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PEAK: Professional Experience and Knowledge

Quality Enhancement Plan for Francis Marion University

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Approved by the Faculty

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I. Executive Summary

The Francis Marion University (FMU) Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), Professional Experience and Knowledge (PEAK), is the result of a broad-based, campus-wide effort to develop a long-range strategy for improving student learning. The QEP builds on the successful Ready to Experience Applied Learning (REAL) program that was initiated in 2008 at FMU. While the REAL program has provided students with a rich array of experiential learning opportunities, the new program, PEAK, will focus on professionalism. REAL broadens students' perspectives, largely through travel opportunities; PEAK will foster skills and experiences that are attractive to employers. PEAK will not replace the REAL program. Instead, it will provide a necessary complement, one that will help students transition from school to careers.

PEAK was developed based on extensive research as well as on input from university faculty, students, and stakeholders. Instrumental in the development process were two surveys distributed to faculty and students that gathered information about the value and benefits of professionalization activities. A literature review also has helped to pinpoint the benefits of professional experience as it pertains specifically to FMU students, taking into account their particular demographic characteristics.

The program's goals involve students understanding how academic learning can be applied in professional contexts, developing students' career-readiness skills, and increasing opportunities for internships and other professional experiences. PEAK will develop students' "soft" skills such as etiquette, interpersonal communication, resume building, interviewing, professional appearance, and networking. The PEAK program will address these needs through non-traditional, out-of-the-classroom experiences. The program goals will be measured through both internal and external assessments that evaluate how students and employers regard the provided experiences.

FMU has devoted significant resources to supporting the QEP, including allocating funds for the program and creating organizational structures to disburse these funds in the form of PEAK grants. As recommended by the PEAK Committee, which will be formed in Spring 2018, the Provost will award grants to individual faculty members and departments to support professionalization activities for students. Starting in Fall 2018, faculty members and departments will apply for these grants to conduct nontraditional learning activities that support the PEAK program learning objectives. The administration has earmarked $65,000 for the academic year 2018-2019, which will increase to $100,000 for the academic year 2019-2020. It is estimated that $30,000 will be added to the fund each year for the following 3 years 2020-2023. Of the $65,000 first year funding, $7,500 will be set aside for a total of five $1,500 Departmental Planning Grants to jumpstart the process of creating new PEAK program activities.

In summary, Francis Marion University has developed PEAK, a Quality Enhancement Plan that demonstrates institutional capability for initiating, implementing, completing, and assessing professionalization activities for students. Overall, PEAK will improve students' career-readiness through expanding students' knowledge of their intended professions and enhancing their professional skills.

II. Introduction

Among the many challenges facing today's university graduates, none is more urgent than transitioning from student to worker. Many recent university graduates have spent almost their entire lives in educational settings. Those who have worked have often done so in environments and managerial cultures that have neither valued nor fostered the professional skills and dispositions necessary for later success. As a result, students graduate knowing how to achieve within a classroom but have little understanding of how to transfer their knowledge to the workplace. These students are often ill-prepared for the interview process and unaware of the expectations of future supervisors and co-workers.

These dynamics are especially acute for students graduating from regional institutions, such as Francis Marion University, that serve large numbers of first-generation students and students from economically depressed regions. Not only have these students had fewer opportunities for part-time and summer employment, they have also frequently grown up without appropriate role models to teach them the expected mores of professional life. Compounding their struggle, these same students often lack the financial resources needed to take advantage of internship opportunities, especially those that involve travel and temporary relocation.

For many years, Francis Marion University has recognized these challenges and has sought to address them at both the program and university level. In addition to an abundant array of internship and service-learning opportunities, departments have hosted dress and etiquette dinners, job fairs, and mock interviews. Recognizing the importance of early intervention, the university has created a Center of Excellence for College and Career Readiness. More recently, FMU has combined its vibrant career-develop center with its new Center for Academic Success and Advising. This important restructuring encourages students to begin planning their

transition from student to professional life early in their university career, a change that promises not only to improve retention and graduation rates, but also employment prospects.

The university's new Quality Enhancement Plan, Professional Experience and Knowledge (PEAK) builds upon these initiatives by providing the resources needed by our most economically and socially challenged students. Much like the university's successful Ready to Experience Applied Learning (REAL) program, PEAK will disburse funds through small grants approved by a faculty committee. These funds will be used to support professionalization activities, including but not limited to subsidizing internships programs, establishing professional outreach activities, providing speakers and workshop facilitators, and funding student/faculty travel to professional workshops and conferences.

As demonstrated throughout this document, the PEAK program has been designed cooperatively with input from faculty, students, and administrators. The program responds to a recognized need and is consistent with the university mission and strategic plan. PEAK also includes a comprehensive assessment process, which will make it sustainable through continuous improvement.

III. QEP Development Process

In fall 2016, the President and Provost created the QEP Steering Committee and charged it with the responsibility of developing a QEP concept for presentation to the institutional community. Composed of six faculty members from diverse disciplines, the Steering Committee took into account the FMU Mission Statement, the FMU Strategic Plan, recommendations from the SACSCOC Leadership Team, and significant issues of longstanding concern to the institution.

From fall 2016 through fall 2017, members of the QEP Steering Committee gathered data and formulated drafts of a QEP focused on professionalization.

Studies have demonstrated the need for workplace skills that fall outside traditional academic curricula. A frequently cited definition of career readiness from the Association for Career and Technical Education posits that students need to apply core academic knowledge "to concrete situations in order to function in the workplace and in routine daily activities" (Lockard & Wolf, 2012). This same definition calls attention to the importance of "*employability skills* (such as critical thinking and responsibility) . . . and *technical, job-specific skills* related to a specific career pathway" (Carnevale, Smith, & Strohl, 2010). Subsequent studies have shown these skills to be especially important for African-American students, who comprise approximately 50% of the FMU student body (Lippman, Atienza, Rivers, & Keith, 2008).

In developing the QEP proposal, the committee considered Francis Marion University's mission, which recognizes the significance of both traditional and non-traditional instruction. In particular, the committee considered how the mission places importance on "out-of-the-classroom experience" (Francis Marion University, 2017). The committee noted that the University's strategic plan similarly articulates the need to "provide opportunities for students to develop interpersonal and leadership skills" and establishes a goal of increasing "opportunities for student involvement within business, governmental, and public organizations" (Francis Marion University, 2012).

From the beginning of the QEP process, the committee sought to make QEP development activities as inclusive and transparent as possible. The committee identified several methods to identify potential stakeholders in such a program and to solicit input from both students and faculty. As the proposal was formed, committee materials have been made public on a university website. This inclusivity was furthered by open forums designed to gather faculty and staff input. In addition, to document wide-based support for a new professionalization initiative, the QEP Steering Committee surveyed faculty and students across all university departments

about the perceived importance of student professionalization activities, with special emphasis on the value of internships. Two online surveys were designed to acquire information from ~~both~~ students and faculty. Faculty and students were notified numerous times in the hopes that a cross-section of the disciplines on campus would be represented within the bounds of the surveys.

Student Survey

The student survey was hosted on Google Forms and distributed via web link posted on the Blackboard landing page. Faculty members were asked, both via email and in person at faculty meetings, to encourage their students to fill out the survey. Approximately 3074 students viewed the Blackboard announcement that asked them to complete the survey (Petrush, personal communication, October 12, 2017).

Students responded to questions that spanned three general areas of inquiry. These sets of questions sampled student interest in internships and other professionalization activities, gathered data on professionalization experiences that students already had completed, and collected students' opinions about the perceived value and logistical feasibility of these experiences. Full survey results may be viewed in Appendix C.

