**UNIVERSITY COLLEGE**

**University Curriculum Committee**

**Contact: Nevil Speer**

DATE: March 28, 2011

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| Type of Item | Description of Item |
| Action | Proposal to Create a New CourseItem: IDST 269 Career Exploration Field ExperienceContact: Becky S. Bennett, Email: becky.bennett@wku.eduPhone: 745-3095 |
| Action | Proposal to Create a New CourseItem: IDST 369 Career Related Field ExperienceContact: Becky S. Bennett, Email: becky.bennett@wku.eduPhone: 745-3095 |

Proposal Date: November 4, 2010

**University College**

**Department of Interdisciplinary Studies**

**Proposal to Create a New Course**

**(Action Item)**

Contact Person: Dr. Becky S. Bennett, becky.bennett@wku.edu, 270-745-3095

**1. Identification of proposed course:**

* 1. **Course prefix and number:** IDST 269
	2. **Course title:** Career Exploration Field Experience
	3. **Abbreviated course title:** Career Exploration
	4. **Credit hours and contact hours:** 1 – 3 hours per semester, variable based on number of hours working (1 hr. credit for 10 – 19 hrs. of work/week (140 hours minimum); 2 hrs. for 20 – 29 hrs./week (280 hours minimum); 3 hrs. for 30 or more hrs./week (420 hours minimum))
	5. **Type of course:** Internship, Cooperative Education, Practicum (N, O, P)
	6. **Prerequisites:** Freshman or sophomore standing. Instructor permission is required. Work arrangements approved through the Career Services Center with instructor consultation.
	7. **Course catalog listing:** Supervised work experience aligned with a student’s expressed career interests within a cooperating business, industry, or agency. Students should work directly with the Career Services Center and course instructor to identify goals, secure appropriate work experience, and review course requirements.

**2. Rationale:**

* 1. **Reason for developing the proposed course:** The proposed course provides a mechanism for students to engage in hands-on career exploration to help them clarify their career goals and assist them in identifying possible academic majors and degree programs that support those goals. As career and vocational concerns form at least a partial basis for numerous choices made and issues expressed by students at the college level and by individuals throughout life, it is extremely important for students to begin to align their academic studies with career decision-making and career-exploration early in the college experience. Helping students see their academic studies as relevant to the real world, with application to specific career paths has been shown to have a positive impact on the retention and persistence of college students (Keaveney & Young, 1997; Shields, Kara & Kaynak, 2007), and data indicate that career decision-making self-efficacy significantly influences students’ intent to persist in higher education (Sandler, 2000). Thus, experiential opportunities and courses that support students in making informed academic and career decisions can have a direct impact on college degree completion, retention, and success, factors that remain consistent components of WKU’s vision and the recently updated strategic plan which emphasizes degree completion. Engaging in internship and co-op experiences helps students explore and confirm appropriate career and academic major choices; builds both technical and “soft” skill sets; increases student understanding, meaning, and interaction/involvement within their course studies; and facilitates informed choice regarding both academic major choice and elective coursework that often leads to increased student satisfaction, graduation rate, and successful transition to the workforce. As the proposed course provides a system and centralized avenue for collecting data related to the learning that takes place outside of the classroom, it will also contribute additional measures of academic quality, and provide relevant data for program accreditation purposes.

* 1. **Projected enrollment in the proposed course:** Based on enrollment in Interdisciplinary Studies, interest expressed by students enrolled in Co-op 200 (a non-credit, non-graded course), and on enrollment in similar courses at other institutions, beginning enrollments are projected to be 10-15 per semester, increasing over time.
	2. **Relationship of the proposed course to courses now offered by the department:** Interdisciplinary Studies does not currently offer an Internship course. It is expected that students considering an interdisciplinary field of study, or those students undecided about their academic major, may elect to enroll in this course to obtain experience in a particular occupational field to assist them in exploring and choosing a specific career path and academic focus.
	3. **Relationship of the proposed course to courses offered in other departments:** Currently, there are approximately 158 distinct programs of study at the undergraduate, graduate and associate degree levels. In recent semesters, there have been only 52 cooperative education, practicum and internship courses offered that are unique to specific programs of study. Only 19 percent of those courses are offered at the 200 level. The Career Services Center currently offers Co-op 200, a non-credit, non-graded course charged at the tuition rate of a 1 hour course. Co-op 200 is available to students who are unable to obtain internship or co-op credit within their academic major or discipline. While enrolling in Co-op 200 does provide a means for students who are working in a full-time intern/co-op capacity during the summer or regular semester to maintain affiliation with the University for visa status and insurance purposes, it does not allow them to receive appropriate credit and recognition for the learning that takes place, as would be the case of a co-op/intern course offered within academic major departments. Since few internship or cooperative education courses are offered currently at the 200 level, the proposed course offers all departments an option to encourage students to explore career fields of interest at an early stage of their college education.
	4. **Relationship** **of the proposed course to courses offered in other institutions:** In an examination of courses offered by WKU benchmark institutions and schools within the state, only 20%, or 5 of 25, offered a generic internship/cooperative education course available to students outside specific departments. With the realignment of University College, and the growing number of interdisciplinary programs being developed, the proposed course is relatively unique in that it can provide WKU students with exposure, early in their college studies, to new and emerging careers across a variety of disciplines. This exposure is especially meaningful to those individuals making critical decisions related to choosing an academic major and career path.

