CREATING A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CERTIFICATE PROGRAM TO
ENHANCE COLLEGE STUDENT CAREER READINESS

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ABSTRACT

Title: Creating a Professional Development Certificate Program to Enhance College Student Career Readiness

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The purpose of this creative project was to create a Professional Development Certificate Program for the Ball State University Career Center. This program also has the potential to be implemented into other career centers at institutions of higher education. The Career Center at Ball State University recently made a specific goal to focus more on the retention of sophomores. This program will help the Career Center accomplish that goal. The program is intended to provide more engagement, focus, and understanding of professional development areas for sophomores and juniors. This is done through structured requirements to complete a variety of professional development activities and to compile those experiences into a portfolio.

Research has shown that sophomores need encouragement and challenge to become more involved and dedicated to the college experience. The Professional Development Certificate Program will engage these students and motivate them to focus on their future goals. In addition, juniors will receive an early start on gaining the knowledge, skills, and experience to help in their job or graduate school search for after graduation.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TITLE PAGE</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE OF CONTENTS</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER ONE</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of Purpose</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of Study</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Limitations</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitions for the Study</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of the Paper</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of the Project</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Role of Career Centers in Higher Education</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Background</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Role</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services and Programs Offered at a Career Center</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals Development Certificate Program</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of Purpose</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design of Project</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER FOUR: CREATING A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CERTIFICATE

PROGRAM ........................................................................................................27
  Project Summary ...........................................................................................27
  Marketing Flyer ..............................................................................................29
  Program Details Packet ..................................................................................30
    Program Introduction Letter .........................................................................30
    Program Requirements ..................................................................................31
  Enrollment Form .............................................................................................32
  Attendance Sheet for Monthly Meetings .........................................................33
  Credit Recordkeeping .....................................................................................34
  Timeline and Plans for Monthly Meetings ......................................................35
  Certificate of Professional Development .......................................................39

REFERENCES ....................................................................................................40

APPENDIX A: PORTFOLIO EXPLANATION AND FEEDBACK FORM ..............45
APPENDIX B: NETWORKING EXERCISE ..........................................................47
APPENDIX C: SUPERVISORY PREFERENCES EXERCISE ...............................49
APPENDIX D: ETHICAL DILEMMAS EXERCISE ..............................................51
APPENDIX E: CONFLICT RESOLUTION EXERCISE .....................................55
APPENDIX F: MOCK INTERVIEW EXERCISE ................................................57
APPENDIX G: HEALTHY WORK ENVIRONMENTS EXERCISE ......................59
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Career centers have incorporated student learning and development since the 1950s and early 1960s (Kroll & Rentz, 1988). This can be seen in today’s typical career center through the role of career advisors (Rayman, 1996; Reardon, 1996). It has been shown that students benefit in career-decision making and development through the help of advisors (Bullock-Yowell, Peterson, Reardon, Leierer, & Reed, 2011; Foltz & Luzzo, 1998; Hettich & Helkowski, 2005; Luzzo & Taylor, 1994; Maples & Luzzo, 2005). Career advisors use programming as a way to provide students with resources and information (Figler, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c; Goh & Lee, 2003; Herr, Rayman, & Garis, 1993; Johnson & Eckel, 1998; Rayman, 1993; Smith, 1998). Programs have primarily focused on freshmen and seniors in college (Jordan & Blevins, 2009; Lawhon, 1998). The lack of attention on sophomores and juniors has become an issue within higher education and should be addressed (Jordan & Blevins, 2009). Developing a Professional Development Certificate Program (PDCP) is one way to address this issue.

The PDCP was developed within the context of Ball State University’s Career Center. Within the PDCP, sophomores and juniors in college participate in a variety of career development activities and workshops. To complete the program, students will need to meet requirements set forth in the program. Students will meet these requirements by attending programs, fulfilling internships, conducting
informational interviews, attending conferences, completing immersive learning projects, obtaining employment, and many of other career development activities. Once the student meets all requirements, he or she will then receive a certificate of professional development. A member of the professional staff within the Ball State University Career Center will oversee this program. A plan containing the structure and guidelines for the PDCP will be developed within this creative project.

**Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this creative project was to develop a Professional Development Certificate Program (PDCP) within the Ball State University Career Center, which will focus on supporting sophomores and juniors in their professional development and collegiate experience. The goal is to provide sophomores with engagement, focus, and knowledge of professional development and allow juniors to receive an earlier start in preparing for senior year and life after graduation.

**Significance of Study**

The Ball State University Career Center is currently making second-year students a priority of the office in order to battle against the sophomore slump, increase retention, and enhance student success. The PDCP will provide the Ball State Career Center with a program that will increase sophomore engagement and success, and aid in motivation for the junior year when students prepare for life after graduation. Additionally, it is important to understand the need for more focus on sophomores and juniors is widespread across the United States. The PDCP will be a program capable of making valuable impact at all different types of institutions of higher education. The design of
this program will be one that is easily modified to the specific needs of each individual career center.

**Scope and Limitations**

The PDCP was designed to encourage sophomores and juniors to focus on their own professional development. In order to reward students for their work and development, staff at the Career Center will need to undertake the task of providing structure, evaluating student participation, and recording credit for the program. There will need to be a cap of 20 students participating in the PDCP because of staffing limitations. As the program grows, the institutions may consider involving Graduate Assistants to help advise the program. It will also require yearly marketing to ensure students are aware of it early on in their college experience. These changes may lead to slight modifications to the current work assignments in the office. In addition, the university may restrict the way this program is structured. For example, the program could be set up as a course for academic credit. However, if the university does not allow for this, students would simply choose to participate in it as an extracurricular activity. There may also be limitations to the final certificate offered by the program depending on what the university will allow. For instance, the certificate could be recorded on a student’s transcript, but if the university does not permit it, the certificate may be included on the student’s resume and/or portfolio. These limitations will vary from institution to institution.
Definitions for the Study

1. Professional Development Certificate Program (PDCP): A program offered through the career center of a university, which focuses on the professional development of sophomores and juniors in college.