Demographics and Interest

The first set of questions gathered demographic data about respondents, including current class standing, major, minor, and collateral areas of study, gender, and age group. Next, this grouping of questions asked students to identify whether or not their plan of study requires an internship, student teaching experience, or other field experience, and then asked if students would still be interested in such an experience even if it were not required by their plan of study. Students were asked to evaluate how prepared they are to make the transition from college to the

workplace. They also were asked to indicate their level of interest in activities that would help them transition from school to a career.

Students from across all class standings and departments responded to the survey. The participants also reflected the gender, age, racial and ethnic demographics of the student population. Almost three-quarters of respondents indicated that they would be or might be interested in an internship, student teaching, or field experience—even if their program or plan of study did not require it.

When asked about the transition from school to the workplace, most respondents indicated that they feel a neutral level of preparedness or that they feel somewhat prepared. Approximately 45% of respondents feel prepared or mostly prepared to make the transition from school to work; however, around 20% of respondents felt unprepared to make the transition. Students overwhelmingly demonstrated that they were very interested in activities that would help them to transition from school to career.

Completed Professionalization Experiences

The next set of questions gathered information on already-completed internships, student teaching experiences, or other field experiences. Questions in this section asked details about these completed experiences, including whether the experience was required, paid, and which organization or company hosted it. Additional questions gathered data on when the experience was completed, how many hours total were spent on it, and how many hours per week were spent at the internship/field experience. Students then rated their overall perceptions of benefits derived from the experience, how it contributed to career decisions, how well it helped with job prospects, and how well the experience aligned with content learned in their classes.

Of those students who reported having already completed an internship (around 20% of survey respondents), a strong majority indicated that they found the experience beneficial and that it helped with career decisions. About twice as many students had internships, teaching, or field experiences that were unpaid compared to those that were paid. Most students completed their internships in Fall or Spring semesters, with less than a quarter completing them during the Summer. Approximately half reported that their internship was required by their program of study. Respondents reported that these experiences improved their job prospects and aligned with the content that they had learned in their university classes.

Value and Feasibility of Professionalization Activities

The third set of questions solicited students' opinions on internships. These questions asked students to evaluate how well internships would help to prepare them for their future careers, how easily students would be able to complete internships during the summer, and how easily an unpaid internship could be completed during summer versus during fall or spring semesters. This section also asked students to give free responses about the value of internships. They were asked to describe the educational value of internships in their own words, identify companies or organizations where an internship would be desirable, identify the main challenges or barriers to completing an internship, and describe the types of activities that would help them to make the transition from school to career.

The results of this set of questions revealed that students perceive internships to be extremely beneficial. However, students also perceive unpaid internships as difficult to work into their schedules. While nearly 40% of students thought that internships were necessary to prepare them for their careers, most students did not think that they could easily complete unpaid internships. More than half of respondents indicated that they would only be able to work an internship during the summer if they were paid. In addition, almost half of the respondents

disagreed with the statement that an unpaid internship works best for them during Fall or Spring semesters. Most students reported that their main challenges or barriers to completing an internship were time and money.

When asked what types of activities would help to prepare them for a career, around a third of students responded that internships would be helpful. Regarding additional professionalization activities, more than 20% of students thought that workshops would be beneficial. Other activities found to be valuable included mentorships or job shadowing, career fairs with local companies, simulation labs, networking events, hands-on experiences involving trips to jobs, more field experiences, mock job days, and preparatory programs.

As a whole, the student survey responses suggest that students find internships extremely valuable in helping them to prepare for their future careers; however, they need to receive pay in order to complete an internship at any time during the academic year.

Faculty Survey

The purpose of the faculty survey was to gather faculty input and assess opinions on student career preparedness and professionalization activities. The questions centered on four main areas: student career preparedness, faculty resources, characteristics of internship programs, and the perceived benefits of these programs. Of the approximately 350 faculty members at FMU, 61 participated in the survey. Participants represented a diverse range of departments and schools on campus. Survey results may be viewed in Appendix D.

Student Career Preparedness

In this section of the survey, faculty were asked how prepared their students are to make the transition from college to the workplace, what they perceived to be the main barriers for this transition, and the types of activities that would help students to make this transition.

Less than a third of faculty respondents reported that their students were extremely prepared or somewhat prepared for the transition from college to the workplace; most responded neutrally, indicating that their students were neither prepared nor unprepared. Around 13% of faculty evaluated students as not prepared or less than prepared to transition to the workplace. Faculty cited a range of challenges or barriers to the transition, such as students' lack of motivation or work ethic, not knowing how to search for jobs, lack of professional skills/soft skills, few networking or job opportunities, unfocused career goals, and poor writing skills. When asked which types of activities would help students transition from school to career, faculty reported that more internships were needed, in addition to activities including opportunities to hear speakers talk about their careers, mentorship in areas of interest, job shadowing, professional etiquette instruction, opportunities to attend conventions, professional development workshops on a range of career-related topics, working for real clients with classroom case projects, career fairs, and mock interviews.

Faculty Resources

Next, faculty were asked to indicate whether or not they had sufficient resources to develop professionalization activities, what types of resources would assist them in providing professionalization activities, how they would use funding, and the sorts of activities that already exist in their department or school to help students transition from school to the workplace.

Of the 56 faculty who responded to the question, more than 40% felt that they do not have sufficient resources to develop professionalization activities. Around a third of respondents had a neutral response to the question, and another third indicated that they do have sufficient resources. Faculty responded most frequently that funding and time are the two most important resources that would help them to provide more professionalization activities. A range of ideas

were suggested for potential activities. If additional funding were available, faculty reported interest in using these funds to pay student stipends, take students to professionalization activities, plan and host events or speakers on campus, and develop spaces on campus dedicated to these activities.

Ongoing, established department professionalization activities mentioned by faculty included internship and student teaching programs, externships, clinical learning opportunities, mock interviews, hosting speakers and workshops, specialized courses, independent research courses, capstone courses, field trips, etiquette dinners, specialized programs and projects, trips to conferences, and activities with related membership organizations.

Characteristics of Internships

Faculty were also asked about the qualities of internship, student teaching, or field experiences within specific majors, including whether their majors had such a program, whether the program was required, how often students receive pay or course credit, and in which semesters students typically participate.

Over 90% of respondents indicated that their majors had an internship or field experience program. Of these, almost 60% reported that the program was required. However, nearly 35% of these experiences are reported as unpaid. Only around 10% of respondents thought that students always receive pay for their internship or field experience. Another roughly 30% reported that students sometimes receive pay. Many respondents (around 25%) did not know whether or not students received pay. The majority of faculty responding indicated that students always receive course credit for their field experience (around 57%), while another nearly 29% reported that students sometimes receive course credit. Only 10% of faculty thought that students received no credit, and around 4% did not know. Respondents indicated that spring is

the most popular time for students to engage in internships, field experiences, or student teaching, followed by fall, and then summer.

Benefits of Professionalization Experiences

In the final survey section, faculty were asked to rate the perceived benefits of student internships, field experiences, or student teaching. They were asked to describe the educational value of these activities and to share concerns about the challenges or barriers that prevent students from completing them. The survey also asked faculty to share resources with the QEP Steering Committee.

All but one faculty member completed the corresponding question evaluating internships, student teaching, or field experiences as extremely beneficial or beneficial for students. The educational value of these experiences was frequently described as "extremely important" or "extremely valuable." According to faculty members, these experiences help students understand the real world, experience life in a business setting instead of just an academic setting, understand the real-world contexts of academic theories, build their network of contacts, and apply what they have learned. Faculty thought that the biggest barriers and challenges to participation would include students not having the time and money to afford an unpaid internship, difficulty finding opportunities with industry employers, lack of transportation, scheduling difficulties, and students not being mature or dependable enough. A few respondents provided references to professional organizations in their fields or said that they would share materials with the committee.

Overall, the results of the survey demonstrate that faculty members are committed to helping students achieve successful transitions from college to career through professionalization activities. Faculty members already engage in a wealth of different professionalization activities that benefit students, and they also have excellent ideas for developing additional opportunities.

