



EXPLORING THE WORLD OF BUSINESS: PAIRING DOMAIN BUSINESS KNOWLEDGE WITH PROFESSIONAL AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN THE UNDERGRADUATE BUSINESS CORE

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This paper describes a personal, professional and career development program required of all undergraduate students earning the BA in Business Administration at Dominican University of California. Paired with business domain knowledge, this 4-year course sequence is a component of the business degree's core requirements. This paper highlights the junior and senior years where business students explore career choices, practice effective interviewing and networking techniques and conduct a job search. They also develop professional behaviors required in the workplace and to launch and maintain a successful business career. A review of college business career curricular literature is described related to networking, mentoring, interviewing and job search strategies utilized in the development of the curriculum. Future research will include program assessment utilizing a four-step model for evaluating the pairing of domain business knowledge with personal and career development for undergraduate business students.

Keywords: College to career, Preparing for business jobs, Career development curriculum, Preparing students for jobs.

Introduction and Background of the Problem

Generational characteristics of today's college students necessitate a re-calibration of the pedagogy of college business courses. Twenty years ago, academics understood the need to calibrate pedagogy and delivery methods for the shift from Baby Boomers to Generation X, which then led to another recalibration ten years later as we moved from Generation X to Generation Y. Today, university faculty stand at the crossover of Generation Y to Generation Z (also known also as the Millennial generation), which drives academe to again recalibrate to effectively consider the changes in generational needs. A consideration is how universities prepare graduates for the workforce using methods students will embrace and that correlates with their unique generational propensity for high touch technology and instantaneous, positive feedback (Majeske & Serochi, 2009).

Unemployment and under-employment outlook for newly graduating college students is a matter of concern. The June 2013 national unemployment rate hovers close to 7.6 percent and the trend line reports that unemployment rates are slowly dropping (United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013). Last year, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) predicted a 13 percent increase in jobs available for recent college graduates in 2013. However, NACE's spring 2013 outlook survey and employers' predict to hire only 2.1% over last year's class of 2012. Also, only 30% of employers surveyed plan to hire college graduates in fall 2013 (National Association of Colleges and

Employers, 2013). Still further, steadily rising since 2008 through the 2013 prediction, a third of recent college graduates with jobs are under-employed in positions where a university degree is not a requirement. In 2008, over 30% were under-employed and each year this figure has annual risen steadily to 37% in 2012, with 36.7% predicted for 2013 (CNN Money, 2013). So, it is important for colleges to continue to take an active role in preparing students to seek and find jobs linked to their educational preparation. Career preparation courses have dramatically increased graduates' opportunities to launch their careers immediately after graduating from college (D'Abate, 2010; Folsom & Reardon, 2003).

College students and college graduates' expectations of the work place are not necessarily synchronized with the realities of the workplace. Preparing for the realities of a career in business is not always included in a university business education. College students inexperienced with working professionally may have different expectations than their first time employers. Students may not know what to expect in the work place culture and what the jobs in their field entail. The college to work transition can be a difficult experience. New employees may be disappointed that their new job is not what they expected, and this gap between the realities of the work place compared to their expectations can lead to disappointment and job turnover (Wehlant & Rochlen, 2008).

There is a gap that exists between employers' needs and students' skills. Assisting college students to obtain their first career job after college graduation is one of the goals of universities. Universities have made it their curricular focus to highlight and feature the domain knowledge of their majors, and not necessarily in combination with developing graduates with the skills and behaviors needed to perform in the workplace. Too often, businesses report that college graduates lack the skills to meet business needs (Orr, et. al., 2011). Business schools have been criticized by focusing too heavily on concepts and theory that do not pertain to practice while not adequately assisting students to develop the important business skills like communication, teamwork, and leadership (Smith, 2005). Business students need to be academically qualified in the domain areas of emphasis, as well as able to perform and behave as a professional.

Retention rates are important to students, their families and to universities. Non-academic factors have been demonstrated to be critical to student retention. An American College Test (ACT) policy report built upon previous national studies and over 20 years of research on retention, concluded administrators and policymakers should consider both academic and non-academic factors in the design and implementation of retention efforts (Lotowski, Robbins, & Noeth, 2004). Their research focused on the need to enhance retention rates so that students are prepared for the challenges of a career in a fast paced global workplace. Both academic and non-academic factors were considered in order to assess which had the greatest effect on college retention and performance. Non-academic factors were found to have the greatest effect on college retention. The results of the ACT study indicate that the non-academic factors of academic-related skills, academic self-confidence, and academic goals had a strong relationship to retention. Institutional commitment, social support institutional selectivity, financial support and social involvement all had a moderate relationship to retention. Academic factors such as high school GPA and ACT scores had a moderate relationship to retention.