2. Certificate of Professional Development: A certificate the student receives he or she has reached the required amount of career development points.

Organization of the Paper

The organization of this creative project consists of four chapters. The second chapter includes a literature review of the historical background of career centers, the current role of career centers, and the research supporting the need for a PDCP. The third chapter explains the methodology used in this creative project. The fourth chapter describes the application of a PDCP within the Ball State University Career Center.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

Summary of the Project

Career centers have been made available to students since the late 1800s (Wrenn, 1951). During the 1950s and 1960s, programming and a focus on student development became main components for university career centers (Bishop, 1966; Kroll & Rentz, 1988). However, programming for sophomores and juniors have tended to take a back seat to the concentrated programs geared toward freshmen and seniors (Jordan & Blevins, 2009). This has led to sophomores, in particular, lacking in interest, involvement, and performance in college (Gahagan & Hunter, 2006; Gump, 2007). A Professional Development Certificate Program is one program idea that would encourage sophomores to become more interested in their own individual development in college and allow juniors effective preparation for their job or graduate school search during their senior year.

The Role of Career Centers in Higher Education

Historical Background

The idea of career-related services has existed since the beginnings of higher education (Herr et al., 1993). In the early years, the responsibility of career services was on the professors who chose to mentor students. When it came time for a
student to graduate, the professor would contact professional friends to secure employment for the student. As the years progressed, it became a growing role for the entire university to offer centralized career services for students. This allowed all students to receive career-related help and did not limit the resources to only those students who were privileged to have a professor as a mentor. Oxford University’s Committee on Appointments, created in England in 1899, was the first version of a centralized career services office on a college campus (Wrenn, 1951). Yale University established the first office in the United States in 1919 (Teal & Herrick, 1962). Career services offices quickly emerged on college campuses across the United States and were viewed in a business-like manner to provide students with vocational opportunities.

Donald E. Super established several innovative concepts related to career development (Bolles, 2007). These ideas were first published in 1953.

Vocational choice is not an event but a process; one’s choice of vocation is a way of implementing a self-concept; vocational maturity, or career maturity, can be defined in terms of five life stages: growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline; career crises are developmental stages, ill handled.

Career transitions are developmental stages, well handled. (p. 59)

The influence of these career development concepts can be seen within higher education. During the 1950s and early 1960s, a trend took place in which the career counseling services, from the counseling center on a campus, were put into the career placement office (Kroll & Rentz, 1988). These offices became widely known as career development and placement offices and began to take a more holistic approach to career services for students (Bishop, 1966). Career development started to incorporate student
learning, major and career exploration, skills development, and planning for a career. In addition, during the 1990s, the “career coach” became more popular for career services (Bolles, 2007, p. 78). A career coach advises students with career-related issues that do not involve as much psychological distress for the student. For more complex problems, students are referred to the counseling center for a deeper look at career-related issues. These offices began to resemble the career centers of today in higher education.

**Current Role**

“The type of assistance being rendered to most career center customers (clients) is what I would call career advising, that is, brief immediate assistance provided by paraprofessional staff with an emphasis on information giving and referral” (Rayman, 1996, p. 286). This definition of career advising shows the role of professionals within a career center as being a resource for students to gain information and assistance as they go through the process of learning about career choices and decision-making. This is also shown in the following definition. “Career advisors are available to provide assistance at any point in the process, from locating information resources to processing the results of learning activities” (Reardon, 1996, p. 281).

Taking a closer look at the career decision-making process, career advisors help students handle many different issues. Career decision-making self-efficacy (CDMSE) refers to the confidence a person has to effectively accomplish tasks and overcome obstacles involved in deciding on a career choice (Maples & Luzzo, 2005). It was found that undergraduates who accept advising from career counselors have a significant improvement in their CDMSE (Luzzo & Taylor, 1994). Foltz and Luzzo (1998) found that the CDMSE of nontraditional college students increases when they attend “a career
guidance workshop that incorporated anxiety reduction, verbal persuasion, exposure to role models, and discussion of personal career-related accomplishments” (p. 275). In addition, it was shown that when negative thoughts toward career decisions are confronted in a positive manner, career indecision lessens (Bullock-Yowell et al., 2011). The professionals within a career center are available to help a student increase his or her confidence and lessen anxiety regarding career decisions (Maples & Luzzo, 2005). By advising the student directly about career-related issues, the student is receiving the help needed to successfully overcome career indecision and make confident career choices (Bullock-Yowell et al., 2011). All of these findings help explain the modern role of a career center.

Hettich and Helkowski (2005) stated that transitions are a part of life and have been present throughout all of history. They discussed how there should be preparation involved with the transition from college into the workplace.

View graduation as the ceremonial conclusion of the ending phase, not the ending itself. Graduation is the point of physical departure from yours institution with diploma in hand and the inspiring words of the commencement speakers mostly forgotten. We want you to begin your ending much sooner. Our primary message is this: When you carefully plan and construct your remaining academic terms and activities as essential components of your ending phase, the neutral zone and new beginning will likely be productive and satisfying. (p. 3)

Another role of the professionals within a career center is to help with the preparation for the transition from college into the workplace. They do this by offering a variety of career-related services and programs to a diverse group of students and alumni.
Services and Programs Offered at a Career Center

During the 1990s, programs in a career center diminished because Generation X students did not perceive a need for career services (Murray, 2002).