However, the main obstacle to this development is a lack of time and money. Faculty members also recognize that unpaid internships or field experiences pose an enormous obstacle for students' professional growth.

History of the QEP

The PEAK program is the latest manifestation of FMU's longstanding commitment to the Quality Enhancement Process (QEP). From the time that SAC-COC created the QEP requirement, FMU has devoted significant resources toward developing meaningful enhancement plans that are closely tied to the university mission to provide tangible benefits for students. In the fall of 2007, FMU approved its first QEP, an innovative program designed to expand experiential learning opportunities for students. Originally titled "Expanding Student Horizons Through Real World Connections," the program has been renamed Ready to Experience Applied Learning (REAL) has expanded significantly over the years and has become a key component of the university's educational culture.

Like the PEAK program, FMU's original QEP responded to the particular dynamics of the student body. FMU remains committed to its original mission: providing baccalaureate-level education to the people of South Carolina, especially those from the historically underserved Pee Dee region. The university remains enormously proud of the fact that a large percentage of FMU students are SC residents (approximately 95% in any given year), which is the highest of any of the universities within the state. Consistent with the demographics of our service region, many of the university's students come from rural and economically depressed areas. As a result, many FMU students have not traveled far from home, have never been to a large metropolitan city, and have not experienced workplaces, cultural experiences, or large-scale events that might be typical experiences for students at larger universities.

In the ten years since its implementation, the REAL program has provided opportunities for these students to travel (often overseas), to work with faculty mentors on research projects and ~~to~~ present their findings at national and international conferences, and to experience artistic and cultural events that would otherwise be unavailable to them. Recognizing the value of these experiences, the university has steadily increased funding for the REAL program; the faculty committee that controls the budget has worked tirelessly to fund as many opportunities for students as possible.

Not surprisingly, faculty have responded well to the opportunity to provide these experiential learning activities. During the 2015-2016 academic year, applications were received by faculty requesting $268,400 to provide learning activities for 1176 students.

Without question, the REAL program has proven transformational for many of the university's students and has provided important opportunities for curricular development. For these reasons, the university remains committed to sustaining and expanding the program. The university recognizes, however, that no single program can address all of the needs of our student body. The REAL program does an excellent job of providing travel opportunities ~~for~~ cultural and intellectual enrichment. As valuable as these experiences are, they do not directly help students make the transition from the university to the workforce. As a result, the university has recognized a need for a new program, one that will complement the REAL program by addressing the students' need for greater professionalization.

While this seems to be a straightforward idea, the implementation of such a program requires careful consideration of a number of factors. First, it is imperative that any new program be evaluated to determine if it will benefit all students across campus; no QEP program should be implemented that unintentionally favors one set of students over another. Second, it is crucial that faculty see the need for any new program and will support the initiative and be willing to

submit applications. Third, the program must be designed to provide students with opportunities that could occur either on campus under the tutelage of a professor or off campus with a local business or other entity with which professors can interact and receive feedback.

In the fall of 2016, faculty members from across the campus were assembled and tasked with beginning the preliminary work of identifying whether a workplace-readiness program would comprise an appropriate Quality Enhancement Plan. The QEP committee met several times during the ensuing semesters to begin a logical, methodical, and orderly approach to assessing the viability of a QEP based on internships and other transitional experiences.

Early in the process, the QEP committee reviewed the previous applications for the REAL program to discover if there had been consistent interest in funding professionalization activities. From the Spring 2008 semester to the Spring 2016 semester, there were 33 REAL applications that specifically mentioned the word "internship" or some variation of the word in the application. These were all short-term projects for students, and the amount of money that could be paid to students was extremely limited because of the scope of the REAL program and the amount of available funds for any given grant. Based on the results of the review of the past REAL grant applications, the committee deemed it prudent to pursue further investigation into whether a new program with professionalization opportunities as its focus would benefit students and faculty at FMU.

IV. Program and Student Learning Outcomes

The QEP Steering Committee created the following Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) that would be used for the development and creation of PEAK activities and programs.

Program Learning Outcomes

The PEAK program will provide experiential learning opportunities to:

- Increase students' understanding of how academic learning can be applied in professional contexts.
- Allow students to acquire career-readiness skills, such as interpersonal communication, resume-building, interviewing, networking, professional appearance, and etiquette.
- Increase students' opportunities for internships and other professional experiences.

Student Learning Outcomes

After engaging in PEAK program activities, students will demonstrate that they:

- Understand how the skills and knowledge that they have developed as students can be applied in work environments.
- Can define common practices and typical job responsibilities within their chosen field.
- Have increased self-confidence while engaging in professional activities, such as job interviews.
- Have developed connections with potential employers.

The committee designed these outcomes so that they would be universally applicable to all schools, departments, and programs. They were developed as a result of an extensive literature review and make an effort towards reflecting best practices as garnered from the body of research on professionalization activities.

V. Literature Review

Although the PEAK program originated with the identified needs of our students and has been carefully designed to work in conjunction with FMU's academic programs, it has also been shaped by a thorough review of scholarship related to employment trends, experiential learning,

professional development engagement, and student internships. Incorporating many of the best practices that have been developed across the profession over many years, PEAK is at once institutionally specific, theoretically grounded, and workably designed.

Institutional Response to Employment Trends

In the first decade of the twenty-first century, the Bureau of Labor Statistics projected that the United States economy would add almost twenty-one million new jobs between 2010 and 2020. While most occupations were expected to grow, the greatest growth was expected, and has proven to be, within "healthcare, personal care, and community and social service occupations" (Lockard & Wolf, 2012). For many years, Francis Marion University has actively responded to these dynamics, and as a result, it is well positioned to prepare students for emerging career opportunities. Over the past decade, for example, the university has significantly expanded its offerings in a number of healthcare fields. To complement the burgeoning nursing program, the university has added a physician assistant program and doctor of nursing practice degree. The university is currently working toward programs in speech pathology and occupational therapy. The university has also added a new undergraduate program in healthcare administration and proposed an undergraduate major in healthcare informatics, which is currently undergoing the approval process.

New Pedagogical Models

Additionally, the university has strengthened its undergraduate offerings in sociology, psychology, education, and nonprofit management. These curricular initiatives have been developed in response to local and national employment trends and reflect the university's profound commitment to preparing students for the careers and professions of the future. Along with new curricula, the university has sought to incorporate effective, engaging pedagogy, which

includes such approaches as flipped classroom models, decentered instruction, inquiry-based learning, and service learning. Overall, these initiatives have grown from a recognition that traditional classroom learning cannot entirely prepare today's students for tomorrow's workplace. Both research and experience suggest that students need instructional environments that combine high expectations and academic rigor with cooperative and collaborative learning opportunities.

Need for Professional Learning in Changing Workplace

In addition to understanding a discipline and mastering a variety of technologies, students must gain the skills necessary to work within organizations and managerial approaches that are less hierarchical and structured than they were in the past. In order to be successful in the emerging workplace, students need professional and interpersonal skills that remain outside the scope of traditional classroom learning. Experiential learning, which includes internships, class projects with companies, and workshops that teach students to dress professionally, interview effectively, and expand networking opportunities, are critical for success after graduation. These activities may also include opportunities to earn professional certifications while engaging in more traditional classroom activities. Class projects with companies help students apply theories and allow them to see the immediate relevance of classroom lectures. These projects help students assimilate and absorb the information provided in the classroom and transfer that knowledge to other classes and contexts.

Students also need to have cultural humility in the modern work environment where fellow workers and customers bring with them a variety of expectations, customs, and perspectives. Classroom learning on cross-cultural awareness and a global outlook needs to be supplemented by experience and working in interdisciplinary and multicultural environments.

