With its diverse student body, location in downtown Atlanta, and national leadership in the use of analytics to promote student success, Georgia State University is uniquely positioned to create a new model for preparing students from all backgrounds for life-long success in graduate school and careers. GSU has the opportunity to be on the leading edge of the innovations in career readiness that will prepare students to be agile and effective members of the workforce and will allow the university to address the complex issues of the future employment landscape. GSU also can be a national game-changer when it comes to helping to close achievement gaps within a range of professions between individuals of different races, ethnicities and income-backgrounds.

A 2016 study by Georgetown University’s Center on Education and the Workforce draws a troubling connection between the academic choices commonly made by low-income and first-generation college students and lower levels of earning power throughout their careers. Focusing on black American college students, the study found that, post-graduation, black students are over-represented in service fields, such as social work and education, and under-represented in the highest paying fields, including business and STEM. Studies show that this phenomenon is found not merely among blacks but also among low-income, first-generation, and Latino college graduates. Because of our failure to connect college students from at-risk populations to the full range of careers that they are qualified to pursue, social inequalities across the United States are reinforced, even among the group that represents our greatest hope for economic mobility: college-educated individuals. Meanwhile, the Pew Research Institute, in a 2016 report on the American work force and changing job market, reported: “Tectonic changes are reshaping U.S. workplaces as the economy moves deeper into the knowledge-focused age….They may be prompting a society-wide reckoning about where those constantly evolving skills should be learned – and what the role of colleges should be.”

Georgia State University’s College to Career (CTC) pathway program will attempt to address these challenges and to provide a scalable, adaptable model to prepare the next generation of Georgia State students to succeed in graduate school and careers. Building on several cutting-edge technologies in which GSU already has invested in (including career-based, personal e-portfolios for every student and new advising portals that expose students to live job data from thousands of careers) and more than $2 million in grants recently secured to support the initiative, CTC will implement a four-year curriculum in career readiness for all Bachelor’s students and a two-year curriculum for all Associate’s students that will be delivered by a partnership between academic departments and key administrative offices such as Career

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Services, Academic Advising, and First-Year Programs. Rather than adding new courses and degree requirements, CTC will infuse modules directed at career readiness to existing academic programs such as GSU 1010/GPO 1030 orientation courses, meta majors, Signature Experiences, and CTW courses.

Georgia State has developed a national reputation for graduating students from all backgrounds at high and comparable rates. That reputation is enhanced when our students demonstrate essential career readiness competencies in their graduate and professional lives. Such preparation also builds a stronger affinity to Georgia State post graduation and will promote alumni engagement and giving.

Goals of CTC:

1. Students will have meaningful career-readying experiences throughout their academic careers. The university will establish intervention points for students’ professional progress; leverage Georgia State’s advising technologies and staff resources, and train academic advisors as frontline career responders to refer students for career interventions to college and university career offices.

2. Students will be career ready upon graduation.
   a. A 4-year career readiness curriculum with 7 milestones for 4-year degree seekers or a 2-year curriculum with 4 milestones for 2-year degree seekers will be implemented and used as measurement toward progress. Faculty members will support career readiness in the components germane to the disciplines. Staff will support career readiness in the components related to co-curricular activities.
   b. Students will be proficient in the use the technologies of the 21st century including e-portfolio to pursue careers and will document their career readiness experiences and achieved milestones.

3. Students will be aware of the career competencies that are required for career readiness and cognizant of those competencies that they individually develop during their Georgia State education. Career competencies will be mapped to the general curriculum (GSU 1010, meta-majors), the offerings within academic majors (signature experiences, CTW) and co-curricular activities (alumni panels, departmental lectures series, internships, club and athletic experiences) and will be chronicled to students via e-portfolios and other measures to increase student awareness of the skills they are developing.

When analyzing recent QEP proposals from peer and aspirational institutions, only two (Virginia Commonwealth University, and the business school at University of Central Florida) had QEPs with a significant career readiness component. When research was expanded to 30 more QEPs, only one more (University of Texas at Arlington) was found to contain this aspect.
The organizational structure would be a collaboration between career services and academic advising and academic departments.

Develop a career readiness 2 and 4-year curriculum with 4 or 7 milestones. The milestones will include experiential learning, ePortfolio documentation, and modules is orientation and CTW courses.

Division of Student Affairs; GSU 1010/GPO 1030; academic advising, career services.

Faculty will be encouraged but not required to add components such as peer-review of students’ career e-portfolios to courses such as CTW.

**Relevance to GSU Mission and Strategic Plan**

**Mission** includes: . . .strengthens the workforce of the future. The university provides an outstanding education and exceptional support for students from all backgrounds. Georgia State readies students for professional pursuits. . .

**Goal 1 of the Strategic Plan:** Become a national model for undergraduate education by demonstrating that students from all backgrounds can achieve academic and career success at high rates.

Up to this point, we have made much more tangible progress in helping students attain “academic” than “career” success. A clear focus of the updated Strategic Plan is to correct this deficiency.

**Research Literature**


Various research articles in the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) Journal