The route to success begins with having the curiosity to seek out new things, the independence to go where others may never go, the mental tenacity to stay focused, the wisdom to take advantage of any resources that are available to you, and the humility to recognize that you still have much to learn to achieve your goals. Isn't it time you invested in yourself by getting involved with your Career Center? Run, don't walk, to your Career Center today. (Parker, 1995, para 16)

Parker also said, “Not using the Career Services Center is like sitting at a table starving to death with a full plate of food in front of you” (para 6).

This lack of enthusiasm shown in the 1990s has rebounded into widespread use of career center programs on a college campus by the new generation called Millennials (Murray, 2002). Career centers have had to reenergize and update their programs and services for this new generation and are currently offering a variety of services and programs to a diverse population of students. These include workshops on career-related topics, experiential learning opportunities, self-assessment, alumni networking, employer relations, mock interviewing, career advising, and availability of lab resources (Figler, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c; Goh & Lee, 2003; Herr et al., 1993; Johnson & Eckel, 1998; Rayman, 1993; Smith, 1998). Specialty programs for specific populations of students are also taken into consideration at a career center (Buyarski, 2009; Jordan & Blevins, 2009; Lawhon, 1998; Madaus, 2006; Nott & Zafft, 2006; O’Herrin, 2011). One career center
may not offer every single program and service, but all of these programs can be found in varying career centers across the United States.

Goh and Lee (2003) found that career centers offer a variety of workshops to students. Some workshops are aimed toward freshmen with an emphasis on career or major exploration and self-assessment. Other programs are geared toward students in their sophomore and junior years highlighting the importance of gaining information from work experience and professionals in the field. Still more workshops are offered to students, especially seniors, who are preparing to enter the workforce. These programs educate students on resume writing, networking, job searching and interviewing. Goh and Lee gave examples of specific workshop topics.

Choosing a Major; Job Search Strategies; Planning a Successful Career; Graduate School Opportunities; Changing Careers; Mastering the MBA Marketplace; Internet Job Search; Case Interviewing Techniques; How To Work a Room; Resume Writing and Cover Letters; Networking; Etiquette Dinner Workshop; Offers and Negotiation; and Interviewing Techniques. (p. 88)

Other topics that have been identified include internships, summer jobs, on-campus interviewing, transitioning from college to the workforce, stress management, exploring the links between majors and careers, and time management (Herr et al., 1993). These are all frequently offered programs at university career centers across the United States.

Self-assessments, also known as career assessments, are administered within many career centers on a university campus (Figler, 2007a; Goh & Lee, 2003). Goh and Lee (2003) found common career assessments within higher education to include the Strong Interest Inventory, the Myers Briggs Type Indicator, Holland’s Self-Directed
Search, and the Campbell Interest and Skills Survey. These assessments measure a person’s abilities, interests, values, and other personal qualities in order to try and find the career fit for an individual (Figler, 2007a). Figler discussed that career advisors need to be cautious when assisting students with self-assessments. These assessments should not be used as an end to the career search; meaning students must not be limited to what their self-assessments show. A student’s knowledge of his or her future career path should include that the path will evolve each year, he or she will gain knowledge and skills, and career choice occurs throughout a person’s life. Therefore, career advisors should avoid overemphasizing the initial career choice because it can be debilitating to a students view of his or her future career path. Many professionals within a career center will use these self-assessments as a tool to help students understand which careers might match their personality best, however they must pair this with education about the evolving career path and individual career choice.

Experiential learning is another opportunity promoted by the career center because student learning is encouraged (Smith, 1998). Experiential learning includes various types of educational work experiences. Students report that internships are valuable because they are able to put what they learned in their classes into practice. Community service is also an avenue for experiential learning because it involves partnering with businesses in the surrounding community to complete a project as a team. This type of project also provides students with the practical experience of dealing with ethical issues, social responsibility, interpersonal relations, and effective communication. In addition, community service can also be done abroad. For example, Goshen College, a religiously-affiliated institution, maintains relationships with communities abroad and
sends students there to work every semester. Student employment is also offered as an experiential learning opportunity on college campuses for students to gain experience as an employee (Rayman, 1993). Professionals at a career center help students gain the resources needed to obtain experiential learning opportunities.

Career centers also provide students with connections to alumni. This network of alumni serves as mentors by helping to guide students with specific career interests (Goh & Lee, 2003; Johnson & Eckel, 1998). Informational interviews, job shadowing, and networking opportunities are also offered through alumni connections (Goh & Lee, 2003). Alumni dedicate their time and effort to being available as speakers and panelists for career-related workshops as well. Networking with alumni through the career center is a valuable opportunity for students to gain knowledge and job connections.

Taking advantage of opportunities through employer relations is another avenue for students to gain job connections at the career center. Professionals at a career center build and maintain relationships with employers (Goh & Lee, 2003; Herr et al., 1993). These employers participate in career fairs and conduct interviews on campus. This provides students with opportunities to network and obtain internships and jobs. As part of the interviews, employers are asked to fill out evaluation forms, which provide the career center with strengths and weaknesses seen in students (Goh & Lee, 2003). This information can then be used to enhance curriculum effectiveness, so students may be more prepared for future careers.

Goh and Lee (2003) also identified mock interviewing as a service provided by many career centers. This service offers students an opportunity to have their interviewing skills critiqued by professionals. In addition, the mock interview can be
taped for the student’s self-review. This allows the student to acknowledge and modify any negative interviewing habits and enhance his or her skills.

