When students request DegreePlus designation for an activity, a reference letter form will be generated for a supervisor, organizer or advisor to confirm that the selected activity does satisfy the learning outcomes for the relevant skill.

Another option to support these students requires a cultural shift for our institution. Today’s advanced technology provides opportunities to make on-campus events available to a much broader audience. For instance, a presentation on leadership development could be broadcast as a webinar, not just to WCU students, but to the community at large. This provides more inclusive opportunities for WCU students, but also helps WCU engage with the community in a strong way. Currently, there are not many events that are presented in this way, but this is an opportunity for DegreePlus to foster our growth as an institution serving the region and beyond. This effort will require significant support from IT services, Educational Outreach, and faculty and staff event sponsors, so it is a task DegreePlus might pursue in year three or four of the program.

Lastly, the Graduate School currently has an intentional professional development program for graduate students. Individual programs report on professional activities provided to all graduate students. In some cases, this might be training for an instructor role in the classroom, a seminar course on professional writing, or attendance or presentation at a conference. All the professional development opportunities are compiled and shared back to programs, and this data could help to identify new opportunities, many of which could tie in well with the learning outcomes of DegreePlus. The challenge is that most graduate programs are two year programs, and that may not be sufficient time for graduate students to complete DegreePlus. We’ve considered an abbreviated version of the program, allowing undergraduate experiences to count, or possibly creating a separate role for graduate students as mentors. Similar considerations have been made for transfer students who are only on campus for a few years or less. These discussions continue and will shape the opportunities for
graduate students to benefit from DegreePlus.

Marketing Plan

DegreePlus will have a large impact on the entire WCU community. Educating people who will be impacted about the program will be critical to its success. Promotion of DegreePlus has been taking place on campus since early on in the development stage and will continue throughout the Spring 2017 semester and into the following fall. Members of the QEP Implementation Committee have met with various groups including the Board of Trustees, Staff Senate, Faculty Senate, Provost’s Executive Council, Student Affairs Executive Council, Graduate Council, Distance Learning Council, Department Heads Meetings, Department Meetings, as well as several student groups including the Honors College Leadership Council, Academic Success Program Students, and several summer school classes. Several open forums have also been held, and the WCU community has been invited to provide feedback on several occasions through email, the DegreePlus website and in person through QEP Implementation Committee members. The Chancellor and the Provost, who both strongly endorse DegreePlus, have spoken positively about it at major events, such as Convocation and the 2016-2017 Opening Assembly. A push for DegreePlus was provided in September of 2016 through the University’s Employee Appreciation Day where an information booth was set up and flyers were distributed. In February 2017, a very well attended forum was held, and flyers with additional details were distributed to faculty and staff through campus mail. An information session at new faculty orientation will also educate the newest members of the WCU community about DegreePlus. A main component of the communication to faculty and staff will include how they can be involved, and the benefits DegreePlus will have on our students and our programs.

Advertising about DegreePlus will be broadcast throughout campus in the form of signage, email communication and a special student forum in March 2017. These campaigns will target the entire student body. However, given that the pilot includes just a subset of the student body, the QEP Implementation Committee thought an additional, more informative and directed marketing campaign should target these students specifically. This will help to focus our efforts on those who will be most affected in the near future and will avoid confusion amongst other students who will not be fully exposed to DegreePlus until at least Fall 2018. As described previously, the pilot will consist of students from the Honors College, the Leadership Living/Learning Community (LEAD LLC), and the Academic Success Program (ASP). In the Honors College population, we will encourage students at all levels to participate. On the other hand, the LEAD LLC and ASP programs are one year programs for first-year students. Therefore, these students are not yet on campus. In preparation for the soft launch, a targeted marketing campaign will take place during the Spring 2017 semester that focuses on Honors College students. Advertising of DegreePlus to Hon-
EXECUTION

ors College students will capitalize on the fact that the majority of these students live together on campus in Balsam Hall. Information flyers will be posted in the dormitory; we will provide some evening programming in the residence hall to discuss the program with students in person; and we will follow up with individual mailings and emails to explain the goals and details of the program.

Toward the end of the semester and throughout the summer, marketing will extend to the LEAD LLC and ASP students. This will include direct mail to all students accepted into ASP and who have been invited to participate in LEAD LLC in April (prior to the May 1 deposit deadline), an informational video or livecast to promote the program to entering freshman through our accepted student Facebook page, an email campaign to launch in April of 2017 targeted to deposited ASP and LEAD LLC students. Additionally, when these students are on campus for orientation, they will hear about DegreePlus at one of their sessions. Lastly, since the ASP students arrive for classes in July, there will be an opportunity to meet with them again to explain the program, and we will also have one or two activities related to the professionalism skill available to them during the summer months to give them a leg up on the program. All these communications will include the extrinsic rewards students can receive by participating, such as giveaways, prizes and graduation accolades, but advertising will also stress the intrinsic benefits of participation, like having meaningful skills that employers are looking for, being able to articulate their experiences clearly, and being prepared for a job or other professional goal upon graduation.

Marketing of DegreePlus will continue throughout the 2017-2018 academic year. Near the start of the Fall 2017 semester, we are planning a kick-off event that will have a keynote speaker to talk about professionalism and the value of the DegreePlus program. We are hoping this might be a regional employer or someone from a regional development office who can truly speak to the significance of the skills we are providing to our students. Not only will this event help with advertising DegreePlus, it will also count as an activity for the students’ professionalism skill area. Throughout the Fall 2017 semester, students within the pilot group will continuously receive communication via email, campus mail and social media that re-emphasizes the benefits of participating in DegreePlus and also advertises upcoming events that count toward the professionalism skill. A similar campaign to that initiated this spring (modified by any changes from what we’ve learned from the pilot campaign) will be expanded to incorporate all students in the following year.

Marketing during the Spring 2017 semester will be the responsibility of the QEP Implementation Committee, and a subcommittee has already been formed to carry out this charge. In the summer months, this role will fall to chair of the QEP Implementation Committee (who will receive a summer stipend for these duties) and the new Associate Director for DegreePlus, who will begin at WCU on July 1, 2017.
The chair of the QEP Implementation Committee will also receive a course release to aid in the transition of DegreePlus into the Center for Career and Professional Development, so she can help with marketing throughout the initial stages of the pilot. Additionally, a DegreePlus Advisory Committee composed of faculty and staff and either a paid undergraduate or graduate student will be available for marketing support throughout the 2017-2018 academic year.

**Timeline**

The timeline below shows how DegreePlus has developed, and how it will be executed throughout the soft launch.