Career courses have been found to have a positive impact on career planning and success. Over the past decade, many institutions have explored this opportunity. For example, Halasz & Kemption (2000) conducted an email survey and found that 70 percent of responding institutions reported offering career courses to help their students link to their career jobs. Folsom & Reardon (2003) found different types of career studies that varied in scope, design, and delivery. Historically, some of these courses that include career components are offered for academic credit and some not, resulting in a battle between the student and academic offices (Geisler, 2002). No matter what the variation, there was a preponderance of evidence from students that the career study output was of value to their career plans (Folsom & Reardon, 2003). These factors provide universities with the motivation to refine business curricula to combine domain knowledge in students' degree programs with the professional development students need to secure jobs in their career fields, while enhancing the talent to meet the job market demand (Majeske & Serocki, 2009).

The Exploring the World of Business (EWB) course sequence was created to support business student's personal, professional and career development. Given this landscape, in 2008 Dominican University of California's School of Business and Leadership launched the four-year EWB undergraduate business program, included in the core requirements for the Business Administration baccalaureate degree at Dominican University of California. The faculty have designed and embrace the EWB professional and career development program as a critical component of the formal business curriculum, and as an important pairing with business domain knowledge. The program seeks to reinforce that Dominican University of California's School of Business and Leadership graduates perform in their business careers as socially responsible leaders of sustainable organizations that make a positive difference in the world.

This paper will describe the full four-year program, and then highlight the junior and senior year. Also, pivotal research from the career and business curricular literature in the areas of networking, mentoring, interviewing and job search strategies has guided the development of the program is featured. The assurance of learning plan is described and future research to assess the program is suggested.

Research Finds Career Content Beneficial in Business Core

Dominican University of California's EWB program is taught by business faculty in its School of Business and Leadership and is part of the business core curriculum. Dominican University's Career Services office has been invited by the business faculty to participate as partners. The EWB faculty sought to understand what other universities are doing to prepare students for careers through the academic departments and through career service offices.

A major discussion in academe is whether the vocational guidance or career services courses should be integrated into the domain knowledge of the major disciplines. Over a decade ago, Monks & Walsh (2001) reported that a limitation of management education was found in that management courses were taught separately from career services courses. They reported that universities showed distinct subject areas with little opportunity to integrate the material back into the management education. Today, business programs are beginning to incorporate career content in the business programs.

Delivering only domain knowledge of a bachelor's degree is not sufficient to prepare undergraduate business students for their business careers. It is important to prepare business graduates to know how to search for, and acquire, their first career job. It is also important for students to be ready to perform as professionals as expected by their new employers. Business faculty developing the domain curriculum could consider the research in the areas of college-to-work and career exploration courses related to university student success. A growing number of universities are intentionally including career exploration as an integral component of the major discipline in which the degree is granted, coupled by the support provided by the university's career services office (Folsom & Reardon, 2003; Orr, et. al., 2011).

Actually, career preparation courses have dramatically increased graduates' opportunities to launch their careers immediately after graduating from college (D'Abate, 2010; Folsom & Reardon, 2003). There is also a gap in students' knowledge of careers, job search strategies, networking techniques, experience with informational and job interviewing, and with completing internships in students' chosen degree concentration areas (Barnett, 2012).

Vendemia (2012) describes an example from Youngstown State University that appears to be a common situation at other universities. Youngstown faculty revealed high support for the career services program, but domain faculties were reluctant to teach the career course since the curricula content required faculty to teach outside their specialized areas of expertise. Youngstown freshmen are introduced to the world of business through freshman seminars that span both business content and student success skills. Each student must complete activities taught by faculty and not by career services professionals. Therefore, the program is not fully integrated into the student's career discipline. Instead, it is an "add-on" of knowledge, leaving the student to connect the linkage between their career and their degree focus. Elmuti (2004) suggested that professors must use creative ways to refine their curricula that develop

students' skills that go beyond the domain business theory, which are so critical for today's college graduate. This would place additional requirements on tenured faculty to remain current, not only with the academic disciplines in their core area of expertise, but also the required knowledge of career path development.

Folsom and Reardon (2003) researched career course meta-analyses. The studies they analyzed had more than 17,600 student subjects. Their review found that the design, scope and function of the college-to-work courses varied significantly, but illustrated that positive student outcomes were achieved. Some courses were dedicated solely on freshman or first year students and other courses were designed only for specific majors; some courses were stand-alone programs while others were fully integrated into ongoing career services programs on campus, including with the academic departments. Their research indicated that 30% of colleges offered career development courses a decade ago. Further, there is variability in colleges offering academic credit for the career exploration. Some institutions designate units to these courses in an attempt to reinforce the value of the courses. Often, one or two units are offered to entice students to attend, but in many cases, since the unit values are relatively low, the student is left to decide if attendance is important. This important study of meta-analyses of college career courses reported that 90% of the studies illustrated positive improvements in vocational identify and career decision-making. The examination of these multiple studies concluded that career "courses appear to have positive impact on student outcomes, including satisfaction with career choices and increased retention in college" (Folsom and Reardon, 2003, p. 445).

