

BRIDGE TO CAREER TASK FORCE

FINAL REPORT

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Introduction

When President Donna Carroll created the Bridge-to-Career Task Force last spring, she charged the group to *create a comprehensive, integrated, and deliberate map of how the University can move from producing well-rounded graduates to producing well-rounded work-ready graduates*, addressing these questions: What does it mean to be a work-ready Dominican graduate? How will the University answer questions from parents and students about what DU students accomplish after graduation and how they were prepared?

Through the late spring and summer, the task force

- 1) consulted a wide variety of stakeholders and policy documents to address the question, “what makes a career-ready student?”;
- 2) surveyed “best practices” of a wide variety of peer/aspirant institutions to learn what Dominican might do—beyond what we’re already doing—to prepare our students for successful careers after they graduate; and
- 3) drafted recommendations for consideration by the faculty and administration, some of them calling for new programs, some of them calling for expansion or refinement of current programs.

Our research and discussions have been driven by a sense of urgency on behalf of our students—in particular, their need to be ready to enter and to succeed in an economy quite different from that encountered by college graduates only a few years ago. But our discussions and our recommendations have been guided by commitment to Dominican’s mission: *to prepare students to pursue truth, to give compassionate service, and to participate in the creation of a more just and humane world.*

Determined as we all may be to effect institutional changes that will help our students find and secure their “first job” after graduating from Dominican, none of us regards doing that alone as sufficient to justify the huge investment of institutional resources, human and fiscal, we’re calling for. Dominican aspires to prepare students to build meaningful lives—to instill habits of mind and character that will inform their personal, professional, and public lives as they and their world evolve.

Must we be “practical” in preparing our students for their lives after graduation? Yes. Must we be “principled” in preparing our students for their lives after graduation? Yes. We have no choice. The answer is: we must be *both*.

While some of our recommendations depend on administrative initiative and some depend on faculty initiative, all of our recommendations require that all of us participate in the process of adopting or adapting policies and programs *and* in the execution of those policies and programs. Can the administration and staff make this happen without the active engagement of the faculty? No. Can the faculty make this happen without sustained support from the administration and staff? No.

What we are calling for is a cultural shift, not a paradigm shift.

Dominican University is a complex, vital organism: a culture organized in the service of common goals. The impulse to secure congruence between mission and curriculum—between what we believe and what we teach—asserts itself throughout the university. Our Task Force is but one of a number of major initiatives set in motion over the past few years. We view and would want others to view our

recommendations within that context; that is, we want our work and recommendations to support—not to compete with, nor to supplant—others’ work.

Particularly relevant here is the “Contemplating Life’s Callings” initiative led by Dominican’s Division of Mission and Ministry in collaboration with the LAS Seminars program. This project aims to weave sustained, systematic reflection about **vocation**, in all its richly-layered meanings, throughout the education Dominican offers its students: *“At Dominican, we encourage students to develop a sense of responsibility for themselves, their community, and the wider creation—to discern the big picture and name their place within it; to stand somewhere and to stand for something, conscientiously positioned in relationship to the world”* [CLC Prospectus].

The recommendations for action we’ve produced are quite practical (as was our charge): we want to engage the entire community in giving sustained, systematic attention to preparing our students to move confidently into their future, both personal and professional. We are calling for a “cultural shift”—a change in the way we organize the education we provide our students. We are not, however, proposing a “paradigm shift”: we are *not* calling for change in the vision that guides and governs a Dominican education.

Our goals and others’ converge in the letters “CV.” We want to ensure that *all* of our students graduate with a Dominican *Curriculum Vitae* [“the course of (my) life”] shaped and permeated by Caritas/Veritas. That is, we want to ensure that *all* of our students leave us with the knowledge, skills, and values they’ll need not just to survive, nor even to flourish in the world beyond Dominican but to make a difference in that world—a distinctively Dominican difference.

What makes a career-ready student?

The first part of our charge was to consider at some length what makes a career-ready student. Toward this end, our working group turned to several resources representing a diversity of stakeholders within the DU community. A key source of ideas was a visioning event that brought together faculty, staff, administrators, and board members to brainstorm specifically on this topic. In addition, we consulted current and prior undergraduate learning goals, examined essential learning outcomes recommended by various majors and the LEAP panel, read reports on employer surveys, and held additional discussions within the group.

Across these efforts, seven major themes emerged:

1) Foundational skills in the liberal arts and sciences. This has long been the core of a Dominican Education. The visioning process revealed that all stakeholders continue to see the foundational skills fostered by a liberal education as critical to lifelong success. These skills include:

- written and oral communication
- critical thinking/problem solving
- quantitative thinking and computer literacy
- interpersonal skills for collaboration and problem solving
- cultural knowledge / global perspective

2) Expert Knowledge. Career-ready students have applied their skills to develop expertise in one or more complex fields of inquiry.

3) Integration. Career-ready students have acquired the habit of integrative thinking: making connections among information and ideas drawn from courses within and beyond the major; between their coursework and their lives beyond the classroom; and between their own lives and others' lives.

4) Experience. Career-ready students have had the opportunity to apply their skills, knowledge, and values in complex, real-world situations. These experiences provide students with opportunities to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses, synthesize their academic training, and integrate themselves into professional and global communities. Experiential learning could include both academic and non-academic work including:

- internships
- study abroad/away
- community-based learning
- research
- entrepreneurship
- on campus and off campus jobs

5) Attitudes/Values. Success in career and in other domains is not only about what one knows but also about how one pursues one's goals. A career-ready student exhibits several attitudes that foster success. These include:

- self-awareness
- determination/self-motivation/resilience
- honesty and integrity
- appreciation of diverse perspectives

6) Community. Developing career goals and strategies requires sustained exposure to a range of possible career paths, the guidance of mentors and role models, and the development of a network of contacts. Career-ready students have formed relationships not just with their classmates, but within other important personal and professional communities, including faculty, working professionals, alumni, and local communities.

7) Career plan. Career-ready students have acquired knowledge relevant to their potential career paths. That is, they have:

- a) reflected on several possible career directions, considering such factors as their fit with personal goals, costs, employment prospects, personality match, work/life balance, etc.;
- b) evaluated different career paths (e.g., to weigh the pros and cons of different grad school programs); and
- c) learned the customs and conventions governing next steps in their career plans (e.g., have developed a business plan, CV, and/or grad school written statement).

Caveats and Comments

- **This is not a definitive characterization of career-readiness.** It reflects major themes that emerged in discussion with various stakeholders, summarizing general characteristics that are likely to be appropriate for most students. Career-readiness may differ substantially across disciplines, and changing economic circumstances could require substantial revision over time.

- **Career-readiness is only part of the mission.** Liberal education is about more than career-readiness. We seek to make a broader impact on our students' personal growth, civic engagement, and intellectual development. Moreover, we believe that liberal education has intrinsic value, and we strive to instill in students the value of knowledge—wisdom—for its own sake. Nevertheless, we recognize that career-readiness is an important outcome of a Dominican education, an indispensable component of empowering students to work toward a more just and humane world.

- **Career-ready is not the same as “careerist.”** Emphasizing career-readiness does not mean promoting a simplistic pursuit of the highest salary, nor does it aim to produce compliant workers to suit the needs of industry. Research in behavioral economics has consistently shown that the highest job satisfaction comes from work that offers both meaning and autonomy. We expect that, in pursuing career-readiness within a Dominican context, students will reflect on how to match their values to their career pursuits, critically examine the politics of work and employment, and develop relationships within their Dominican and local communities that will provide social, civic, and moral contexts for their career pursuits.

What’s Working, What’s Missing

As we compiled conceptions of a career-ready student, it became clear to us that *all* stakeholders continue to value a liberal education as the essential foundation for career-readiness.

This commitment is reflected in the strong alignment of the career-readiness themes we identified with the existing learning goals for liberal education. The undergraduate learning goals already encompass a focus on foundational skills, disciplinary knowledge, integrative thinking, and experiential learning. Moreover, it was easy for us to identify units within the University that are already working toward ensuring career-readiness for Dominican students. For example, this summer a faculty workshop considered how to define, assess, and teach the core foundational skills, and LAS Seminars faculty considered ways to integrate reflection on “life’s callings” into the seminars. The career development office provides excellent resources to help students develop a career plan, find an internship, compose a CV, etc. Experiential learning is supported by the community-based learning office, the URSCI office, the career development office, and the study abroad/away office, each of them relying in turn on the contributions of faculty, who serve as mentors, research directors, internship supervisors, project directors.