**Fall 2014**

- Establish QEP Topic Selection Committee
- Develop criteria for proposals for the QEP topic
- Put forward call for proposals
- Develop rubric for proposal evaluation

**Spring 2015**

- Evaluate proposals
- Select finalists

**Fall 2015**

- Present proposals to the campus and external community
- Vote for QEP topic
- Establish QEP Implementation Committee – met regularly to for broad planning

**Spring 2016**

- Establish guiding concepts for the program (establish competencies, extracurricular activities, etc.)
- Interview small groups of faculty, staff and students for feedback

**Summer 2016**

- Interview small groups of faculty, staff and students for feedback
- Interview student focus groups in summer school classes
- Initiate development of learning outcomes at retreat
- Form subcommittees
- Begin budget requirements
EXECUTION

Fall 2016
Establish learning outcomes
Establish three-level framework
Interview small groups of faculty, staff and students for feedback
Establish pilot group constituents
Solidify goals
Host open forums and meet with small groups of faculty, staff and students for feedback
Submit budget requests through University procedure

Spring 2017
Develop assessment rubrics
Develop assessment plan
Create student reflection prompts
Search for and hire the Associate Director
Prepare for and have the on-site review
Analyze preliminary baseline data for current student participation rates
Meet with Honors College students to promote the pilot
Prepare and post signage to market DegreePlus
Meet with Employer Advisory Board
Add past and future professionalism activities to OrgSync
Develop post-event surveys

Summer 2017
Establish DegreePlus Advisory Committee
Send promotional materials to admitted students in the pilot
Meet with on-campus ASP students in transition course
Meet with other pilot students at orientation
Offer a professionalism activity for ASP students
Track attendance at qualified events
Solicit feedback from Employer Advisory Board

Fall 2017
Solicit faculty/staff for mentoring opportunities
Market DegreePlus to on-campus pilot students
Host DegreePlus kick-off event related to professionalism
Host additional professionalism events
Track attendance at qualified events
Train mentors
Host small scale *DegreePlus Day* for students who’ve completed Level 1
Collect and evaluate first round of Level 2 reflections

**Spring 2018**
Prepare for adoption of Campus Labs merged software platform
Plan and execute full-scale *DegreePlus Day*
Solicit participation for Level 3 presentations
Evaluate participation data, event descriptions and surveys, and Level 2 reflection data

**Summer 2018**
Prepare assessment report
Solicit feedback from stakeholders
Implement new Campus Labs merged software platform
Market to incoming first-year students
Solicit feedback from Employer Advisory Board

**Resource Allocation**
A program such as *DegreePlus*, which seeks to impact student learning at an institutional level, will require additional resources. A detailed budget was constructed to provide an approximate cost for the next five years. It reflects the scaling of the cost associated with an expansion of the program over that timeframe. This budget was proposed throughout the 2016-2017 campus budget hearing process, which began in October 2016. Our requests have received continuous support throughout the process and we await the final approval which will occur following the final budget hearing scheduled for February 20, 2017. A detail of the budget is provided in Appendix E, but a general justification of each category is provided here.

The budget is broken down into five categories: QEP personnel, administration costs, professional development for faculty and staff, activity/event costs, and construction costs. As stated previously, *DegreePlus* will rely on an Associate Director for management of the program. The allocated salary matches an average salary of campus employees in similar positions. This individual will be responsible for managing the *DegreePlus* events in OrgSync; working with the Employer Advisory Board, the *DegreePlus* advisory board, faculty and staff liaisons and mentors; and assessment. In later years of the program, he or she is responsible for hiring additional staff as the program expands. The budget accounts for the hiring of a Program Specialist in Year 2 and an Administrative Support Associate in Year 3. The Associate Director will also hire and manage a graduate assistant to help with day-to-day program
management. The personnel costs for Year 1 are $78,613. By Year 5, with additional staff, this cost will have increased to $179,533 per year.

The budget allocates for basic program management costs such as marketing, postage, mailing, and printing/copying, as well as start-up costs for Year 1, such as computers, office furniture and telephones. These costs total $18,168 for Year 1 but steadily decrease as the program becomes more well-established resulting in an annual cost of $11,934 in Year 5.

Professional Development costs were included to support faculty and staff, and the initial cost of $15,000 expands to $22,500 per year by Year 5, based on anticipated growth of participation. This money will be used to support training and development of faculty who want to pursue the inclusion of transferable skill development in their extracurricular activities. In the budget, this is listed as training provided by an external speaker, but it could also fund faculty and staff travel to workshops or funds needed for developing or enhancing an experience for students. This portion of the budget also supports mentor training at $500 per mentor each year, as well as a travel budget for the Associate Director to attend conferences and/or workshops.

Since DegreePlus is founded on student participation in extracurricular activities, a sizable budget has been included to support those activities and to incentive student participation. This budget sits around $10,000 per year, with some higher cost in Year 1 and 2 to purchase card reader equipment. Half the budget is to support DegreePlus Day, including a prominent external keynote speaker. The other half is designated as student travel to support students’ capstone experiences that take place off campus, such as presentation of research at a national conference. Students would be able to apply for these funds.

Lastly, the budget accounts for a needed expansion of the Center Career and Professional Development office. This office recently moved to a renovated space in Reid Hall, but the space is too small to accommodate the needed support staff and increased foot traffic anticipated by the expansion of the DegreePlus program. An allocation of $300,000 in Year 2 of the program will provide for the additional space.
Assessment

The specific goals of DegreePlus and the associated outcomes are identified below. These goals align with the goals and mission of the Center for Career and Professional Development, the office in which DegreePlus will be housed, as well as the University’s strategic plan and mission. (See Appendix H.) While the goals of DegreePlus align with several key goals of the WCU Strategic Plan, there is particularly strong alignment with Goal 1.3: Ensure that all programs include cross-curricular, experiential, applied, and international/global awareness opportunities for all students; and Goal 2.1: Foster a student-centered campus culture that emphasizes academic excellence, personal growth, networking opportunities, and global and social awareness.

Goals and Outcomes

Goal 1: Increase students’ participation in extracurricular activities that promote transferable skill development.

- Outcome 1.1: Attendance at workplace relevant extracurricular activities by at-risk populations will increase.
- Outcome 1.2: Attendance at workplace relevant extracurricular activities by high-achieving and honors college students will increase.

Goal 2: Enhance students’ cultural responsiveness, leadership, professionalism, and/or teamwork skills.