Exploring the World of Business Course Sequence Described

Dominican University of California's School of Business and Leadership developed a working model for all undergraduate students with Business Administration majors, entitled 'Exploring the World of Business' (EWB), which integrates domain knowledge paired with career exploration. EWB is a 4-year course sequence that is required in the business core. The program began as a Freshman-Sophomore first year and second year sequence to increase retention by developing community and facilitating students' bonding with the University. Retention is an initial key goal for the program in Freshman and Sophomore years.

The EWB program seeks to strengthen retention. The curriculum provides an opportunity for students to develop and strengthen these important non-academic factors found in the research to be critical to retention including self-confidence, academic goals, institutional commitment, achievement motivation, and social support. In an in-depth review of college career courses, Folsom and Reardon conclude that among the many benefits of such courses, including a positive impact on cognitive functioning, student outcomes, and student satisfaction, career courses such as EWB also increased retention rates (Folsom & Reardon, 2003).

In 2008, the EWB model was piloted with freshman and sophomores majoring in business administration. With each year a new level was added. Today, all business majors complete the four-year sequence totaling 5 units across the four years of the business degree. Key goals of the EWB program are to build students' knowledge of themselves and of the concentration choices while developing their overall business domain knowledge so that they make the most informed choices about their careers. Also, students study and practice how to behave professionally and to how to network to acquire internships and their first career job. These goals are pursued through practical application with a progression in student objectives in each year of a student's degree program. The practical application has multiple foci intended to align individual human developmental needs of students matched with the domain business knowledge of their concentration choice.

The program, set on a semester format, spans the four years of the Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration. In each semester of the undergraduate Business Administration major, students complete educational requirements of their bachelor's degree. In addition, students are required to attend the four-year EWB to fulfill graduation requirements for the business major. Self-examination and career

exploration are fundamental goals of the curricula’s four-year sequence The EWB program is comprised of five units (two half unit and four 1-unit courses) spread across four years. The program includes workshops to enhance students’ preparation for careers in business professions. This four-year sequence includes a variety of deliverables that are captured as required student learning outcomes. Tables 1 through 4 outline the foci of each level, the method used to fulfill the learning goals and the activities that students practice.

Thus, the sequential four-year EWB program seeks to provide students with the greatest option for success with their career job searches related to business disciplines. The value of Dominican’s offering resides in its ability to link both the program methodology with the pedagogy in content to help produce a well-balanced program for the students throughout the undergraduate Business Administration program. The goal of EWB is to systematically advance students’ business understanding along with skills needed to secure a job upon graduation.

Freshman Year – *Discovering the World and You*

The sequenced learning begins upon entry into the Dominican University of California in the freshman year. As a freshman, the student focuses on the course entitled, *Discovering the World of Business and You*. This course explores the students’ values and talents and how these factors align with Dominican University of California’s School of Business and Leadership’s core values and educational programs. They begin considering how their reputation translates into a personal brand. This first year also focuses on building community and bonding with students, faculty and the University. Table 1 lists the freshman year’s learning goals, methods used to achieve learning goals and activities in which students are engaged to practice and develop skills.

Table 1. Freshman Year goals and activities focused on exploring self and business world.

Year	Learning Goal Foci	Method Used to Fulfill Learning Goals	Activities Students Practice
Freshman Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek self-knowledge • Know one’s values & talents • Describe personal brand • Explore business functions • Understand vocational identity • Bond with Dominican, its faculty and students • Experience teamwork & leadership variables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Myers-Briggs self-assessment • Field trips to businesses • Written reflections on business in the news • Tea & Talk with Professor & peers • Guest speakers in various business domain areas • Community gatherings as engagement opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinking, writing & speaking critically • Choosing concentration(s) • Networking • Attending campus events • Teaming with classmates

Sophomore Year – *Building Your Career Foundation*

During the sophomore year, the emphasis is on *Building Your Career Foundation* coursework, which is designed to emphasize a more thorough understanding of business concentrations and encourages students to continue to more deeply explore their values, skills, personality and expressing their personal brands. Students also explore more about their strengths and interests linked to choosing a business concentration, which they declare no later their junior year. They also explore different occupational paths within the chosen concentration. Sophomores are exposed to internships and international including a variety of study abroad options. Table 2 lists the learning goals, methods used to achieve learning goals and activities in which students are engaged to practice and develop skills.