Thus, one of our conclusions is that Dominican is already doing a lot to prepare career-ready graduates. What, then, is missing? Where are our efforts falling short? To answer these questions, our group examined the career development practices of peer/aspirant institutions. We mined websites, called career development officers and deans, consulted promotional material, and in some cases visited campus and orientation events. While these efforts convinced us that Dominican is doing many things right, it also became clear that—compared to many of our peer and aspirant institutions—*we have fallen behind in the scope, organization, and coherence of our efforts*. Specifically:

- **Intentionality.** Many of our peer/aspirant institutions put a more explicit emphasis than we do on career development. From initial promotional materials through the curriculum and administrative offices, students are presented with a unified message to help them become conscious and deliberate in their achievement of career-readiness. This emphasis isn’t a matter merely of marketing; it typically involves an approach to advising that goes beyond helping students meet graduation requirements to helping them think systematically about their lives after they graduate. For example, many institutions focus on the student’s development of a four-year plan with co-curricular and experiential milestones for each year. Other institutions have developed specific competency outcomes and require students to assess (and receive faculty feedback on) their progress, leading to the development of an e-portfolio or developmental transcript.
- **Regularity.** Many of our peer/aspirant institutions put more effort than we do into ensuring that all students are provided opportunities for career development. For example, a few have established programs to make it financially feasible for all students to engage in at least one significant experiential learning project. Others have built career development exercises into core classes. This institutional commitment seems particularly important in the context of Dominican’s mission: it helps ensure that career development opportunities are equally accessible to students regardless of background or financial means.

- Integration. Although all the schools we contacted have an office for career development, none of them conceptualizes this office as working alone toward the goal of career-readiness. Aspirant institutions are intentional in making career development a collaborative effort that includes faculty and staff, alumni and advancement officers, external communications professionals (marketing and web experts), IT leadership, and other key stakeholders. Successful programs have an administrative structure that supports the work and leaders who are jointly accountable for the progress of the initiative across the institution.
- Networks. Almost all of our peer/aspirant institutions have available more staff and resources than we have to devote to connecting students with opportunities on and off campus. Some institutions hire staff specifically dedicated to cultivating relationships with employers, connecting students to internship and work opportunities, and providing faculty with information on employment trends. Some institutions cultivate alumni and parental networks to help mentor students, identify job and internship opportunities, etc.
- Feedback. Our aspirant institutions are doing more than we are to track the outcomes of their students' efforts and report this information back to key stakeholders on campus. This includes, for example, electronically tracking outcomes of experiential learning opportunities to refine databases and help faculty become aware of what curricular efforts are working, what efforts are falling short; and tracking post-graduate career trajectories to help faculty and administrators get a clearer picture of what, exactly, they are helping their students prepare for.
- Data/Assessment. A key theme across all these areas is the collection and thoughtful analysis of a lot of data—data on available resources, data on outcomes from experiential learning, data on alumni experiences, data on local employers and their needs, etc. Moreover, these data sources are made available to a variety of stakeholders. [At some universities, *parents* can submit job or internship opportunities as well as search listings for their own student.] While we could not inspect the IT infrastructure required to support these efforts, it was clear that they are well organized and succeed largely because these schools are tracking the right information and getting it into the right hands at the right time.

Preliminary Recommendations

Note: Throughout the fall, task force members solicited and received responses to our preliminary recommendations from individuals and groups across the university. At the same time, working in smaller groups, we set about refining and elaborating a few of the proposals we had circulated among our colleagues (*4 Year Plan, Star Bucks, an Alumni Mentoring Network, Data Enhancement and e-Portfolios*). The products of these "working groups" appear at the end of the report as **Appendices**. That they are appendices does not diminish their status among our recommendations; they can be taken as close-ups shots of a few of the proposals we consider most crucial to the success of the initiative.

Working from both the characteristics of the career-ready student and our survey of peer/aspirant institutions, the task force began brainstorming ideas to enhance the career-readiness of Dominican graduates. We started by pulling together a long list of possible initiatives culled from the visioning session, peer/aspirant institutions, and our own deliberations. We then began the difficult process of synthesizing and distilling these ideas into what we hope is a coherent set of recommendations to advance the career-readiness of our Dominican students.

We call our recommendations "preliminary" because we know that any successful career development initiative will require feedback and buy-in from the entire Dominican community. Thus, our goal was to produce not a finalized set of recommendations, but an initial set that is sufficiently detailed to provoke

discussion and foster the community-wide input needed to develop a finalized plan. We fully expect some recommendations to be embraced, others to be modified or even rejected, and additional steps to be suggested.

Career development cannot continue to be an optional service utilized primarily by students with the time and wherewithal to attend to these issues. We propose that career planning be fully integrated into the DU curriculum so that all students are presented with multiple opportunities to reflect on their values, explore career options, and develop a plan for achieving their career goals. We have listed below several ways in which this could be accomplished, *all of them requiring close collaboration* among, specifically, the Dean's Council, the Core Curriculum Director, the Honors Directors, the LAS Seminars faculty, the Advising Office, various standing faculty committees, the BCTLE, the AEC, the Alumni Office, and (of course) the Career Development Office.

I. INSTITUTE A SYSTEM-WIDE FOUR-YEAR PLAN TO PROVIDE A FRAMEWORK FOR ORGANIZING AND MONITORING EACH STUDENT'S CAREER DEVELOPMENT.

Ways to do this:

- **Introduce an instrument (e.g., E-portfolios or developmental transcripts) through which students document how they have developed university-wide and department-specific competencies.** This strategy would have the virtue of requiring our students to do something that employers across the US say college graduates are increasingly unable to do – discuss competencies they have developed as undergraduates and explain how they have applied them in “hands-on” working environments. It would also provide an over-arching framework for helping students organize their efforts and see how the various opportunities at Dominican can be connected to their development.

The challenges would be a) determining how portfolio work could be *required* of students within the curriculum and b) providing faculty or professional staff supervising the platforms with adequate training and resources to provide rich prompts, rigorous assessment, and valuable feedback.

- **Integrate career-development modules into the LAS Seminars.** So that these modules would not be perceived as mere “insertions” into the seminars, they could be linked to the level-by-level seminar themes—i.e., exploring, initially, individual aptitudes and interests as they relate to various career options and progressing gradually toward integration of students' coursework and experiential learning with more sharply defined career goals and personal values. This strategy would have the benefit of providing students a meaningful (and universal) *sequence* of career activities.

The drawbacks would be a) the danger of overloading the seminars; b) the resistance of seminar faculty to courting that danger; and c) the difficulty of customizing the material to each student's discipline.

- **Encourage development of a “career course” in each major/department.** Since career advising is often highly specific to each discipline, one option would be for each major/department to develop a 1-credit career development course in collaboration with the Career Development Office. Such a course would provide discipline-based career advice.
- **Offer stand-alone career courses, taught by Career Development staff.** [Cf. Information Literacy Workshops taught by library faculty, most of the workshops embedded in English 102, which all students are required to take, some of them taught to transfer students who arrive at Dominican having already met that requirement.] Drawbacks are that a) the Career Development Office is already short-staffed, and b) students do not benefit as much from general courses as from discipline-specific programming.

- **Provide the faculty with training and compensation for their role in the process.** Faculty are key partners in fostering career development but are staggering under the pressures of teaching, advising, and mentoring increasing numbers of students, pursuing their own scholarship, contributing service to the university, etc. Again, specific tactics will depend on the initiatives adopted, but it seems likely that, at the very least, we will need to make available advising materials that help scaffold career development (e.g., an academic skills inventory for advisees to complete each year) and include training for advising toward career development in annual faculty workshops.

II. PROVIDE THE NECESSARY FINANCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT TO MAKE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING A VIABLE OPTION FOR ALL DOMINICAN STUDENTS.

We propose an initiative through which all students would have access to experiential learning funds [“Star Bucks”?]. These funds would be available for each student to apply towards for-credit experiential learning: to pay for travel to a conference, to pay themselves a stipend for an unpaid internship, to use as seed money for an entrepreneurial project, to pay for travel to a study abroad/away program, etc. This proposal differs in important ways from a simple mandate for experiential learning: it helps address the accessibility of these experiences to all students, and it serves as an incentive to students, rather than a top-down directive.