- Outcome 2.1: Students will demonstrate cultural responsiveness by (a) demonstrating an awareness of key historical and current issues surrounding race, ethnicity, gender, social class, religion, sexual identity, ability, national origin, or other identities, (b) analyzing one’s own beliefs, traditions, norms, biases, and the differences/commonalities in relation to other’s, (c) practicing cultural sensitivity and respect when interacting with others, (d) engaging in unfamiliar cultural spaces and experiences, and/or (e) identifying resources and appropriate forms of advocacy to promote social justice and equity.
- Outcome 2.2: Students will demonstrate leadership by (a) demonstrating an understanding of leadership principles and behaviors of effective leaders, (b) utilizing leadership styles in diverse contexts, (c) applying knowledge of conflict resolution in difficult situations, (d) generating and accepting constructive feedback, and/or (e) defining clear and actionable goals.
- Outcome 2.3: Students will demonstrate professionalism by (a) applying appropriate communication methods to a variety of audiences, (b) recognizing the importance of appropriate dress and professional image, (c) demonstrating
ethical behavior in work-related contexts, (d) developing methods for building
effective work relationships, and/or (e) demonstrating an awareness of industry
specific culture and values.

- Outcome 2.4: Students will demonstrate teamwork by (a) demonstrating the
basics of team dynamics, (b) taking responsibility for one’s own role within a
team, (c) utilizing appropriate team communication skills, (d) treating others
with respect and value others’ contributions, and/or (e) contributing to the
movement of a team toward a common goal.

Assessment Matrix

In the assessment matrix below (Table 3), the assessment tools are associated
with the three levels of the DegreePlus program, which have been described previously in
the Student Experience section. The assessment tools are each linked to some or all
of the outcomes. Whether the measurement is direct (D) or indirect (I) and formative
(F) and/or summative (S), has been indicated.

Table 3: Assessment matrix.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Tool and Timeline</th>
<th>Student Learning Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1 Event Attendance Tracking (D)</td>
<td>1.1 1.2 2.1 2.2 2.3 2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review each semester</td>
<td>F/S F/S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 1 Event Descriptions (D) &amp;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 1 Event Participant Surveys (I)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review each semester</td>
<td>F F F F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2 Student Reflections (I) &amp;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of Level 2 Reflections (D)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review in alternating years</td>
<td>F F F F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3 Capstone Project Presentations (I) &amp;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of Level 3 Presentations (D)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review in alternating years</td>
<td>S S S S S</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The direct assessments in Levels 2 and 3 involve the use of skill-focused, develop-
mental rubrics to assess student progress and success. These rubrics are provided in
Appendix G. Since the professionalism skill is the pilot area for Fall 2017, the rubric
for professionalism has been the focus for the Fall 2016 Assessment Subcommittee,
and it is the most refined of all the skill rubrics. The other rubrics are provided for reference, but will likely undergo some additional development throughout the Spring 2017 semester. It’s worthy to note that no experience or activity will result in a student achieving every learning outcome for a particular skill. The DegreePlus expectation is for students to achieve at least two or three outcomes.

**Assessment Process**

A timeline for the assessment processes is provided in Tables 4 and 5. In the pilot, the assessment will focus on outcomes associated with Goal 1. Attendance at events and activities will be tracked and compared to baseline data that is being assembled during the Spring 2017 semester. Additionally, results of post-event surveys will be used to determine if students are able to discern the intended learning outcomes outlined in the event description. Finally, curriculum mapping will be done to investigate the balance of learning outcomes provided by the selected pilot events for professionalism. Toward the end of the Spring 2018 semester, some Level 2 reflections will be available, so an initial analysis of the direct and indirect measurements will be done.

**Table 4: Timeline for the assessment process during the pilot.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Assessment Step</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring/Summer 2017</td>
<td>Collect and/or create descriptions of events, including how they align with professionalism learning outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring/Summer 2017</td>
<td>Collect and evaluate baseline attendance data from records of previous events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer/Fall 2017 &amp;</td>
<td>Track attendance at DegreePlus events through card-swiping and aggregating in OrgSync</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2018</td>
<td>Deploy and collect post-event surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2018</td>
<td>Map intended learning outcomes from event descriptions to self-reported student learning from post-event surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2018</td>
<td>Evaluate the distribution of learning outcomes captured by events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2018</td>
<td>Evaluate Level 2 reflections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2018</td>
<td>Report findings of the pilot to stakeholders</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following the pilot, a more routine assessment plan will be put into place. (See
Table 5) Throughout the year, the Associate Director for DegreePlus will collect assessment results for Level 1 measurements. In alternating years, the Level 2 and Level 3 analysis will also be done. The Associate Director will prepare an annual report on the program’s progress and include recommendations for the upcoming year, such as adjustment of the operations of the program, development of new marketing strategies, enhancement of activity opportunities, altering of mentoring processes, and requests for resource allocations. The report will be submitted to the DegreePlus Advisory Committee, which will include representatives from program stakeholders. The Advisory Committee will provide strategic oversight and guidance to DegreePlus and will be responsible for selecting which recommendations to implement to ensure that DegreePlus is positioned to meet its strategic goals. At the conclusion of the committee’s review, the original report and the Advisory Committee’s evaluation and recommendations will be made broadly available to campus and employer stakeholders. Stakeholders will be encouraged to provide feedback at all steps of the review process.

Table 5: Timeline for a two-year assessment process after the pilot.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Assessment Step</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As new events are</td>
<td>Collect and/or create descriptions of events, including</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>created</td>
<td>how they align with skill area learning outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As events occur</td>
<td>Track attendance at DegreePlus events through card-swiping and aggregating in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OrgSync (or alternate event organization platform, as available)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As events occur</td>
<td>Deploy and collect post-event surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every spring</td>
<td>Map intended learning outcomes from event descriptions to self-reported student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>learning from post-event surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every spring</td>
<td>Evaluate the distribution of learning outcomes captured by events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2 - spring</td>
<td>Evaluate Level 3 presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3 - spring</td>
<td>Evaluate Level 2 reflections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every Summer</td>
<td>Report findings to stakeholders</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion

*DegreePlus* serves as an enhancement to the education of WCU students by encouraging them to be involved in activities that support the development of important transferable skills. This program complements the learning of cultural responsiveness, leadership, professionalism, and teamwork that the students receive in their classes by providing a structured framework to achieve these skills through extracurricular activities. At the first level, students will gain experience in these skills. In Level 2, students will receive mentoring to reflect and articulate those skills, and in Level 3, students will apply those skills in a capstone experience presented to their peers and mentors. This framework initially provides extrinsic rewards to entice participation, but ultimately, we anticipate students will become involved because of the intrinsic benefit of being better prepared for post-graduation success. In the focus groups we’ve worked with, students exhibit excitement about this program and are eager for it to begin. As an institution, we feel the anticipated return on the investment for this program is huge. Students will have a unique distinction that sets them apart from their graduating peers at other institutions, and WCU will grow its reputation as an outstanding university that values a comprehensive education. We are excited about the possibilities *DegreePlus* has in store, and we look forward to reporting on its full implementation in five years.
References


SUMMARY OF ELON EXPERIENCES

ELON EXPERIENCES VISUAL TRANSCRIPT

Elon University validates all information presented on a student’s Elon Experiential Transcript. Validation occurs within each program responsible for the experiences and is then maintained in a centralized system. Students do not personally enter any experiences onto their Elon Experiential Transcript. The Elon Experiential Transcript is an official document of Elon University. For more information about the Elon Experiential Transcript visit our site.