Table 2. Sophomore Year goals and activities focused on building career foundation.

Year	Learning Goal Foci	Method Used to Achieve Learning Goals	Practice Activities
Sophomore Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine strengths & interests Become aware of personal brand Explore business occupational paths Explore study abroad options Explore internship options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Swiss Army Knife Gap</i> exercise identifies personal and professional goals & aspirations gaps with reality Alumni panel Reflection assignments Community gatherings as engagement opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practicing informational interviewing Attending campus & community networking events Targeting & building one's network Thinking globally

Junior Year – *Developing Your Business Network*

The junior year experience focuses on *Developing Your Business Network* requiring students to reflect on their current career direction. The key learning objectives of the junior year include exploring and assessing career choices, defining one's personal brand and effective interviewing and networking skills. The structure of this junior year, with the small class size, allows students specialized coaching time with the faculty seeking to help students develop goals and understand their professional drivers. Table 3 lists the junior year learning goals, methods used to achieve learning goals and activities in which students are engaged to practice and develop skills.

Table 3. Junior Year goals and activities feature developing students' business networks.

Year	Learning Goal Foci	Method Used to Fulfill Learning Goals	Activities Students Practice
Junior Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore and validate career choices Refine personal brand Practice online & in person networking Improve interviewing skills Use mentoring relationships Apply for and be hired in internships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Career Wheel</i> exercise Mentoring in small teams Business expert lecturers Reflection assignments Career Services assistance LinkedIn Contest Etiquette Dinner Business cards Community service & volunteer events Reflection Assignments Community gatherings as engagement opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploring occupations based on interests, skills, & values Researching careers and organizations Creating meaningful professional connections Informational interviewing Developing mentor relationships Attending campus & community networking events Evaluating an evolving personal brand Collaborating in community projects

Senior Year – *Launching Your Business Career*

In the senior year, which is the culminating course of the EWB program, the focus is on *Launching Your Business Career*. The senior year focus seeks to empower students to lead their own job search. Key

learning objectives include: Exploring and validating career choices strengthening networking contacts, utilizing contacts to assist in job searches and practicing job search skills. The student learning outcomes include developing and executing a job search, gaining confidence in interviewing and networking and the ultimate goal of receiving a job offer. Table 4 lists the senior year’s learning goals, methods used to achieve learning goals and activities in which students are engaged to practice and develop skills.

Table 4. Senior year goals and activities concentrate on launching student business careers.

Year	Learning Goal Foci	Method Used to Fulfill Learning Goals	Activities Students Practice
Senior Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning career search • Integrating personal brand to job search • Networking in person & online • Improving interviewing skills • Practicing job search • Participating in business community • Setting career goals 	<p>Complete Career Search Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researching organizations • <i>5 Year Resume</i> exercise • Personal Branding SWOT • Career Mission & Vision • Professional networks and associations • Resumes & cover letters • Mentoring in small teams • <i>Values Auction</i> exercise • Professional career coach training • Engagement opportunities • Mentoring relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executing a Career Search • Researching jobs & organizations • Understanding self & values • Customizing resumes and cover letters • Engaging with the business community • Conducting informational interviewing • Preparing for job interviews • Attending campus & networking events • Customizing effective resumes and cover letters • Incorporating personal brand in to job search • Utilizing social media effectively

Method of Instruction

The literature illustrates a wide variety of offerings where some courses are taught by career counseling staff and others by tenured faculty. When career counselors were involved the career courses were paired with campus Career Services offices. Majeske & Seocki (2009) recommended leveraging the Career Services resources resulting in a blend of curricular, extra-curricular and co-curricular learning opportunities.

Dominican University of California’s EWB incorporates both social networking and mentoring as key strategies to prepare students for their job search education. The program was developed on the premise of engaging students with faculty and business professionals serving as adjunct faculty to mentor students identify and align personal and professional goals. Also, a key goal is for adjunct faculty to bring current professional experience and networks that can be leveraged for students’ access to, and preparation for, internships and jobs.

As noted above, students are assigned to the same faculty from the junior year into the senior year seeking to add continuity and consistency to the developmental relationship. The goal is to have the professor and student bond affirmed, thus continuing the mentoring relationship. Thus, in the senior year each student’s professor/mentor is available to guide and support them through the transition from education to workforce. Each adjunct professor guides an in-depth discussion with their students about their career paths using the faculty member’s professional background experience and network to help guide the student to a successful launch into the world of work.

