

**11-MONTH MBA  
PROFESSIONAL AND CAREER  
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING  
REVIEW & RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Internship Report**

Instructional Design Leadership  
Information Learning Technologies  
IT 6930

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## Project Summary

In this internship, I have reviewed the existing Professional and Career Development (PCD) curriculum offered through the 11-Month MBA Program at the Business School at the University of Colorado at Denver and Health Sciences Center. After researching the antecedents to job search success and reflecting on current learning theories, I have developed a set of recommendations to make the PCD curriculum more effective and valuable.

## Introduction

The PCD programming is offered exclusively through the 11-Month MBA, an accelerated, cohort graduate business school program at the University of Colorado at Denver and Health Sciences. The program consists of 16 courses (48 credit hours) broken into five eight-week terms; each term consists of three pre-selected classes. The sixteenth course is an international business course, held on an academic campus abroad, historically in the UK or France. The annual academic schedule is:

Term 1: Aug-Oct  
Term 2: Oct-Dec  
Term 3: Jan-Feb  
International Business Course Abroad: March  
Term 4: April-May  
Term 5: June-July

The students attend all their classes (approximately 20 hours a week) in the off-campus Bard Center for Entrepreneurship (located at 16<sup>th</sup> & Welton in downtown Denver). The center includes a classroom, computer labs, break-out and meeting areas, a kitchenette and locker room. Although technically the Bard Center is only fifteen minutes from the Auraria Campus, students rarely venture on campus.

For 2005-2006, 33 students graduated from the program (38 were signed up at orientation). They ranged in age from 22-43, with 73% falling between 22-28 (a historical deviation; usually the average age is 28-32). There were a relatively high proportion of women (42%) and out-of-state students (27%) compared to our historical averages. While half of the students had come from business undergraduate backgrounds, 29% came from liberal arts and 18% came from science/engineering backgrounds. The composition of the class of 2007 is still in flux, but from preliminary data it looks like the class will fall inline with historical averages, with a slight downward shift in ages: 60% of incoming students are between 25-32 years old.

Students must demonstrate an ability and desire to be in an accelerated program to even be considered candidates for the program. Students encompass a range of preferred learning styles, but they all demonstrate a high level of learning aptitude. The admissions requirements to get into this program are higher than the on-campus MBA and MS business programs. Among those students who successfully complete the program, some of the shared characteristics include: a fast learning curve, engagement, drive, hard work, time management skills, and motivation. This is a group that can be pushed cognitively in ways that would be harder with a more heterogeneous group. The combination of aptitude and aforementioned characteristics make this a very dynamic group capable of achieving much; they also place high demands on the program. The challenges in working with each class are dealing with their wide range of backgrounds and goals and managing their expectations.

While some of the demographics of this class were different than the average class of 11-Month MBA students, they did have a similar career goals in similar proportions to the past classes that have gone through the program. Their self-described career goals varied with most of them wanting to go into corporate management, though nearly 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the students were interested in entrepreneurship. Specific career goals differ among students, with some students expressing

multiple goals. 75-80% of the students coming to the 11-Month MBA program want to retool themselves quickly in order to make a significant career change (i.e. working in a new field and industry). The general categories of career goals expressed by 11-Month MBA students include (in order of preference):

- establishing a new career (for the first time or in both a new field and industry)
- staying in their field, but doing it in a new industry (e.g. biotech, banking, etc)
- starting their own company
- continuing on their past path in the same field/industry in a new company
- staying in the same industry, but in a new field (e.g. HR, IT, Finance, etc)
- continuing on their past path in the same field/industry and the same company

Their prior level of knowledge on PCD topics varies, but most have a basic rudimentary knowledge. All students have at least developed a resume (a requirement for admission to the program), and most have gone through at least one job search in the past.

The PCD programming occurs on site and is scheduled in conjunction with their rigorous academic schedule over the course of the eleven-month cycle. While the academic program first exists to provide a quality education, as a professional degree it also plays a role in helping students transition successfully from school to work and developing life-long professional and career skills and acumen.

The PCD programming goals include being able to help students develop the knowledge, connections, and resources to 1) conduct a successful job search in the short-term and 2) be able to plan and manage their careers over the long-term. The PCD curriculum was initially developed in the middle of the 2002-2003 school year as a supplemental resource to the existing Career Center. Student feedback to administration consistently identified the lack of career support as one of the weakest aspects of the 11-Month MBA program. One of the expectations incoming students have is that by getting their MBA they will be able to be more marketable and get a better job. Students

who had trouble accomplishing that on their own reported increased dissatisfaction with the 11-Month MBA Program and felt little, if any, goodwill towards the Program.