SUMMARY OF ELON EXPERIENCES

RESEARCH
6 TERMS

INTERNSHIP
400 HRS

SERVICE
180 HRS

GLOBAL EDUCATION
2 TERMS

LEADERSHIP
1 TERM

EXPERIENCE TIMELINE

2013

- HONORS RESEARCH (Spring)

2014

- ELONATHON (Spring)
- FOREIGN EXCHANGE (London)
- COMMUNITY SERVICE (Aquakation Fall)

2015

- AUSTRALIA NEW ZEALAND EXCHANGE (Fall)
- ENGL REPS (Spring)
- UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH CONFERENCE (Spring)
- CENTER FOR LEADERSHIP (Spring)
- GLEN ROVEN (Fall)

2016

- UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH CONFERENCE (Spring)
- KIDS WHO CODE BOOTCAMP (Spring)
- ALPHA PHIOMEGA (Fall)
- GLEN ROVEN (Fall)

STUDENT INFORMATION

NAME: JOHN S. DOE
DEGREE: B.S.C
MAJOR: APPLIED MATHEMATICS
COMPUTER SCIENCE
COMPLETE: 28TH OF NOVEMBER 2016

parchment
## Appendix C  Sample DegreePlus Events and Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Host</th>
<th>Cultural Responsiveness</th>
<th>Leadership</th>
<th>Professionalism</th>
<th>Teamwork</th>
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<td>Entourage</td>
<td>Admissions</td>
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<td>Career Panels</td>
<td>Center for Career and Professional Development</td>
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<td>Service Learning Activities</td>
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<td>Nomad Conference</td>
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<td>Literary Festival</td>
<td>College of Arts and Sciences</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Development Lecture Series</td>
<td>College of Arts and Sciences (MPA Program)</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<td>Banquet and Networking Night</td>
<td>College of Business</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Meet the Firms</td>
<td>College of Business</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitch Party</td>
<td>College of Business</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Dress for Success</td>
<td>College of Business</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Insights and Reflections Speakers</td>
<td>College of Business</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Enterprise Speaker Series</td>
<td>College of Business</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td>Fall Interview Day</td>
<td>College of Business</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<td>Leadership Conferences</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MacC Program Orientation</td>
<td>College of Business</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>London Cultural Exchange</td>
<td>College of Business</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Day in Washington DC</td>
<td>College of Education and Allied Professions</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rural Urban Exchange</td>
<td>College of Education and Allied Professions</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Networking Social</td>
<td>College of Fine and Performing Arts</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Controlled Chaos Film Festival</td>
<td>College of Fine and Performing Arts</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance Programs</td>
<td>College of Fine and Performing Arts</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theater Productions</td>
<td>College of Fine and Performing Arts</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Host</td>
<td>Cultural Responsiveness</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>Teamwork</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Fine Art Museum Exhibits</td>
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<td>Music Recitals</td>
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<td>Performances in Dance, Music, Theater</td>
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<td>Pride of the Mountains Marching Band</td>
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<td>Three Minute Thesis</td>
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<td>Graduate Research Symposium</td>
<td>Graduate School</td>
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<td>Graduate Student Association</td>
<td>Graduate School</td>
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<td>Greek 101</td>
<td>Greek Student Engagement and Development</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Center for Life Enrichment Scholar Events</td>
<td>Honors College</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Board Events</td>
<td>Honors College</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
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<td>Student Board Committee</td>
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<td>Ambassador Training</td>
<td>Honors College</td>
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<td>Mentor Program</td>
<td>Honors College</td>
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<td>CURE Conference</td>
<td>Honors College</td>
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<td>ICA Events</td>
<td>Intercultural Affairs</td>
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<td>Safe Zone Training</td>
<td>Intercultural Affairs</td>
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<td>International Coffee Hour</td>
<td>International Programs</td>
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<td>Movie Productions</td>
<td>Last Minute Productions</td>
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<td>MAPS Workshops</td>
<td>Mentoring and Persistence to Success</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
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<td>Card Signing</td>
<td>Military Services</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Organizations</td>
<td>Multiple Programs</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Volunteer/Service Activities</td>
<td>Multiple Programs</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Conferences</td>
<td>Multiple Programs</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Student Employment</td>
<td>Multiple Programs</td>
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<td>Peer Connections</td>
<td>Multicultural Student Programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>i-LEAD Speaker and Workshops Series</td>
<td>Office of Leadership and Student Involvement</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whee LEAD</td>
<td>Office of Leadership and Student Involvement</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
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## APPENDIX C  SAMPLE DEGREEPLUS EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Host</th>
<th>Cultural Responsiveness</th>
<th>Leadership</th>
<th>Professionalism</th>
<th>Teamwork</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cat Camp Leadership Explorations</td>
<td>Office of Leadership and Student Involvement</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>Disney Leadership Experience</td>
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<td>Freshman Leadership Institute</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Franklin Covey 7 Habits Trainings</td>
<td>Office of Leadership and Student Involvement</td>
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<td>International Leadership Experience Trip</td>
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<tr>
<td>Various Leadership Conferences</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sustainable Energy Initiative</td>
<td>Office of Sustainability</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Battle of the Plug</td>
<td>Office of Sustainability</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Eco Cats</td>
<td>Office of Sustainability</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earth and Wellness Celebration</td>
<td>Office of Sustainability/Campus Recreation and Wellness</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Next Step Bingo</td>
<td>Residence Life</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremes Week</td>
<td>Residence Life</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mo’ Money, Mo’ Problems</td>
<td>Residence Life</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>CORE Training</td>
<td>Student Government Association</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food for Thought</td>
<td>Student Government Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAT Fair</td>
<td>Office of Leadership and Student Involvement</td>
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</table>
Appendix D  Example Scenarios of the Student Experience

Below are two examples of how different students with different backgrounds and long-term goals might progress through DegreePlus. These scenarios are not intended to encompass all the possible pathways through DegreePlus, especially given that DegreePlus offers a great deal of flexibility and customization. However, these scenarios are based on feedback the QEP Implementation Committee received from student focus groups.