In both the junior and senior years, the class sizes are reduced to a dozen students, replacing tenured faculty with adjunct faculty who are business executives from a variety of fields. The adjunct faculties are guided by the tenured professors in a team that develops networking events, workshops, professional speakers and curricular content and design. The students remain with the same faculty mentor assigned in the junior into their senior year.

Junior Year: Developing Networks and Practicing Interviews

The junior year experience focuses on ‘Developing Your Business Network’ requiring students to reflect on their current career direction, with a focus on career exploration and improving and practicing career related skills. The emphasis at the outset in the fall term is to aid students in career decision making self-efficacy, which has been shown to be integral in career choice and job environments (Bandura, 1977). Juniors practice in-person and virtual networking, strengthening skills through mock and informational interviews, and preparing social media tools to refine one’s online presence. Students focus most deeply on their personal brand, with instruction by business professionals, to strategically align their skills, brand, and career discipline choice. Additionally, the students study and practice important techniques by participating in mock and informational interviews. Lastly, they begin their focus on job opportunities by preparing job search strategies through career network building.

The primary exercise utilized to help students become better informed regarding current options is the Career Wheel (Laker, 2002). The ‘Career Wheel’ model is used for exploring and validating a career choice. This model is based on decision-making theory and is seen as an “active career exploration device” (Laker, 2002, p. 62). This career exercise not only aids students in career exploration, but also incorporates career related skills, such as researching jobs and organizations and conducting informational interviews so that students can begin the goal of *Building Your Business Career Network*.

The model is used to guide students through their assumptions of a particular job and/or career to developing questions about their career choices from such assumptions. Students’ career-related assumptions are explored by conducting informational interviews with professionals practicing students’ career choice to gain insights as they weigh options for their career decisions. Developing the skill of informational interviewing facilitates students’ career and job choices. Informational interviewing helps to challenge assumptions and have myths debunked while learning more about the development of a profession (Lieberman, 2011) Students should be grounded in the process of the informational interview, as well as to be prepared with a list of questions to be asked of the business professional from whom the advice is being sought. Utilizing mentors, professional networks, and faculty, students are asked to seek answers to these questions and determine if the answers reinforce their desires to continue in their career paths.

Lectures by guest speakers include networking using LinkedIn, in-person networking, and personal branding. Research has suggested the importance of developmental interactions to career development (D’Abate 2010). The EWB faculty members have made networking integral to the Junior Year curriculum. The concept of mentoring is introduced and students must seek professional mentors as a part of their career exploration. In addition, students are split into smaller groups of about 12 and instructors act as mentors with whom students are encouraged to build relationships beyond the standard role of instructor. In the Junior Year, faculty assist students to understand the value of researching organizations, industries and people as they prepare for a job search. Juniors participate in mock interviews and informational interviews.

In the spring semester of the Junior Year, students are provided with the opportunity to continue their career exploration. They also practice the skills they have begun to develop to date. Engagement opportunities are emphasized and internships, although not mandatory, are encouraged. Students attend networking events such as Chamber of Commerce mixers and alumni gatherings to practice their in-person networking skills. In an effort to provide students with an opportunity to develop interpersonal and problem solving skills, they participate in collaborative student projects involving the community.

D'Abate (2010) reports studies that have suggested such projects have been shown to aid in career development, business knowledge, and collaborative leadership.

In summary, key learning objectives of the junior year include: Exploring and validating career options, honing one's personal brand, improving interviewing skills and networking effectively. Student outcomes include a refined career direction, established mentoring relationships, an expanded professional network, a personal brand that is integrated with job search activities, and an internship experience.

Senior Year: Developing and Enacting Career Search Plan

In the senior year, which is the culminating course of the EWB program, the course is entitled, *Launching Your Business Career*. Whereas previous EWB course sequences center on self-efficacy, vocational decidedness and grasping the realities of the job market, the focal point of senior year is job seeking. The final phase of the 4-year EWB sequence is designed to give students a measured approach to looking for career jobs that they can use upon graduation and throughout their careers.

Senior year is the culmination of a career development process that encompasses previous incremental action of the students, and focuses on presenting a proactive job-hunting strategy. The ultimate objectives include giving students a sense of readiness and feeling of competence in identifying and seeking out a career in their field of choice. Again in the senior year, students will research organizations, industries and people as they prepare for their job search. Learning outcomes in the senior year include the ability to develop a 5-year resume and execute a *Career Search Plan*, increased confidence in interviewing and networking skills, and ultimately acquiring a job that launches them into their chosen business career.

The Career Search Plan is divided into 11 sections that are briefly described below. Students are required to complete tasks within each section, which generally include a complete a short written assignment in each section.

