COLLEGE TO CAREER CONNECTIONS

Why Embed Career Readiness into the Curriculum?
While students gain career-related skills through their academic experiences, they often struggle to communicate the competencies they're developing to potential employers and graduate schools. Faculty can help students make connections between college and career through simple practices related to their syllabi, assignments, and class discussions. There are many compelling reasons why embedding career readiness into the curriculum is critical to student success.

UT's Strategic Vision
The university's Strategic Vision includes priorities and metrics that require our campus to respond to the career outcomes of UT students, particularly in Goal One – Cultivating the Volunteer Experience. As the university seeks to prepare career ready graduates and increase positive career outcomes (job or graduate school), faculty can play an important role.

Why Involve Faculty?
Faculty and other mentors are some of the primary influences on students' career development, and research shows that having someone who encourages their goals and dreams is one of four experiences that most impact graduates finding purpose in work. The conversations faculty have with students may prompt them to act on their career development.

Additionally, students spend far more time in the classroom engaging with faculty than they do seeking support services like career development. Embedding career readiness into the curriculum is the most equitable way to ensure that all students, not just those with social capital, are exposed to career development.

Career Readiness Competencies
The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) defines career readiness as "a foundation from which to demonstrate requisite core competencies that broadly prepare the college educated for success in the workplace and lifelong management." Defining competencies provides a common framework for students, higher education, and employers to discuss the foundation students need to successfully launch a career across all job functions. Eight competencies and sample behaviors are detailed by NACE and a summary follows.

Communication: Clearly and effectively exchange information, ideas, facts, and perspectives with persons inside and outside of an organization.

Critical Thinking: Identify and respond to needs based upon an understanding of situational context and logical analysis of relevant information.

Career & Self-Development: Proactively develop oneself and one's career through continual personal and professional learning, awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses, navigation of career opportunities, and networking to build relationships within and without one's organization.

Equity & Inclusion: Demonstrate the awareness, attitude, knowledge, and skills required to equitably engage and include people from different local and global cultures. Engage in anti-racist practices that actively challenge the systems, structures, and policies of racism.

Leadership: Recognize and capitalize on personal and team strengths to achieve organizational goals.

Professionalism: Knowing work environments differ greatly, understand and demonstrate effective work habits, and act in the interest of the larger community and workplace.

Teamwork: Build and maintain collaborative relationships to work effectively toward common goals, while appreciating diverse viewpoints and shared responsibilities.

Technology: Understand and leverage technologies ethically to enhance efficiencies, complete tasks, and accomplish goals.

Volunteer Core and Career Readiness Competencies

The stated purpose of UT's general education is to "provide students with the foundation for successful academic study, lifelong learning, and actively engaging in the duties of local, national and global citizenship." Many of the eight career readiness competencies are embedded within the Volunteer Core. Consider the following.

Vol Core	Career Readiness Competencies
Effective Communication	
Oral	Communication
Written	Communication
Applied Oral	Communication, Career & Self-Development
Expanded Perspectives	
Arts & Humanities	Critical Thinking, Equity, & Inclusion
Natural Sciences	Critical Thinking
Quantitative & Logical Reasoning	Critical Thinking
Social Sciences	Critical Thinking, Technology
Global Citizenship	Critical Thinking, Equity & Inclusion, Career & Self-Development
Engaged Inquiries	Critical Thinking; Teamwork; Career & Self-Development

Through class assignments and projects, students have the ability to develop additional career readiness competencies.

Assignment or Classroom Expectations	Career Readiness Competencies
Presentations, oral reports, papers and essays, written labs, group discussions, journal entries, classroom debates	Communication
Case studies, problem solving, comparative papers, readings and discussion, data analysis	Critical Thinking
Assigning diversity events on campus, readings and reflections, group assignments, modeling inclusive language and accessible course materials, study abroad	Equity & Inclusion
Group projects that assign a leader or ask students to choose one, peer grading, discussion facilitation, leadership training	Leadership
Group projects and activities, online forums, service learning, small group discussion	Teamwork
Presentations, videos, labs requiring use of technology or software	Technology
Reflections related to self-knowledge, portfolios, resumes, practice interviews, and other career-related assignments	Career & Self-Development
LinkedIn profile creation, assignments requiring goal setting and achievement, expectations of punctuality, professional dress for presentations, practicums, fieldwork, internships	Professionalism

Help Build a Career-Centered Campus Culture
Through several simple practices, faculty help students better prepare for their post-graduation goals. Consider the following:

- Map course learning outcomes to career competencies
- Include intentional language surrounding career competencies on class syllabi and assignments
  - *This course will provide you knowledge and skills related to these NACE Career Readiness Competencies: [insert relevant competency/competencies]. These skills will help prepare you in securing internships, full-time jobs, and graduate school admission. Consider what you are learning in this class and how it will help prepare you for your chosen career. Learn more about career competencies from the Center for Career Development & Academic Exploration.*
- Encourage students to engage in high-impact practices including research, service learning, internships, and programs abroad
- Offer assignments that encourage the professional development of students; Utilize assignments developed by the career center
- Add pre-made Canvas career modules to your Canvas course site
- Refer students to the Center for Career Development & Academic Exploration

Visit career.utk.edu to learn more or email utcareer@utk.edu with questions.