Moreover, the changing nature of our nation's work culture demands that students acquire these skills before entering the workforce. Fewer and fewer workers will have neither the opportunity nor the inclination to complete their careers within a single corporation. With mobility, whether compelled or voluntary, comes expectations of adaptability and readiness. Carnevale, Smith, and Strohl's 2010 study, "Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements Through 2018," has proven prescient. Not only do the authors predict the importance of college-level education for career success, they also capture the dynamics of change that define modern corporate life:

> The day when people left high school to go to work in the local industry and then worked their way up is disappearing. Starting out, straight from high school, on the loading dock or in the mail room and climbing to the C EO's corner office is no longer an option. People do not go to work in industries any more. They get educated or trained, go to work in occupations, and progress in an occupational hierarchy. (Carnevale et al., 2010)

Although their use of the terms *industry* and *occupation* might be confusing, Carnevale et al.'s (2010) point is that today's workplace requires considerable flexibility. Gone are the days that an entry-level worker could advance within the ranks of a local industry, learning its corporate culture and expectations along the way. Instead, workers will, in all probability, move within various industries, each of which will expect them to arrive ready to function and solve problems within the new professional environment. For higher education, these dynamics create an undeniable urgency. Since workers will have fewer opportunities to learn the professional skills needed for a particular industry through sustained employment, educators must produce graduates who are already professionally proficient and adaptable to a variety of industries.

Career Readiness Studies

To meet these challenges, higher education should enhance curriculum with opportunities for professional development. Specifically, students need to learn the "soft skills" that are essential for success. In this regard, the abundant literature related to college and career readiness becomes particularly instructive. For example, Lippman, et al. (2008) identifies five competencies for success that transcend discipline: physical development, psychological development, social development, cognitive development, and spiritual development. Some of these competencies (physical and spiritual development, for example) may be beyond the scope of a public university. One competency, cognitive development, is already central to the academic curriculum. Psychological and social development--as crucial for workplace success as they are for college readiness-- remain largely unaddressed by collegiate academic programs. In large measure, PEAK is designed specifically to address this deficiency.

Recognizing the importance of psychological development, Lippman, et al. (2008) demonstrates the importance of self-esteem and argue that "positive mental health," which includes understanding "self-management and learning . . . motivational strategies," is a prerequisite for success. Psychological development, however, goes beyond matters of self-image and self-care, and includes qualities, such as "resilience and flexibility" that are more immediately applicable to the workplace. As Lippman, et al. (2008) conclude, "a strong work ethic is key to workplace readiness, including conscientiousness, reliability, professionalism." Discussing the importance of these issues in the context of establishing the university's Center of Excellence of College and Career Readiness, the FMU faculty has recognized that classroom learning alone cannot always provide the kinds of psychological development required within professional environments. In order for our students to be competitive, the university needs to find collegiate-

level analogs to the successful curricular and extracurricular programs the Center of Excellence has developed for younger students.

Similarly, in their discussion of social development, Lippman, et al. (2008) notes that "social competence emerges as the most visible quality needed for success across all fields, although it is considered less important in the college readiness research." Examining this idea, the university discovered, once again, that by itself a traditional college curriculum could do little to help students master necessary skills. To be sure, the university provides an appropriate emphasis on communication skills, largely through the general education requirements of writing and speech, but does not do as well in teaching students how resolve conflict, act appropriately for a specific context, and work within "cross-cultural" environments.

The research also suggests that the need for these psychological and social skills is especially acute for low-income and minority students, who have "more limited access to financial resources and social capital than do their higher income peers" (Lippman, et al., 2008). The findings of the Alfred P. Sloan Study of Youth and Social Development are especially informative in this regard (Schneider, 2013). The researchers report that "mentorship," a type of relationship closer to that of a supervisor or senior colleague with a coworker than that of a teacher with a student, "can improve career-related efficacy and perhaps help to prepare racial minority youth for the racially discriminatory career barriers that still exist" (qtd. in Lippman, et al., 2008). This conclusion is especially significant for an institution, such as Francis Marion University that serves large percentages of first-generation and African-American students.

Indeed, the benefits of work experience, which would be available through professionalization activities such as internships, go beyond the psychological and social development of the student and extend to the way job applicants are evaluated by employers. As Lippman et al. (2008) note, "according to two large-scale surveys of American employers, having previous paid

work experience was the only characteristic consistently ranked as one of the three more important reasons an applicant was hired or rejected." Because student-age minorities are less likely than their peers "to have jobs that provide them with skills, training, or opportunities for advancement," even those who find employment experience "barriers for the later transition to full-time work" (Lippman et al., 2008). These dynamics are especially hard hitting for students from economically struggling regions, such as the service area for Francis Marion University.

Collegiate-Level Professionalization Studies

Studies that consider college-age students exclusively reach similar conclusions. In a study that has become the foundation for much subsequent scholarship, Knouse, Tanner, and Harris (1999) established that professional activities, specifically internships, provide an array of tangible benefits for students, including "better time management, better communication skills, better self-discipline, heightened initiative and an overall better self-concept." These findings correlate closely to those reported in career and college readiness research cited above. In each case, students not only develop skills but also enhance their psychological and social development in ways that are immediately applicable to the workplace.

Knouse, et al. (1999) have also found that skills learned through internship experiences improve the students' subsequent classroom performance. Equally important, the experiences "allow students to directly access job sources" and "impress potential employers." Unsurprisingly, the studies cited by Knouse, et al. (1999) conclude that "students who had internships found jobs more quickly upon graduation than students who did not have internships." A subsequent study by Callanan and Benzing (2004) largely supports these findings. Tracking the progress of 163 graduates of an Atlantic-region public university, the investigators identify a positive correlation between completing an internship and "finding career-oriented employment" (Callanan & Benzing, 2004).

Studies that look specifically at summer internship experiences—a key component of PEAK--reach similar conclusions. For example, a recent study by Gale Horton Gray (2015), which focuses primarily on African-American engineering students, concludes that summer internships provide benefits that exceed those of other summer work experiences. These benefits include "the first-hand experience of professionalism, the ability of making classroom learning [applicable in a] work environment, the creative thinking of interns for culture, and wide profession contact connections" within the students' "field of expertise" (Gay 2015).

Gray's study, again supporting the claims of research in college and career readiness, shows the tangible advantages of professional engagement for African-American students. Later studies reach similar conclusions for other groups that have been historically underserved and subject to discrimination. Burgstahler and Bellman's (2009) study for the *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation* examines the benefits of internship experiences for male and female students of various races with disabilities, both visible and invisible. Although the authors note distinctions in the perceived improvements of different groups, students who participated in internships "reported gains in their motivation to work toward a career, knowledge of career options, job skills, ability to work with supervisors and co-workers, and knowledge of accommodation strategies" (Burgstahler & Bellman, 2009).   These findings also support the idea that internship benefits are not discipline specific, but extend across the entire university curriculum. In designing their study, Burgstahler and Bellman (2009) examined students in a number of fields, including "computing, biology, engineering, research, administration, and health science," all of whom benefitted from workplace experience. Particularly valuable for FMU's QEP is Burgstahler and Bellman's (2009) discussion of "lessons learned," which will serve as a foundation of the best practices for assisting students with disabilities.

Burgstahler and Bellman's (2009) findings have been both reinforced and expanded in Bellman, Burgstahler, and Ladner's (2014) work, which examines the experiences of students with disabilities who participated in a variety of "work-based learning experiences such as industry and research internships, career development activities, job shadows, field trips, and mock interviews." The researchers discovered that these professionalization activities provided participants with a range of benefits, including "increased employment success, motivation to work toward a career, knowledge about careers and the workplace, job related skills, ability to work with supervisors and coworkers, skills in self-advocating for accommodations, and perceived career options" (Bellman, et al., 2014). Two ideas from Bellman, et al. (2014) have been particularly important for the development of PEAK. First, the study reinforces the connections identified earlier between professionalization activities and psychological and social development. Second, the study demonstrates that students can develop applicable professional skills through a variety of activities. While many studies have shown the importance of internships, Bellman, et al. (2014) call attention to the efficacy of activities such as mock interviews that, while outside traditional classroom learning, may not necessitate outside partners (Bellman, et al., 2014).

