Designing the Future of Experiential Learning at ODU

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DESIGNING THE FUTURE OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AT ODU EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In his 2019 State of the University Address, Old Dominion University (ODU) President John R. Broderick announced the creation of the ODU Economic Development Catalyst Task Force. The aim of the task force is to "leverage Old Dominion's assets and tighten [its] connections with business and industry to develop and place talent in high-demand and tech jobs." The Economic Development Catalyst Task Force will be expanded for this project to bring together ODU representatives with members of the community to jointly create a vision, framework, and plan for the future of experiential learning at Old Dominion University.

Using a design thinking framework, members of the task force will engage in activities that will provide insight into how to strategically shape experiential learning at ODU. These activities will include monthly meetings of members of the task force, an exhaustive review of current experiential learning activities, surveys of relevant stakeholders, and a series of focus groups with students, employers, and officials involved in experiential learning. A primary aim is to improve students' access and participation in work-based experiences while improving the quality of curricular and co-curricular experiential learning programs.

The following products will be produced by the task force:

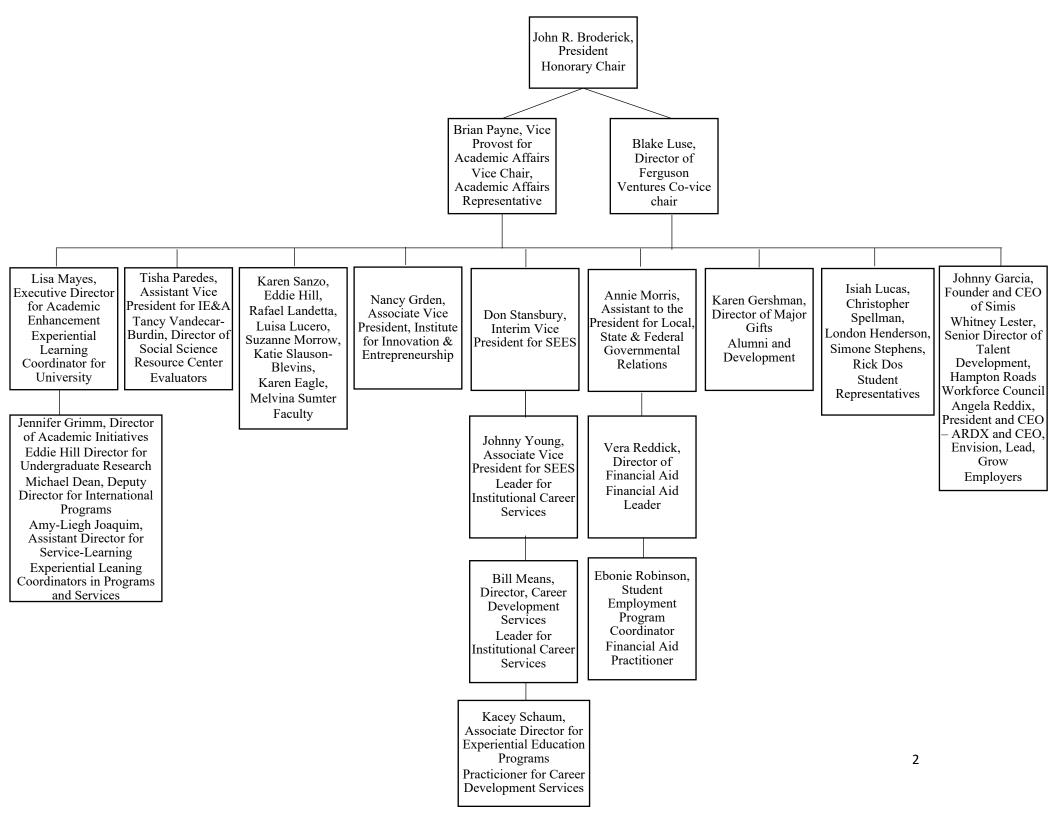
- A vision statement for experiential learning that is endorsed by the President's cabinet and President Broderick
- A glossary of experiential learning terms and formal descriptions of each type of experiential learning to benefit students and employers
- A structured pathway for experiential learning and career development for students progressing from freshman orientation to graduation.
- A strategic plan for experiential learning with goals, strategies, outcomes, and initiatives prioritized.