**3. Discussion of proposed course:**

* 1. **Course objectives:**
* To provide students with opportunities to explore careers of interest
* To increase student understanding of theoretical concepts through practical application in workplace settings, and through exchange of ideas and information with workplace experts
* To provide students with awareness of both the technical and “soft” skills required for success in various career fields
* To provide students with opportunities to acquire new skills and work with technologies that aren’t available in the academic setting
	1. **Content outline:** This course will incorporate hands-on, experiential learning, along with the exchange of ideas and knowledge between the student and workplace experts. Learning will be facilitated by participation in workplace activities that meet specific learning objectives, based upon each student’s expressed career interests, and documented in an individual Learning Plan. The Learning Plan is developed by the student, working collaboratively with the course instructor and the student’s workplace supervisor. Learning objectives will be reflective of each student’s career goals and the opportunities available within each individual workplace setting.
	2. **Student expectations and requirements:** Participation in planned workplace activities will be expected. The activities will be based on the goals and objectives outlined by each student in their **Learning Plan**, which is to be completed at the beginning of the internship. Additionally, students will be required to report on their experience within a **Data Report** (self-evaluation of learning) and **Final Work Report Narrative** (student reflection paper) at the end of each work period. An **Employer Evaluation** of each student’s learning is completed by the worksite supervisor. Additional assignments and readings related to each student’s learning goals will be provided by the course instructor.
	3. **Tentative texts and course materials:** An Internship Handbook and list of reading materials and resources will be assigned based upon each student’s individual learning goals.

**4. Resources:**

* 1. **Library resources:** Sufficient
	2. **Computer resources:** Computerized career assessment and planning program provided by the Career Services Center

**5. Budget implications:**

* 1. **Proposed method of staffing:** Career Services Center professional counseling staff and Interdisciplinary Studies departmental staff and faculty
	2. **Special equipment needed:** None required
	3. **Expendable materials needed:** None required
	4. **Laboratory materials needed:** None required

**6. Proposed term for implementation:** Summer 2011

**7. Dates of prior committee approvals:**

Department of Interdisciplinary Studies: \_\_\_\_March 3, 2011\_\_

 University College Curriculum Committee March 28, 2011\_

 Undergraduate Curriculum Committee \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 University Senate \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Attachment: Bibliography, Library Resources Form**, **Course Inventory Form**

Proposal Date: November 4, 2010

**University College**

**Department of Interdisciplinary Studies**

**Proposal to Create a New Course**

**(Action Item)**

Contact Person: Dr. Becky S. Bennett, becky.bennett@wku.edu, 270-745-3095

1. **Identification of proposed course:**
	1. **Course prefix and number:** IDST 369
	2. **Course title:** Career Related Field Experience
	3. **Abbreviated course title:** Field Experience
	4. **Credit hours and contact hours:** 1 – 3 hours per semester, variable based on number of hours working (1 hr. credit for 10 – 19 hrs. of work/week (140 hours minimum); 2 hrs. for 20 – 29 hrs./week (280 hours minimum); 3 hrs. for 30 or more hrs./week (420 hours minimum))
	5. **Type of course:** Internship, Cooperative Education, Practicum (N, O, P)
	6. **Prerequisites:** Junior or Senior standing with a declared major. Instructor permission is required. Work arrangements approved through the Career Services Center with instructor consultation.
	7. **Course catalog listing:** Supervised work experience related to a student’s field of study or career goals within a cooperating business, industry, or agency. Students should work directly with the Career Services Center and course instructor to identify goals, secure appropriate work experience, and review course requirements.
2. **Rationale:**
	1. **Reason for developing the proposed course:** The proposed course provides a means for students to apply classroom knowledge and acquire additional skills in a workplace setting prior to graduation. Additionally, students are provided the opportunity to interact with and exchange ideas with experts within their chosen career field. Engaging in internship and co-op experiences helps students confirm appropriate career and academic major choices; builds both technical and “soft” skill sets; increases student understanding, meaning and interaction/involvement within their course studies; and facilitates informed choice regarding elective coursework that often leads to increased employability. With unemployment rates among the highest of the past 10 years (Bureau of Labor Statistics), internship and cooperative education experiences help students develop a career network, marketable career-related experience, and post-graduation employment opportunities with intern/co-op employers. As career and vocational concerns form at least a partial basis for numerous choices made and issues expressed by students at the college level and by individuals throughout life, it is extremely important for students to align their academic studies with career decision-making and career-clarifying activity during the college experience. Helping students see their academic studies as applicable to specific career paths has been shown to have a positive impact on the retention and persistence of college students (Keaveney & Young, 1997; Shields, Kara & Kaynak, 2007), and data indicate that career decision-making self-efficacy significantly influences students’ intent to persist in higher education (Sandler, 2000). Experiential opportunities and courses that support students in increasing their career-related skills can have a direct impact on college degree completion, retention, and success, factors that remain consistent components of WKU’s vision and the recently updated strategic plan which emphasizes degree completion.
	2. **Projected enrollment in the proposed course:** Based on interest expressed by students enrolled in Co-op 200, a non-credit, non-graded course, and on enrollment in similar courses at other institutions, beginning enrollments are projected to be 10-15 per semester, increasing over time.
	3. **Relationship of the proposed course to courses now offered by the department:** Interdisciplinary Studies does not currently offer an Internship course. It is expected that students within interdisciplinary fields of study would benefit from enrollment in the proposed course as a means of applying course content and knowledge to specific occupations within a workplace setting, allowing them to obtain career focus, connect with potential employers, and develop additional skills and experience.
	4. **Relationship of the proposed course to courses offered in other departments:**