Scenario 1: The Ambitious Student

Suzanne is a new freshman entering WCU with 9 advanced placement (AP) credits. She has a high school GPA of 3.75/4.00 and was admitted to the Honors College at WCU. She has plans to go to law school when she graduates and is majoring in Business Administration and Law. She first heard about DegreePlus at an Open House in November. She was excited to hear that the program might help her develop skills that would help her with her law degree, and she was particularly interested in the focus on professional and leadership skills. Her mother suggested this might be a good reason to apply to WCU. Suzanne found more information about upcoming programming in her orientation packet and heard a presentation about DegreePlus at the Honors College luncheon during orientation.

Once she was on campus in the fall, Suzanne received some notifications about DegreePlus events through email, in her USI transitions course and on “tent” flyers in the dining hall. Since she was interested in professionalism and leadership, she started going to those events right away. In her first semester, she attended three leadership activities, and in the following spring, she attended a few more related to both leadership and professionalism. Some of the activities she participated in were sponsored by the Honors College, so it was easy for her to count them toward both her Honors Path and DegreePlus. As she registered for classes each semester and checked her balance on myWCU, she would frequently see her DegreePlus progress bar and be encouraged to continually participate.

By the end of the fall semester of her sophomore year, Suzanne had completed five activities in professionalism and was invited to DegreePlus Day. This was an opportunity for her to be rewarded for her efforts, celebrate the achievements she and her peers had made, reflect on her experiences, and be inspired to complete the next phase of the DegreePlus journey. DegreePlus Day was offered in the spring. She attended, received a nice leather-bound notebook, listened to a key-note speaker discuss “What Professionalism Really Looks Like,” and participated in a small-group session,
led by a faculty mentor, for herself and other students who had just completed their professionalism activities. She recognized some of the students who had been to some of the same events as her, and they had a great discussion about how their participation can help them achieve their career goals. That evening, she was able to go home and write a strong reflection statement. She submitted it to her mentor, and received positive feedback along with encouragement to continue attending events and write additional reflection statements on other skills as she completed the required 5 events in each category. Her mentor also told her about how to incorporate an experience of her choosing as a capstone experience for Level 3.

In Suzanne’s junior year, she completed her leadership skill activities, and since some activities also counted for teamwork, she was able to complete those as well. She submitted reflections in those skill areas. In the spring, she saw her goal was in sight, and started attending some cultural responsiveness activities. By the end of her junior year, she had completed activities and reflections in all four skill areas.

At the beginning of Suzanne’s senior year, she was enrolled in MGT 404 (Strategic Management) with Dr. Edward Wright. In this capstone course, Suzanne recognized many ties to her DegreePlus experiences and reflections. In particular, she recognized her ability to apply teamwork skills, and decided to use this class project as an example of how she had integrated teamwork into her life. She submitted an “intent to present” at DegreePlus Day in the spring. While there, she presented her project to her peers and mentors, focusing specifically on the incorporation of teamwork learning outcomes into her coursework. A mentor graded Suzanne’s presentation using a rubric and provided her with positive and constructive feedback. Suzanne also met many students at the reflection stage and offered them some support and encouragement, indicating that she felt her participation in DegreePlus has really strengthened her skills and preparation for post-graduation success.

Later in the semester, Suzanne was preparing for an interview at her top choice law school. She reflected on her Experiential Transcript, noting specific examples of experiences in which she was able to work with others in a team, take on a leadership role, and respond to a new situation that was outside of her comfort zone. She felt ready for her interview questions.

Finally, it was May of her senior year. Suzanne was accepted to her top choice law school. The only thing left to do was to walk across the commencement stage. She was wearing her DegreePlus graduation cords, her transcript and resume said “DegreePlus Participant,” and her parents couldn’t have been more proud. Suzanne was confident that her experience at WCU prepared her for her next step.
Scenario 2: The Less Ambitious Student

Brian struggled with school his entire life. Studies never came easy to him, and he lost interest in academics at an early age. However, in his junior year of high school, his English teacher told him she saw potential in his creative writing. His stories were not necessarily well written, but his ideas were imaginative, and he was encouraged to try a little harder in this area. His English teacher also informed him that if he wanted to go to college, he'd have to take school more seriously. Brian was inspired to try, and his grades steadily improved. He graduated with a GPA of 2.7/4.0, and was admitted into the Academic Success Program (ASP) at WCU as an English major with a Professional Writing concentration.

The ASP begins with a six-week summer program before the start of Brian’s freshman year. In his transition classes, Brian learned about DegreePlus, but dismissed it as “busy work.” He also received some email notifications about some summer activities that would count toward DegreePlus, but he ignored these. At the beginning of the fall semester, he went with a friend to the DegreePlus kick-off event. He swiped his CatCard when he arrived, and later that evening, he got an email saying he had participated in a DegreePlus professionalism activity. This continued to happen several times throughout the fall semester, as Brian was required to attend some DegreePlus activities as part of his ASP assignments.

In the middle of his first fall semester, Brian logged into myWCU to register for his spring classes, and he saw a DegreePlus progress bar showing he had completed 40% of the professionalism skill just by attending two events. Curious about how to move his bar forward, he clicked the link to learn more. He registered for DegreePlus, and invited his friend to tag along to an upcoming event, an Art Display at the campus Art Museum. Throughout his next few semesters, Brian continued with on-again/off-again commitment to the program, but was continually interested in cultural events.

One event that had a major impact on Brian’s career goals was attending the Literary Festival in the spring of his sophomore year. The following year, he decided to volunteer to help bring the festival to life. Now in his junior year, Brian had finally completed five activities in the cultural responsiveness category, and he was invited to attend DegreePlus Day. Curious about the rewards that were mentioned in the invitation, he decided to participate, and was pleasantly surprised to receive a leather-bound notebook as recognition for being involved. He enjoyed the small-group session led by a WCU staff mentor, and started to realize the significance of how his developing cultural responsiveness skills might help him in his creative writing. Rather than writing a traditional reflection after his workshop session, Brian opted to express his experience in a short story, which he submitted to his mentor for review and also as an assignment in one of his English courses.
Having completed Levels 1 and 2 in cultural responsiveness, Brian wondered if he should participate in the capstone component his mentor had told him about. Hesitantly, he posed this to his academic advisor, Pamela Duncan, who is also the director of the WCU Literary Festival. Of course, she was aware of his previous participation as a volunteer. Brian brought up the conversation he had had at lunch during the festival with author Stephanie Elizondo Griest, a writer of travel memoirs. Their conversation and her books about people and places far away and different from himself inspired Brian to create characters for his assignments in his Advanced Creative Writing class, ENGL 405. They agreed that this experience definitely demonstrated the integration of cultural responsiveness into Brian’s work. Ms. Duncan consulted with the Associate Director of DegreePlus and learned that an experience completed prior to the Level 2 reflection could be used as the Level 3 capstone experience. Ms. Duncan and the Associate Director of DegreePlus urged Brian to put together a poster presentation describing his work at the Literary Festival as a capstone experience for DegreePlus Day. Brian agreed, and in his senior year, he presented a powerful excerpt from his short story. His mentors and peers were impressed.