These efforts will result in the following outcomes:

- Improved coordination of experiential learning activities throughout Old Dominion University
- An improved system for tracking and evaluating experiential learning
- Development of a single online starting point for employers
- Development of tools for employers interested in establishing work-based learning programs
- An increase in the number of employers willing to serve as experiential learning partners
- Processes ensuring that all students are aware of experiential learning opportunities
- Seamless access for student to experiential learning opportunities
- Expansion of experiential learning offerings and tools (micro-internships, ePortfolio, etc.)
- Use of federal work study to support internships in non-profits, state, and local governments
- Enhanced support for students seeking experiential learning, including support for remote internships, online students, underrepresented students, and students with low GPAs.
- Enhanced programming to prepare freshmen/sophomores for the business environment
- Professional development programming in experiential learning for faculty and staff
- A viable and scalable model for adoption across the Commonwealth

Bringing together more than two dozen ODU officials and business leaders on this effort will solidify experiential learning partnerships that will benefit the university, community, and Commonwealth.

¹ Broderick, John R. (2019). ODU State of the University Address. Available online at https://www.odu.edu/stateoftheuniversity.



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

BRIEF HISTORY

In 1995, Old Dominion University began its Career Advantage Program, a program that guaranteed every ODU student an internship. At the time, ODU "was believed to be the only public university in the nation that...guarantees internships to its students." Since then, nearly 60,000 students have completed more than 115,000 internship experiences. While the guaranteed internships were an early indication of the university's commitment to experiential learning, in the past decade alone several programming changes demonstrate a sustained commitment to providing learning experiences that prepare students for their careers. Consider the following:

- ODU created the Learn and Earn Program (LEAP) under President John R. Broderick's leadership in 2011. Available to first and second-year students, LEAP students enroll in a career preparation course and are paid to work in on-campus jobs designed to help students learn skills related to their chosen careers.
- The ODU Honors College created the undergraduate research apprenticeship program in 2012 to expand undergraduate research programs across academic units.
- Then-vice president Ellen Neufeldt created a service learning program in Student Engagement and Enrollment Services in 2013. A primary function of the program was to integrate experiential learning into service learning activities offered in courses across the university.
- ODU renamed its Career Management Center to "Career Development Services" in 2014 to reflect the institution's efforts to integrate career development throughout the student experience.
- ODU created the Center for High Impact Practices in 2015 to coordinate the delivery of high impact practices (most of which are forms of experiential learning) across campus.
- In 2017, faculty from across campus began to develop "entrepreneurships" (e.g., courses similar to internships, but the experiential learning entails creating a product, initiative, or business). Nearly 20 such courses now exist.
- In 2018, provost and vice president Austin Agho led the development of the LeADERS program, which ultimately incentivized students to engage in multiple experiential learning activities (e.g., Leadership experiences, Academic internships, Diversity experiences, Entrepreneurial activities, Research, and Service learning) while developing e-portfolios to document and demonstrate their learning.
- ODU created zero-credit internship programming allowing non-credit internships to be transcripted and recognized on student transcripts in 2019.

Perhaps our greatest strength in experiential learning is our university-wide commitment to the application of innovative learning strategies. The university is consistently on the cutting edge of innovative experiential learning programming. ODU faculty, staff, and students alike routinely come together to create new ways of learning. One barrier that arises is that our current experiential learning programming operates in seven different institutional units. While each of those units is strong and viable, creating a coordinated vision and plan for experiential learning will ultimately benefit students, the community, and the Commonwealth, and can be a model for other colleges and universities.