Benefits for Underserved Populations

The research demonstrates clearly that students, especially students from the demographics that define the FMU student body, benefit tremendously from professional experience. Internships, which serve as immediate venues for professionalization, are especially valuable, perhaps even more valuable than the student's choice of major. In a study for *Labour Economics*, Nunley, Pugh, Romero, and Seals (2016) used data from an extensive resume audit "to estimate the impact of particular college majors and internship experiences on employment prospects." Surprisingly, they found little evidence that "business degrees improve

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employment prospects," even when they limited their study to "business-related job openings" (Nunley, et al., 2016). In contrast, internships experiences proved to be tremendously beneficial, increasing the students' interview rate by 14%; surprisingly, the largest returns for internship experiences are realized by "non-business majors" (Nunley, et al., 2016). For FMU's purposes, the value of these findings is not to deemphasize the importance of the academic major, but rather to emphasize the efficacy of professionalization activities across the spectrum of majors.

The work of Nunley, et al. (2016) also includes a useful caution for an institution committed to helping an entire student body. Their research suggests that the greatest benefits from internships are realized by "applicants with high academic ability," a conclusion that is not as surprising as it is instructive (Nunley, et al., 2016). It reminds institutions that serve students with diverse levels of preparation and ability, such as FMU, that internships alone are not a panacea and that a successful QEP will need to carefully craft professionalization activities so that they will provide advantages for all students.

Value for Multiple Constituents

Nunley et al.'s (2016) concessions notwithstanding, internships remain an excellent way of helping students transition from the university to the workplace. They also provide value for other constituents. As Sanahuja-Velez and Ribes-Giner (2015) conclude, internships comprise a "win-win situation" for three stakeholders: "students, employers, and higher education." Looking specifically at healthcare related fields, the fastest growing field of study at FMU, Anderson, Pulich, and Sisak (2002) reach a similar conclusion: "Internships are advantageous to both healthcare organizations and students." More specifically, students provide a cost-effective way of "completing meaningful backlogged projects" (Anderson, Pulich, & Sisak, 2002). The internship program also becomes a valuable recruiting tool, benefitting both the

organization and the student participants, and a means of building a partnership between the healthcare organization and the university.

Anderson, Pulich, and Sisak (2002) are careful to add, however, that like all professionalization activities, internships include potential drawbacks. For the cooperating organization, the downsides include "increased managerial time" and those issues that accompany a reliance on a "contingent workforce" (Anderson, Pulich, & Sisak, 2002). For the student, a principal shortcoming is an internship experience that is limited to the "assignment of routine tasks only" (Anderson, Pulich, & Sisak, 2002). To be sure, any workplace experience will be valuable and will assist with the student's psychological and social development. In order to be optimal, however, the internship must allow the student not only to take on increasing responsibility, but also be assigned tasks that demand newly acquired skills. Universities cannot expect students to receive the best outcomes from internships or other workplace experiences unless these activities are carefully planned and managed and ~~unless~~ faculty members, students and cooperating organizations are all committed to achieving clearly articulated goals and maintaining appropriately high expectations. As Anderson, Pulich, and Sisak (2002) conclude, "what identifies a quality internship, as it does other experiential 'high impact practices,' is the degree of faculty or professional staff direction and support and support of the process and the expectation for student self-study that together enable the intern to 'learn by doing' and to reflect upon that 'doing' to achieve specific learning outcomes." These conclusions are consistent with the findings of earlier studies, including those by AAC&U (2008) and Kuhl (2008) (as cited in Anderson, Pulich, & Sisak, 2002). They are also consistent with the practices of FMU's existing REAL program, which not only provides opportunities for experiential learning, but also requires students to reflect meaningfully upon their experiences. As indicated below, reflection is also a key component of the PEAK program.

Drawing upon the work of Sweitzer and King (2014), Inkster and Ross (1995; 1998), and Hesser (2014), Anderson, Pulich, and Sisak (2002) clarify their position by noting a useful distinction between a proper internship experience and less-structured volunteer work:

> What distinguishes an intern from a volunteer is the intentional learning shaped by experiential pedagogy. Assessment feedback for student learning and the clarification of the relationship of an internship experience to it specific learning outcomes are essential. Additionally, the development of this experiential learning environment provided by the internship is the responsibility of the student, the student's academic program, the institution, and the internship site partner. Each shares in the responsibility to ensure that the experience addresses intentional and collaboratively framed learning outcomes that are sufficiently rigorous to warrant academic credit or to ensure personal developmental outcomes. (Anderson, Pulich, & Sisak, 2002)

This conclusion calls attention to the importance of ideas that have become foundational to experiential learning theory. Especially important are the idea of shared responsibility among all constituents and the articulation of clearly defined learning outcomes. In many ways, these ideas constitute best practices for professional engagement activities, as is discussed more fully below.

As indicated in the Executive Summary and Development Process sections, the PEAK program seeks to be both transformational and transitional. It has been designed to provide students with the psychological and social development needed to take academic knowledge and classroom skills to the workplace. In doing so, it will also broaden students' understandings of career options, strengthen their confidence, and fortify their commitment to their studies. In these ways, the program aims to do more than just professionalize students, but professionalization remains at its center. The extensive research on internships, workplace

experiences, and experiential learning suggests that FMU's new QEP will become especially important for the students the university is committed to serving. That same research establishes that ~~the~~ PEAK is built on a solid theoretical foundation. Moreover, the work of previous and current scholars provides abundant guidance on pitfalls to avoid and the best practices to incorporate. While the PEAK program, designed to address specific institutional needs and build upon established strengths, remains unique to FMU, it has also been shaped by a thorough review and careful consideration of available scholarship.

VI. Implementation

The implementation of the PEAK program will be accomplished through the continued commitment of the administration and faculty and the allocation of the resources necessary to ensure its success. In Spring 2018, a seven person committee will be formed as detailed later under organizational structure. Beginning Fall Semester 2018, grants will be available for individual faculty members and departments to support professionalization activities for students. Faculty members and departments will apply for these grants to conduct professionalization activities that support the program learning objectives of the PEAK program. These applications will be evaluated on a competitive basis as funds allow by the PEAK Committee who will then make recommendations to the Provost. The Provost will award the grants to individual faculty and/or departments based on the recommendations of the committee. Following the activities, faculty will file assessment reports with the School Dean or Department Chair, the PEAK Coordinator, and the Provost. Additionally, in an effort to springboard these types of activities, five departmental planning grants will be offered on a competitive basis. These planning grants will be used for professional development for faculty members within a department to increase motivation and competence in providing quality

experiences for students. The timeline, organizational structure, and resources for the

implementation of the PEAK program follow.

Timeline

Fall 2017

- Faculty forums held for feedback on the PEAK Proposal

- PEAK Proposal revised based on feedback

- Finalization of PEAK Proposal

- Approval of PEAK Proposal by institutional stakeholders

Spring 2018

- Submission of QEP (PEAK) to SACSCOC in January

- Creation of instruments and guidelines for faculty applications and Departmental
  Planning Grants

- Workshops conducted for Departmental Planning Grants

- Appointment of PEAK Coordinator (Chair)

- Appointment of PEAK Vice-Chair

- Election of PEAK Committee

Fall 2018

- Faculty and departments submit PEAK grant applications for Fall 2018, Spring 2019,
  and Summer 2019

- PEAK Committee evaluates grant applications based on established guidelines

- PEAK grants approved

- Faculty and departments implement PEAK learning activities

- Faculty and departments evaluate PEAK learning activities

- Faculty and departments submit evaluations to PEAK Coordinator and Provost

Spring 2019

- PEAK enters operational phase

- Continued workshops as needed

- Faculty and departments continue to submit PEAK grant applications

- Continued evaluation and approval of grant applications

- Continued implementation of PEAK learning activities

- Continued evaluation of PEAK learning activities

- PEAK performance assessed

- Assessment data filed with Provost, Deans and Chairs Committee, and PEAK Coordinator

- Improvements made based on analysis of assessment measures

Organizational Structure

The overall responsibility of the PEAK program lies with the Provost, who will be advised by a seven member PEAK Committee. The committee will be organized as follows: the PEAK Coordinator (Chair of PEAK Committee) will be appointed by the Provost; the Chair of the Faculty will appoint the Vice-Chair of the PEAK Committee; and seven other members of the committee will be elected by the faculty. One member from The School of Business, one member from The School of Education, one member from The School of Health Sciences, and four members from The College of Liberal Arts or Library will be elected.