In addition, individual career advising sessions are available through career centers (Figler, 2007a; Goh & Lee, 2003). Figler (2007b) stated that career counseling incorporates themes including asking the client “1. What do you want to do? 2. What is stopping you from doing it? and 3. What are you doing about it?” (p. 106). These questions guide students to resolving career-related issues. Individual career advising sessions are approximately one hour long and the time is used to help a student talk through and find answers to his or her questions (Figler, 2007c). The student is then expected to use the knowledge and insight gained from the session to obtain information necessary to successfully resolve the career-related issue. For example, if a student comes in for a session with questions concerning an internship search. The career advisor will guide them through deciding on a few interest areas for an internship. He or she will then recommend some resources to the student. The student will use the resources to start the internship search outside of the advising appointment. Career advising appointments are an effective way to introduce students to the informational resources available at a career center.

A resource lab can be found at many career centers (Goff & Lee, 2003; Herr et al., 1993). The resources at a lab should be relevant to the mission and services of that specific career center (Herr et al., 1993). For instance, a career center that is decentralized within the science department should provide information focused on that specific area of study. A resource lab should provide books, website links, handouts, computer programs, directories, related to career areas, employment, salary, career-
planning, job search, minorities and careers, experiential learning, graduate and professional schools, employers, and geographic influences.

Professionals at a university’s career center should also take special consideration for specific groups on campus. This includes, but is not limited to, alumni, the parents of students, student veterans, minority students, non-traditional students, undecided students, college athletes, transfer students, graduate students, and freshmen through seniors. Savickas (2003) stated that career counselors should “display multicultural competence and promote social justice” (p. 88). By gaining a working knowledge of various student groups on campus and incorporating that understanding into specialized programs, career centers can advocate for and support a diverse group of students. For instance, O’Herrin (2011) found that student affairs offices should provide an orientation to resources on campus for student veterans. In a career center, this could be an introduction program to the lab and online resources that would most benefit veterans transitioning back into higher education. Another example can be seen in supporting students with disabilities who have difficulty with self-understanding, knowledge about ones disability, and how the disability relates to the job search (Madaus, 2006). Gaining experiential learning opportunities is also an area of struggle for students with disabilities (Nott & Zafft, 2006). Madaus (2006) discussed how professionals within a career center offer specific guidance, support, resources, programs, and information about self-understanding, experiential learning, and the job search to students with disabilities. Taking these specific groups into consideration at a career center is an important step in multicultural competence and being viewed as a supportive resource to all students on campus.
Another specific student population that a career center should take into consideration is students in their midyears of college. Sophomores and juniors, compared to freshmen and seniors, do not have as many programs offered specially for them (Jordan & Blevins, 2009). Specific programs geared toward sophomores and juniors are a necessity. A program called Professional Development Certificate Program is one way to help develop this specific student population.

**Professional Development Certificate Program**

Research on Professional Development Certificate Programs (PDCP) is scarce, but the need for this type of program is seen in the literature. Jordan and Blevins (2009) noted that freshmen students have been researched for a number of years. Programs geared toward seniors are common in a career center and can include job shadowing, graduate school orientation, mentoring, and programs for graduate school or job searches (Lawhon, 1998). The lack of focus on sophomores and juniors has become an issue that needs to be resolved (Jordan & Blevins, 2009). The term sophomore slump has been used to show how sophomores in college “lack motivation, feel disconnected, and flounder academically” (Gahagan & Hunter, 2006, p. 18) and have “decreasing interest, declining grades, increasing absences, and ultimately, dropping out altogether” (Gump, 2007, p. 111). Few colleges have specific programs for sophomores (Jordan & Blevins, 2009). It is important to keep these students connected to the college, which can be done through specific career center programs. “This can be initiated through a sophomore trip or dinner, having sophomore officers on a leadership council, creating publications specific to sophomores, or having peer mentors for second-year students” (p. 251). There are a number of ways to get sophomores involved. A career center can help by offering a
PDCD that would incorporate a variety of opportunities to keep sophomores interested and engaged in college. This can also be offered to juniors in order to further develop their professionalism and help them become better prepared for their senior year and transition to graduate school or employment.

Life after college is full of transitions and students need to be prepared (Hettich & Helkowski, 2005). Students need to gain an understanding and working knowledge of what to expect after graduation. They should understand themselves and what motivates them to work hard, the different types of relationships they will develop at work, home, and within the community, being passionate about your work, and being willing to grow and transform. Arndt and Coleman (2008) also noted that students need to understand life skills such as finances, credit, insurance, emergency planning, retirement plans, paying off debt, setting goals, hard work, getting a raise, making good impressions, and networking. A PDCP could incorporate various workshops and experiential learning opportunities to educate students on these topics.

Additionally, the need for a PDCP can be seen in the research reports of graduating seniors (National Associations of Colleges and Employers, 2010, 2011). Nineteen majors were investigated in the Class of 2011 Student Survey. Seven of those majors were found to have more than 25% of students reporting they did not know what their plans were for after graduation (National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2011). A PDCP could help lower the percentage of undecided graduates because it would help direct their attention to professional development and career decisions early on in their college experience. Students would dedicate specific time to thinking through their career choices, so they have a better understanding of their career path before
graduation. The National Association of Colleges and Employers also found that the majority of students in the class of 2011 were on social networking sites, but did not use them for job searchers and do not approve of employers using them to look at applicants. Educating students on the importance of using social media appropriately and how to effectively incorporate it into their job search could be offered within the PDCP. Also, in the class of 2010 student survey, The National Association of Colleges and Employers (2010) found that students who participated in internships and other experiential learning opportunities had a greater likelihood of receiving job offers and higher salaries compared to students who did not have these experiences. Experiential learning is yet another opportunity students could receive through a PDCP, which would enhance their skills and capability of obtaining employment after graduation.