² Di Vincenzo, Mark. (1995, April 5). ODU Touts Internship Guarantee. Daily Press. Available online at https://www.dailypress.com/news/dp-xpm-19950405-1995-04-05-9504050080-story.html

TASK FORCE

John R. Broderick, President	Honorary Chair
Brian Payne, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs	Vice Chair, Academic Affairs representative
Blake Luse	Co-chair, Director of Ferguson Ventures
Lisa Mayes, Executive Director	Experiential learning coordinator for university
Johnny Young (AVP), Bill Means, Executive Director	Leaders for institutional career services
Kacey Shaum, Associate Director	Practitioner for Career Development Services
Don Stansberry (VP), Vera Riddick, Director	Financial aid leader and director
Ebonie Robinson	Financial aid practitioner
Karen Gershman	Alumni and development
Nancy Grden, Associate Vice President	Chair, Economic Dev. Task Force (Industrial
	Adv. Bd.)
Annie Morris	Director, Government Relations
Jennifer Grimm (Director of Academic Initiatives); Eddie Hill	Experiential Learning Coordinators in programs
(Director of Undergraduate Research); Michael Dean	and colleges
(Study Abroad); Amy-Liegh Joaquim (Service Learning);	
Karen Sanzo, Eddie Hill; Rafael Landetta, Luisa Lucero,	Faculty
Suzanne Morrow, Katie Slauson-Blevins; Karen Eagle;	
Melvina Sumter	
Isiah Lucas, Christopher Spellman, London Henderson,	Student representatives
Simone Stephens, Rick Dos (online student)	
Johnny Garcia (Founder and CEO of Simis); Whitney	Employers
Lester (Senior Director of Talent Development, Hampton	
Roads Workforce Council); Angela Reddix (President and	
CEO -ARDX and CEO, Envision, Lead, Grow);	
Tisha Paredes; Tancy Vandecar-Burdin	Evaluators

WORK PLAN

The Designing the Future of Experiential Learning at Old Dominion University initiative will use design thinking to create a vision, framework, and strategic plan for experiential learning at Old Dominion University. At the broadest level, the Stanford Design School defines design thinking as "a methodology for creative problem solving." Awareness about design thinking and the use of design thinking has grown dramatically in recent years. Because design thinking practices inform both practice and policy, design thinking in higher education has the potential to create new ways to think about experiential learning, including internships, co-ops, undergraduate research, capstones, and other forms of work-based learning. Broadly speaking, the following activities will be performed as part of this initiative:

- Monthly design thinking meetings with members of the task force
- An exhaustive review of current experiential learning activities
- Surveys of relevant stakeholders
- Focus groups with students, employers, and officials involved in experiential learning.
- Development of an ODU-informed experiential learning glossary.
- Identification of a structured pathway for experiential learning and career development
- Creation of a faculty/staff experiential learning development program
- Creation of a vision and strategic plan for experiential learning at ODU.

Monthly Design Thinking Meetings with Members of the Task Force. Members of the task force will come together for design thinking meetings on a monthly basis, with subgroups meeting regularly. In this context, the design thinking meetings will follow the design thinking framework which includes the following components: (1) generally understanding the problem

the initiative is addressing through the lens of those most involved in activities under review (in this case students, employers, and faculty/staff), (2) using the general understanding to more specifically define the problem that needs to be addressed, (3) ideating (or brainstorming) solutions to the problems identified, (4) developing prototypes to address the problems, (5) testing the prototype, and (6) refining the solutions based on the test.

The monthly meetings will focus on different stages of the design thinking process and will be scheduled in coordination with the other activities discussed below. The initial design thinking meeting will bring together the more than 24 task force members for a lunch workshop designed to introduce participants to the project, initiate a discussion about experiential learning, and provide project leads a general introduction into the way that stakeholders see experiential learning strengths, opportunities, and obstacles. Dr. Karen Sanzo, professor of educational foundations and leadership, will lead the design thinking processes of the project. Sanzo has been nationally recognized for her work in developing and promoting educational strategies using a design thinking framework.

One point to drive home about design thinking is that it is, at its very core, a form of experiential learning. In this case, members of the task force will be engaging in experiential learning while completing the various parts of the work plan. Using experiential learning strategies to create a vision, plan, and framework for experiential learning seems to be appropriate way to design the future of experiential learning strategies at Old Dominion University.