Implementing this program would require community-wide planning and effort. To ensure that students have a variety of experiential learning projects to choose from, we would need to increase exponentially the opportunities we currently offer for student leadership, URSCI projects, on- and off-campus work/study positions, study abroad/away programs, community-based learning related to the major field, internships, etc.

Ways to do this:

- Encourage development of internship opportunities in every major by offering guidance to departments on how to develop an internship program and providing adequate compensation for faculty supervision of internships;
- Encourage departments to offer more experiential learning opportunities by making funds available for faculty to explore experiential components for their courses; and
- Provide tuition scholarships to students undertaking summer research projects and compensate faculty who supervise student research, whether during the regular school year or during the summer.

“Star Bucks” seems an innovative and exciting way to ensure that the vast majority of our students have genuine opportunities to engage in meaningful experiential learning. From a career development perspective, this program would help students establish themselves within work communities and provide early feedback on career goals and plans.

III. ESTABLISH A NETWORK OF PERSONAL CONTACTS BEYOND DOMINICAN TO WHICH OUR STUDENTS—MANY OF THEM FIRST GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS, WHO DO NOT BRING THOSE CONTACTS *WITH THEM* TO DOMINICAN—CAN TURN FOR HELP BEFORE AND AFTER GRADUATING.

Ways to do this:

- **Connect with Business Communities.** Allocate Career Development staff specifically to

cultivating relationships with local, national, and global businesses. Such relationships are essential for organizing recruiting events, connecting students with internships and jobs, and helping provide feedback to campus on employment trends.

- **Activate and expand our Dominican network of Alumni, Parents and Friends.** Alumni (and other “friends” of the university) can provide students with role models for their career paths and help them begin to position themselves within broader communities. Alumni could serve, for example, as guest speakers for career development classes, as members of major/department advisory committees, and as mentors for individual students. Initial in-person encounters of this kind might be especially helpful to students whose past experience does not include frequent, informal access to professionals beyond their family and community.
- **Give students access to the network and the tools to use it.** For this strategy to succeed, we must give our students the training they will need to navigate the network in order to advance their vocational exploration and career development. Our career development “curriculum” might very well include offering workshops on how to approach alumni and other prospective mentors for professional purposes.

IV. COLLECT AND DISSEMINATE INFORMATION NECESSARY TO BUILD AND MAINTAIN THE BRIDGE-TO-CAREER INITIATIVE.

As we’ve noted, the career development and community-based learning offices, in particular, already provide students, faculty, and community partners with a great deal of support in planning and assessing students’ internships and service-learning experiences. But we are calling here for a much expanded university-wide career-readiness effort, and for that effort to be effective, we must gather and make available to everyone involved extensive and easily-accessed information about what’s possible, what’s been done, and how well it was done.

Ways to do this:

- **Establish and maintain comprehensive experiential learning databases.** The Career Development Office already maintains lists of internship opportunities. We suggest taking these efforts to a higher level. For example,
 - Specifically assigning CDO staff to work as business liaisons to stock this database, gather feedback on student performance, etc.;
 - Crowdsourcing: Opening up our leads database to contributions from parents and alumni;
 - Expanding the reach of the database to include, along with internships: research opportunities, community-based learning, study abroad/away (through coordination with the appropriate offices);
 - Tracking outcomes: conducting follow-ups with both the student and supervisor that can help future students evaluate their fit for future opportunities.
- **Make and maintain (i.e., keep track of) a connection with alumni.** The alumni office already tracks alumni, but records of employment history are spotty and this information is not currently connected back to other university efforts. We suggest expanding and upgrading the alumni database. For example,
 - Making a concerted effort to populate work histories, at least for alumni over the past 10 years;
 - Connecting the alumni database to programming efforts (e.g., career panels, etc.);

- Connecting the alumni database to assessment efforts (e.g., outcomes by major by year, etc.).

V. PROVIDE THE INSTITUTIONAL INFRA-STRUCTURE TO SUPPORT—ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN—THIS UNIVERSITY-WIDE INITIATIVE.

We have known from the start of our deliberations that undertaking so extensive (and expensive!) an initiative would involve assigning responsibility for coordinating and overseeing—for *uniting*—the efforts of so many people, departments, offices, and programs. And we were assured by President Carroll that we could count on the administrative support that this massive undertaking would demand—support, that is, to hire additional staff, fund the acquisition of additional resources, train and compensate faculty and others who will guide students toward career-readiness, etc.

But two further considerations have influenced our recommendations in this section of our report:

- awareness that the university has recently experienced and has not yet fully rebounded from an economic crisis that requires *everyone* to think carefully about the wisest ways to invest our common resources, even when proposed expenditures are as thoughtfully conceived as ours have been; and
- awareness that, as we said in our introduction and have acknowledged throughout, many structures and programs within the university—some of them long-standing, others of more recent vintage—are already doing or are designed to do some of what we propose to do.

This complex institutional context has made it difficult—indeed, impossible—for the task force to reach unanimous agreement on a single structural “model” for implementing the initiative, even at this late stage of our deliberations. We have, however, reached a consensus at three levels, both organizational and strategic. That is, there are three *functions* for which we all believe responsibility must be assigned immediately, i.e., within the next six to nine months.

1. The work proposed by the task force is distributed across a broad spectrum of offices, divisions, and units of the university. We’re confident that we can count on our colleagues throughout the university, once they’ve signed on, to do what they’ve said they’ll do and do it well. But their work will be more effective and more satisfying if they believe that they’re working “in concert” toward clear, consistent, common goals. From *our* point of view, the success of the initiative depends ultimately on whether these “parallel lines” can be made, in defiance of mathematical law, to converge. We recommend first, then, that *someone* be put at the center of the program—that *someone* be charged with “orchestrating” it. **The program, whatever it comes to be called, needs a Director.**

Many task force members believe that this responsibility should be assumed by the current Executive Director of the Academic Enrichment Center, arguing that this position was originally designed to provide oversight to most of the activities listed in our recommendations [e.g., Career Services, Experiential Learning]. But they caution that the AEC Director must either oversee additional experiential learning staff or be able to make adjustments to his current responsibilities if he is to give the initiative the attention required for its success.

2. As we learned in our review of the career development practices of peer/aspirant institutions, career services at Dominican is severely short staffed when compared to other universities. The two staff members currently providing career services are often hard pressed for time, although a large percentage of our students currently do not use career services. Even if the only result of our task force

proposal is that most of our students start using the services of this office, the current staff will almost certainly *not* be able to handle the workload.

All members of the task force agree that we must add *immediately* to Career Services a staff member who concentrates on Employer Relations, a function well beyond the resources of time and attention of our current staff. Most Task Force members agree that **one or two additional staff positions** will quickly become necessary as the initiative gets underway—necessary, among other things, to deliver the 4-year plan that figures prominently in our recommendations.

3. The task force has recommended “the implementation of a widespread, universally supported e-portfolio culture” at Dominican. Work already done on e-portfolios—most notably by members of the LAS Seminars faculty in conjunction with the BCTLE—is one of those “parallel lines” referred to above. That is, the functions served by the e-portfolio are both curricular and “trans-curricular”: establishing the e-portfolio as an integral feature of undergraduate education at Dominican will serve the purposes of the Core Curriculum, the “Contemplating Life’s Callings” program and, of course, the Bridge-to-Career initiative.

While it is not yet clear *where* in the university the e-portfolio program should reside [nor, therefore, which administrative unit will hire the director of the program], it is clear that responsibility for the program must be assigned to a single person, someone equipped with the academic and technical background and experience to work (primarily with faculty) to establish and maintain that “e-portfolio culture.” **Like the program resulting from our task force recommendations, the e-portfolio program needs a Director.**

4. Finally, while we are proposing the creation of several new positions [and, possibly, the re-alignment of one current administrative position], we believe that some of the members of the Bridge- to-Career Task Force should be asked to serve on **a transitional Steering Committee** to work with the Planning Committee on getting the program underway. As will be evident from this report, the Task Force has worked very hard not only to generate a list of recommendations, but to conceive a complex, integrated program grounded in extensive research and reflection. Not every member of the Task Force will have the time or the interest to continue this work, but a few would be both willing and [indisputably] able to do that.

Where do we go from here?