The PCD curriculum has grown over the past four years to include:

- 6-8 hands-on PCD workshops
- 4-8 Speaker's Series Events – events bringing local business professionals into the classroom (or, sometimes having students do site visits) to educate students on different fields, industries, career paths, and organizations
- a mentorship program with five formally scheduled meetings
- a monthly newsletter with tips, resources and recommendations
- an online one-stop resource for information on occupations, industries, professional associations, and other PCD-related topics (including a networking-discussion board)
- on-going networking opportunities with alumni and other local business people

# Career Development Research on Antecedents to Job Search Success

In order to anchor the analysis and recommendations of this report to proven concepts and strategies, I reviewed the available literature for research on the antecedents to job search success. There has been a considerable amount of research in the past 20 years on what personal characteristics, academic achievements, and extracurricular activities will predict job search and job performance success. Much of the work is grounded in social-cognitive theory and analyzes the knowledge, skills, personality characteristics, and conceptual frameworks that are predictors of behavior and interventions that can help regulate behavior. There were four primary concepts that kept recurring and that could be applied to the 11-Month MBA PCD curriculum to increase the potential for successful outcomes: self-efficacy, leadership, school engagement, and career planfulness. Below I have outlined each of these guiding concepts.

## ***Self-Efficacy***

Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief about their abilities and can vary with different tasks. For instance, a person may have a strong positive belief about their ability to fix a car but a negative belief about their ability to do math. Self-efficacy is an accepted predictor of behavior (Bandura, 1997) and can be revised with the introduction of new information and experiences (Bandura, 1997; Gist & Mitchell, 1992). Whereas strong self-efficacy is related to goal-setting, commitment, effort and persistence, weak self-efficacy creates self-doubt and people will quickly abandon the skills they've been taught when they encounter barriers or fail to get positive results quickly (Bandura, 1989, 1997; Gist & Mitchell, 1992; Saks, 1995).

Tay, Ang & Van Dyne (2006) demonstrated a positive relationship between self-efficacy and interview success, and between interview success and subsequent beliefs about self-efficacy. Success reinforces an individual's sense of skill and mastery which then boosts their self-confidence. This research is supported by a breadth of previous research (Eden & Aviram, 1993; Kanfer & Hulin, 1985; Saks & Ashforth, 1999, 2000) which found that self-efficacy is "a significant antecedent of job search behavior, job search effort, and job search outcomes" (Brown, Cober, Kane, Levy & Shalhoop, 2006, p. 719).

Given the research, incorporating activities into the PCD programming that increases students' self-efficacy beliefs as they relate to career development activities should help students be more successful. Wanberg, Kanfer and Rotundo. (1999) recommended that career development organizations and professionals develop programming to enhance their clients' interviewing self-efficacy. Bandura (1997) recommended practice, counseling and vicarious learning as ways to increase self-efficacy and self-confidence, which, according to Tay et al. (2006), should lead to increased interview success.

## ***Leadership***

Leadership is directly related to interview success because recruiters use leadership as evidence of experience and initiative (Brown & Campion, 1994; Campion, 1978). Leadership roles also help in interviewing through developing and practicing key transferable skills such as organizing, strategizing, planning, self-presentation, communication, influence and interpersonal skills (Bandura, 1997; Hogan, Curphy, & Hogan, 1994; Rubin, Bommer, & Baldwin, 2002; Tay, Ang & Van Dyne, 2006). Practicing these skills and leadership experience and will increase individual's sense of self-efficacy, which will also contribute to interviewing success (Bandura, 1997; Tay, Ang & Van Dyne, 2006).



## ***School Engagement***

Lapan (2004) found that career development programming is one way to increase student engagements and attitudes towards school (including teachers, classmates, learning). Students who understand the relationship between their coursework and future career options may be more motivated to perform academically and master new subjects (Lapan, Kardash, & Turner, 2002). Students who are not engaged are demotivated and perceive school as unwelcoming, irrelevant, boring and alienating (Fredericks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). In their time-sequence research on the relationship between school engagement and level of career development, Kenny, Blustein, Haase, Jackson, and Perry (2006) found that career development at time 1 is a strong predictor of school engagement at time 2, though the reverse is not true. While this does not necessarily indicate a causal relationship, it is consistent with life career development theory and the hypothesized importance of internalized career goals and expectations in educational motivations (Gysbers, Heppner & Johnston, 1998; Kenny, Blustein, Haase, Jackson & Perry, 2006; Lapan, 2004).

In the 11-Month MBA program, prior to that PCD program, students felt that the absence of career development programming negatively impacted their academic experience. As the quality of the career development programming has increased, so have student perceptions of the quality of the academic program. The relationship between student engagement and career development programming in the 11-Month MBA has been documented over the years.