Currently, there are approximately 158 distinct programs of study at the undergraduate, graduate and associate degree levels. In recent semesters, there have been only 52 cooperative education, practicum and internship courses offered that are unique to specific programs of study. Only 36 percent of those courses are offered at the 300 level, leaving many students seeking to combine work and learning for skill-building and professional networking outside the classroom, without a means of doing so. The proposed course provides an avenue for students to obtain career-related work experience, increase their career competencies, and engage with professionals within their chosen field, each contributing to their successful employment after graduation. The Career Services Center currently offers Co-op 200, a non-credit, non-graded course charged at the tuition rate of a 1 hour course. Co-op 200 is available to any student who is unable to obtain co-op or internship credit within their academic major or discipline. While enrolling in Co-op 200 provides a means for students in interdisciplinary majors and others working in an intern/co-op capacity to maintain affiliation with the University for visa status and insurance purposes, it does not allow students to receive appropriate credit and recognition for work performed and learning involved in an internship experience, as would those students enrolled in departmental-specific internship courses. With the initiation of the proposed course, students in interdisciplinary fields of study, and those unable to enroll in an internship course within their own academic department, would have an option for extending learning and practice beyond the classroom.

* 1. **Relationship of the proposed course to courses offered in other institutions:** In an examination of courses offered by WKU benchmark institutions and schools within the state, only 20%, or 5 of 25, offered an internship/cooperative education course available to students outside specific departments. The proposed course specifically offers WKU an avenue for encouraging the development of interdisciplinary programs of study that will include opportunities for applied learning outside the classroom, similar to those afforded students within academic programs of study where internships already exist.
1. **Discussion of proposed course:**
	1. **Course objectives:**
* To provide students with opportunities to apply course content and knowledge within the workplace setting
* To provide students with awareness of both the technical and “soft” skills required for success in their career field
* To provide students with opportunities to acquire new skills and work with technologies that aren’t available in the academic setting
* To help students develop a network of professional contacts
	1. **Content outline:** This course will incorporate hands-on, experiential learning, along with the exchange of ideas and knowledge between the student and workplace experts. Learning will be facilitated by participation in workplace activities that meet specific learning objectives, based upon each student’s occupational goals, and documented in an individual Learning Plan. The Learning Plan is developed by the student, working collaboratively with the course instructor and the student’s workplace supervisor. Learning objectives will be reflective of each student’s goals and the opportunities available within each individual workplace setting.
	2. **Student expectations and requirements:** Participation in planned workplace activities will be expected. The activities will be based on the goals and objectives outlined by each student in their **Learning Plan**, which is to be completed at the beginning of the internship. Additionally, students will be required to report on their experience within a **Data Report** (self-evaluation of learning) and **Final Work Report Narrative** (student reflection paper) at the end of each work period. An **Employer Evaluation** of each student’s learning is completed by the worksite supervisor. Additional assignments and readings related to each student’s learning goals will be provided by the course instructor.
	3. **Tentative texts and course materials:** No text assigned; however, an Intern Handbook will be provided to each student in the course, and a list of web-based reading materials and resources to support interns will be updated regularly on the Career Services Center website.
1. **Resources:**
	1. **Library resources:** Sufficient
	2. **Computer resources:** Computerized career assessments, occupational research and job location resources provided by the Career Services Center

**5. Budget implications:**

* 1. **Proposed method of staffing:** Career Services Center professional counseling staff and Interdisciplinary Studies departmental staff and faculty
	2. **Special equipment needed:** None required
	3. **Expendable materials needed:** None required
	4. **Laboratory materials needed:** None required

**6. Proposed term for implementation:** Summer 2011

**7. Dates of prior committee approvals:**

Department of Interdisciplinary Studies \_\_\_March 3, 2011\_\_\_

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**Attachment: Bibliography, Library Resources Form**, **Course Inventory Form**