Exhaustive Review of Current Experiential Learning Activities. To create a baseline of participation in experiential learning programming at Old Dominion University, members of the task force will conduct an exhaustive review of the programs. This portion of the work will focus on available data and a review of processes students, faculty, and others follow to engage in the experiential learning activities. The existing data to be collected and reviewed will include:

- Number of students participating in various experiential learning activities
- Demographic characteristics (race and gender in particular) of students engaging in experiential learning
- Timing of experiential learning activities for students (freshman, sophomore, etc.)
- Retention rate of students engaging in experiential learning activities
- Graduation rate of students engaging in experiential learning activities
- Predictors of engaging in experiential learning activities.

This review will be conducted in the initial stages of the project. Data and findings from the review will be used by task force members to inform subsequent stages of the project. Dr. Tisha Paredes, assistant vice president for institutional effectiveness and assessment, will lead this phase of the project. She has been conducting similar reviews for more than fifteen years.

Surveys of Relevant Stakeholders. To gain insight into stakeholders' experiences with experiential learning, a series of surveys will be conducted with students, faculty/staff, and employers. Dr. Tancy Vandecar-Burdin (director of the Social Science Research Center) will work with Drs. Paredes and Sanzo to carry out this phase of the project. Between them, Vandecar-Burdin, Paredes, and Sanzo have conducted more than one hundred surveys. Survey items will be constructed with input from members of the task force. Generally, student surveys will assess student perceptions about experiential learning, student experiences with various types of experiential learning, an assessment of barriers students encountered in their experiential learning programming, and an assessment of reasons some students chose not to participate in experiential learning. Faculty/staff surveys will focus on faculty perceptions about

experiential learning, reasons faculty encourage or discourage experiential learning, and potential strategies to enhance professional development related to experiential learning. Employer surveys will focus on employer's experiences with experiential learning, the barriers they encountered working with students and employees, and their recommendations for improving experiential learning for students. Drs. Paredes and Vandecar-Burdin will share the results of these surveys in one of the monthly design thinking meetings. The results will be used to inform subsequent parts of the project.

Focus Groups of Relevant Stakeholders. Using the preliminary results of the surveys as a guide, focus group interviews will be developed to provide more detailed insight into the experiential learning experiences of stakeholders. Ten focus group interviews will be held with stakeholders. Groups to be interviewed will include:

- A subgroup of the task force
- A group of students recently completing an internship.
- A group of students participating in LeADERS (which includes multiple types of experiential learning).
- A group of distance learning/online students interested in experiential learning.
- A group of upper-class students who have not participated in any experiential learning
- A group of disadvantaged/Pell-eligible students who can give insight about access barriers.
- A group of faculty/staff who have experience with internships.
- A group of faculty/staff who have experience with other forms of experiential learning.
- A group of employers who have hired ODU students in internships or other types of work-based learning.
- A group of employers who have not hired ODU students in internships or other types of work-based learning.

Members of the task force will help identify the potential interview participants. Dr. Paredes will lead the focus groups with support from Sanzo and Vandecar-Burdin. Together, they have conducted numerous focus groups over their careers. In fact, Paredes, a nationally-recognized focus group expert, is the co-author of *Using Focus Groups to Listen, Learn, and Lead in Higher Education*. The results of the focus group interviews will inform subsequent stages of this project.

Development of an ODU-Informed Experiential Learning Glossary. Using the data gathered from the exhaustive review, feedback from members of the task force, and insight from officials working in experiential learning, an ODU-specific experiential learning glossary will be created. The glossary will include definitions of different types of experiential learning offered at ODU and information about the units overseeing the experiential learning activity. Following the design thinking framework, the glossary will be developed in five stages: terms to be included will be identified, terms will be defined by key stakeholders through an ODU lens, stakeholders who will be using the glossary will review and provide feedback about the glossary, the glossary will be revised based on stakeholder feedback, and the glossary will be published and made publicly available. Lisa Mayes (executive director of the Center for High Impact Practices) and Bill Means (executive director of Career Development Services) will lead the development of the glossary. Between them, they have more than fifty years' experience with different aspects of experiential learning programming.