## ***Career Planfulness***

Career planfulness encompasses a range of activities and knowledge related to job searching, including:

- learning about different occupations
- conducting information interviews

- taking career assessment tests
- networking
- preparing resumes and cover letters
- preparing for interviews
- looking for jobs

Career planfulness is one of the core concepts in Donald Super's theories on career development. One of the most influential thinkers in the career development world, he incorporated career planfulness into his work on assessments (1983) and life-long career development (1990).

Savickas, Silling and Schwartz (1984) correlated career planfulness to future optimism in college students. Blustein, Phillips, Jobin-Davis, Finkelberg, and Roarke (1997) found that career planfulness was related to motivation and positive transitions from school to work. Lapan's (2004) model of career development proposed that planfulness and positive career expectations "can bring a sense of purpose, opportunity, and choice" (cited in Kenny, Blustein, Haase, Jacksin & Perry, 2006, p. 273) One of the counseling tools Solberg, Howard, Blustein, and Close (2002) recommend is having students write paragraphs about their lives, aspirations, barriers, and perceived growth to identify the level of student planfulness, academic engagement, and motivations.

# Task Analysis

The PCD tasks necessary for 11-Month MBA students to be successful are the cognitive tasks related to career planfulness, including problem solving, decision making, and making judgments. The various knowledge students need to acquire include:

## **Procedural knowledge**

Most of the tasks intuitively associated with career development fall into this category. These skills are used primarily during the planning and preparation stage of the career search and relate to specific tasks that job seekers must perform. They include:

- How to research jobs and companies
- How to gain related experience
- How to network
- How to write resumes for a variety of delivery formats
- How to write cover letters
- How to research salary ranges
- How to interview
- Proper etiquette during the job search (including following up, appearance, etc.)
- How to effectively match individual skills to organizational needs
- How to articulate skills and fit
- How to value past experience and credentials

The rules and steps for these tasks are fairly stable and universally accepted. Most of these topics are addressed in the PCD workshops or in one-on-one counseling sessions. These workshops have been particularly successful when they are done with hands-on exercises and lots of feedback.

## **Declarative knowledge**

In order to do appropriate job planning and effective job searches, students need to know some of the facts about job seeking, occupations, careers, the economic environment, and the local business environment. Understanding why things work the way they do, grasping higher level

concepts, and relationships between different personal and environmental factors in the job search will all help students make better decisions and judgments. These skills are used primarily during the planning and preparation stage of the career search. Key information students need to understand includes:

- Self-knowledge of motivations, expectations, skills, and abilities
- How job and organizational fit relate to job success and employment quality
- Maintaining emotional control over the course of the job search
- Maintaining motivational control over the course of the job search
- The state of the economy and the local job market
- How salaries range over occupations, industries and geography

This body of knowledge is somewhat subjective and some of it changes over time. Most of these topics are addressed in the PCD workshops or in one-on-one counseling sessions. These workshops have been more successful when students are involved in sharing their knowledge and dialoguing about the topics.

### **Strategic knowledge**

Strategic knowledge relates to the students abilities to problem solve and use their procedural and declarative knowledge dynamically in action. This becomes more relevant during the job search, when students are actively looking for opportunities, interviewing, negotiating, and deciding between their options. These skills include:

- Career action planning and time frames
- How to overcome barriers and manage rejection
- How, when and what to negotiate
- How to find information and connections when none are apparent
- How to decide among multiple offers
- Networking and informational interviewing strategies
- How to determine organizational fit with a specific company

While these topics can be addressed abstractly, relating to very general situations, students have a hard time transferring the abstract knowledge into applicable courses of action. Therefore,

most of these topics are addressed in one-on-one counseling sessions as the students are facing these issues.

Together, all of the activities comprising the PCD programming work together to address students' career development needs, providing help in a variety of settings and formats. Transferring this broad range of procedural, declarative and strategic knowledge to students requires a flexible program that can meet student needs using a range of delivery modes and contexts. The strength of the program is that the individual components reinforce one another making them accessible to students no matter what their learning style.

# Analysis of Programming

## ***Training Content***

Two of the tactical goals of the PCD programming are to help students know themselves and market themselves. Self-knowledge would include an understanding of who they are and what they bring to a potential employer, including:

- knowledge
- skills
- abilities
- values
- attitudes
- beliefs
- expectations

Marketing themselves includes articulating their skills both in written and oral ways, including:

- resumes
- cover letters
- networking
- informational interviews
- job interviews
- negotiations

Insofar as the PCD programming is successful at realizing these two tactical goals, it should help students develop the knowledge, connections, and resources to:

- conduct a successful job search in the short-term
- transition successfully from school to work
- develop life-long professional and career skills and acumen; in order to,
- be able to plan and manage their careers over the long-term

To realize these goals, this year's programming included:

**PCD Workshops – Stand-up training for large groups**  
**Identifying & Articulating Your Skills for Career Success (9/23/05)**  
***Workshop Goal***

To give participants specific tools and resources to begin crafting personal statements. To enable participants to sell themselves effectively in a variety of professional situations, including networking, interviewing, and on-the-job.