**Summary**

Starting as strictly placement centers, university career centers helped place students into jobs after graduation (Herr et al., 1993). Over time, the career center evolved to incorporate a more holistic approach to career decisions and began offering workshops, advising, and other services to help students develop (Bishop, 1966; Bolles, 2007; Kroll & Rentz, 1988). In the current day, many different services and programs are offered at career centers across the United States. These include, but are not limited to career-related workshops, experiential learning opportunities, self-assessments, alumni networking, employer relations, mock interviews, advising, lab resources, and specialized programming for specific student populations on campus. Looking closer at these specialty programs for student populations, there is a lack of programming found for sophomores in college (Jordan & Blevins, 2009). This has led to lower interest, grades,
involvement, and retention rate for sophomores (Gahagan & Hunter, 2006; Gump, 2007). Few second-year specific programs are offered to help combat this sophomore slump phenomenon (Jordan & Blevins, 2009). A PDCP is being recommended as a way to get sophomores more involved in the career planning and to continue preparing juniors for life after graduation. Based on the National Association of Colleges and Employers (2010, 2011) research about students and what to expect after graduation, it has been inferred that this program is needed within a career center to help students become better prepared for life after graduation.

The benefits of a PDCP are valuable in assisting students in their development and individual career success. Offering this type of program to students, starting in the sophomore year, can help students focus on their career choices and understand the importance of professional development early on in the college experience. This will enable a student to be better prepared for life after graduation, whether that is graduate school or employment.
CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this creative project was to develop a Professional Development Certificate Program (PDCP) within the Ball State University Career Center, which will focus on supporting sophomores and juniors in their professional development and collegiate experience. The goal is to provide sophomores with engagement, focus, and knowledge of professional development and allow juniors to receive an earlier start in preparing for senior year and life after graduation.

Methodology

The first step to developing the PDCP involved gathering preliminary research based on the existing literature on the historical background of career centers, the current role of career centers, and support for the need for a PDCP. This research was used in developing the significance of this project. Next, institutions of higher education were investigated for successful sophomore-year programming, paying special attention to those resembling a PDCP. These schools were found from online searches and examples of programs found in the existing literature. After identifying potential schools with successful sophomore-year programs, a thorough examination of school websites followed to identify the details of each program. Once programs at specific schools were noted, contact was made with a program coordinator to initiate an interview. Interviews
consisted of information regarding the benefits and challenges of the program for students and staff, the role of staff members, procedural guidelines for the students, and the structure of the program. The final step in developing the PDCP was a meeting with professional staff at the Ball State University Career Center to gain insight to how the program would fit into the office and the campus.

**Design of Project**

The Professional Development Certificate Program was designed to fulfill particular needs of college students and the Ball State University Career Center. Research shows sophomores lack interest and involvement in college, which corresponds with lower grades and retention rates (Gahagan & Hunter, 2006; Jordan & Blevins, 2009). This program will engage sophomores by educating them on the importance of professional development and an early start on career planning. The options of activities available to these students will keep them interested in their collegiate experience and future career. Juniors will also benefit greatly from this program because they will have the support, opportunity, and encouragement to be proactive in their search for jobs and/or graduate school after graduation. Juniors will be able to start early on these processes, instead of waiting until their senior year. In addition, students who participate in this program will gain valuable experiential learning, which will help them in life after graduation. The Ball State Career Center will also benefit from this program because it will help advance the office in the goal to make sophomores a priority.

Students will sign up for the PDCP through the Ball State Career Center. An Assistant Director will be the advisor of this program. Students will meet as a group with the advisor monthly. These meetings will involve a discussion of what they have learned
from the various programs and activities they have participated in, a brief career
development lesson from the advisor, and a group exercise or social focus to encourage
the building of relationships and support within the group. This will provide the students
with an opportunity to interact with and learn from each other, gather ideas for future
professional development opportunities, and build rapport as a group and with a career
advisor.

Students will be expected to participate in each monthly meeting to ensure they
are staying involved and focused on learning. Because this will be a voluntary
extracurricular activity, students who do not meet expectations will not be penalized.
However, the advisor of the program will be expected to continue to encourage the
student to participate for his or her personal development and success. Any student who
has not met all requirements of the program by the end of his or her senior year will not
receive a Certificate of Professional Development.

A student will have a wide variety of professional development activities to
choose from to complete the program requirements. This is meant to help the student
understand there are many ways to gain professional development. It shows the student
that professional development does not have to be a boring task. It can be creative and
within their area of interest. A section of requirements focused on the development of a
student’s own identity will also increase their knowledge of themselves as a professional
individual.

Students will be allowed to sign up for this program anytime while they are in a
sophomore or junior class standing. At the beginning of each semester, the advisor for
the program will have a call-out meeting for all who are interested in signing-up. After
that, if a student signs up in the middle of a semester, he or she will meet the advisor individually to go through a program overview and expectations.

Once a student completes all requirements of the program, he or she will turn in a portfolio of their work with professional development. The student will also present their experiences with professional development to the advisor and any other guest invited to the presentation. These presentations will take place in April of each academic year for each student who completed the program in the previous year.

The Certificate of Professional Development will be given to a student once he or she has completed the portfolio presentation. The Certificate of Professional Development will be a printed certificate the student receives. The certificate can then be included on a resume or in a portfolio. Additionally, the certificate may be recorded on the student’s transcript, depending on the institution’s allowance.

**Summary**

The development of this program will enhance involvement in college and retention rates of sophomores and the preparation for life after graduation for juniors. It will increase professional development in both sophomores and juniors. As a voluntary program, students will receive great satisfaction and confidence in knowing the effort they have put forth to improve their professional development and gain an array of valuable experiences to enhance their futures. The program will also support the Career Center’s focus on retaining sophomores.
CHAPTER FOUR
CREATING A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

Project Summary

This creative project was designed to develop a Professional Development Certificate Program for the Ball State University Career Center. Its intent is to provide further opportunities for sophomores to engage in the collegiate experience and to help juniors receive an early start on their job or graduate school search for life after college. It will also advance the Career Center in its goal to retain more sophomores. The program has the potential to be applicable in many Career Centers in the United States.