Brian graduated with a 3.2 GPA, and got a job writing a travel column for a small-town newspaper. He was grateful for his experiences in DegreePlus, and in hind-sight, wished he had taken it more seriously in the beginning. Participation in activities related to the other skill areas could’ve helped him to be an even more versatile employee. Because of his training through DegreePlus, he continued to seek out interesting opportunities in his post-graduate life and reflect on how those activities shape him as an individual.
Appendix E  Advertisement for the Associate Director of DegreePlus

As part of the decennial reaffirmation process, Western Carolina University (WCU) has developed a new Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) entitled DegreePlus. Briefly, the goals of DegreePlus are to increase student involvement in extracurricular activities that provide soft skills that will benefit students’ post-graduation. The focus skills are cultural responsiveness, leadership, professionalism and teamwork. An additional goal is to aid students in articulating their experiences and skills through reflections and an experiential transcript. More details about the program can be found at [http://DegreePlus.wcu.edu](http://DegreePlus.wcu.edu). We are seeking to hire a QEP Associate Director to implement this program beginning with a pilot phase in the 2017-2018 academic year. The position will be housed in the Center for Career and Professional Development (CCPD), which is under the Division of Undergraduate Studies in Academic Affairs. Pending financial approval, the associate director will have the opportunity to hire his/her own support team consisting of 2-3 additional personnel over the first three years of the program. During this time, the associate director will have the support of CCPD staff as well as an institutional QEP advisory committee composed of dedicated faculty and staff across campus. The salary range for this 12-month position is $45,000 - $52,000, and the anticipated start date is July 1, 2017. The position will be posted until filled. WCU is an equal opportunity employer.

Job responsibilities include

- Management of support staff for DegreePlus
- Management of the DegreePlus budget
- Marketing of DegreePlus to students, faculty, staff and external constituencies
- Point of contact for employer advisory board; students, staff and faculty that have questions about DegreePlus; administrators; SACSCOC; Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness; the Registrar’s Office; and other units on campus that participate in DegreePlus
- Training of faculty and staff that desire to host events or activities that support DegreePlus
- Management and coordination of events or activities that support DegreePlus
- Management of a software platform (OrgSync, or a similar product) that coordinates events, tracks student participation, and produces an experiential transcript
Management of student assessment, including reflection statements and capstone projects

Planning, organization and implementation of DegreePlus Day, the event at which students share their experiences and are mentored in the reflection process

Coordinator of mentor training with the Coulter Faculty Commons

Meeting with students for one-on-one or small group mentoring

Assessment of the DegreePlus program for internal purposes and SACSCOC

Required qualifications:

- Master’s Degree
- At least 2 years of experience working in higher education

Preferred qualifications:

- Experience in
  - Teaching
  - Work in student services (student affairs or a student services unit in academic affairs)
  - Event planning
  - Budget management
  - Staff management
  - Outcomes-based assessment

- Familiarity with OrgSync or similar event organization software platform

- Customer service oriented work ethic

- Interest in building a program from the ground up

- Passion for student development

- Understanding of student, faculty and staff relations
Appendix F  Budget

Please see the following page for the five-year budget summary.
DegreePlus proposed 5 yr budget - 11/29/2016

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<thead>
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<th>Duty or Justification</th>
<th>Year 1 (Start up)</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
<th>5 yr Total</th>
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<td>FY17</td>
<td>FY18</td>
<td>FY19</td>
<td>FY20</td>
<td>FY21</td>
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<td>QEP Personnel (Flexible)</td>
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<td>QEP Associate Director</td>
<td>Duties: Manage the software platform, act as a point of contact for the employer advisory board and liaison to faculty and staff, manage assessment (level 1-3 grading), meet with students 1-1 or in groups, manage their staff, manage the DP budget, collaborate with Office of Student Transitions and MAPS, organize committees, task forces, and training</td>
<td>52,000</td>
<td>52,000</td>
<td>52,000</td>
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<td>SHRA University Program Specialist</td>
<td>Starts year 2. Duties: Support assessment, manage technology (platform and associated devices and interfacing programs), monitor student participation, faculty and staff involvement, attendance at events, approval and tracking, organize DegreePlus Day.</td>
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<td>42,242</td>
<td>42,242</td>
<td>42,242</td>
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<td>SHRA Admin Associate</td>
<td>Starts year 3. Duties: Manage marketing, incentives, committees, task forces, graduate student and undergraduate assistants.</td>
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<td>Social Security</td>
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<td>State Retirement</td>
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<td>Marketing, Printing and Binding</td>
<td>Online marketing and printing of promotional/informational materials (signs, promotional materials, brochures, poster times, table tents)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Software Platform (Campus Labs)</td>
<td>OrgSync (Umbrella, Portals, API, SIS integration). This is roughly 20% of the annual OrgSync budget. Student Affairs pays the other 80%.</td>
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<td>Postage and mailing (letterhead, etc.)</td>
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<td>PawPrint Printing/Copying</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phones (Network &amp; Phone chargers)</td>
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<td>734</td>
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<td>Start Up Computers</td>
<td>2 Desktops with Monitor, 1 laptop (See quotes on Computer tab)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Start Up Office Furnishings</td>
<td>$3000-4000 for wood desk, $2000 modular - assumes 2 desks and chairs (may already have this)</td>
<td>2,650</td>
<td>2,650</td>
<td>2,650</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start Up Phones (2)</td>
<td>Phones range from $57-65 each</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Supplies</td>
<td>Estimate based on HHS departmental budgets</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration Costs</td>
<td>38,168</td>
<td>34,584</td>
<td>34,584</td>
<td>31,934</td>
<td>31,934</td>
<td>73,204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development for Staff and Faculty</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>22,500</td>
<td>22,500</td>
<td>22,500</td>
<td>97,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Speakers</td>
<td>Workshops and external speakers who can help faculty learn how skills are applied in workforce, workforce needs, etc.</td>
<td>7,500</td>
<td>7,500</td>
<td>7,500</td>
<td>7,500</td>
<td>7,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Training</td>
<td>Training and compensation for grading student reflections (approx $800/person per year; $300/mentor x 5 mentors in year 1, $4 increases in yr3)</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assoc. Dir Travel</td>
<td>This is a travel budget for the DegreePlus Associate Director and/or staff</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development Costs</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>22,500</td>
<td>22,500</td>
<td>22,500</td>
<td>97,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity/Event Costs</td>
<td>11,310</td>
<td>10,655</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>52,265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student travel money</td>
<td>This is an additional incentive for students to participate in events related to the 4 skill areas (e.g. speakers, trips to conferences, LEAD conference registration, visits with company leaders, field trips)</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Token/Gift/Cords</td>
<td>Prices, pinning ceremony, graduation cords, other material incentives (probably all externally funded)</td>
<td>1,310</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Card Readers</td>
<td>10 readers in year 1, replacement/repair costs in years 2 and 3</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree Plus Day</td>
<td>External speaker, marketing, event costs (waiting for Diedre to find out)</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity/Event Costs</td>
<td>11,310</td>
<td>10,655</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>52,265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL (excluding construction costs)</td>
<td>$123,091</td>
<td>$176,888</td>
<td>$226,617</td>
<td>$225,967</td>
<td>$224,267</td>
<td>$976,832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total less Personnel Costs</td>
<td>$44,478</td>
<td>$40,239</td>
<td>$40,239</td>
<td>$40,239</td>
<td>$40,239</td>
<td>$226,905</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Construction Costs
- Center for Career and PD expansion: Because potentially 3 new positions will be created and housed in the current CCPD, money is requested to expand CCPD space. Current configuration can permit one or two extra personnel. One office is available and some common-area workspace.
- Construction Costs: $300,000
Appendix G  Assessment Rubrics for the Four Skills of DegreePlus