Over the past several months, we’ve gained a better understanding of what Dominican means by “career-ready,” identified areas in which our efforts could be improved, and developed a cluster of recommendations to set in motion an effective, coherent, mindful, and data-driven collective effort to ensure that all Dominican graduates are prepared to pursue a meaningful, satisfying, and successful career. We now consign the fruit of our labor to the care of the Planning Committee, and we thank you in advance for giving our report your best—most careful and, of course, most critical—attention.

Appendix A - 4 Year Plan

For students to be career-ready upon graduation, it is essential that they build the skills they will need across their entire academic experience. Although we had many recommendations for what these experiences could be, we identified the following skills or activities that we think should be completed in each class year.

FRESHMAN YEAR

Complete FOCUS assessment and review report with a career peer advisor (required)

The FOCUS assessment is an online resources provided to students to help them determine appropriate majors and careers. The assessment consists of 4 sections: work interests, personality, skills, and values and is often used with both career and academic advisors. Students would be instructed in their SOAR orientation to complete the assessment over the summer before fall classes begin. Currently, freshmen students are assigned Peer Advisors connected to their Freshman Seminar to help them acclimate to college life. These Peer Advisors would be trained by Career Development staff as Career Peer Advisors and would administer the FOCUS assessment and review the completed student reports. Completed FOCUS reports could be a starting component of the student's ePortfolio. This would require hiring additional Peer Advisors and/or increasing the total hours worked by Peer Advisors and would need to be budgeted accordingly (estimated increase of \$1500 over current Peer Advisor budget). The Career Peer Advisors would be supervised by a Graduate Student (paid or unpaid).

Construct a resume and cover letter (required)

Students should begin to document their accomplishments on their resumes and cover letters at the beginning of their college careers. Each year, students will be advised to update their resumes and cover letters. Freshmen and sophomores will be encouraged to review and revise their new drafts in consultation with career peer advisers and / or Dominican Writing Fellows. Juniors and seniors will be encouraged to review and revise with Career Development staff and faculty in their major departments. Each year, students can review and revise their resumes/cover letter and have them reviewed by a staff or faculty member and build upon the previous year. We recommend freshmen complete both documents no later than the spring semester, ideally before they register for their sophomore year courses. In order to meet the increased demand, staffing levels would need to be increased through additional Career Advisors, Graduate Students and Career Peer Advisors. Training and funding for faculty willing to work with students on review and revision will also need to be considered.

Officially declare a major (recommended)

We recommend that students would officially declare their major at the conclusion of the fall semester as part of their freshman seminar. Students should be advised that although they are declaring a major, they still have the ability to change majors if they determine another program is more suitable to their interests. Students who are undecided and don't wish to declare a major will be able to declare later in the academic year.

Timeline for implementation: Fall 2014

SOPHOMORE YEAR

Conduct 2 informational interviews (one per semester) (required)

Very often, students are not aware of the potential careers in their major and the skills necessary to be successful in their chosen field or area of occupational interest. Students would select a person working full-time in their discipline and conduct an informational interview about their employment experience (once each semester). Career Development would provide online training and guidelines to students and help them identify potential interviewees, create a script for the interview and write a thank you note once the interview is completed. The interviewees could be identified from the Alumni network, employer contacts and community partners.

Participate in a job shadowing program (required)

Students would participate in a minimum of 3 hours of job shadowing in a career appropriate for their major. The job shadowing program would be coordinated by a full-time staff person in Career Development. This staff member would collaborate with Alumni Relations to connect students to professionals and prepare students for their job shadowing experiences. A recent salary survey conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers lists the average salary for an Employer Relations Specialist for a school of our size to be \$46,075.

Take a career development class or explore career development modules in major-based courses (recommended)

We recommend that students take a general Career Development course, a course designed specific for their major, or explore career development modules in major-based courses. To make this possible, we encourage departments to develop highly visible courses or course modules students could use to satisfy that outcome. One promising model for this is a 1 credit 200 level Career Development for Psychology Majors, that Psychology faculty have developed in partnership with Career Development. We further recommend creating a 1 credit, 200 level general career development class to be taught by Career Development staff. This course would be focused on career exploration, particularly for undecided majors. In both cases, these additional credit-bearing courses would need to be developed, vetted and approved through the proper channels before implementing.

Timeline for implementation: Fall 2015.

JUNIOR YEAR

Take part in an academic experiential learning opportunity (internships, study abroad, community based learning, undergraduate research) (recommended)

In a recent employment outlook survey done by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, 80.6% of employers require demonstrated leadership skills from their potential candidates. To be career-ready, students would participate in an experiential learning opportunity and apply their knowledge and skills outside the classroom. Additionally, the Star Bucks proposal will allow more students to participate in these programs by providing funding to students for unpaid experiential learning. We suggest that this part of the four year plan be “highly recommended” rather than required in its first few years. Should the range of experiential learning opportunities Dominican is able to provide students prove robust enough, perhaps this part of the plan can be converted into a requirement.

Complete professional online profiles (Linked In, ISCPA, CCN) (required)

It is essential for students to activate their professional online profiles no later than their Junior year, begin to investigate available internships, research potential employers and engage in networking opportunities (in some cases it would be appropriate to start this even sooner). Dominican uses a product called College Central Network (CCN) to manage all employment and internship opportunities and make them available to current students and alumni. In addition to the job postings, CCN has a valuable online career library featuring videos, podcasts and articles available free of charge, on or off campus. Students will also create and manage their profiles for the Illinois Small College Placement Association (ISCPA). Through this membership, students have access to events including ISCPA Interview Day and CareerFest; centralized job and internship postings from member schools; and online resume books viewable by over 500 employer partners. In addition to creating their Linked In account, they will also join the Dominican University Alumni Group and have the opportunity to network with over 3300 members. Career Development staff will teach students through online modules how to manage their professional online profiles, how to manage their networks and seek out post-graduate opportunities.

Research prospective post-graduate opportunities (graduate school, employment, volunteer programs)

Career-ready students are preparing themselves for more than their first job out of college. Many students pursue graduate school programs or service programs after they complete their degrees. Students are not always aware of the diverse opportunities available to them upon graduation and it is important that they start no later than their Junior year researching post-graduate opportunities. Resources will be available to students through the Academic Enrichment Center to navigate the graduate school application process and testing procedures. Students will build upon the experiences they've already completed (informational interview, job shadow, experiential education, etc.) and be more prepared for their future. As they identify their interests for post-graduate experiences, students will work with faculty and staff members to develop a career plan and articulate their goals.

Timeline for implementation: Fall 2016

SENIOR YEAR

Complete a mock interview (virtual or in-person)

Students need to articulate that they are career-ready in order to be prepared for their post-graduate experiences. Dominican uses a program called Optimal Resume to provide students with the opportunity to participate in an online, mock interview. The student can select the interview questions from a database of over 900 interview questions, is able to record themselves answering each question, and then email a Career Development staff member for a critique of the interview. Students will also be given the opportunity to conduct face-to-face mock interviews with a member of the alumni network or an employer partner. In order to meet the increased demand, staffing levels would need to be increased through additional Career Advisors, Graduate Students and Career Peer Advisors.

Participate in career preparation events (job fair, post-graduate volunteer fair, graduate school fair, interview day)

Students need to participate in the many and varied career preparation events that are available to them. To be career-ready students, they will have participated in at least one of these events before graduation. Employers continue to rank “high touch” recruiting methods (such as career fairs and on-campus recruiting) the most successful and a recent National Association of Colleges and Employers survey states that employers allocate over half of their total recruiting budgets to these types of events. It could be possible to track student participation through an e-Portfolio system or a student managed co-curricular transcript system. Additional budgetary resources would be necessary not only for staffing, but to increase the number of career preparation events offered to students.

Timeline for implementation: Fall 2017

ONGOING

While we have identified specific skills and/or activities to be completed by class year, we recommend additional skills and/or activities that should be completed on an ongoing basis through-out their time at Dominican. Although students are asked to complete a resume and cover letter in their Freshman year, this does not imply that this task is simply, “done.” Each year, students need to reflect on what they’ve learned and how they’ve developed and update these documents. Additionally, it is recommended that students engage in other co-curricular activities including, but not limited to, athletics, part-time employment, university ministry, on-campus work-study, and student involvement leadership.