### ***Workshop Agenda***

- I. Evaluating where you are starting from
- II. The Basics – Elevator Statements
  - a. Know Yourself
  - b. Be True to Yourself
  - c. Know Your Goal
  - d. Know Your Audience & Their Needs and Goals
  - e. What is Your Unique Selling Proposition? Why?
  - f. Be Specific – Contextualize and Quantify
  - g. Be Clear and Succinct
  - h. Have Both “Sizzle” and “Steak”
  - i. Individual Elevator Statement Development Exercise
  - j. Presentation to Large Group
  - k. Feedback from Large Group
- III. Using the Myers-Briggs to talk about general characteristics
  - a. Review and Brainstorm in small groups
  - b. Presentation to Large Group
- IV. Talking about your 11-Month MBA
- V. Play to your audience: Incorporating your personal experience and transferable skills using industry key words and phrases
- VI. Putting it all together
  - a. Individual Elevator Statement Refinement Exercise
  - b. Peer Review
  - c. Presentation to Large Group
  - d. Feedback from Large Group

### **Job Searches, Resume Writing & Skill Building (11/3/05)**

#### ***Workshop Goal***

Learn about and exchange ideas on job searches, writing professional resumes, building skills, and considering your career moves in the bigger picture.

#### ***Workshop Agenda***

- I. Searching for A Job
  - a. Peer Information Sharing
- II. Deciphering Job Descriptions
  - a. Individual Review Exercise
  - b. Group Sharing Exercise
- III. Types of Resumes
  - a. Peer Sharing and Q&A
- IV. SWOT Analysis of Skills & Experience
- V. Customizing Your Resume

- a. Peer Review and Brainstorm Exercise in Small Groups
- VI. Career Trajectories

### **Giving Business Presentations (11/7/05)**

#### *Workshop Goal*

To provide participants with best practices and tips on how to give effective business presentations.

#### *Workshop Agenda*

- I. Elements of an Effective Oral Presentation
  - a. Know Your Audience
  - b. Speak To Decision Makers
  - c. Deliver Content in the Way Preferred by Decision Makers
- II. Elements of an Effective PowerPoint Presentation
  - a. Don't Be Wordy
  - b. Include Support Slides
  - c. Form Always Follows Function

### **Researching, Networking, and Informational Interviewing for Career Success (1/13/06)**

#### *Workshop Goal*

To provide participants with the framework, motivation, tools and resources to do research, begin networking, and conduct informational interviews to help them achieve their professional goals. Have participants share their personal experiences and practice their oral presentation skills.

#### *Workshop Agenda*

- I. Review of Information from first 2 workshops
  - a. Crafting Personal Statements
  - b. Job Searches, Resume Writing, and Skill Building
- II. Why Research & Network
  - a. Peer Sharing
- III. Research Tools
  - a. Peer Sharing
- IV. Networking
  - a. Peer Sharing
- V. Informational Interviewing
  - a. Peer Sharing
- VI. Blackboard Resources for 11-Month MBA students

### **Prospecting Networking Contacts and Polishing Your Personal Statement (2/10/06)**

#### *Workshop Goal*

To provide participants with the tools and resources to identify 10 prospective networking contacts and polish each individual's personal introductory statements so that participants will know who to call and what to say to explore future career opportunities.

#### *Workshop Agenda*



- I. Prospecting Networking Contacts (1 Hour)
  - a. How to prospect: Tools and Resources
  - b. Self-guided prospecting
  - c. Debrief and Peer Information Sharing
- II. Personal Introductory Statements (2 Hours)
  - a. Review of Crafting Personal Statements
  - b. Individual Development/Refinement
  - c. Peer Review in Small Groups
  - d. Final Presentation to Large Group

### **Power Interviewing (4/6/06)**

#### *Workshop Goal*

Participants will understand what a one-minute pitch is, how to prepare for an interview, different types of interviews, interviewing methods and typical questions, questions to ask at the interview, how to close an interview and how to follow up after an interview.

#### *Workshop Agenda*

- I. The Interviewing Process
- II. Interviewing Faux Pas
- III. Answering tough questions
- IV. Navigating behavior-based questions
- V. Presenting a professional self-image

### **The Denver Metro Job Market (5/4/06)**

#### *Workshop Goal*

Participants will understand the Denver Metro Labor Market, including current trends, major sectors, and some of the best targets for employment. Additionally they will learn what observations and feedback local HR personnel and recruiters had for job seekers.