Identification of a Structured Pathway for Experiential Learning. Using the information from the student and employer surveys and focus groups, as well as information elicited from the review of experiential learning programming, the task force will identify a pathway that students can follow throughout their time at ODU to engage in experiential learning from the beginning of their studies through graduation. The pathway will culminate with a graduating student who has

the skills required to enter their chosen career. Built into these pathways will be opportunities for students to use federal work study funding to work in government agencies and non-profits, as identified by the financial aid experts on our task force. It is anticipated that three different types of pathways will be identified:

- A pathway for on-campus students starting at ODU as freshmen
- A pathway for transfer students (for roughly 40% of our undergraduates)
- A pathway for online students (for the university's 4,000 undergraduate online students)

The pathways will be reviewed and modified on an annual basis to make sure they are current.

Creation of a Faculty/Staff Experiential Learning Development Program. Information gathered from the surveys, focus groups, and review of experiential learning will be used to create an experiential learning professional development program for faculty and staff. The design thinking framework be especially helpful in creating and implementing the professional development program. In particular, the development program will be created and implemented through the following stages:

- Areas where there are general gaps in understanding will be identified in the surveys
- More specific understanding about the gaps will be identified from the focus groups.
- A prototype professional development program will be developed.
- The prototype professional development program will be shared/tested with stakeholders.
- The professional development program will be finalized based on feedback received.

Executive directors Mayes and Means will lead the creation and implementation of the experiential learning professional development program.

Creation of a Vision and Strategic Plan for Experiential Learning at ODU. The design thinking processes will culminate in the creation of a vision and strategic plan for experiential learning at Old Dominion University. The vision and plan will be guided by ODU's longstanding commitment to social mobility, diversity, and equity. This is evident in our status as a minority serving institution; serving high percentages of online, Pell-eligible and first-generation students; along with, having in place the highest number of transfer articulation agreements. These point to ODU's long recognition in the importance of creating programming that helps put students and their families on different social and economic pathways. Grounded in social mobility ideals, our vision and plan will address the barriers that underserved and disadvantaged students face in their efforts to participate in experiential learning.

Among other things, our plan will include goals, strategies, and initiatives that promote better coordination of experiential learning, improved tracking of experiential learning, ongoing assessment strategies for experiential learning, a single online starting point for employers seeking students to participate in experiential learning, processes and marketing strategies related to experiential learning, strategies to use federal funds to support internships, strategies enhance consistent support all for students seeking experiential learning (including support for remote internships, online students, and students with low GPAs), and sustained professional development programming in experiential learning for faculty and staff.

The vision for experiential learning will be informed by students, employers, and faculty and staff at Old Dominion University. To ensure institutional commitment, the final vision will be approved by President Broderick. The strategic plan and framework for experiential learning will be guided by the vision.

Brian Payne (vice provost for academic affairs) will oversee the specific activities needed to complete these activities. Business partner Blake Luse (director of Ferguson Ventures) will serve as co-vice chair of the task force. His leadership, along with the contributions of other business partners on the task force, will help to make sure that our vision and plan respond to the needs of the community. Ultimately, this comprehensive plan developed by our task force will benefit students, the region, and the Commonwealth.