Timeline for implementation: Fall 2014

In this document, we recommend implementing the program as a “cohort” model, adding new initiatives one year at a time with full implementation in Fall 2017. However, we do believe implementation could be accelerated and be fully implemented sooner. We also discussed the possibility of a Career Audit, similar to a Graduation Audit, either after each semester to monitor student progress or in combination with the Graduation Audit. Alternatively, it might be possible to track progress through electronic sources like an e-Portfolio, Jenzabar or Canvas. Completion of most of these requirements (save perhaps participation in career preparation events) could be tracked and noted through zero credit courses that teach this information and require the completion of some tasks. Although some of these tasks are more easily measured than others, we agreed that it would generate a need for additional staffing, not only in Career Development, but across multiple departments. We felt strongly that in order for the 4 year plan to be successful, it must be highly recommended or required for students to complete.

Appendix B - Star Bucks

Purpose: The faculty at Dominican University unanimously approved a vision statement that included *“We encourage students to participate in internships, study away (international and domestic), community-based learning, and undergraduate research, scholarship, and creative investigations.”* Unfortunately, a number of Dominican students have not been able to participate in these experiential learning opportunities due to a lack of funds.

Star Bucks is designed to make experiential learning a universal and affordable component of a Dominican education. It provides students up to \$2,000 to use towards any one credit-bearing experiential learning experience, such as a study away program (domestic or international), internship, or research.

Eligibility: Registered Dominican University students who start at Dominican in the fall of 2014 or later will be eligible to apply for Star Bucks funding. These students may apply for funding for study away, internships, or research experiences. Students who start as freshmen are eligible to use Star Bucks money after they have successfully completed at least 45 credit hours at Dominican University. Transfer students are eligible after successfully completing at least 30 credit hours at Dominican University and 45 credit hours overall. Students on academic probation will not be eligible for Star Buck awards.

In exceptional circumstances, students with fewer credits may apply to the RCAS Dean for Star Bucks funding. This may include experiences that will not be offered again before the student graduates or related to a group they are members of. Seniors may apply for Star Bucks funding as long as the Star Bucks experience is concluded within a month of their graduation. Students who have graduated are no longer eligible to apply for Star Bucks.

Application & Approval: Student applications for these experiences along with budgets must first be approved by the supervisor of the experiential course. This would include the Director of International Studies/Director of a study away program, Office of Internship Services/faculty internship supervisor, or faculty research supervisor.

All students must register for a course connected with the Star Bucks experience. Each student can receive Star Bucks funds only once during their stay at Dominican. If an application is denied, a student may reapply. Furthermore, once the application is approved and all approved funding for the experience is allocated, a student may not apply for further Star Bucks funding. Star Bucks applications must be submitted no later than one month before the experience. Star Bucks funds must be approved at least fifteen days before they are needed.

Examples of expenses covered by Star Bucks include, but are not limited to:

- **Study Away (International & Domestic):** travel (airfare, public transportation, rental car), meals, travel documents, immunizations, program fees from sponsoring institutions (non-tuition)

Star Bucks awards will cover up to 85% of the costs of a study away program. To increase student buy in to the study away program, students would be responsible for at least 15% of the cost of the program.

- **Internships:** living expenses (food, housing, transportation) for internships where the student has to live away from home, research expenses for Academic Internships, stipends for unpaid internships.
- **Research:** direct expenses related to projects (books, specialized equipment, supplies, incentives for surveys, travel and other relevant expenses), research presentation expenses (transportation, food, housing, registration fees, presentation materials), stipends for unpaid research taken for credit. Specialized equipment purchased will be the property of Dominican University.

Stipends for unpaid internships and research will be paid at the prevalent wage for Dominican student workers. It would cover the work hours the internship/research is being taken for academic credit (40 hours per credit). For example, if a student is taking an unpaid internship for 3 credits, they would be compensated for 120 hours. Stipends for unpaid internships/research would only be paid to the students when they have successfully completed the course.

Reflection Paper: All students who receive Star Bucks funding have to write a reflective paper at the end of their experience and submit it to their experience supervisor. Where appropriate, they will also present their work at the URSCI Expo.

For experiential learning to thrive on campus, we recommend the following additional elements:

1. Summer Research Tuition Grants: DU currently gives summer internship tuition grants that allow students to not pay for up to 3 credits of internship tuition in the summer as long as their fall credits are 15 or less. We propose that a similar summer research tuition grant be given to students who do research in the summer for credit.
2. Study Away Tuition Grant: We recommend that study away courses that are taken for credit in the summer also include a similar tuition grant for up to 3 credits.
3. Compensation for faculty supervising research for credit: We recommend that faculty supervising student research for credit be compensated similarly to faculty supervising student internships. The current faculty compensation rate for student internships is \$100 per credit.
4. Creation of Experiential Learning Experiences: Star Bucks is going to cause a lot more students to be able to afford to take experiential learning courses. To help meet the anticipated demand, we recommend financial and other incentives be provided to faculty to create new experiential learning courses. The could include travel funds, course releases, summer development funds, ...

The task force strongly recommends that the above be implemented, even if we do not implement the Star Bucks initiative.

Budget:

Star Bucks Budget			
	Minimum	Anticipated	Maximum
Freshmen			
Anticipated Freshmen Each Year	475	500	500
Retention Percentage Freshman to Sophomore Year	78%	81%	85%
Retention Percentage Sophomore to Junior Year	85%	88%	92%
Number of students eligible	315	356	391
Percentage of students that will use the funds	50%	85%	100%
Number of students that will use the funds	134	267	360
Transfers			
Anticipated Transfers Each Year	115	125	125
Retention Percentage For Transfer Students after 1 year	80%	84%	88%
Number of students eligible	92	105	110
Percentage of students that will use the funds	45%	75%	100%
Number of students that will use the funds	41	79	110
Total Students Using Star Bucks each year			
	175	346	470
Maximum Star Bucks Award Amount	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000
Anticipated Average Award Amount	\$ 1,400	\$ 1,800	\$ 2,000
Annual Funds needed for Star Bucks Awards			
	\$ 245,000	\$ 622,800	\$ 940,000
Faculty Compensation for Supervising Research/Unpaid Internships			
Credit Hours Earned (@3 credits/experience)	525	1,038	1,410
Estimated % credits in research/unpaid internships	20%	40%	75%
Faculty compensation @ \$100/credit hour	\$ 10,500	\$ 41,520	\$ 105,750
Expenses to develop more experiential learning opportunities	\$ 20,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 60,000
Total Estimated Expenses			
	\$ 275,500	\$ 704,320	\$ 1,105,750

The above budget has a lot of assumptions in it. The retention assumptions are based on retention rates from the Institutional Research web site. If all eligible students who are retained use the full Star Bucks award, and our retention goes up, the yearly budget could rise by \$400,000 above the anticipated budget.

Other Items to Consider

- **Reduced Average Cost for Study Away:** Besides the individual costs for Study Away courses, there are some fixed costs that are shared among students. This could include the cost of the faculty member leading the group, guide costs, etc. One benefit of Star Bucks for study away is that with the increased class size, the average cost for every student will go down. For example, the Florence study abroad program would cost each student \$3,450 if we had a class of 15, instead of \$4,450 that it cost last time with a class of 8.
- Study abroad programs currently have a minimum gpa requirement of 2.5. This would have to be reduced to 2.0 if all students who are not on probation are allowed to participate. If we leave this restriction in place, we would be automatically adding another eligibility requirement to Star Bucks.
- Do we have the capacity to offer enough experiential learning programs? This is a concern that has been raised by some faculty. Are there enough faculty who are willing to add experiential learning courses?
- **Finances:** A number of DU faculty and staff wondered if this program is financially feasible in Dominican's current budget situation. The task force is not recommending any particular method of funding - should it be paid for by endowment funds, tuition or a mix of the two. Based on the funds available, a variety of changes may need to be made. These could include moving back the starting date for this proposal, further restricting eligibility, reducing the dollar amounts, ...

Questions that may still need to be discussed by the planning committee/President's cabinet:

1. The assumptions in the budget
 - a. % of students who will participate (currently 85% freshmen and 75% transfers)?
 - b. Average award amount (currently \$1,800)?
2. Eligibility criterion
 - a. 45 DU credits for incoming freshmen? Should this be 60?
 - b. Should the transfer credits also be increased to 45 DU credits and 60 overall credits?
3. Mission Trips
 - a. Should they be covered even though they are not for academic credit?
4. Student buy in for Study Away
 - a. Should there be a minimum amount students have to pay for study away trips?
 - b. If yes, what should it be (amount and % or \$ amount) (currently 15%)
5. Can we use the term "Star Bucks" or would it be copyright infringement?
 - a. The task force is not sure if we can legally use the term Star Bucks, even though it seems so appropriate and has nothing to do with Starbucks/coffee.

