



Integrating Career Readiness into the Academic Experience

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The Career Development Center (CDC) is available to collaborate with academic affairs in diverse ways to impact students' career readiness.

Colleges prepare students for World Readiness which is viewed through three main contributions of Citizenship, Life, and Work (defined by Cathy Davidson at CUNY and used in the Boyer 2030 Commission's Equity/Excellence Imperative).

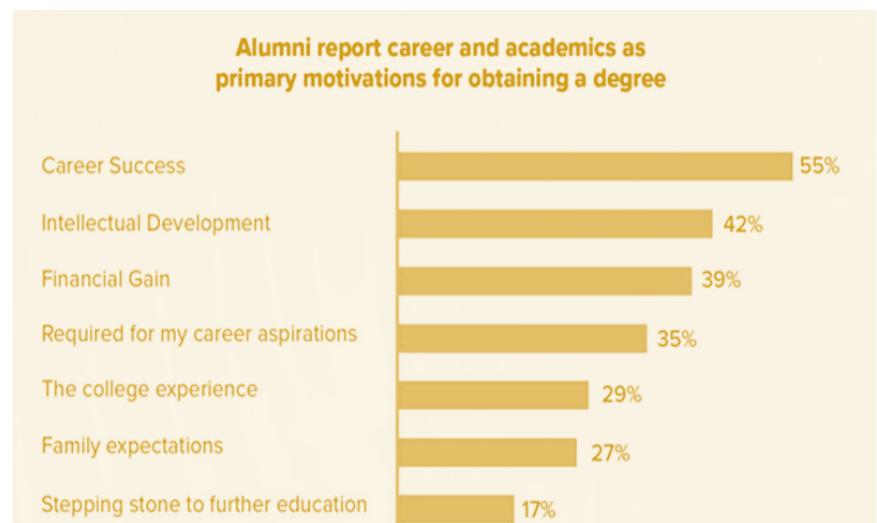
Our office further specifies Career Readiness as the demonstration of core competencies that broadly prepare students for the job/internship/graduate school search, the workforce, and lifelong career management.

Students engage in career readiness preparation through the classroom, academic advising, co-curricular involvement, and experiential learning. Integration into the academic experience allows for a holistic approach that is centered around equitable access for all students.

IMPORTANCE OF INTEGRATION

Higher education is in an evolutionary moment that is adapting to the needs and motivations of today's student. Institutions are seeing the need to focus on student intellectual development AND their preparation for post-graduation success.

The Career Development Center serves as a champion of creating campus-wide career readiness integration strategies but it only



functions with the wonderful support and collaboration from our faculty and staff.

**2022 National Alumni Career Mobility Report | Career Leadership Collective*

Each academic college has a designated liaison in the office that is ready to discuss career integration. Contact the appropriate liaison by visiting the [faculty section](#) of our website.

CAREER READINESS IN THE CLASSROOM: MAKING THE CONNECTION

As students engage in their academic curriculum, they are inherently building a strong set of skills; however, they are not always able to evaluate their academic experience and identify these skills.

In a 2022 survey from the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), employer responses indicated they were seeking these attributes:

FIGURE 47: ATTRIBUTES EMPLOYERS SEEK ON A CANDIDATE'S RESUME

ATTRIBUTE	PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS
PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS	61.4%
ABILITY TO WORK IN A TEAM	61.0%
STRONG WORK ETHIC	52.4%
ANALYTICAL/QUANTITATIVE SKILLS	50.4%
COMMUNICATION SKILLS (WRITTEN)	50.0%
TECHNICAL SKILLS	50.0%
INITIATIVE	48.0%
DETAIL-ORIENTED	47.6%
COMMUNICATION SKILLS (VERBAL)	46.3%
COMPUTER SKILLS	44.7%
FLEXIBILITY/ADAPTABILITY	43.9%
LEADERSHIP	43.9%

In addition to this survey, NACE has a defined set of Career Readiness Competencies*:

1. Career & Self-Development
2. Communication
3. Critical Thinking
4. Equity & Inclusion
5. Leadership
6. Professionalism
7. Teamwork
8. Technology

*Head to <https://tinyurl.com/NACECC8> for more detail on each competency.

We know these skill areas are being built in the classroom, but we see a gap in our students' ability to reflect and translate those skills to their professional and personal journey. Faculty can help build that competency bridge.

Our goal in providing this quick context of Career Readiness, is to allow faculty to identify attributes students are already gaining through their curriculum. By intentionally highlighting the

broader skills gained, students can begin to better articulate what they are developing through their academic pursuits.

Want a simple way to get started on integration?

Add career competency language to your syllabus. Here is an example:

This course will provide you with knowledge and skills related to these NACE Competencies: [insert relevant competency/competencies]. These skills will help prepare you in securing internship, employment, or continuing education opportunities, as well as realizing a fulfilling, civically engaged life. Your academic courses not only provide you with discipline specific knowledge, but also opportunities for you to practice these competencies which are transferable to all career paths and industries.

You can learn more about these competencies and how to include them in your resume at WCU Career Services: wcupa.edu/cdc

Integrated Assignment Examples

In the following examples, you will see how faculty have partnered with us to integrate common career topics into the classroom and engage in their career development process.

Major & Career Exploration

Students are encouraged to connect with us as early as their first year to discuss their career plans and aspirations.

Collaboration Opportunities:

- Writing assignment based on identifying and researching career or major options
- Take FOCUS (Career Interest Inventory) and reflect on results
- Informational interviewing with a professional or alumni (LinkedIn/Ram Nation) in their field

Resumes and Job Searching

Resume formatting and the job search are industry-specific, and students should be familiar with the best ways to find employment in their field of interest.

Collaboration Opportunities:

- Make creating or updating a resume to Handshake an assignment and provide feedback for students, which can be done through our office
- Encourage students to attend campus networking events and job fairs, and if possible, incentivize attendance

Interviewing

Interviewing can be intimidating. Help your students become more confident with the process and their answers to commonly asked questions.

Collaboration Opportunities:

- Students in internship preparation or capstone classes receive interview presentations or complete mock interviews with classmates
- Assign students to schedule in-person mock interview with Career Center or complete a virtual assignment through [Big Interview](#)

Professionalism

Developing the habits and behaviors of professionalism starts in the classroom. Students must be ready to embody their professional brand as they transition to their career.

Collaboration Opportunities:

- Including professionalism statement in syllabus that speaks to the importance of professional traits such as promptness, positive attitude, accountability, and being respectful of instructors and peers
- Capstone course project of creating portfolio or LinkedIn profile

Utilizing Career Topics in Applying Theory

The content taught in each course is unique to the major, professor, and learning outcomes. We have seen great examples of faculty using a career topic as a practical example of discipline specific theory or content area.

Examples:

- *Organizational Communication Theories taught through the lens of communication with applicants from the onset through interviewing phase of a job search.*
- *Theater classes with mock interview dramatizations*
- *Early level math or finance classes that discuss budgeting (paying for college, research on potential salaries and cost of living expenses)*