#### *Workshop Agenda*

- I. Colorado Employment Growth 1995-2005
- II. Definition: Denver Metro Area (DMA)
- III. DMA Employment, Sector Size, Employer Size and Vacancies
- IV. Local Economic Trends (Expansions and contractions) & Development Organizations
- V. The Graying of the Colorado Workforce
- VI. Feedback from Local Recruiters and HR Professionals

### **Third-Party Career Resources (6/20/06)**

#### *Workshop Goal*

Workshop Goal: Participants will be aware of third party resources available to them to help with their career development and search.

#### *Workshop Agenda*

- I. Introduction

- II. Working with Private Career Counselors
- III. Working with For-Profit Resume and Personal Marketing Materials Services
- IV. Working with Recruiters
- V. Working with Professional Contract Employment Agencies

### **Speaker's Series Events – Guest speakers and panels in large group lecture formats**

Careers in Real Estate (11/4/06)  
Careers in Project Management (12/2/06)  
Starting Your Own Business (2/7/06)  
Careers in International Business (2/9/06)

### **Jobs Club – Small group strategy and support sessions**

During the fourth term (April-May) we experimented with facilitated weekly jobs club sessions to help students maintain their motivation and emotional control in the face of barriers. Approximately 5-9 students attended each week, with 50% of the students attending regularly.

### **Mentorship Program – Individual and small group dialogues and discussions**

This year's mentorship program included 15 volunteer alumni mentors that worked with the class. Each mentor worked with 1-3 students who shared an interest in the alumni's area of expertise. 94% of the class signed up for the mentorship program. Although feedback indicates that student participation is weak, it has improved over time.

### **Individualized Counseling**

97% of the students sought out 250+ documented formal and ad hoc PCD-related individualized counseling sessions this year. The number of sessions ranged from two to over 20 sessions (with the average student having between 3-5 formal meetings over the course of the year). Most of the information covered in these sessions related to the declarative and strategic knowledge students needed related to their individual job searches.

### **Online One-Stop PCD Resource Center**

A comprehensive resource for information on occupations, industries, professional associations, and other PCD-related topics (including a networking-discussion board).

### **Monthly Newsletter – Print newsletters distributed live and online.**

There were 8 "Career Booster" newsletters published this year:

*Vol. 4 Issue 1 August 2005*

- Introduction and welcome to the program
- Career Development: Self-assessments
- Colorado's largest employers
- Colorado occupational information (incl. # of positions & wage estimates)

*Vol. 4 Issue 2 September 2005*

- Career Development: Networking
- Local business news (expansions/contractions)
- Breakdown of required experience for open positions in the Denver Metro Area

*Vol. 4 Issue 3 October 2005*

- Career Development: Starting the job search
- Career planning/job search guide of phases and steps to take
- Sample Professional Business Associations

*Vol. 4 Issue 4 November/December 2005*

- Career Development: Dealing with Barriers & Gaining Relevant Experience
- Books & online resources for identifying goals, networking, learning more about careers, and starting a business.

*Vol. 4 Issue 5 January 2006*

- Career Development: Valuing and Demonstrating Your Worth
- Online resources for learning about occupations and salaries
- Jobs outlook for 2006
- Fortune's 100 best companies to work for
- Career Center resources: Exploring the main Career Center database

*Vol. 4 Issue 6 February 2006*

- Career Development: Job Search Planning Schedule
- Networking at Career Fairs
- Resources for Videotaped Interviews
- Career Center resources: Exploring your interests and identifying appropriate careers

*Vol. 4 Issue 7 April 2006*

- Career Development: Publicize yourself using the 11-Month MBA Resume Book
- Developing skills and networking through community service
- Geography, wages and cost-of-living comparisons

*Vol. 4 Issue 8 May 2006*

- Career Development: Job search benchmarks & steps to be employed by graduation
- Labor market information for the Denver Metro Area

## ***Programming and Content Analysis***

The PCD program was initially conceived as a supplement to the campus Career Center, but it has become the primary resource on PCD topics for students in the 11-Month MBA program. Consistently through the history of the 11-Month MBA program very few students have ever participated in activities offered through the Career Center. While 100% of the class of 2006

participated in at least one event offered through the PCD Programming, only 24% met with someone from the Career Center or participated in a Career Center sponsored event. Of the students that reported working with the Career Center, 100% only participated in one or two events there. Contrast that with the PCD programming, where students participated in an average of 18 events. There were 240 attendees at the 12 group events (PDC Workshops and the Speaker's Series events), and another 250+ documented formal and ad hoc PCD-related meetings over the course of the 11-Months. Clearly the students find the PCD programming valuable as they participate in it consistently and in a variety of ways.