1. **Career Vision, Mission, and Goals:** Students are asked to succinctly communicate their Career Vision, Career Mission, and Career Goals.
2. **Researching Organizations:** Students must identify five company names or organizations where they would like to work. They must choose two and use a variety of sources to research them and then record detailed information on each including company history, financial stability, products and services, personnel, and if possible information about the company culture.
3. **Customizing Resumes and Cover Letters:** Two prospective jobs are identified by each student. One must be a posted job opening and the other should not be a posted position, but rather in an organization where they would like to work. Resumes and cover letters must be customized for each position.
4. **Considering a Five Year Resume:** The Career Wheel is a career planning exercise, developed by Laker & Laker (2007) that anchors the junior year. Students visualize their future by designing a resume they would like to have in five years. Students answer a series of questions in different categories to help them identify an action plan of what they need to do to prepare themselves for their professional futures. The categories include: Objective, Education, Personal Experience, Volunteer Activities, Personal Interests, and References.
5. **Applying SWOT (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats) to Personal Branding:** Students' examine their individual strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats as they pertain to their own personal brand. Using this analysis, they begin to close gaps they see in the weaknesses s and threats while strengthening the remaining two other areas. This self-evaluation

helps the student to assess their personal brand while allowing them to grow in their personal development.

6. **Evaluating and Expanding Professional Networks:** Students must evaluate their current networks and identify people who could help in their job search in general. In addition they must identify specific people that could help them to pursue jobs at the two companies they have previously identified as having interest in. If they do not have any such connections they must cultivate them. Students must also prepare for, attend, and follow up on at least one networking event.
7. **Utilizing LinkedIn:** LinkedIn provides several tips for job seekers. Students are to utilize some of these tips and then describe those they found most useful.
8. **Preparing for A Job Interview:** Students develop 10 questions they expect to be asked during an interview and provide the answers. They also develop 3 questions they might ask at the interview.
9. **Participating in an Informational Interview:** Students identify five people with whom they want to conduct an informational interview. They are required to participate in at least one informational interview and write a brief summary of the experience.
10. **Completing a Job Search Planning Log:** Students must document their reflections of their job search activities on a weekly log. The log modeled one that is provided on Drexler University career website. Students identify techniques and activities that were both successful and unsuccessful for the assignment, but making sure to log in weekly to keep track of their progress.
11. **PowerPoint Presentation:** Each student prepares a brief PowerPoint presentation that describes one's experience with the *Career Search Plan*. In class, students share their career mission, vision and goals. They choose one section of the plan to present and share what they found most valuable from the tool.

Targeted Literature Review for College-to-Career Preparation

In addition to learning more about the variables that impact retention, faculty conducted a review of career and business curricular literature to learn about the underlying theories and the associated best practices related to the student learning outcome goals associated with career and job search for college graduates. The areas conducted for this literature review are networking, mentoring, interviewing and job search strategies. These theories and best practices have been utilized in the development of the curricula.

Networking

Social Network Theory is a fundamental paradigm of sociology. It considers the interconnected relationships among individuals and/or organizations that form networks and considered as social capital (Williams & Durrance, 2008). In 1966, Rees conducted the important research in the area of networking for jobs, and Grannovetter (1995) moved the topic forward by illustrating that a significant number of job seekers incorporated connections with personal contacts. A study conducted in 2006 reported that 44% of U.S. workers found their jobs through their social networks (Franzen & Hangartner (2006). Networking with the goal of obtaining a job has been defined as “individual actions directed towards contacting friends, acquaintances, and other people to whom the job seeker has been referred for the main purpose of getting information, leads, or advice on getting a job”, (Wanberg et al., 2000, p. 492). Van Hoye, et.al. (2009) reports studies that suggest the more networking increases job leads, and more appropriate job applications improving the opportunity to receive job offers.

The reality is that students can no longer depend on college placement services to guarantee them employment in their desired career upon graduation as they did in the 1980's. There was concern as early as the 1990s where career placement centers were under fire for not being in touch with career development needs in academe, and a call for renewal was heralded (Freeman, 1994).

Today, with the skyrocketing use of social media to connect people, Student Career Service fairs are often sparsely attended by employers and students since they are often seen by both parties as ineffective and antiquated. In today's challenging economy, employers no longer have the luxury of spending resources to have recruiters come to campuses to entice prospects. Fewer open positions, even given the current job market increase noted above, and compound that reality. In a 2009 Challenger Survey, human resources executives were asked to rate the effectiveness of various job-search methods. On a scale of 1 (least effective) to 5 (most effective), job fairs ranked as the least effective job search method, scoring an average rating of 1.6 (Challenger & Christmas Inc., 2011).

