

# CLOSING THE GAP IN EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION

## Information for Administrators

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From 2021-2023, with the assistance of a post-doctoral student and PhD student, the Pomerantz Career Center analyzed pre-existing data as well as collected new data via focus groups, surveys, and interviews with students, faculty, staff and specific academic departments in order to identify barriers to participation and solutions to undergraduate student gaps in experiential education participation.

The first year of assessment confirmed trends between Senior Exit Survey Data and Post-Graduation Placement data, with qualitative data pointing towards students' need for paid work conflicting with their ability to participate in experiential education and departments' needs for faculty lines to expand offerings.

The second year of assessment confirmed the conflict between paid work as well as the potential for student-employment experiential education interventions by analyzing point in time data, 8 years of student-employment data, as well as SERU and UI GROW data. While information and tailored interventions are also being shared with faculty, staff, and advisors, the information and recommended actions herein are tailored for UI administrators.

### Knowledge Gained Regarding Experiential Education:

- ✓ Gaps in experiential education participation exist by First-Generation status and by certain academic departments (*UI Senior Exit Survey; UI Post-Graduation Data*)
- ✓ Students with GPAs below 3.0 report lower access to opportunities (*Qualitative Data*)
- ✓ Students report needing information regarding experiential education and wanting it earlier in their academic careers (*Qualitative data; Experiential Education Student Survey*)
- ✓ Students report wanting to receive information regarding experiential education from academic advisors, professors, and peers (*Qualitative Data; Experiential Education Student Survey*)
- ✓ Students report not knowing what UI resources exist for networking and building social capital while at UI (*Experiential Education Student Survey*)
- ✓ Faculty/staff report excitement for experiential education and see lack of incentive for teaching time intensive experiential education courses when they are not included in the P/T process (*Qualitative Data*)
- ✓ Departments with lower student participation report challenges due to lack of faculty funding lines and need to fill pre-existing openings due to faculty departure or student enrollment growth (*Qualitative Data*)
- ✓ Departments with lower student participation report students' pursuit of activities not captured in current list of practices included on the Senior Exit Survey (*Qualitative Data*)

### Knowledge Gained Regarding On-Campus Student Employment:

- ✓ First-Generation students working on campus work slightly more total hours than others; First-Generation students are also represented at higher rates in work off campus and for more hours compared to continuing generation students (*On Campus Student Employment Data; SERU*). First-Generation students also report more negative impacts from food insecurity, including missing class, missing study sessions, not performing as well academically, opting out of social activities, and dropping a class (*SERU*). These characteristics arguably create conditions in which students have less time available for non-required activities that add to their educational experience and make them competitive post-graduation.
- ✓ Students in academic departments with lower participation in experiential education report working paid jobs on campus at higher-than-average rates (*On Campus Student Employment Data*)
- ✓ First-Generation students and students with GPAs under 3.0 are highly represented in the student-employment classification "Office Work" compared to other classifications. (*On Campus Student Employment Data*)

## Recommended Actions:

### ✓ Incentives for Faculty and Academic Departments

- Create strategic faculty lines for lecturers or faculty of practice, where these new faculties' teaching loads emphasize experiential education courses. To make an impact on identified gaps in participation, the recommended priority for these faculty lines would be programs of study with low participation in the high-impact practices currently used in the Senior Exit Survey. 💰💰💰
- Partner with the Pomerantz Career Center and the Office of Assessment to identify programs of study with low participation rates in the high-impact practices currently used in the Senior Exit Survey and set goals for percent of student participation or course offerings. Then provide strategic course development funds for these departments when needed to continue to add to their experiential education offerings beyond the timeframe of the P3 Closing the Gap project. 💰💰
- Continue discussions of how colleges, departments, and individual faculty members translate established tenure requirements into practice. Attempt to remove barriers to teaching experiential education courses. 💰—💰💰💰

### ✓ Financial Education and Strategic Incentives for Students and Departments

- Incorporate financial planning for experiential education into Financial Literacy Services and/or aid packages 💰
- Continued funding and administrative support for the Hawkeye Experience Grant 💰💰
- Consider additional course-level financial incentives for low-income, First-Generation, and/or students with a GPA of 2.0-2.99 to participate in preparatory or embedded experiential education courses (ex. CCP:2005 Internships: Search, Secure, and Succeed; Community-Engaged Courses, etc.) 💰

### ✓ Make Planning and Referrals Unavoidable

- Incorporate planning for experiential education into My Plan 💰💰
- Incorporate use of support offices for experiential education (Career Center, Office of Undergraduate Research, Study Abroad, Leadership, Service, & Civic Engagement, Office of Community Engagement – Community Engaged Courses) into First Gen Hawks' academic coaching sessions, TRIO, CIAE, College Transition, First Year Seminar programming, and Introduction to Major courses 💰
- Incorporate networking support in to First Gen Hawks' academic coaching sessions, TRIO, CIAE, College Transition, First Year Seminar programming, and Introduction to Major courses 💰
- Train peers (ambassadors, advisors, mentors, tutors/SI Leaders, RAs, and Hawkeye Guides) and graduate TA's on how to refer to engage.uiowa.edu and support offices for experiential education 💰

- Train advisors and faculty, especially those teaching first year students, on how to refer to engage.uiowa.edu, the engagement record, and how to search for experiential courses within MyUI once course category tagging is completed 💰

### ✓ Use Student Employment to Supplement Experiential Education

- Explore strategic expansion of UI GROW, UI STEP, or development of other employment-based intervention for undergraduate students working in on-campus employment in Office Work category positions, especially if trend of high representation of First-Generation students and students with GPA's below 3.0s continues for next few years 💰
- Explore strategic expansion of UI GROW, UI STEP, or development of other employment-based intervention for reflection and synthesis for students in Health Science/Clinical category positions and UIHC – Nursing Services category positions, which are positions held in large proportion by students in programs of study with lower participation rates in high-impact practices currently used in the Senior Exit Survey 💰
- Briefly use SERU to look for trends with off-campus employment and experiential education, food insecurity, income, and First-Generation students 💰
- Explore strategic expansion of UI STEP or development of other employment-based intervention with added reflective components for students working off-campus, with pilots first targeting specific sub-populations 💰

### ✓ Advocate for Student Resources

- Cultivate and steward donors to continue funding undergraduate experiential education via the Hawkeye Experience Grant 💰💰
- Advocacy at the state-level for tuition support for students enrolling in required extra semesters (more than 8) for experiential education that meets credentialing or graduation requirements, especially in high need fields (examples: radiation sciences clinical internship, social work practicums, student teaching, etc.) 💰
- Advocacy at the state-level for food security initiatives and tuition support for first-generation and low-income college students 💰
- Collaborate with donor, employer, UI departments, and community partners to integrate food insecurity prevention into their experiential education activities (ex. food stipend provided by internship site or cafeteria access at hospital site; food bank and community services referrals included in onboarding information for internships, community-engaged courses, etc.; food stipend scholarships during school year targeting those who are food insecure and participating in an experience on campus or in local community) 💰