The duties of the PEAK Coordinator and Committee will include the following:

1. Oversee the implementation of the PEAK program

2. Conduct workshops for faculty interested in applying for Departmental Planning Grants

3. Develop guidelines for allocating PEAK funds

4. Evaluate applications for Departmental Planning Grants

5. Evaluate faculty and departmental PEAK grant applications

6. Make recommendations to the Provost about the allocation of PEAK funds

7. Oversee assessment of the PEAK program

8. Write the annual PEAK (QEP) report

9. Provide assessment results to interested parties

10. Prepare the 5th year Impact Report

These roles may change with time and experience.

Resources

Financial and human resources have been allocated to the success of the PEAK program. The administration has earmarked $65,000 for the academic year 2018-2019, which will increase to $100,000 for the academic year 2019-2020. It is estimated that $30,000 will be added to the fund each year for the following 3 years 2020-2023. The PEAK Coordinator will have a reduced teaching load to allow time for program oversight.

Departmental Planning Grants

Of the $65,000 first year funding, $7,500 will be set aside for a total of five $1,500 Departmental Planning Grants. These grants will be awarded on a competitive basis by the Provost. The PEAK Committee will: provide guidelines for submission, develop guidelines for the allocation of funds, review submissions, and make recommendations to the Provost for grant approval.

VII. Assessment of the QEP

The PEAK Program will be assessed continuously to ensure that program and student learning outcomes are being met. Both internal and external assessments will be used to evaluate student and stakeholder value, and modifications will be made for improvements to the program based on the results of the assessment.

External Assessment

FMU participates each academic year in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). Selected items from the College Student Report are particularly relevant to the FMU QEP:

- Which of the following have you done or plan to do before you graduate:—Participate in an internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement?
- How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas—Acquiring job- or work-related knowledge and skills?

A contractual agreement with NSSE for Special Analysis of the College Student Report will provide for external data. The responses by FMU students who participated in PEAK program learning activities and/or internships will be compared to national NSSE norms. The responses to the selected items by FMU students who have not yet participated in PEAK program learning activities and/or internships will also be compared to national NSSE norms. Baseline data will be extracted from the 2016-2017 NSSE.

Internal Assessment

At the end of the fall and spring semesters, faculty who have utilized the PEAK program to offer nontraditional learning opportunities, professional development, and internships will capture

data using the College-to-Career Readiness Survey (see Appendix __). The survey allows for the provision of quantifiable results, as well as qualitative information addressed by the student. This information details the useful and transmittable skills provided by the learning opportunity, professional development, or internship from college to career. The faculty member will distribute the survey to his or her students involved in the nontraditional learning opportunities and activities through an online survey site often utilized by the university called Survey Monkey. Data will be collected from the site by the faculty member after the semester grades have been submitted. The results of the survey will be distributed to the Dean or Chair of the program/department, the QEP Coordinator, and the Provost.

To ensure that the opportunities funded by the PEAK program are seen as useful and transmittable from college to career not only by the students, but by the agency coordinator and/or prospective employer, data from the agency coordinator and/or prospective employer will also be captured for the fall and spring semesters. Three months after the semester's end, the Employee/Job Candidate Career Readiness Survey (see Appendix___) will be administered to the agency coordinator and/or the prospective employer. Faculty leading the nontraditional activities will collect the data from the survey through Survey Monkey, requesting the agency coordinator and/or prospective employer complete the survey. The faculty member will collect the data within the three-month period after the semester's end and provide the results of the survey to the Dean or Chair of the program/department, the QEP Coordinator, and the Provost.

Utilizing the Results of the Assessment

Using the descriptive information and the assessment data, the QEP Coordinator, along with the University Accreditation Committee, will analyze the effect of the QEP. The QEP Coordinator will prepare the annual QEP Report from data provided by both internal surveys and the NSSE survey. The report will focus on the effects of the nontraditional learning opportunities,

professional development, and internship opportunities made available through the PEAK program. It will also focus on the institutional progress toward the goals of the program—both the SLOs and PLOs—and evidence of improvements based on the data. Further, as different activities may meet individual SLOs and/or PLOs rather than all, the QEP Coordinator's annual report will determine whether all SLOs and/or PLOs are being met with the current funded activities. These findings will be made available by the QEP Coordinator to administrators and the general faculty, including key stakeholders: the Provost, the University Accreditation Committee, and School Deans and Department Chairs. The QEP Coordinator, along with the University Accreditation Committee, may submit to the faculty governance process proposals for improving the student learning experience. Any substantial changes to the QEP process must also undergo approval by faculty governance.

Faculty who serve as advisors for these nontraditional learning opportunities will make changes, based upon the QEP assessment data, to improve the effectiveness of the nontraditional programs they administer.

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X. APPENDICES

Appendix A: QEP Steering Committee

Marie DeVincenzo, Ph.D. (Chair), Associate Professor of Marketing

Philip Fulmer, Ph.D., Professor of Physics

Christopher Johnson, Ph.D., Professor of English and Director of the McNair Institute for Research and Service

Sarah Kershner, Ph.D., Assistant Professor and Director of Healthcare Administration

Christine Masters, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of English and Professional Writing Program Coordinator

Kimberly McCuiston, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Education, Co-Coordinator of the Elementary and Middle Level Education Programs, and Co-Coordinator of Teacher Cadets

Appendix B: Evaluation Instruments

College-to-Career Readiness Survey

1.   Because of this program, I understand how the skills and knowledge I've developed through my coursework can be applied in a work environment.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

2.   Because of this program, I am able to define the common practices and typical job responsibilities within my field of study.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

3.   Because of this program, I am confident when/if I engage in professional activities, such as job interviews.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

4.   Because of this program, I have developed connections with potential employers.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

5.   How do you see yourself utilizing the skills and knowledge you've developed through your coursework in a work environment?

6.   Are there any skills or knowledge acquired in your coursework that you are unsure how they will apply in a work environment?

7.   What common practices and typical job responsibilities within your field do you feel confident in knowing?

8.   What common practices and typical job responsibilities within your field do you struggle with the most?

9.   When you engage in professional activities, such as job interviews, how do you feel? Why?

10. What could be done by FMU to help build your confidence when you engage in professional activities, such as job interviews?

11. Do you feel that you have developed adequate connections with potential employers? Why or why not?

Demographic Information:

12. Select the gender with which you identify.

    Male   Female   Prefer Not to Respond

13. Select the ethnicity with which you identify.

    White/Caucasian   Black/African American   Native American
    Hispanic   Asian   Prefer not to Respond

14. What is your current major?_____

15. Select your current age group:

    17-23   24-30   31-40   41-50   51-60   61-+

Employee/Job Candidate Career Readiness Survey

1.   The employee is able to transition the skills and knowledge they developed as students into the work environment.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

2.   The employee can define the common practices and typical job responsibilities required by his/her field of study.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

3.   The employee demonstrates confidence while engaging in professional activities, such as job interviews.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

4.   Prior to employment, the employee was an intern in my company.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

5.   Which skills and knowledge developed as a student does the employee transition well into the work environment?

6.   Which skills and knowledge developed as a student does the employee struggle with in transitioning into the work environment?