Brennan, Daly, Fitzpatrick & Sweeney (2004) explored the idea of "virtual" career fairs in order to better serve the needs of employers and students. They concluded that, "technology itself, is not in itself, the source of improvement from a student, graduate, employer or institute point of view" (p. 39). The fact remains that for today's graduating seniors, in order to be successful upon graduation, must become competent in being self-reliant and utilizing proactive strategies to achieve their career goals.

Mentoring

Jacobi (1991) developed a baseline of research suggesting the importance of mentoring as a valuable component of effective undergraduate education. Close to ten years later, D'Abate (2010) noted that a student's transition to post-college life is often accomplished through relationships with mentors and working closely with faculty members. Although there are many definitions of mentoring, the one that resonates for higher education is that of a one-to-one relationship between an experienced and less experienced person for the purpose of learning or developing specific competencies (Brown et al., 1999 and Murray, 2001). Crisp (2008) and Crisp & Cruz (2009) suggested that a key domain of mentoring was support for setting goals and choosing a career path, support for academic subject knowledge aimed at advancing students' domain knowledge in their chosen fields, role modeling and overall support.

Interviewing

Employment interview preparation boosts confidence and performance of students and jobseekers during interviews (Hansen et. al 2009). Thus, many universities offer interview preparation courses that include lectures, discussions, role-playing, practice, feedback and modeling. For example, in a co-curricular program at Xavier University, interview preparation activities including mock interviews are offered over a three-year period during the student's undergraduate degree (Clark, 2005).

In some programs, the mock interviews were offered in one experience in one class session (Marks & O'Connor, 2006). Additionally, the activities used for mock interviewing vary by who performs the interview preparation sessions. Crosby (2000) noted that it was important to rehearse interviews with a career counselor or friend providing professional feedback to the student. Thus, it is helpful to have people experienced with interviewing to be present at the mock interview practice sessions.

Job Search

The four-year EWB career development process culminates senior year with exercises and activities that provide students with the confidence and tools required to apply their skills to a proactive career search. The primary tool used is a job search plan developed internally entitled, *The Career Search Plan*. Two prominent theoretical perspectives have been the focus of job search research and support the importance of providing students with a job search tool or method that they feel confident in applying the Theory of

Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) and Self-Regulation Theories (Elliott & Thrash, 2002; Kanfer et al., 2001). According to Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) an individual's goals and plans to engage in a particular behavior, such as a job search, is the main predictor of that behavior. Ajzen's Theory (Ajzen, 1991) states that an individual's actions are guided by three factors: 1) behavioral beliefs (positive or negative evaluation of job search behavior), 2) normative beliefs (perceived social pressure to engage or not engage in a job search), and 3) control beliefs (perceived control in ability to perform various job search functions). Together they shape an individual's behavioral intentions and behaviors. In combination, behavioral beliefs produce a favorable or unfavorable attitude toward the behavior; normative beliefs result in perceived social pressure or subjective norm; and control beliefs affect the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behavior.

This leads to the formulation of behavioral intention. The more favorable the behavioral beliefs and subjective norms and the stronger the behavioral control, the more likely the individual is to carry out the action (Ajzen, 1991). TPB has been applied directly to the theory of understanding job search behavior (Van Hooft, Born, Taris & Van Der Flier, 2004; Zikic & Saks, 2009 Song, Wanberg, Niu & Xie, 2006). TPB suggests that individuals will be more likely to perform job search activities if they feel confident in their ability to do so successfully (Van Hooft, Born, Taris & Van Der Flier, 2004).

Similarly, Self-Efficacy Theory (Bandura, 2001) proposes beliefs about one's capabilities influence how one can succeed in a specific situation or task. Self-efficacy plays a strong role in the self-regulatory process of social cognitive theory. Self-regulation involves controlling our own behaviors through self-observation, judgment, and self-response. Bandura also cites the importance of goals in self-regulatory behavior in that goals motivate behavior.

Kanfer, Wanberg, and Kantrowitz (2001) present the job search process in terms of self – regulation, defining job search behavior as the outcome of a “dynamic, recursive self-regulated process by which individuals identify, initiate, and pursue actions for the purpose of obtaining new employment or reemployment” (p. 838). Their research suggested that job search behavior was significantly and positively related to finding employment.

The EWB curriculum has been developed considering these theories related to student retention, networking, mentoring, interviewing and successful job search strategies and techniques. Each year, the curriculum is revised based upon student and faculty feedback. Dominican's School of Business and Leadership is committed to its continued investment in the program and to its continuous improvement. The faculty members who teach in the program are studying the theories and best practices of incorporating personal and career development into the business core. Faculty members are also considering standardized tools to assess students personal and career development, and appropriate textbooks that match the courses' learning goals. The next section will describe future research goals slated to seek program improvement.