This chapter has been created to ease the implementation process of a Professional Development Certificate Program into the Ball State University Career Center.

The design of this project includes the following items:

- Marketing Flyer, page 29.
- Program Details Packet,
  - Program Requirements, page 31.
  - Enrollment Form, page 32.
- Attendance Sheet for Monthly Meetings, page 33.
- Credit Recordkeeping, page 34.
- Timeline and Plans for Monthly Meetings, page 35.
ATTENTION ALL SOPHOMORES AND JUNIORS AT BALL STATE UNIVERSITY!

The Career Center presents the Professional Development Certificate Program!

Gain professional development experience with the following.

- Internships
- Study Abroad
- Immersive Learning Projects
- Professional Conferences
- Self-Assessment
- Career Exploration
- Resumes and Cover Letters
- Interview Practice
- Employment
- Student Organizations
- Community Volunteer Work
- And Much, Much More!

Join the Professional Development Certificate Program!

- View full program details and sign-up at bsu.edu/careers
- Or stop by the Career Center in Lucina 220

Questions? Contact:

(Insert program advisor name)

Career Center, Lucina 220

(Insert Advisor email)

765-285-1522
Program Details Packet

This program details packet should be made available online and in hard copy for students to gain access to information about the program and to sign-up for the program.

Program Introduction Letter

Greetings,

Thank you for your interest in the Professional Development Certificate Program at Ball State University!

Professional development opportunities are all around us in college. We want to help you find them and truly benefit from them! As a member of this program, you will be encouraged to participate in and reflect on various professional development experiences of your choosing. It is our goal to help improve your understanding of your unique career path and enhance the skills and experience necessary to find personal success after college.

Please use the information in this packet to decide if you would like to join this wonderful opportunity to develop yourself professionally and become more involved on campus and in the community. If you have questions regarding this program, please contact (Insert program advisor name and contact information).

Thank you,

Advisor’s Name

Ball State University

Career Center
Professional Development Certificate Program Requirements

To earn a Certificate of Professional Development, you must successfully complete all requirements, over the duration of the program, as follows.

Development of Self
*Must complete 2 of the following activities:*
- Self-Assessment activity at bsu.edu/careers (Quest, TypeFocus, or Sigi3)
- 10 hours of community volunteer work
- Participation in a workshop on ethics
- Study abroad (any program)
- 3 page reflection paper on how your interests, values, and abilities have influenced your career interests

Development of Skills
*Must complete the following activities:*
- Attend 3 Career Center presentations
- Resume and cover letter critique at the Career Center
- Mock Interview at the Career Center
- Attend a Career Fair
- Participate in an Etiquette Dinner (requires payment)

Professional Experience
*Must complete 3 of the following activities:*
- Internship
- Externship
- Independent project related to your career interest
- Job shadow or Informational interview
- Attend a professional conference
- Participate in Building Better Communities Fellows
- Participate in Virginia B. Ball Center for Creative Inquiry
- Employment at a job related to your career interest for at least 1 year
- Volunteer work in an office related to your career interest

Presentation of Portfolio
A portfolio and a presentation of the portfolio are due at the completion of the program.

Monthly Meetings
Attendance is expected. Monthly meetings will consist of a brief professional development topic facilitated by the advisor, a group discussion of members’ experiences with development over the past month, and a group exercise or social aspect.
Enrollment Form

Full Name:_________________________  Student ID Number:____________________

Major:____________________________   Email:_______________________________

Class Standing (check one):

- Sophomore
- Junior

I, _________________________________, hereby enroll to complete the Professional Development Certificate Program at Ball State University. I have read and understand the Information Packet for the Professional Development Certificate Program. As a member, I plan to attend the monthly meetings and fulfill requirements to obtain the Certificate of Professional Development.

Signature of Student:_________________________   Date:___________________
Attendance Sheet for Monthly Meetings

Date:

Name

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.
11.
12.
13.
14.
15.
16.
17.
18.
19.
20.
Credit Recordkeeping

Development of Self
Must complete 2 of the following activities:
Check circle when complete.
- Self-Assessment activity at bsu.edu/careers (Quest, TypeFocus, or Sigi3)
- 10 hours of Community Volunteer Work
- Participation in a workshop on ethics
- Study Abroad (any program)
- 3 page reflection paper on how your interests, values, and abilities have influenced your career interests (*one page reflection does not apply here*)

Development of Skills
Must complete the following activities:
Check circle when complete.
- Attend 3 Career Center presentations
  1. __________________________________________________________
  2. __________________________________________________________
  3. __________________________________________________________
- Resume and cover letter critique at the Career Center
- Mock Interview at the Career Center
- Attend a Career Fair
- Participate in an Etiquette Dinner (requires payment)

Professional Experience
Must complete 3 of the following activities:
Check circle when complete.
- Internship
- Externship
- Independent Project related to career interest
- Job Shadow or Informational Interview
- Professional Conference or Membership to Professional Organization
- Building Better Communities Fellows
- Virginia B. Ball Center for Creative Inquiry
- Employment at a job related to your career interest for at least 1 year
- Volunteer Work in an office related to your career interest
Timeline and Plans for Monthly Meetings

Plans are designed for the first two years of the program, so students who participate starting their sophomore year do not experience the same monthly meetings during their junior year of participation.

Please note if a new student signs up mid-semester, the advisor will meet with him or her individually to cover the program overview and expectations.

Year 1
August: Promotion
- Marketing and student outreach
- Informational meetings

September: Monthly Meeting
- Student and advisor introductions
- Brief overview of the program and member expectations
- Explanation of a portfolio and the portfolio feedback form (Appendix A)
- Handout Career MAP flyer for workshop schedule
- Discussion of professional development experiences thus far
- Students pair up and brainstorm ideas about what they want to get involved with to complete the program. Come back together as a group to share goals.