Appendix C - Alumni Mentoring Network

The proposal in brief: We recommend establishing a network of career mentors at Dominican University. This program would enlist alumni who are willing to serve as volunteer mentors to students and other alumni in a variety of capacities that include, but are not limited to:

- providing informational interviews
- participating in career and industry panel discussions
- offering practice interviews and resume reviews
- serving as guest lecturer for classes and student organizations
- job shadowing
- providing guidance for first generation college students
- article writing
- networking events (for instance, rotating round-tables and “speed-networking” events)

This network would be accessed through an online portal and separate components would be administered and monitored by the Career Development and Alumnae/I Relations offices.

Career Development would recruit students, provide training (e.g., how to get the most out of informational interviews), and gather students’ assessments of their experiences. Career Development would also share mentor profiles with university faculty and encourage the development of department-specific events that allowed mentors to share their stories, discuss professional experiences, and provide students practical advice. Alumnae/I Relations would be responsible for recruiting alumni volunteers and marketing the program to alumni seeking career advice. Jointly, these offices might coordinate networking events for students and mentors. Alumni Relations would also develop strategies to fill in volunteer gaps when they are identified (e.g., students are seeking mentors in healthcare administration and we don’t have any in the program) by personally recruiting individuals.

The rationale: In its 2012 Fall to Fall retention study, Dominican University’s office of Institutional Research found that 42% of our student population identify as First Generation College Students (FGCS), a designation commonly given to students if neither parent has had any college experience. As the proportion of FGCS we serve is significantly higher than most private colleges and universities, our efforts to prepare students for productive lives beyond Dominican must meet the particular career challenges that FGCS face.

Research shows that many FGCS are less aware of extracurricular career pathways than traditional college students. Traditional college students learn informally about the skill and network-building value of clubs, internships, and experiential learning from family and friends. Students who are the first generation in their family to attend college often grasp their formal roles as students clearly and can excel in the classroom, but come to campus with less information and expectations about how these other experiences allow them to shape their futures. Mentoring, job shadowing and more targeted and frequent visits from professionals will give many of our students greater access to this “hidden curriculum.”

Key Components

Online platform: A platform that allows interested mentors and students or alumni to learn about the program, apply and submit a profile. It would also provide a searchable database that would give students and alumni the ability to connect with alumni volunteers based on their major, industry, career track, affinity (race/ethnicity, 1st generation, study abroad, etc.). Mentees would be able to reach out to alumni volunteers with questions and requests. Alumni would then be able to accept or decline the request. Career Development and Alumnae/I Relations would be able to track mentee requests and alumni responses, gather feedback from experiences, and note and follow up on missed meetings. Our research has persuaded us that choosing an online platform is important in keeping volunteers.

Volunteers who opt-in: Alumni will choose to be a part of this program signifying both their willingness to connect with students and other alumni and the type of connection they prefer. This will be a selling point for the mentee audiences (students and alumni) who will be contacting individuals who have expressly stated their interest. We anticipate that this will result in a higher satisfaction rate.

Volunteer orientation: For any volunteer experience to be meaningful, volunteers need to have clear expectations. Each volunteer will be required to go through an orientation that will outline the types of appropriate interactions they will have with mentees. This will include but not be limited to: sample subject matter, appropriate meeting locations, necessary time commitments, and a snapshot of students and how we set their expectations. Staff will be assigned to monitor the volunteer experience, especially at the beginning of the program.

Student training: In order for our students to be able to make the most of this tool to access our alumni network, our students need training to learn how to develop the skills to contact alumni. Students will learn how to connect in a meaningful way that will help them in their career exploration and give them valuable insight into the industry or career track they are considering. Knowing what they are looking to gain from a contact with an alum (e.g., a practice interview, a specific piece of information about the industry, information about how a major prepared the alum for his/her career, etc.) is essential at the outset of any interaction. This training would be required for students who want to use this system.

Feedback: Students will be asked for feedback on their interaction with volunteers. Volunteers will also be asked to review their experience. This feedback will be critical to adjusting the program to meet the needs of the mentees and meet the expectations of the volunteers. Feedback also can be used to gather testimonials the university can promote to prospective students.

Breadth over Depth: The mentoring program we recommend privileges one-time and short-term interactions between mentors and mentees over long-term and more closely monitored relationships. Though we have seen some promising programs that facilitate more frequent interactions between mentors and mentees (or protégés, as they are called at Elmhurst College), we believe that we must grow a culture of mentoring at Dominican before we pursue something more ambitious and demanding of our alumni and students limited time. We also believe that some more enduring relationships may grow organically from these one-time and short-term interactions.

Expansion of volunteers and programs: As we move forward with this program, we have every intention of broadening our volunteer base to include parents, community members and other appropriate constituencies. We also intend to monitor and evaluate our effectiveness and make

adjustments to the program as necessary with the intention of adding a deeper and more guided one-on-one mentoring experience.

Anticipated Challenges

- **Stewarding volunteers:** Volunteers who sign up but are not contacted by students, alumni or the university may feel unappreciated or disenfranchised. Volunteer activity (or inactivity) must be closely monitored, especially in the first year to make sure we meaningfully engage those alumni who have graciously offered up their time and expertise.

Recommendation: To more fully engage alumni not requested by students we propose asking alumni to write first-person articles written about their industry, career transitions, job search, study abroad relevance, etc. which will be posted online for our students and alumni to have access to.

- **Recruiting and orienting students:** Many of our students are first generation and may not realize what an asset they have in a career mentoring program like the one we are proposing. This is part of the culture shift we have discussed. As mentioned above, students will need training before accessing this system but we anticipate that we will need a concerted marketing effort to engage students in this program. This will need to involve faculty and staff who have influence with students.

Recommendations: We recommend an advisory group be formed as we develop and implement this system to ensure that we maximize the way we use this network of volunteers and as ambassadors to other faculty. We also envision making presentations to small group of faculty on how to encourage their students to make use of this resource. Also because Career Development staff must provide students orientations and materials (e.g., a handout with set of substantive questions to ask mentors in an informational interview) for students to get the most out of their encounters with mentors, we encourage the task force to consider these new demands as they recommend increases in staffing or allocation of work assignments.

- **Staffing:** While in this document we articulate that much of the staffing for this program will reside in Career Development and Alumnae/i Relations, we recognize the need for flexibility given the many activities and responsibilities within each of those offices. We also recognize that even with our research, we cannot foresee exactly how the administration of this program will be executed in the daily life of both departments. We also cannot anticipate the demands on staff from all the constituents involved in the program. Finally, it is obvious to us that the first year will be the most labor intensive and require decision-making responsibilities that will affect other areas of programming and cannot be delegated to grad students or others who are not intimately familiar with the Career Development and Alumni Relations programs.

Recommendations: We recommend that as the program moves forward we think of the student side staffing of this program as residing more broadly in the AEC to give flexibility as both these entities undergo transformation with all the recommendations of the Bridge to Career initiative. We also recommend that responsibilities as to administration of this program be reevaluated as various milestones are met and we have more information about some of the technical side of the implementation. It will also be necessary to adjust how we staff the program after we receive feedback from both students and volunteers to make sure we are serving the needs of both.

Timeline

March –May, 2014	Assigning Alumni Relations, Career Development and Information Technology staff responsible for initial phase development of program Researching and identifying online platform
June-August, 2014	Purchasing and customizing platform Developing recruiting and training materials for volunteers and students
Sept.-Dec. 2014	Pilot volunteer recruitment Pilot student recruitment
January, 2015	Pilot volunteer orientation Pilot student orientation Sharing mentor profiles and possible program roles for pilot mentors
March – May, 2015	Feedback and program adjustment
April – August, 2015	Full scale mentor and mentee recruiting
September 2015	Volunteer orientation Student orientation Sharing mentor profiles and possible program roles for pilot mentors

Anticipated Staff Needs:

Career Development (or AEC) staff who can devote 75% of working time to developing this program in its first year, 50% in following years.