The following four pages provide drafts of the assessment rubrics to be used for the evaluation of student reflections and presentations at DegreePlus Day. There are several areas the QEP Implementation Committee continues to work on in the development of these rubrics.
Cultural Responsiveness Rubric

Cultural Responsiveness is [... insert operational definition]. The Cultural Responsiveness student learning outcomes are: Students will (a) articulate an awareness of key historical and present issues in diversity, (b) analyze beliefs, traditions, norms, biases and understand how these relate to other's, (c) practice cultural sensitivity and respect, (d) engage in unfamiliar cultural spaces and experiences, and (e) identify resources and appropriate forms of advocacy to promote social justice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Performance Levels</th>
<th>Integration &amp; Application</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of Key Issues</td>
<td>Participates in events and experiences aimed at introducing cultural traditions past and present.</td>
<td>Recognizes and articulates important components of cultural traditions such as key historical and present issues surrounding race, ethnicity, gender, social class, religion, sexual identity, ability, national origin, or other identities. This includes an understanding of art, music, sports and heritage based traditions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyze own Beliefs</td>
<td>Participates in events and experiences aimed at giving participants the opportunity to understand the importance of beliefs, traditions, norms, biases and the differences or commonalities in relation to others and their own identity.</td>
<td>Recognizes and articulates an understanding of own beliefs, traditions, norms, biases and the differences or commonalities in relation to others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Cultural Sensitivity</td>
<td>Participates in events and experiences aimed at introducing the importance of cultural sensitivity and respect when interacting with others.</td>
<td>Recognizes and articulates how to act with cultural competence such as having coping strategies for navigating charged environments, being able to have courageous conversations, understanding context of situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage in Unfamiliar Experiences</td>
<td>Participates in events and experiences aimed at introducing participants to unfamiliar spaces and experiences.</td>
<td>Recognizes and articulates the value of openness to unfamiliar cultural spaces and experiences other than their own by respecting and exposing themselves to other environments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify Resources &amp; Forms of Advocacy</td>
<td>Participates in events and experiences aimed at introducing participants to issues of social justice, equity, and equality and other appropriate forms of advocacy.</td>
<td>Recognizes and articulates appropriate forms of advocacy to promote social justice, equity, and equality such as understanding levels of advocacy, being able to identify resources available, understanding one’s own place in society and how to utilize it in advocacy with others.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Western Carolina University (2016)
Leadership is [... insert operational definition]. The Leadership student learning outcomes are: Students will (a) demonstrate an understanding of leadership principles and behaviors of effective leaders, (b) utilize leadership styles in diverse contexts, (c) apply knowledge of conflict resolution in difficult situations, (d) generate and accept constructive feedback, and (e) define clear and actionable goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Experience &amp; Exposure</th>
<th>Performance Levels</th>
<th>Integration &amp; Application</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of Leadership Principles</td>
<td>Participates in events and experiences aimed at providing an opportunity to learn about leadership principles and behaviors of effective leaders.</td>
<td>Synthesizes experiences which have informed an understanding of leadership principles and behaviors, such as theories of leadership, leadership styles, and personality traits of leaders.</td>
<td>Demonstrates and applies principles and behaviors of effective leaders through intentional practice with leadership-oriented activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilize Leadership Styles</td>
<td>Participates in events and experiences aimed at providing an opportunity to learn about leadership styles.</td>
<td>Explains how to adapt leadership styles in a range of contexts such as identifying and describing aspects of leadership styles, such as the need to adapt leadership styles based on context and ethical principles in leadership decision making.</td>
<td>Ethically adapts leadership styles in a range of contexts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Resolution</td>
<td>Participates in events and experiences aimed at providing an opportunity to learn about conflict resolution.</td>
<td>Identifies and describes aspects of conflict resolution, such as analyzing difficult situations, considering alternative outcomes, and choosing appropriate resolutions.</td>
<td>Adapts and applies knowledge of conflict resolution by analyzing difficult situations, considering alternative outcomes, and choosing appropriate resolutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructive Feedback</td>
<td>Participates in events and experiences aimed at providing an opportunity to learn about generating and/or accepting constructive feedback.</td>
<td>Articulate the characteristics and process of generating and accepting constructive feedback such as timeliness, specificity, delivery, context, open-mindedness, and responsiveness.</td>
<td>Demonstrates an ability to accept and provide constructive feedback by being timely, specific, aware of the context, open-minded, and responsive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define Clear and Actionable Goals</td>
<td>Participates in events and experiences aimed at providing opportunity to learn about goal setting.</td>
<td>Identifies and provides examples of SMART goals such as specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-specific.</td>
<td>Develops clear and actionable goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-specific.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Western Carolina University (2016)
Professionalism Rubric