7.   With which common practices and typical job responsibilities is the employee strong?

8.   With which common practices and typical job responsibilities does the employee struggle?

Appendix C: Student Survey Results

1. Current Class Standings (191 Responses)

The majority of those responding to the survey were juniors (36.1%) and seniors (26.7%), with a total of 62.8% of the sample.

2. Majors (182 responses)

The majority of respondents were from the School of Business or College of Liberal Arts. From the College of Liberal Arts, most of the respondents were from the Biology Department (15) and Psychology Department (14). Other departments represented were Chemistry (4), English/Modern Languages/Philosophy (6), Fine Arts (4), History (1), Mass Communications (4), Mathematics (1), Physics/Astronomy (6), Political Science (4), and Sociology (1). For the School of Business, most respondents were majoring in Marketing (17), Management (11), General Business Administration (11), or Accounting (9). Other majors represented were Computer Science (7), Economics (1), Business Economics (1), Finance (6), Management Information Systems (6), and Master of Business Administration (1). Three respondents stated a general major of Business. For the School of Education, most respondents were from the Master of Education-Learning Disabilities (8) or the undergraduate Early Childhood Education (5). Two other majors were also represented—Masters in Instructional Accommodations (1) and Middle Level Education (2). Three respondents stated a general major of Education. The majority of respondents from the School of Health Sciences were Nursing majors (22) with Healthcare Administration also represented (6). Finally, two respondents were undecided in the majors.

3. Minors (65 Responses)

The majority of respondents had minors in the College of Liberal Arts (41). Within the College of Liberal Arts, Biology (8) and Mathematics (9) were the most prevalent minors stated. Other minors included Chemistry (2), English (3), Spanish (1), French (1), Art History (1), Music (1), Visual Arts (2), History (2), Mass Communications (3), Political Science (2), Psychology (3), and Sociology (4). The School of Business had 9 respondents with minors in the business school, including 5 in Business, 1 in Computer science, and 3 in Economics. The School of Education and the School of Health Sciences had no minors for offer. Fifteen respondents stated "None" as their minor.

4. Collaterals (35 responses)

For Collaterals, combinations among different departments and/or colleges and schools were the norm. Fifteen respondents listed a combination of two areas of study. Psychology was the most prevalent with these mentioned 7 times in conjunction with Chemistry (3), Biology (2), Literature (1), and African and African American Studies (1). Other combinations included Biology/Chemistry (1), Biology/Physics (1), English/Sociology (1), Chemistry/Physics (1), Chemistry/Professional Writing (1), Biology/Political Science (1), and Astronomy/Physics (1). The College of Liberal Arts had four respondents that supplied collaterals of Chemistry (1),

English (1), and Physics (2). The School of Business had no collaterals mentioned. Both the School of Education and the School of Health Sciences offer no collaterals. Thus, a large portion of responders (16) stated they had no collateral.

5. Race/Ethnicity (187 responses—Checked all that apply)

The majority of respondents identified, at least in part, as White (57.8%) or Black/African American (34.8%). These are somewhat demonstrative of the racial/ethnic makeup of the university's students, although there was a higher disparity between White and Black/African respondents than university demographics (47% White/46% Black/African American).

6. Gender (186 respondents)

Respondents demonstrated a very similar representation of school gender numbers with 66.7% responders identifying as Female and 33.3% responders identifying as male.

7. Age (186 responses)

The majority of respondents were between the ages of 18 and 22 years (72%) with 11.8% of respondents between the ages of 23 and 29. The respondents, thus, were similar to the average age of the FMU student population of 21.

8. Does your plan of study require an internship, student teaching, or field experience? (191 responses)

Of the respondents, more than half stated they are required to work an internship, student teaching, or field experience. Yet, almost one-third do not have the requirement.

9. If your plan of study does not require internships, student teaching, or field experience, would you still be interested in completing one? (162 responses)

The majority of respondents would be or might be interested in an internship, student teaching, or field experience even if their program of study did not require it, as 72.2% responded "Yes" and 19.1% responded "Maybe."

10. How prepared do you feel to make the transition from college to workplace? (191 responses)

The respondents selected from a 5-to-1 scale whether they were "Extremely Prepared" (5) to "Not Prepared" (1). Most respondents remarked that they felt somewhat prepared, as 31.4% selected 4 and 35.1% selected 3, to transition from college to workplace.

11. How interested are you in activities that would help you transition from school to career? (191 responses)

When asked to rate their interest in activities to transition from school to career, with 5 ranking as "Very Interested" and 1 ranking as "Not Interested," the respondents demonstrated that they were very interested in activities that would help transition them from school to career. There were 62.8% of respondents who selected 5 as "Very Interested" and 27.2% who selected 4.7

12. As of today, have you completed an internship, student teaching, or field experience while at FMU? If no skip to next section. (191 responses)

The majority of respondents have not completed their internship, field experience, or student teaching with 70.7% selecting "No." Only 20.4% have completed any internship, student teaching, or field experience as of the date of the survey.

13. Was the internship, student teaching, or field experience required by your program? (98 responses)

Respondents mostly stated that the question was Not Applicable (48%). The other respondents were split as to whether the internship et al. were required (Yes—25%, No—26%).

14. Did you receive pay for the internship? (95 responses)

Again, the majority of responders answered "Not Applicable" (49.5%). About 1/3 of the respondents were not paid for their internship (34.7%), and only 15.8% were paid.

15. What company or organization hosted you? (39 responses)

There were 32 different specific companies listed with some overlap of hospital and school districts, specifically. Most of the companies were local to Florence and the surrounding areas.

16. When did you complete it? (42 responses-multiple checking allowed)

Most respondents completed their internship, field experience, or student teaching in Fall (52.4%) and Spring (64.3%), with less than 25% completing one in the summer.

17. How many estimated total hours was the entire internship, student teaching, or field experience? (39 responses)

Almost half of the respondents spent 100 or fewer hours in an internship/student teaching/field experience. Approximately 10% spent 101-200 hours and 12.8% spent 201-300 hours in the setting. The hours ranged from 0 to 1800 hours.

18. How many hours per week on average did you spend in internship? (40 responses)

Most respondents indicated that they spend 20 hours or fewer a week in internship, student teaching, or field experience with approximately 45% stating they spent 1-10 hours a week and 27.5% stating they spent 11-20 hours per week in the setting.

19. Please evaluate your overall perception of the experience. (46 responses)

Respondents were to select a 5-to-1 rating of their perceptions of the experience with 5 meaning the experience was "Very Beneficial" and 1 meaning the experience was "Not Beneficial." Overall, respondents seemed to find the experience to be beneficial as 47.5% selected 5 and 32.6% selected 4.

20. How well did the experience help with your career decisions? (46 responses)

The respondents were asked to select a 5-to-1 rating whether the experience helped with their career decisions with 5 meaning it was "Essential in helping me make career decisions" and 1 meaning "It did not inform my career decisions." The majority of respondents found the internship, student teaching, or field experience mostly essential in making their career decisions with 37% selecting 5 and 30.4% selecting 4. About 24% of respondents seemed ambivalent as they rated the experience a 3.

21. How well did the experience improve your job prospects after graduation? That is, how well did it help build your resume? (46 responses)

The respondents were asked to select a 5-to-1 rating whether the experience helped build their resumes and future job prospects with 5 meaning it was "It greatly improved my future job prospects" and 1 meaning "It did not improve my future job prospects." The respondents had neutral to positive statements of how the experience helped them with job prospects, as 30.4% rated the experience a 5, 28.3% rated it a 4, and 21.7% rated it a 3.

