Reimagining GE for Employability: Preparing Graduates with Essential Employability Qualities

Ralph Wolff, President
MISSION:
To develop a new approach for quality assurance that responds to the changing landscape of higher and postsecondary education and will serve the needs of learners, employers, and the larger society.

Funded by the Lumina Foundation
Gaps Between Higher Education & Employers

98% of Chief Academic Officers rate their institutions as very or somewhat effective at preparing students for the world of work,

BUT ...

Only 11% of business leaders strongly agree that graduating students have the skills and competencies they need.

Source: 2015 Gallup-Purdue Index
Students’ Perspectives

Only 25% of students are in a major with established career paths at their institutions.

AND...

Only 40% of seniors feel their college experience has been very helpful in preparing for a career.

Source: McGraw Hill’s 2016 Workforce Readiness Survey
Students Want Jobs!

Since 2010, 86% of incoming freshman have said that getting a job represents a critical factor in their decision to enroll in college. Only 17% of those using career service offices found them helpful.

(Gallup-Purdue Index, 2016)
3 DIMENSIONS OF THE GAP

1. Skills Gap

2. Documentation of Students’ Abilities

3. Identification of / Alignment with Employer Needs
Graduates of the EEQ Certified Program are:

• Communicators
• Thinkers & Problem Solvers
• Inquirers
• Collaborators
• Adaptable
• Principled & Ethical
• Responsible & Professional
• Continuous Learners
The EEQ CERT PILOT

In 2017-18, we partnered with 27 programs from 14 colleges and universities serving 35,000 students to co-design a certification for educational programs leading to the EEQ CERT.
PILOT LESSONS LEARNED – FIVE CRITERIA

1. Graduate Preparation
   -- Lack of clear graduate proficiencies
   -- Not job related
   -- Not well assessed

2. Career Support Services
   -- Too little too, too late
   -- Disconnected from other services/academic programs
   -- Little support for humanities and social science majors
LESSONS LEARNED – FIVE CRITERIA

3. Employer Engagement
   -- Too often promotional
   -- Little connection to taught curriculum/assignments
   -- Increasingly frustrated, seeking other approaches

4. Student and Alumni Engagement
   -- Little beyond course evaluation
   -- Lack of adaptation to adult students
   -- No attention to alumni
LESSONS LEARNED – FIVE CRITERIA

5. Public Information

-- Typically lists courses not career pathways
-- Little connection to employers
-- Lack of completion or salary and other information
NEW INITIATIVES – Fall 2018 Launch

Statewide Prototype with the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education:

• 19 programs at 6 institutions (3 community colleges/3 Universities

• Stakeholder Advisory Committee of Employers, Provosts, Students

• Faculty Fellows Program on Defining and Addressing Workforce Needs
How Can General Education Meet Employer Needs for Essential Employability Qualities?
PROMISING PRACTICES

Guttman College – Ethnography of Work
Warren Wilson College: Internship Evaluation Aligned with EEQs
Central Oklahoma University: Student Transformative Learning Record (STLR)
Texas Lutheran University: Applied Physics Career Options
Ed Design Lab: 21st Century Competency Badges
What About a GE Consortium Focused on Demonstrating EEQs Aligned with Employer Needs and the Major?
Thank You

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