Timeline and Milestones

Date	Activities	Responsible Stakeholders	
4/20	Presidential Task Force Convened for Project	Payne, Luse, and Sanzo	
	Overview and Design Thinking Discussion		
5/20	Develop survey items for focus groups and surveys	Vandecar-Burdin and Paredes	
	Presidential Task Force meets to discuss progress		
6/20	Share survey items with task force	Payne, Luse, and Sanzo	
	Presidential Task Force meets to discuss progress	-	
7/20	Conduct 2 focus groups/Begin survey collection by	Vandecar-Burdin and Paredes	
	surveying employers	Grden to help with response rate	
	Presidential task force meets to discuss progress	Payne, Luse, and Sanzo	
8/20	Begin survey collection with students	Sanzo, Vandecar-Burdin,	
	Share results with task force	Paredes	
	Conduct 4 additional focus groups	Lucas to help with response rate	
	Presidential task force meets to discuss progress	Payne, Luse, and Sanzo	
9/20	Using research findings, convene meetings to generate	Sanzo, Vandecar-Burdin, Paredes	
	ideas with employers	,	
	Conduct 4 additional focus groups	Paredes and Vandecar-Burdin	
	Develop draft glossary of experiential learning	Mayes and Means	
	Presidential task force meets to discuss progress	Payne, Luse, and Sanzo	
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10/20	Using research findings, convene meetings to generate	Sanzo, Vandecar-Burdin, Paredes	
	ideas with students and faculty	canzo, variaccar barani, r arcaec	
	Create draft of experiential learning pathway	Mayes, Means, and Hill	
	Presidential task force meets to discuss progress	may so, moune, and rim	
11/20	Develop draft of plan and vision	Payne, Luse, Means, and Mayes	
	Review experiential learning pathway with faculty		
	Presidential task force meets to discuss progress		
12/20	Share plan with students and faculty and get feedback	Payne, Sanzo, Means, and	
	Presidential task force meets to discuss progress	Mayes	
1/21	Share plan and vision with employers and get feedback	Payne, Sanzo, Means, and Mayes	
	Revise experiential learning pathway		
	Finalize experiential learning glossary	Mayes and Means Payne, Luse,	
	Presidential task force meets to discuss progress	and Sanzo	
	. •		
2/21	Finalize vison, plan, and experiential learning pathway	Payne, Luse, and Sanzo	
	Presidential task force meets to discuss progress	-	
3/21	Vision and plan submitted to president and cabinet for	Payne and Luse	
	approval	-	
	Final report submitted to SCHEV		
4/21	Marketing of plan and vision begins	Payne, Mayes, and Means	
	Implement plan	-	
8/21	Implement faculty and staff development program for	Mayes and Means	
	experiential learning		
8/21 –	Assess the success of the vision and plan	Paredes and Vandecar-Burdin	
3/22	·		
3/22	Revise plan and glossary as needed	Payne, Mayes, and Means	

CONCLUSION

ODU's commitment to experiential learning, social mobility, and regional growth will guide the work of the task force. The table below shows how this work aligns with the General Assembly's goals for experiential learning in the Commonwealth. Three points are particularly noteworthy. First, our efforts will be grounded in ongoing efforts President Broderick initiated to make sure that ODU is partnering with the community to meet workforce needs. Second, ODU's fabric as a diverse institution serving a high percentage of disadvantaged students means that our efforts will further diversify the region's workforce. Third, bringing together members of the task force from various backgrounds will ensure that Old Dominion University is enhancing the job readiness of our students. In particular, our business partners all have significant impact in our community, are a diverse group, and will add a significant impact to our efforts. John O. "Dubby" Wynne, the external business co-chair of the Economic Development Catalyst Task Force, has extensive background in these topics given his prior experience as CEO and President of Landmark Communications and in leadership roles with the Hampton Roads Business Roundtable, Go Virginia, and Reinvent Hampton Roads. The business partners on the Experiential Learning Task Force include:

- <u>Ferguson Enterprises</u>: Largest distributor in the country of plumbing supplies, waterworks, fire and fabrication products, as well as HVAC and other supplies, with 27,000 associates and 1,400 locations;
- ARDX: A national woman-owned, minority-owned leading government healthcare and technology consulting and services company;
- <u>SimIS</u>: A veteran-owned innovative technology services company just named "Small Business of the Year for Hampton Roads; and
- <u>The Hampton Roads Workforce Council</u>: The official workforce development organization and network for the Region, which just completed a study of the talent pipeline and gaps in the Region.

Collectively, these activities will help define the future of experiential learning at ODU.