The PCD workshops cover a range of procedural and declarative career development knowledge topics. While the topics covered have been relatively stable over the past few years, the format changed significantly this year (based on feedback from some experimental workshops tested in 2004-2005). Previously most of the workshops we conducted in more lecture-style formats; this year most of the workshops were restyled to be done as hands-on, experiential workshops. Both in the experimental workshops in 2004-2005 and in the workshops this year students responded very positively both during and after the workshops to the new formats. While the restyled workshops have similar content as those in the past, the new modes of delivering the content appears much more effective.

In the 2005-2006 Student Survey (see Appendix) students expressed that their most preferred formats were one-on-one with a coach or counselor, interactive workshops, and small group formats. Most all of the PCD programming now falls into one of those categories. There has been some experimentation this year with adding constructivist learning exercises in some of the workshops to get the students more engaged and involved in the topics. These have mostly taken the form of "share your knowledge" and "use your experience to shed light on this topic" sessions. These have been extremely well received and have resulted in much more dynamic discussions. They have also

positively affected student attitudes and engagements through the year and across different PCD activities.

There have been recent discussions about developing additional self-paced online tutorials, in order to make the training more flexible and available to students “just-in-time” for their personal needs. Based on the negative response to self-paced online tutorials in the 2005-2006 Student Survey and the positive response to the live social interactions and constructivist activities, this initiative needs to be carefully considered before dedicating to many resources to it. Over the course of this year it was observed if that online tutorials are done in conjunction with a hands-on workshop or one-on-one session, and is a guided experience, students are more open and enthusiastic about it.

This past year there was a strong push at the beginning of the academic year to have one-on-one introductory meetings with all the students. In past years the counseling part of the programming was much more self-directed and students had to initiate contact. While this was effective for students with the motivation and a high level of interest, it passively alienated a significant portion of the students. The new engagement tactics of getting to students early and personally worked extremely well by helping develop rapport, helping students understand what they could get out of the PCD programming, and helping the program understand the specific needs of the individuals and the class in general. The tone set by this new initiative was very positive and seemed to carry through the year as more students have sought out more meetings and felt comfortable giving more feedback more often on how the 11-month MBA program in general (both the academic and PCD programming) was meeting their needs and expectations. On more than one occasion potentially volatile situations were diffused based on this feedback. Overall students appeared and acted more satisfied and gave feedback which indicated they were more satisfied. This experience would potentially indicate the depth and breadth of the relationship career development programming and student engagement has in this particular academic program.

This year the Mentorship Program had a big kick-off event at the beginning of the year, which the mentors reported was a good way to start and set the tone for the program. Every year we struggle with the fact that student participation in the program is spotty at best. The insight and networking opportunities that the mentors might provide are lost on the students, who have trouble proactively contacting the mentors or seeking their help. Worse, as students become fully engaged in the academic demands of the program, many tend to disengage from the mentorship program altogether, only to resurface in the last few weeks of the academic year during the job search crunch time. More work needs to be done on this program to improve it.

While there were a number of opportunities for leadership (the Speaker's Series event planning committees) students had a hard time following through. Eight events were scheduled, only four happened. Ironically three of the events, Careers in Finance, Careers in Marketing, Careers in Sports and the Entertainment Industry were topics very enthusiastically embraced not only by the planning committee but also the class as a whole.<sup>1</sup> New ways of operationalizing the opportunities for leadership should be explored to help students take advantage of the opportunities.

The experiment with the Jobs Club, though short in duration, seemed very effective at helping students moderate their motivation and emotional control during a time in the program that students tend to struggle. Fourth term, the term of the experiment, is three to four months from graduation. During this time period, students should be actively job searching as it usually takes at least that long for a professional job search. They are close enough to graduation to be anxious about what they will be doing afterward, but not close enough that they feel pressure to be active in their job searches. Most have never had the luxury of a three to four month time horizon to begin

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<sup>1</sup> The fourth, "CEOs and Lessons Learned from the Top", was of interest to students but seemed to be more mildly received than the other three workshops.

looking for a new job, and they experience some dissonance between their knowledge of what they should be doing and actually doing it.

Looking at the work samples (resumes, cover letters, mock interviews) and outcomes (job offers, salary offers) the new formats and approaches have been very effective. We had a record number of students with job offers this year (30% of those students seeking employment) with offers among the highest, in relation to past salary, in program history: the average historically has been \$5,000 - \$10,000; this year there was an average of \$8,000 and a high of nearly \$20,000.

## Cost-Benefit Analysis

A comprehensive analysis of the PCD programming must include not only a look at the benefits to participants, but the overall return on the investment in time and money to the organization.