October: Monthly Meeting
- Update on student professional development experiences
- Discussion: Networking
- Networking exercise (Appendix B)
- Ask students to attend Study Abroad 101 session with the Rinker Center before next month’s meeting

November: Monthly Meeting (in a location with accessible computers)
- Update on student professional development experiences
- Discussion: Benefits of studying abroad
- Exercise: Students get online and explore the study abroad options together

December: Monthly Meeting
- Update on student professional development experiences
- Winter break holiday social (provide games and refreshments)

January: Promotion
- Marketing and student outreach
- Informational meetings
January: Monthly Meeting (in a location with accessible computers)
- Introduction of students, if there are new students
- Handout Career MAP flyer for workshop schedule
- Update on student professional development experiences
- Discussion: Where you work and live matters
- Students complete the findyourspot.com surveys, explore their results, and then share with the group

February: Monthly Meeting
- Update on student professional development experiences
- Discussion: Working effectively with different supervisory styles
- Build your own pizza exercise (Appendix C)

March: Monthly Meeting
- Update on student professional development experiences
- Discussion: Importance of ethics and professionalism
- Review case studies as a group and work through ethical dilemmas (Appendix D)

April: Monthly Meeting (will need to provide multiple games of Life)
- Update on student professional development experiences
- Discussion: Importance of work/life balance
- Play the game Life in groups and when students run across various life situations, have them discuss how you would balance that with work
- Wrap up for the year

April: Portfolio Presentations
- Program advisor, student members, and other invited guests attend a scheduled presentation of each portfolio

Year 2

August: Promotion
- Marketing and student outreach
- Informational meetings

September: Monthly Meeting
If there are many new students:
- Introduction of students
- Brief overview of the program and member expectations
- Explanation of portfolio (Appendix A)
- Handout Career MAP flyer for workshop schedule
- Discussion of professional development experiences thus far
• Students pair up and brainstorm ideas about what they want to get involved with to complete the program. Come back together as a group to share goals.

If there are not many new students:
• New students will have met with the advisor for a brief overview of the program and brainstorm of ideas for completing of the program prior to this meeting.
• Introduction of new and current students
• Discussion: Networking (this was covered in Year 1 October, but will be good to do again to encourage students to meet one another.
• Networking exercise (Appendix B)

October: Monthly Meeting
• Update on student professional development experiences
• Discussion: Strategies for positive confrontation in the workplace
• Activity: Role play (Appendix E)

November: Monthly Meeting
• Update on student professional development experiences
• Discussion: Interviewing
• Activity: Mock interviews (Appendix F)

December: Monthly Meeting
• Update on student professional development experiences
• Winter break holiday social (provide games and refreshments)

January: Promotion
• Marketing and student outreach
• Informational meetings

January: Monthly Meeting
• Introduction of students, if there are new students
• Handout Career MAP flyer for workshop schedule
• Update on student professional development experiences
• Discussion: Healthy work environments (Appendix G)

February: Monthly Meeting
• Update on student professional development experiences
• Discussion: Working with different personalities in the workplace
• Activity: Student take, compare, and discuss results of TypeFocus

March: Monthly Meeting (Location: computers accessible)
• Update on student professional development experiences
• Discussion: The use of social media for networking and job searching
• Activity: Each student will log onto their social media sites and start to clean up their pages and presence

April: Monthly Meeting
• Update on student professional development experiences
• Discussion: Professionalism in the office
• Activity: Watch an episode of The Office. As you watch, analyze and discuss the professionalism or lack thereof
• Wrap up for the year

April: Portfolio Presentations
• Program advisor, student members, and other invited guests attend a scheduled presentation of each portfolio
Certificate of Professional Development

This Certificate of Professional Development should be printed in landscape orientation onto professional paper.

Certificate of Professional Development

Presented to:

Student’s Full Name

Date:___________   Signature of Advisor:__________________

Ball State University
Career Center
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

PORTFOLIO EXPLANATION AND FEEDBACK FORM
Portfolio Explanation and Feedback Form

Discuss the uses and organization of a hardcopy and electronic form of portfolios.

Provide examples of what the students might consider including in their portfolio.

Portfolio Feedback Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Below Average</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Above Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content in portfolio</strong></td>
<td>Content does not demonstrate experiences and skills.</td>
<td>Content demonstrates experience and skills, but is limited or does not include all experiences and skills.</td>
<td>Content demonstrates all experiences and skills in a concise manner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization of portfolio</strong></td>
<td>Organization is not clear or effective for the reader.</td>
<td>Organization makes sense, but needs a few minor changes to be clearer to the reader.</td>
<td>Organization is clear and effective for the reader.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oral Communication of presentation</strong></td>
<td>Presenter sounded unconfident and unprepared. Did not communicate effectively.</td>
<td>Communicated effectively, but could show more confidence through speech.</td>
<td>Effective communication. Demonstrated confidence and preparedness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content in presentation</strong></td>
<td>Content of the presentation did not reflect the content of the portfolio</td>
<td>Content of the presentation reflected the majority of the portfolio.</td>
<td>Content of the presentation reflected all of the portfolio.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Effectiveness of the delivery of the presentation</strong></td>
<td>The techniques (lecture, visual aids, activities, etc…) were ineffective.</td>
<td>The techniques (lecture, visual aids, activities, etc…) used were effective, but could have been improved upon.</td>
<td>The techniques (lecture, visual aids, activities, etc…) used were very effective.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional Comments:
APPENDIX B

NETWORKING EXERCISE
Networking Exercise

This is used as a social and professional development exercise. Provide refreshments, cups, and plates. Students should have a goal to meet at least three other students in the program. This exercise should last approximately 20 to 30 minutes to allow students to have full conversations with each other.
Supervisory Preferences Exercise

Step One:
Cut out a round piece of paper (the pizza,) for each student.