Future Research and Conclusion

At the end of each semester, the business faculty team that teaches in the EWB program join together to discuss the former term's successes and gaps to ensure 'real time' adjustments to the program. Student comments during the term help to guide the direction and activities tied to the EWB learning goals. Discussions on knowledge building around the key focus areas of the course resulted in several positive comments from students in the area of building skills related to networking and gaining valuable personal skills for building one's career. Student feedback has helped faculty to look to strengthen the campus event participation to better tie to the networking skills learned in the program. Student self-report comments, however, are not sufficient for assurance of learning assessment. The next step for faculty is to design formal assessment research so that curricular improvements can be made, and to determine if the Student Learning Outcomes are actually being achieved.

As mentioned above, student self-report is valuable, but not sufficient. Austin (2011) analyzes a model an assessment model designed by Kirkpatrick (1996), which includes a four level evaluation

system related to the outcome type sought: Reaction, learning, behavior, and results. The faculty will use this model to conduct the assessment research regarding EWB. The following describes these levels:

- Level 1: *Reaction* is defined as “measuring customer satisfaction” (Kirkpatrick, 1996, p. 295), and will seek students’ satisfaction with the program.
- Level 2: *Learning* evaluation is at this stage and considers whether the program’s learning objectives are achieved. Skills and knowledge levels are measured.
- Level 3: *Behavior* change as a goal of the curriculum is assessed to determine the scope of the career curriculum is actually relevant to the student, and utilized in seeking and obtaining a job offer.
- Level 4: *Results* of the program are assessed. An important criterion would include job placement rates at graduation in comparison to the hiring rates prior to the EWB program intervention.

EWB’s next steps include developing a well-rounded assurance of learning assessment program that will highlight the key student learning outcomes for each level (freshman through senior years). Faculty members have committed to conducting empirical pre-test and post-test measures to determine if learning goals are being achieved. The measures will include students’ self-efficiency, student retention, job placement, internship and study abroad participation. The assessment results will inform the EWB’s future courses content.

Dominican University of California’s EWB establishes an approach that pairs domain knowledge taught by tenured faculty specialists in their field, with professional development taught by business professionals as adjunct faculty. This faculty team seeks to develop students’ business acumen, as well as professional behaviors to better prepare them or the expectations of their future employers and for the work place. The faculty provide coaching and mentoring to assist students in their practice of job seeking strategies, techniques and skills needed to be successful on their career path. The program helps students build a career plan based upon what we understand employers are seeking.

Expanding the connections with the local business community to increase internship opportunities and to network with them to link prepared graduates to open employment opportunities is a key next step for Dominican’s EWB program. A cohesive Assurance of Learning Plan used to assess the progress of achieving student learning outcome can systematically ensure the alignment to such needs.

Dominican University of California’s School of Business and Leadership will support the efforts of the EWB faculty to reach out to the business community and engage them in allowing students to attend mixers, conferences and other important networking events. In addition, Dominican University of California is considering hosting an event, which brings the faculty and local business people together in a forum, which will allow both groups to look for synergies and gap closures to enhance the student’s career readiness in the job market. We believe by better understanding local business needs, we can develop and grow the EWB program to serve both the students and prospective local business. One of the next steps will include a survey of the local business community needs. This would serve to help confirm the SLO as well as look for curricular gaps in the EWB program.

In closing, Dominican University of California’s School of Business and Leadership faculty value the *Exploring the World of Business* professional and carer development program as a critical component of the formal business curriculum, and is an important pairing with business domain knowledge. Students reflect on their experiences, interests and talents to make informed choices to guide their business education path. They also develop professional behaviors required in the workplace, enhancing students’ preparation for careers in business professions. Courses are taught by tenured professors, partnered with business executives, who serve as adjunct faculty in the students’ junior and senior years. Beginning in the freshman year and continuing throughout their senior year, the program is designed to have specific annual Student Learning Outcomes supported by theory-based practice activities. The student’s evolution about self and career exploration, and also business concentration choices in the freshman and sophomore years are reinforced in the junior and senior years. Juniors explore and validate career options and develop their business network, refine their personal brands and practice mock and informational interviews. The culminating course in the senior year is geared toward launching the student’s business

career. Seniors develop a 5-year resume and complete a job search plan that seeks to lead to a career job offered immediately before or after graduation. The program seeks to reinforce that Dominican University of California's School of Business and Leadership graduates perform in their business careers as socially responsible leaders of sustainable organizations that make a positive difference in the world. The faculty have designed and embrace the EWB professional and career development program as a critical component of the formal business curriculum, and is an important pairing with business domain knowledge.

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