The benefits of the PCD programming for the 11-Month MBA program may be quantified using 1) the increased marketability of the academic program as a result of the career development program (as measured by the number of students who, in part or whole make a buying decision based on the added advantage of the intensive PCD program) and 2) the goodwill garnered by providing these services that can be converted into alumni support and referrals. Alumni support can be quantified by number of volunteer hours dedicated to supporting the programming and students.

An additional benefit, not included in these calculations because of the difficulty quantifying it, is the local business community's increased awareness of the 11-Month MBA program as a result of engaging them in the PCD programming. The tangible benefits this provides the 11-Month MBA program include: providing opportunities and helping us develop pipelines for future business collaborations, internships, mentors, volunteers, and recruiting opportunities. Indirectly it benefits the program by making students aware of companies and open positions, this increasing student and alumni support and goodwill.

The cost of the programming includes the salaries (including indirect administrative costs) for Professional Development Training Staff<sup>2</sup> and the direct costs incurred by event programming. Since historically this programming has included very minimal web-based materials (which is accounted for in salary cost), all costs are related to live stand-up training and counseling.

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<sup>2</sup> Since there is not a FTE dedicated solely to career development activities, salaries were determined by multiplying the annual proportion of time dedicated to PCD programming by annual salary.



## ***Return on Investment Analysis***

	<b>01-02</b>	<b>02-03</b>	<b>03-04</b>	<b>04-05</b>	<b>05-06</b>
<b>Estimated Costs</b>					
Salaries (incl indirect Administrative Costs)	\$0	\$6,000	\$10,800	\$9,900	\$16,000
Direct Event Costs	\$0				
Materials	\$0	\$25	\$75	\$100	\$300
Food	\$0	\$100	\$200	\$300	\$1,000
<b>Total Investment</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$6,125</b>	<b>\$11,075</b>	<b>\$10,300</b>	<b>\$17,300</b>
<b>Estimated Benefits</b>					
Increased Marketability <sup>3</sup>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$6,210	\$9,250
Support/Volunteers <sup>4</sup>	\$0	\$103	\$211	\$597	\$1,385
Goodwill/Referrals	\$16,000	\$20,000	\$40,000	\$69,000	\$100,000
Business Community Awareness	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Returns</b>	<b>\$16,000</b>	<b>\$20,103</b>	<b>\$40,211</b>	<b>\$75,807</b>	<b>\$110,635</b>
<b>Return on Investment</b>	<b>---</b>	<b>3.28x</b>	<b>3.63x</b>	<b>7.36x</b>	<b>6.40x</b>

Clearly the programming is reaping benefits that would indicate it is a good investment for the program to make. For every dollar spent by the program on the PCD programming, \$6-7 is being realized in income. There are few investments in education that are able to realize that sort of a return.

There is some lag effect in the returns to the program as the relationship between alumni and the program are ongoing and often increase with time (consider the increase in volunteer support as an example). The return in 05-06 was down slightly as the program began investing more in the PCD programming, but there should be on-going long-term benefits that continue to accrue.

<sup>3</sup> Because this aspect of the programming wasn't advertised to potential or incoming students until 2004, there is assumed to be no increase in marketability before then. While it is nearly impossible to determine how much of each student's decision to apply to this program can be traced back to the PCD programming, a value of 5% of their decision was chosen for this calculation. Additionally, because we are looking at increased marketability, we are calculating the value of that decision only based on the first term's tuition. The actual calculation is: the number of total students multiplied by the amount they paid for their first term in the program multiplied by 5%.

<sup>4</sup> Although the actual market value of volunteer support is much higher in terms of benefits provided, for this calculation it was quantified costing out each volunteer hour donated to the program at minimum wage: \$5.15 per hour.

## Recommendations & Conclusion

Most of the restyled hands-on experiential workshops conducted through the PCD programming this year reflect best practices according to situated-learning theories. While heretofore that has not been a specific or explicit goal in the curriculum development, it should be. Based on the self-efficacy and leadership research on career development, situated learning should be an effective way to embed critical psycho-social experiential learning in the procedural and declarative content delivered in the workshops.

By giving students practice with the skills they will need during their job search, particularly communication skills, participants should become more confident in their levels of ability. Not only will the confidence they develop help them directly in networking and interview situations, the secondary effects of strong self-efficacy—goal-setting, commitment, effort and persistence—will be important in maintaining emotional and motivational control over the course of their job search.