Professionalism is a mix of activities, affinities and dispositions, that includes exposure to and working with industry practitioners, experience of working in a team, and acquiring a range of technical skills. The Professionalism student learning outcomes are: Students will (a) apply appropriate communication methods to a variety of audiences, (b) recognize the importance of appropriate dress and professional image, (c) demonstrate ethical behavior in work-related contexts, (d) develop strategies for building effective work relationships, and (e) demonstrate an awareness of industry specific culture and values.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Performance Levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experience &amp; Exposure</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Methods</td>
<td>Participants in events and experiences aimed at demonstrating and presenting different elements of professional communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dress and Professional Image</td>
<td>Participants in events and experiences aimed at demonstrating and discussing professional dress and image.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical Behavior</td>
<td>Participants in events and experiences aimed at introducing approaches to accountable and ethical professional behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Effective Work Relationships</td>
<td>Participants in events and experiences aimed at providing examples and demonstrations of quality team dynamics and work relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry Specific Culture and Values</td>
<td>Participants in events and experiences aimed at exposure to relevant industries and their associated culture and values.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Reflection & Articulation**                 |                                                                                   |
| Communication Methods                        | Recognizes and articulates important components of effective communication in verbal, written, and/or technological forms. |
| Dress and Professional Image                 | Identifies and describes specific dress and image norms, such as appearance, hygiene, work image, personal brand, and conduct for the intended context. |
| Ethical Behavior                              | Identifies and articulates personal values and how they could relate to professional contexts. |
| Building Effective Work Relationships         | Identifies and describes at least one approach to building effective work relationships and/or generating quality team dynamics within a group. |
| Industry Specific Culture and Values          | Identifies and describes culture and values of a given industry. |

| **Integration & Application**                 |                                                                                   |
| Communication Methods                        | Effectively communicates ideas using verbal, written, and/or technological forms. |
| Dress and Professional Image                 | Perform personal image and demonstrate dress appropriate to the intended context. |
| Ethical Behavior                              | Synthesize the relationship between personal values and professional ethics.       |
| Building Effective Work Relationships         | Evaluates approaches to building effective work relationships.                    |
| Industry Specific Culture and Values          | Compares and contrasts culture and values of a given industry in relation to other cultural and professional contexts. |
Teamwork Rubric

Teamwork is [... insert operational definition]. The Teamwork student learning outcomes are: Students will (a) demonstrate and apply the basics of team dynamics, (b) take responsibility for one’s own role within a team, (c) utilize appropriate team communication skills, and (d) treat others with respect and value others’ contributions, and (e) contribute to the movement of a team toward a common goal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Experience &amp; Exposure</th>
<th>Reflection &amp; Articulation</th>
<th>Integration &amp; Application</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basics of Team Dynamics</td>
<td>Participates in events and experiences aimed at demonstrating and presenting different elements of team dynamics.</td>
<td>Recognizes and articulates important components of team dynamics, such as environment, nature of work, personalities of team members, interpersonal relationships, and interconnectedness.</td>
<td>Evaluates the application of team dynamics that contribute to or hinder the work of a specific team, such as environment, nature of work, personalities of team members, interpersonal relationships, and interconnectedness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take Responsibility for Own Role</td>
<td>Participates in events and experiences that demonstrate and model responsible participation on a team.</td>
<td>Describes the characteristics of a responsible team member, such as understanding one’s role, not taking things personally, managing oneself, and understanding contribution.</td>
<td>Dependably takes responsibility by performing own role effectively, including carrying out all tasks, attending all meetings, and participating fully and enthusiastically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Communication Skills</td>
<td>Participates in events and experiences that introduce examples of team communication skills.</td>
<td>Identifies and articulates components of effective team communication, such as compromise, flexibility, negotiation, active listening, and transparency.</td>
<td>Models effective team communication by encouraging participation, synthesizing the contributions of others, and inviting them to engage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treat and Value Others with Respect</td>
<td>Participates in events and experiences that introduce the role of respect and value for others and its impact on a constructive team climate.</td>
<td>Recognizes and articulates elements of a constructive team climate, such as, adjusting behavior when working in a team, allowing others a voice, respecting others’ opinions, and giving credit.</td>
<td>Supports a constructive team climate by activities such as adjusting behavior when working in a team, allowing others a voice, respecting others’ opinions, and giving credit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement Toward a Common Goal</td>
<td>Participates in events and experiences that demonstrate and present different elements of reaching a goal or progress towards a goal.</td>
<td>Identifies and articulates methods of engaging team members to facilitate their methods of movement toward a common goal, such as collaboration, questioning with the common goal in mind, and problem-solving.</td>
<td>Engages in practices that contribute to movement towards a common goal, such as collecting and presenting to the team a great deal of relevant information, and offering well-developed and clearly expressed ideas directly related to the group’s purpose.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix H  Alignment of DegreePlus Goals with WCU Strategic Plan and Mission

The management of *DegreePlus* will reside in the Center for Career and Professional Development (CCPD), which is in the Division of Undergraduate Studies in Academic Affairs. The two goals of *DegreePlus* are well-aligned with the mission of the University. Below is a mapping of how the *DegreePlus* goals support the goals of the nested units in which it will be housed.

**DegreePlus Goal 1: Increase students’ participation in extracurricular activities that promote transferable skill development.**

**Supports CCPD Goal** Provide opportunities for students to experience and learn about career options.

**Supports CCPD Mission & Vision** Supporting students in the development of self-awareness; identification and integration of career and academic goals with real-world experiences.

**Supports Academic Affairs Mission** Facilitating the development of education/career objectives in students.

**Supports University Strategic Direction 2** Enrich the total student experience.

- **Strategic Goal 2.1** Foster a student-centered campus culture that emphasizes academic excellence, personal growth, networking opportunities, and global and social awareness.

- **Strategic Initiative 2.1.5** Create leadership and experiential opportunities at the local, regional, national, and international levels, ensuring that all students participate in such opportunities and can document how these learning experiences are interconnected with their program of study.

**Supports University Strategic Direction 3** Enhance external partnerships.

- **Strategic Goal 3.1** Strengthen relationships and communication between the University and its external partners.

**Supports WCU Mission** Engagement through on campus, off campus, on-line and international experiences.
DegreePlus Goal 2: Enhance students’ cultural responsiveness, leadership, professionalism, and teamwork skills.

Supports CCPD Goal Encourage skill acquisition and development of identified key career competencies.

Supports CCPD Mission & Vision Expansion and articulation of professional competencies to succeed in post-graduate experiences.

Supports Academic Affairs Mission Fostering social and personal development.

Supports University Strategic Direction 2 Enrich the total student experience.

Strategic Goal 2.1 Foster a student-centered campus culture that emphasizes academic excellence, personal growth, networking opportunities, and global and social awareness.

Strategic Initiative 2.1.4 Develop and/or formalize mentoring program(s) that help students develop a sense of personal, intellectual, and professional identity.

Strategic Initiative 2.1.5 Create leadership and experiential opportunities at the local, regional, national, and international levels, ensuring that all students participate in such opportunities and can document how these learning experiences are interconnected with their program of study.

Supports WCU Mission Improve individual lives.