22. How well did the experience align with the content that you learned in your classes? (45 responses)

The respondents were asked to select a 5-to-1 rating whether the experience aligned with the content learned in classes, with 5 meaning it "Greatly complemented classroom content" and 1 meaning "It did not complement classroom content." The majority of respondents found that the experience aligned with classroom content, with 28.9% rating the experience with a 5, 35.6% rating it with a 4, and 17.8% rating it with a 3.

23. An internship would help me prepare for my future career. (183 responses)

The respondents were asked to select a 5-to-1 rating whether an internship/student teaching/field experience would help them prepare for their future careers with 5 meaning they "Strongly Agree" and 1 meaning they "Strongly Disagree." The respondents overwhelmingly demonstrated that they believe an internship would help prepare them for their future careers. The majority "Strongly Agreed" with 70.5% selecting 5, and 24% selecting a 4.

24. I will be well-prepared for my career even if I do not complete an internship. (184 responses)

The respondents were asked to select a 5-to-1 rating whether they would be well prepared for their career even if they did not complete an internship, with 5 meaning they "Strongly Agree" with the statement and 1 meaning they "Strongly Disagree" with the statement. The respondents were somewhat ambivalent as to whether they would be well-prepared without an internship. Most of the ratings were in the 3 range with 34.2% selecting, with 28.3% selecting a 2 and 20.1% selecting 4.

25. I can only work as an intern during the summer if I am paid for the internship. (182 responses)

The respondents were asked to select a 5-to-1 rating stating whether they could only work an internship in the summer if they were paid, with 5 meaning they "Strongly Agree" with the statement and 1 meaning they "Strongly Disagree" with the statement. The majority of respondents demonstrated a need for a paycheck if they were to work an internship in the summer. Over 50% (27.5% for 5 and 27.5% for 4) strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that they would need to have a paid internship if this were to occur in summer. Another 25.8% were neutral regarding the statement.

26. I can easily complete an unpaid internship during the summer. (183 responses)

The respondents were asked to select a 5-to-1 rating whether they could easily complete an unpaid internship during the summer, with 5 meaning they "Strongly Agree" with the statement and 1 meaning they "Strongly Disagree" with the statement. Most respondents demonstrated that they would not be easily able to complete an unpaid internship during the summer. This was indicated by the selection of "Strongly Disagree" (1) by 23% of respondents, 20.2% selecting a 2, and 29% selecting a 3.

27. An unpaid internship works best for me during fall or spring semesters. (183 responses)

The respondents were asked to select a 5-to-1 rating whether an unpaid internship worked best for them during fall or spring semesters, with 5 meaning they "Strongly Agree" with the statement and 1 meaning they "Strongly Disagree" with the statement. Most respondents demonstrated that it would not work best for them to work an unpaid internship during fall or spring. Almost half of the respondents rated the statement as a 2 (18%) or a 1 (29%) to demonstrate they did not agree with the statement.

28. In your own words, please describe the educational value of internships, student teaching, and field experiences. (125 responses)

For this question the open-ended responses were categorized into major themes and ideas, depicted in the following 11 sentences:

1.   They provide knowledge about the job and what the job entails.

2.   They provide networking and job contacts.

3.   They allow for real-world applications of what was learned in the classroom.

4.   They allow the student to adapt to the workplace in a safe setting.

5.   They provide experiences that jobs will expect you to have already.

6.   They provide the experience to determine if the career is really what the student wants to do.

7.   They allow the student to see what jobs are out there.

8.   They allow the student to get his/her foot in the door.

9.   They ensure success.

10. They allow the student to put theoretical knowledge into perspective.

11. They allow the students to learn from others, besides their professors.

29. What are the main challenges/barriers to completing an internship? (126 responses)

For this question the open-ended responses were categorized into major themes and ideas. The main challenges for the respondents were Time (40%) and Money (23%). Of those who stated that time was a challenge, a significant portion specified that finding time while balancing coursework was challenging. Those who stated that money was a challenge were often also juggling at least a part-time job with school, making an unpaid internship difficult. Other challenges included finding/obtaining a "good" or positive place to intern (11%), the student's lack of transportation options (5%), competition (2%), lack of training (3%), lack of awareness of opportunities (2%), fear of failure (1%), no convenient places to intern (5%), applying school knowledge to the internship (4%), and not liking the internship (1%). A few respondents had no challenges or barriers to completing an internship (2%).

30. What types of activities would help you make the transition from school to a career? (99 responses)

For this question the open-ended responses were categorized into major themes and ideas. The types of activities that respondents thought would help them transition from school to career were varied. A significant number of respondents stated that internships were helpful (30%), though only some mentioned specifically whether these were to be paid or unpaid. Another activity mentioned by respondents was workshops (21%). The respondents requested workshops specifically on the skills needed in the job, resume-building, and interviewing suggestions. Mentorships/Job Shadowing was also stated by several respondents (13%). Other

activities included Career Fairs with local companies (7%), Simulation Labs (2%), Networking Events (6%), Hands-On Experiences involving trips to jobs (11%), more Field Experiences (5%), Volunteering opportunities (1%) Mock Job Days (2%), and Preparatory Programs (1%).

Appendix D: Faculty Survey Results

Quantitative Data from the Faculty Survey were analyzed for trends. The first trend was that the survey entries where a department/school was not identified (10 total) tended to have only sparse entries that may not contribute much to the overall conclusions of the survey; as a first approximation, these entries were not included in the analysis.

Secondly, there are some differences in responses based on the school of origin of the survey response. It may be valuable to do a more in-depth analysis based on the school and possibly even the department within the school.

The first set of results below are presented for the three clearly quantitative questions: 1, 4, and 14. For each question, the average is computed along with the standard error (standard deviation of the mean). The standard error gives the bounds within which we would expect the mean to fluctuate with a 68.3% confidence limit (i.e., 68.3% of the time, we expect the mean to be within ±1 standard error.

Question 15 was anticipated to be analyzed, but the number of responses (5 overall) was so few as to not lend itself well to further analysis.

Questions 9 through 13 were simple choice questions without the need for an average or standard deviation answer.

Question 1: How prepared do you feel your students are to make the transition from college to the workplace?

	FMU (all responses)	Business	Education & Library	Liberal Arts	Health Sciences
Number of Responses	51	8	7	30	5
Mean ±std error	3.18±0.12	2.75±0.16	3.86±0.34	3.03±0.15	3.8±0.37

Question 4: Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following statement: I have sufficient resources to develop professionalization activities. (1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3 = neutral; 4 = agree; 5=strongly agree)

	FMU (all responses)	Business	Education & Library	Liberal Arts	Health Sciences
Number of Responses	51	8	7	30	5
Mean ±std error	2.94±0.14	2.38±0.32	3.29±0.42	3.07±0.17	2.8±0.37

Question 14: How beneficial do you believe the internship, student teaching, or field experience is for your students? (Higher numbers indicate a greater benefit)

	FMU (all responses)	Business	Education & Library	Liberal Arts	Health Sciences
Number of Responses	45	8	7	25	4
Mean ±std error	4.69±0.09	4.75±0.16	4.86±0.14	4.64±0.14	4.75±0.25

In response to Question 9, all the schools reported having internships. However, some departments within the College of Liberal Arts reported having no internships.

In response to Question 10, there is some variation in the number of internships that are required.

	Business	Education & Library	Liberal Arts	Health Sciences
Internship Required	0	6	17	5
Internship Not Required	8	1	9	0

In response to Question 11, there is some variation in whether students are paid.

	Business	Education & Library	Liberal Arts	Health Sciences
Always paid	1	1	3	0
Sometimes paid	4	0	10	0
Never paid	1	6	4	5
Do not know	2	0	9	0

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In response to Question 12, there is some variation in whether students are given course credit.

	Business	Education & Library	Liberal Arts	Health Sciences
Always get course credit	3	6	13	4
Sometimes get course credit	5	0	8	0
Never get course credit	0	0	4	1
Do not know	0	1	1	0