Alumni Relations and University Advancement staff who can devote 50% of working time to develop this program in its first year and 10% in following years. As currently staffed, the director would be the point person on this project drawing on the director of advancement services when her expertise is required during the planning and early implementation stage of this project. During this early implementation stage, other Alumni Relations staff will also be involved in recruiting and marketing efforts. After the program is established reporting and evaluation responsibilities will reside with the director or her designee and marketing will be shared across the team as part of the portfolio of alumni benefits/volunteer opportunities offered.

Graduate Assistants could be employed after the initial implementation to help maintain the program with oversight from staff, thus freeing up professional staff to work on other priority initiatives.

Anticipated Budgetary Needs:

Purchase and maintenance of online platform

While we believe that Information Technology must be involved in our deliberations over possible platforms in order for us to make a wise decision, colleagues at one university detailed a database and website creation cost that came to \$25K.

Special Events budgets

Food and table service budgets for orientations and kick-off or end of year events, beverages and snacks for an expanded number of roundtables and panel discussions.

Marketing budget

An overall marketing plan that includes print materials, mailings to alumni and other potential volunteers, digital collateral and stewardship pieces will be necessary to ensure the success of this program.

Appendix D - Data Enhancement

We endorse the belief that our collective ability to **gather, analyze and access** alumni outcomes data is a critical foundation in an enterprise-wide career-ready culture. Descriptive and accessible data enables experiential learning placements, student network building, enhanced professional job placements for our students and alumni **and** university marketing efforts. Consequently, the **intended outcomes** addressed by these recommendations include:

- Improved University capacity to report on aggregate and disaggregated alumni employment and graduate school enrollment;
- Enhanced opportunities for current students to connect to alumni (for externships, internships, job shadowing, and employment);
- Facilitate increased alumni-to-alumni professional networking;
- Increased connections to alumni expertise and experiences for academic purposes (i.e. classroom speakers, etc.); and
- Increased use of alumni “success stories,” and aggregate employment/graduate school data in admission and marketing materials.

Recommended Action Steps:

1. Determine the optimal method to access more alumni data; either through internal or external means; including an investigation of available vendors (HEP/iDegrees, Harris, Blackbaud, etc.), services offered and timeline. Considerations include cost, timeline, and internal personnel capacity/availability.
2. Address, in more detail, *how* we intend to utilize alumni data, and develop policy and programmatic strategy to suit. Particular consideration should be given to alumni privacy and access issues.

3. Conduct an investigation to determine what software applications and products/modules are best for how we intend to use the data; with particular consideration to those products that best align with those systems already in use at the University.
4. Conduct a thorough audit of the current Career Development recruitment/placement website, College Central Network, to determine if it is sufficiently accessible and functional to serve a career-ready culture.
5. Create and promote the methodology to link other sources of alumni outcomes data into the University alumni database, such as National Student Clearinghouse data, Office of Institutional Research graduating student and alumni survey data, and faculty anecdotes.

Appendix E - E-Portfolios

The Bridge-to-Career (BtC) task force recommends the implementation of a widespread, universally supported e-portfolio culture at Dominican University.

In Dominican’s Vision for Undergraduate Education, we state that along with exposure to foundational learning, breadth, depth, and global citizenship, students will participate in integrative learning. According to our vision statement, “Integrative learning is the practice of making meaningful wholes—that is, synthesizing knowledge across academic boundaries; connecting personal, academic, work, and community experiences; and evaluating and reflecting on their own learning. This enables students to develop increasingly complex frameworks for future learning and action in multiple communities.”

In higher education today, integrative critical thinking skills and evidence-based learning are widely accepted as leading practices. The e-portfolio contributes significantly to integrative, evidence-based learning, and for many colleges and universities it provides a mechanism for meaningful reflection and useful assessment. It also provides students an outlet through which they might show their best work to peers, faculty, staff, and prospective employers. We agree with one e-portfolio proponent who writes that “An e-portfolio culture enables students to proudly represent and reflect upon their learning publically, but it requires e-portfolios to function as tools for increasing student learning and engagement first and foremost, while secondarily serving institutional assessment needs” (14).¹

Dominican University has already begun utilizing aspects of e-portfolios and assessing their effect on student learning and engagement by offering in the past 1-credit add-on ID 190 courses. While this model might continue to serve in the future, perhaps as an embedded element of the LAS seminars (whose credit totals might be increased from 3 to 4 credits), the BtC’s hope is that Dominican will cultivate a universal, widely supported e-portfolio culture, likely using its learning management system, Canvas, as the site to which evidence is uploaded and assessed.

Based on previous experiences in ID 190 and other courses, potential e-portfolio structure and contents might include the following:

- A self-study document, not unlike what faculty members write when up for review—an overarching statement that draws on the student’s past, present, and plans for the future. It would be updated each year, or each semester. It shows how the student envisions a future self that builds on past experiences that have occurred across multiple and diverse contexts. It shows how the student has developed as a learner, and where she/he hopes to go in the future. It may incorporate images in addition to text.
- A curriculum vitae.

¹ Elise Martin, Dean of Assessment, Middlesex Community College. In “Helping Community College Students ‘Connect the Dots’ of their College Experience with E-Portfolios. *Peer Review* 15.2 (spring 2013): 14-15.

- Explicit "integrative learning" assignments, such as "Connections to Experience," "Connections across disciplines" and "Reflection and self-assessment," which have been developed for the ID 190 courses and used by faculty in other courses as well.²
- Artifacts/work products selected by the student and "tagged" to specific learning outcomes from the Vision for Undergraduate Education and from the student's major, and in relation to the student's involvement transcript. For each artifact, the student would write a statement that makes a compelling but succinct case that the artifact demonstrates that she/he has met this learning goal.

However, the BtC is aware that challenges exist in developing, implementing, and supporting an e-portfolio system. To navigate these challenges, the BtC recommends the following steps:

- Develop and agree upon the intended overarching purpose and learning outcomes of the Dominican e-portfolio experience (i.e., developmental, professional, both, etc.).
- Establish the Dominican e-portfolio format and assessment design, including intended components and sources of evidence.
- Design and pilot an administrative infrastructure to support the implementation, monitoring, support and assessment/evaluation of student progress through the e-portfolio, including well-developed timelines, rubrics, support systems, and policy development.
- Sufficiently vet the e-portfolio structure and process throughout the DU community to ensure it is universally endorsed and supported by faculty, administration, staff and students.

Given our recent discussions and initiatives on career, calling, and vocation, the culture is ripe for wide-scale development of an e-portfolio system through which students might position themselves intellectually and professionally for life after Dominican. The e-portfolio may be the method through which Dominican's students make "meaningful wholes" and through which they reflect upon their callings and their career.

Proposed Next Steps and a Tentative E-Portfolio Implementation Timeline:

Any approach to implementing a successful, fully integrated e-portfolio system must be guided by the overarching notion that such an endeavor is "our" work—the work of the entire university, in this case.

No such program, if it is to be truly integrative and systematic, can long survive if perceived as the work of one department, school, or body. For example, while the core curriculum and its various outcomes will likely constitute essential pieces of Dominican's proposed e-portfolio model, these outcomes will or should not dominate it; the core will not "own" the e-portfolio.

Further, although a small number of Dominican faculty successfully piloted ID 190 Portfolio Development courses, an "add-on" portfolio approach is not what the Bridge-to-Career task force envisions as the university's future e-portfolio model.

In order to create a truly successful and fully integrated e-portfolio model the university must be ambitious and creative. First, it must hire or assign an existing faculty or staff member as its e-portfolio

² BtC has sample ID 190 assignments, but these samples are not included in this particular document.

director or manager.³ The director or manager will be initially asked to develop, with the help the Committee on Shared Undergraduate Experience (COSUAE) and an e-portfolio advisory board⁴ comprised of faculty and students, the procedures for and contents of the e-portfolio. Over time, the director will also develop an e-portfolio “guidebook,” a resource for both faculty and students.

With the help of faculty and the advisory board, the director will outline the e-portfolio components, which might include some of the contents listed on pages 1 and 2 of this document. Inevitably, the e-portfolio’s focus will be both outward (career/ calling/ vocation), and inward (curriculum/ projects/ activities).

Although the portfolio process will be a self-directed by the students, faculty advisors are necessary at various stages of the e-portfolio process. Faculty advisors will be compensated.

Tentative E-Portfolio Development and Pilot Timeline: (A 3-year plan, beginning in fall 2015.)