In addition to keeping the curriculum more experiential, additional opportunities for leadership roles—particularly opportunities that are more structured—will improve the curriculum. In the past the students have had leadership opportunities through the Speaker’s Series event committees. The Speaker’s Series Program brings in local business people to talk about careers, fields and industries of interest to the students. The topics are chosen collectively by the class; students then sign up for different committees to make the events happen. Students have had the power to manage the process and determine the direction of the events fairly freely, though PCD staff is always available for consultation and resources. Students have a hard time maintaining focus and discipline to follow through on the events, even with periodic reminders and check-ins. Since

the Speaker's Series events have been a part of the PCD programming only 50-75% of the workshops have been successfully executed, despite a myriad of supportive resources.

A new experimental program is recommended for this year, integrating the research on leadership and school engagement with a new twist on the Speaker's Series events. Each year as students begin new classes they are excited about the topics. They will often inquire about career opportunities in each field and express optimism that "this" might be the field for them. The same student may have this experience in 4-5 separate classes, each time with the same level of enthusiasm.

Although students have no problem identifying industries they might be interested in, one of the greatest struggles for them is identifying a functional role or field that fits their skills, interests and abilities. Since their choice of industries usually reflects more on their interests than their technical skills, it is less anxiety provoking and frustrating. Students looking to change their field often are very unsure and trepidacious about identifying their strongest and most transferable skills. They have very weak self-efficacy in this area; few have had the opportunity to exercise different skill sets in the workplace and most are aware, on some level, that learning about a subject is different from performing it day-to-day.

In order to capitalize on their natural curiosity and motivation, as well as to meet an important need and situate the PCD programming in a richer context, a new branch of Speaker's Series events should be developed relating the core functional classes. These events—exploring careers in management, accounting, finance, technology management, operations, law, strategy, statistics and economics—can be done as lunchtime brownbags. This should help students understand the connections between what they are learning academically and what career opportunities are available, increase their motivation and engagement in class, and provide them with networking opportunities. These events should happen in the first few weeks of each class in

order to help stimulate their engagement throughout the class. If the events are done too late in the process student may lose their motivation to engage. The first term events will have to be organized on behalf of the students, but in subsequent terms leadership opportunities can be offered to students to help plan and execute the events. By providing a more strict timeline and more structure to the events (students will assist in the event planning and management, but the team is officially led by the PCD program staff), more students should be able to participate as leaders of successful events. Also, individual student needs and abilities can be taken into account as student volunteers are assigned roles. There will be less peer-to-peer negotiation around who should take what role, which should also contribute to more efficient and successful interactions.

In addition to this new branch of managed Speaker's Series events, there should continue to be the opportunity for students to do self-directed events, though the topics will be focused on exploring new industries rather than new functional fields within business. Refocusing the self-directed events on industries of interest should help students be able to identify companies and potential speakers more easily and tap into their generalized career interests.

It is also recommended to continue pushing the initial one-on-one meetings and doing the jobs club again this year to see if the success experienced in 05-06 is unique or if these new tactics will work with different groups. The Jobs Club this year could be expanded to encompass both 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Terms (Jan – May), with career planning being the focus in Term 3 and job searching the focus in Term 4. The issues that arise for students in Term 5 are often more personal and less generalizable so reverting to more one-on-one sessions during that time period makes sense.

More research needs to be done to identify ways to improve the level of student engagement in the Mentorship Program. Based on the trial "kick-off" lunch in 05-06, more guided interactions might begin to address the engagement issues. Additional mentor training may be necessary as Mentors with more experience have been more successful than individuals newer to the Mentor role.

The Mentorship Program was developed based on the best practices and procedures available, but it would appear the needs of this particular group of students may differ from the general population of students participating in mentorship programs around the country.

The 11-Month MBA PCD curriculum is robust and has continuously improved over the past five years. Each year the curriculum is reviewed and improved. This year's revision takes into account career development research and proven learning theories to help pinpoint what content and structure changes can make the most positive impact. While there is still more work to do, this year's iteration of the PCD program should be the strongest yet.

# Appendix

## 2005-2006 Student Survey

(Insert 2005-2006 Student Survey Here)

## Additional Information Regarding the Cost-Benefit Analysis

	<b>01-02</b>	<b>02-03</b>	<b>03-04</b>	<b>04-05</b>	<b>05-06</b>
# of students referred by alumni	1	1	2	3	4
Income generated by referrals	\$16,000	\$20,000	\$40,000	\$69,000	\$100,000
Alumni involved in the Mentorship Program <sup>5</sup>	0	0	13	12	16
Alumni meetings with students about career-related issues	0	5	15	26	123
Contributing Members of the Alum Associations Steering Committee and/or Board of Directors	0	5	6	10	11
Estimated hours donated by alumni to program/students	0	20	41	116	269
Estimated value of time donated by alumni	\$0	\$103	\$211.15	\$597.40	\$1,385.35

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<sup>5</sup> The mentorship program was developed for the 03-04 class.

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