Commonwealth Goals	Defining the Future of Experiential Learning at ODU			
Support workforce needs	Employers from ODU's Economic Development Catalyst Taskforce will			
	provide input to make sure our activities align with workforce needs.			
Support initiatives to retain	Working closely with employers will help place our students into the			
talent	workplace more quickly. Developing these relationships will incentivize			
	students to stay in the Commonwealth			
Support research/research	Including undergraduate research and entrepreneurship programming			
commercialization in targeted	as forms of experiential learning, our processes will support and			
areas.	encourage student-led research and commercialization efforts.			
Support regional economic	The specific focus of the Economic Development Catalyst Task Force is			
growth and diversification	to promote economic growth in the region.			
Enhance higher education	Stakeholders will make sure that experiential learning complements the			
affordability/time to degree	degree pathway without adding time to degree completion.			
Enhance student job	Participating employers and ODU staff with expertise in experiential			
readiness	learning will identify evidence-based strategies to promote job readiness.			
	Ongoing assessment will determine our success.			
Increase tech talent pipeline	Employers from the Economic Development Catalyst Task Force will			
	identify specific talent areas where our efforts should be prioritized.			

BUDGET AND BUDGET NARRATIVE

BUDGET

Salaries/Wages	Salary	Approx. Time	Salary	Benefits	Total
		Contributed	Cost		
Tisha Paredes	redacted	.4 months	4,000	1,540	5,540
Karen Sanzo	redacted	.4 months	4,000	828	4,828
Tancy Vandecar-Burdin	redacted	.6 months	4,000	1,540	5,540
Hourly support	redacted	150 hours	1,593		1,592
Total					17,500
Participant Support Costs					7.500
Total Project Costs					25,000

BUDGET NARRATIVE

SALARIES & WAGES - \$13,592

Co-Investigators. Faculty salary for the co-Investigator, Dr. Tisha Paredes, is based on a 12-month performance period. Amounts charged are calculated as follows: salary/12 = rate per month. Rate per month x number of months in semester x percent effort in semester = charge per period. Dr. Paredes' salary at the start of this project will be \$[redacted], and she will devote approximately .4 month of effort to this project each year.

Faculty salary for Investigator, Dr. Karen Sanzo, is based on a 9-month performance period. Amounts charged are calculated as follows: salary/9 = rate per month. Rate per month x number of months in semester x percent effort in semester = charge per period. Dr. Sanzo's salary at the start of this project will be \$[redacted], and she will devote approximately 0.4 month of summer effort to this project each year.

Faculty salary for the co-Investigator, Dr. Vandecar-Burdin, is based on a 12-month performance period. Amounts charged are calculated as follows: salary/12 = rate per month. Rate per month x number of months in semester x percent effort in semester = charge per period. Dr. Paredes' salary at the start of this project will be \$[redacted], and she will devote approximately .6 month of effort to this project each year.

Hourly Support. Hired to provide 150 hours of support on the project at a rate of \$10.61 an hour.

FRINGE BENEFITS - \$ 3,908

Co-Investigators Paredes and Vandecar-Burdin: The fringe benefit rate applicable to university faculty salaries is 38.5% of the salary attributable to this project. This rate includes the university's contribution to the Virginia Supplemental Retirement System, FICA, health, life and disability insurance premiums, worker's compensation, unemployment insurance premiums, annual leave, and sick leave. **Co-Investigator Sanzo:** The fringe benefits applicable to the Faculty Contributor summer salaries include FICA (6.2% AND 1.45%), worker's compensation (0.435%) and unemployment insurance premiums (1%).

PARTICIPANT SUPPORT COSTS - \$7,500

Funds are requested in the amount of \$7,500 per year for participant travel, focus group support/refreshments, and workshop lunches. A breakdown is as follows:

- Travel: \$1,000 for team to travel to SCHEV to participate in community of practice
- Survey/focus group incentives: \$2,500
- Meals/refreshments for focus groups, workshops, and task force meetings: \$4,000.