Step Two:
Print off and cut out the following pictures for each student.

Step Three:
Provide students with the following descriptions of each type of food.

Pepperoni: You would like to receive specific instruction on projects.

Peppers: A high energy supervisor is preferable.

Mushrooms: You want your accomplishments to be acknowledged.

Pineapple: A laid-back and relaxed supervisor is preferable.

Onion: You would like your supervisor to give you autonomy within your work.

Ham: Appropriate humor between you and your supervisor is appreciated.

Sausage: You would like a supervisor who prefers teamwork over autonomy.

Cheese: Professional development meetings would be nice to have with a supervisor.

Step Four:
Students make their pizza to represent their supervisory preferences and present their preferences to the group.
APPENDIX D

ETHICAL DILEMMAS EXERCISE
Ethical Dilemmas Exercise

Case Study 1

Some of your group members want to sponsor an extremely controversial event on campus (i.e., a lecture by a leader of the Ku Klux Klan). By simply allowing your group name to be associated with this event you risk losing credibility and being accused of racism (or sexism or ageism, depending on the situation).

1. How do you handle this?

2. Does this controversial person have the same freedom of speech as, say, Mother Theresa?

3. Is there only one “right” way to handle this situation?
Case Study 2

You are the only student in a meeting with all of the influential, prominent faculty and staff members on campus. They are praising your ingenuity and creativity in a successful program you organized and are offering letters of recommendation, status and so on. The only problem is you didn’t actually create the program – one of your first-year recruits did.

1. What do you do?

2. Because the new member created the program for the group you lead, can you take credit?

3. Is it OK to take credit if the person will probably never find out?

Belongs to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Retrieved from http://www.union.uiuc.edu/involvement/rso/leader_readers/ethics.htm
Case Study 3

You are concerned with the morale of your group and decide to talk with each person individually to see if you can find out what the problem is. You assure each person all responses will be strictly confidential. Through the interviews, you discover several people mentioning that Jim, your group treasurer, has been stealing money from the group’s account for his own personal use and threatening anyone who suggests they might report him.

1. How do you handle the situation and maintain your promise of confidentiality?

2. What if you decide to report the problem to the authorities and they refuse to take action unless they have the names of the group members who are suspicious?

Belongs to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Retrieved from http://www.union.uiuc.edu/involvement/rso/leader_readers/ethics.htm
APPENDIX E

CONFLICT RESOLUTION EXERCISE
Conflict Resolution Exercise

Step One:
Write the following words on small pieces of paper and keep separated by category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Confronter</th>
<th>To be Confronted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angry</td>
<td>Angry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apathetic</td>
<td>Apathetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sad</td>
<td>Sad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hesitant</td>
<td>Apologetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>Understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irritated</td>
<td>Distracted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Step Two:
Without looking at the pieces of paper, have one student choose a piece from the “Confronter” pile and another student choose a piece from the “To be Confronted” pile.

Step Three:
Give the student who is the “Confronter” one of the following scenarios.

1. You find out your colleague has been talking negatively about your job performance with another staff member. Specifically, this colleague said you are “always late to meetings, do not meet deadlines, and is constantly swearing.”

2. Two of your coworkers are dating and you are friendly with both of them. However you consider their flirty behavior at work to be unprofessional and it has started to make you feel uncomfortable in the office. You decide to confront one of them at a time and start with the one you are closest to.

3. Your colleague borrowed a book from your office and has not returned it. You overhear another staff member talking about how that same colleague allowed her to borrow the same book. You suspect she is talking about your book and want to confront your colleague about not loaning your items out to others before running it by you.

4. You and your colleagues went out to eat for lunch one day and you ended up having to pay for another person’s lunch because they forgot their money. It is now a few weeks later and you still have not been paid back.

5. You allow your colleague to use your computer one day while you are out of the office for a meeting. When you return to the office the next day you find an inappropriate picture has been saved as your desktop background.

6. One of your colleagues has always been good about meeting deadlines. However, in the past month, he has been consistently late on each project you assign him.
APPENDIX F

MOCK INTERVIEW EXERCISE
Mock Interview Exercise

Step One:
Have students pair up. Each student will choose a specific position they will apply for.

Step Two:
Provide students with the following questions and ask them to work with each other to come up with strong answers.

1. Please tell me about yourself.
2. Why are you interested in this position?
3. What are your top five strengths?
4. What is an area where you could improve?
5. What type of experiences and skills do you have that make you the best candidate for this position?

Step Three:
Students will conduct mock interviews by utilizing the above questions and taking turns being the interviewer and interviewee. This will be done in front of the group. At the completion of each interview, the group will discuss strengths of the interviewee and areas for improvement.
APPENDIX G

HEALTHY WORK ENVIRONMENTS EXERCISE
Healthy Work Environments Exercise

Step One:
Print off five sheets of paper with the following words (one of each sheet of paper):
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Step Two:
Hang up the sheets of paper in five different areas of the room.

Step Three:
Ask the students to go to the respective word depending on how they individually answer the following statements. Then, lead a discussion based on their reasoning for their answers.

Statements to Present to the Group
1. Individuals within a work environment need to consider each other a friend.

2. Individuals within a work environment should immediately confront every issue that arises.

3. A healthy work environment means there are not interpersonal struggles.

4. Incorporating incentives and special celebrations is a good strategy to help keep a work environment healthy.

5. The work environment will suffer if I do not share any personal information with my colleagues.

6. If I see that a colleague is having a rough day, I should check in with him or her to make sure everything is okay.