- Promote (2014-2015) and explain the e-portfolio system to all stakeholders (students, faculty, staff, administration, and Board).
- Hire or assign an e-portfolio director (fall 2015), who will then establish an e-portfolio advisory committee comprised of full-time faculty, staff, and students.
- Create an e-portfolio e-handbook.
- Formally introduce the e-portfolio director and the e-portfolio initiative to faculty at various meetings and open house forums—endorse it.
- Thoroughly investigate Dominican’s learning management system, Canvas, to determine its capabilities for hosting the e-portfolio while providing easy access for assessment purposes.
- Determine “inputs”—what will go in the e-portfolio (“nuts & bolts”) and why?
- Develop incentives (and/or disincentives) for completing the e-portfolio.
- Re-introduce the e-portfolio with its specific inputs.
- Create and publish e-portfolio rubrics.
- Train faculty and students on using the e-portfolio and on what constitutes an e-portfolio artifact and why.
- Determine compensation and advising loads for e-portfolio faculty advisors.
- Build a support system (IT and curricular) for the e-portfolio process.
- Hold e-portfolio training workshops.
- Market the e-portfolio and its outcomes to prospective students and faculty.

³ See the next few pages of this document for more information on hiring and compensation for the e-portfolio director and faculty advisors.

⁴ The e-portfolio Advisory Board might in the future become a committee of the Undergraduate Council.

- Pilot (1 to 2 years, beginning fall 2016) the inaugural e-portfolio system, making revisions to the content and procedures, as necessary.
- Assess the e-portfolio and its effectiveness (ongoing).
- Implement a fully integrative, four-year e-portfolio system.

E-Portfolio Compensation and Procedures

Overview: The Bridge-to-Career (BtC) task force remains committed to the development of a meaningful, fairly compensated, and thoroughly supported e-portfolio system. It is not interested in creating an e-portfolio system that is perceived by faculty or students as merely a “checklist,” “scrapbook,” or busy work. To this end, the BtC proposes the following model for fair compensation and adequate support of a university-wide e-portfolio system.

[Note: this memo assumes the eventual hiring of an e-portfolio director, through whose guidance and support an e-portfolio system will be developed in conversation with various stakeholders: the RCAS Dean, the CTLE, AEC, COSUAE, the BTC task force, as well as faculty, staff, and students.]

The E-Portfolio Director: Ideally, once hired, Dominican’s e-portfolio director’s duties are fully delineated but certainly not limited to only the development and administration of an e-portfolio system.

A key administrative decision regarding the status and rank of the e-portfolio director must necessarily precede the creation of the e-portfolio director position as well as his or her eventual hiring. That is, we must decide whether we hire a faculty member at rank who reports to RCAS; or whether we hire a full-time staff member who reports to the AEC, or create a hybrid position for the director who would work as both faculty and administrator.

Salary: commensurate with experience and possible faculty rank at the assistant or associate level (approximately 50-60k).

Faculty Advisors and Costs: a successful e-portfolio system depends on regular, competent, and assessment-driven advising. Faculty advisors are best suited to oversee the content and focus of student portfolios at each stage of the e-portfolio’s development. While a number of options exist for what goes in an e-portfolio and how that content is assessed, we tentatively propose the following implementation and funding model for discussion.

This tentative model assumes six semesters of e-portfolio advising compensation. Students begin formally working with an e-portfolio advisor in the fall of their sophomore year (or after 30 credits earned), but they begin e-portfolio orientation and initial content input *immediately* in their freshman year via their freshman seminar as well as through e-portfolio workshops and e-portfolio group orientation sessions, led by the e-portfolio director, the core director, and freshman seminar faculty. Since all students will begin portfolio input their freshman year, they will work with their freshman seminar advisors, initially; however, students’ e-portfolio’s will not be assessed until the spring of their sophomore year. This model also stipulates that students will have at least two e-portfolio meetings *a semester* with their faculty advisor, but it also proposes formal e-portfolio assessment “checkpoints” throughout the students’ entire four-year process: for example, after the initial “gateway” entry at the beginning of their sophomore year; at the end of their sophomore year; at the middle of their junior year; at the end of their junior year; at the middle of their senior year; and at the end of their senior

year. These “checkpoints” afford faculty and students regular opportunities to measure the content and quality of the e-portfolio.

Cost Estimate: Faculty advisors beyond the freshman year would be paid \$100 per student for six semesters (or \$600 per student, total): the total cost for advising a class of 500 freshmen for six semesters, for example, would equal: \$300, 000, total.

Advising Equity: A major concern is the number of advisees that any faculty member may have or be assigned. Currently, we have a disparity in our current advisee assignments: some faculty have none while others have too many. The administration would need to revisit the current advising model to accommodate our proposal, especially its compensation scheme, since no one faculty member should be assigned an inordinate number of advisees, what would in this compensation model result in the equivalent in pay to a course overload (e.g., 40 advisees x \$100 = \$4,000 a semester, or the current cost of an overload.)

Alternate Compensation Model: Another proposed budget model is to pay faculty \$200 per credit for e-portfolio advising. If we were to advise approximately 1700 students each spring, the yearly faculty advising budget at \$200 a credit hour would be \$340,000 (or \$170,000 a year, if the per-credit rate is reduced to \$100).

Added Compensation for Required Junior E-Portfolio Defenses: Compensation will be provided to faculty (10-15, approximately) who choose to be part of a required junior year e-portfolio defense: this spring semester “defense” would entail student e-portfolio panel presentations to faculty who provide feedback and commentary. The defense would be required of all students who have achieved 90 credits or more, typically juniors. Faculty moderators would be compensated \$100 day for two or three Saturdays each spring.

Defense/Workshop Days Cost Estimate: faculty advising and panel feedback for three Saturdays (9-4 PM), at 15 faculty per day = \$4, 500, total

Canvas and Assessment: to be successful, the e-portfolio must be offered on a web platform that will support our needs. At present, Canvas offers an e-portfolio link. While the current e-portfolio options in Canvas may or may not fully suit our needs—we would need to thoroughly investigate this and learn from Canvas if they could enhance the site, if needed—it makes sense to use a platform that is already being used and is fully supported by the university. Asking faculty to learn another course management system (e.g., SharePoint) may not be advantageous as we introduce the e-portfolio.

However, we will need to consider thoroughly the advantages/disadvantages of using Canvas, as well as other possible platforms—for example, see the concerns explained in Katie Kramer’s 14 December 2013 memo to the BTC: “[Using Canvas] makes sense to me in a lot of ways. However, I also know that our office is working toward using an online platform that would be used to record and support **student involvement portfolios**. This includes club and organization involvement, the Leadership Certificate and hopefully service and other opportunities with which students connect. If that becomes a way students are managing their own involvement/progress, there could be value in using the same platform to

integrate their academic work if the platform would support that. The vendor we are looking at currently is [campuslabs](#). I know I've brought this up briefly in conversation before but I wanted to mention it again so we can consider the value of connecting the students' use/experience across campus as we move forward.”

E-Portfolio Course: To provide a concrete incentive for successful completion of the e-portfolio, we might also create a 1-credit e-portfolio course, which students enroll in each year (in the spring) during their sophomore, junior, and senior years. Thus, students would graduate with 3 credits in “E-Portfolio.” Like English 404/Comprehensive Exam, this one-credit course would provide a mechanism for assessment, a place to input students’ e-portfolio grades on their transcripts each year. Students would receive a grade (A-F) for their e-portfolio work during their spring semesters of their sophomore, junior, and senior years. (Freshman would not receive an e-portfolio grade or enroll in the course until the spring of their sophomore year.) To accommodate this additional three-credit requirement, we might consider the following options, some more conservative than others:

- Increase the graduation credit total to 127;
- Replace one course in the core curriculum (e.g., the junior seminar or a foundation requirement);
- Increase the flat-rate cost range from 12-18 credits to 12-19 credits;
- Rethink the entire UG curriculum, so that the e-portfolio is at its center, touching the major and the core in fully integrated ways.

In Conclusion: A successful e-portfolio system depends on the enthusiastic support of faculty and staff. Fairly compensating faculty advisors is essential, since it is they who can best assess the portfolio’s content, and it is they who will establish a working relationship with our students in their chosen majors. However, the above model is designed as a conversation starter and provides only a rough estimate of potential costs. It does not intend to prescribe what the portfolio system might look like, in the end. In fact, the BTC is committed to a 2 to 4 year pilot of the e-portfolio system, so that its design and support can be closely monitored, revised, and/or changed as needed.