



MAY 2019 NEWSLETTER

WISCONSIN CENTER FOR EDUCATION RESEARCH | UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Message from the CCWT Director

As the ice melts and bulbs begin to bloom here in Madison, WI, the work here at CCWT goes up a notch. We're in the midst of working with our stellar steering committee to plan the 2nd Annual Symposium on Internship Research, which this year is also addressing issues of equity and 21st century skills. We've got two great keynotes, some thought-provoking panels, and hope to continue building a community engaged in research and practice on college internships and skills development.

Our team is also busy collecting and analyzing data for our College Internship Study, which will be expanding to 8 new campuses in 2019, and continuing research projects on refugees' experiences integrating (or not) into higher education and the workforce, and Participatory Action Research with undergraduate students at UW-Madison. All in all, we're honored to be in a position to be studying – with a critical and anthropologically informed eye – students' experiences with college-workforce transitions, and hope that you and your organization are able to benefit from these efforts in some fashion. Please reach out if you'd like to become involved in any of our research projects, have a question or a suggestion, or just want to touch base and say hello. Enjoy the spring weather wherever you may be!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew Aas".

News and Project Updates

Talking about Teaching: Social Networks and College Faculty

By Ross J. Benbow

For almost as long as teacher learning has been considered a key ingredient of successful educational reform, research has shown that teachers' social circles are important to how and what they learn. Research looking at the spread of ideas in K12 schools and other kinds of organizations and communities supports the notion that certain kinds of social connections better foster professional development than others.

Still, as researchers interested in how undergraduate students come to learn vital "21st century" skills, we found little work asking how and whether college faculty relationships link (or don't) to their use of evidence-based instruction. "Social network analysis," a novel research approach, is a helpful way to gather information on this issue. Social network researchers collect detailed information on relationships then look for connections between these relationships and how people act. Years of such work in schools on teacher relationships, or "social ties," and groups of relationships, or "social

networks,” tell us that how many people one talks to about teaching, how diverse these people are, and how close one feels to these people help instructors get better at their jobs.

To check these assumptions at the college level, we surveyed more than 1,000 faculty members and interviewed nearly 100 more asking about their teaching-focused social networks and 21st century skill instruction. This led to some important discoveries.

- **Most faculty talk to at least few others about teaching.** Ninety percent of college or university faculty members said they talked to other people about teaching important skills, with faculty reporting an average of just under 4 conversation partners.
- **Certain faculty have more teaching-focused relationships than others.** Though our findings show that most faculty have teaching-focused discussions, their networks have different features. Newer faculty members tend to discuss teaching with more people than their more experienced colleagues, as do faculty who spend more time preparing to teach. Research suggests these network characteristics provide more support and information.
- **Bigger, more diverse, and stronger networks lead to better teaching.** Statistically speaking, faculty teaching-focused social networks are closely linked to the techniques faculty use to teach 21st century skills. Among the faculty members who took our survey, network size and feelings of closeness to contacts strongly and positively related to the use of evidence-based teaching methods to teach 21st century skills.
- **Teaching discussions provide camaraderie, perspective, and feedback.** Eighty-three percent of faculty reporting teaching-focused discussions said their relationships helped them better teach 21st century skills. When asked how discussions improved their teaching, they said conversations allowed them to provide and receive social support and share new or effective teaching methods as well as receive feedback on teaching techniques from educators with a variety of perspectives.

With this work in mind, we believe scholars, administrators, and faculty members hoping to encourage better college teaching can use already-existing social learning opportunities to help achieve their goals. Promoting teamwork among faculty, allowing more space for formal and informal conversations, and lining up departmental- and campus-wide teaching initiatives with research and service commitments is a promising way forward both for faculty and the students they serve.

Internship Study

By Zi Chen

CCWT has been partnering with multiple institutions to conduct a mixed-methods longitudinal study to learn about internship

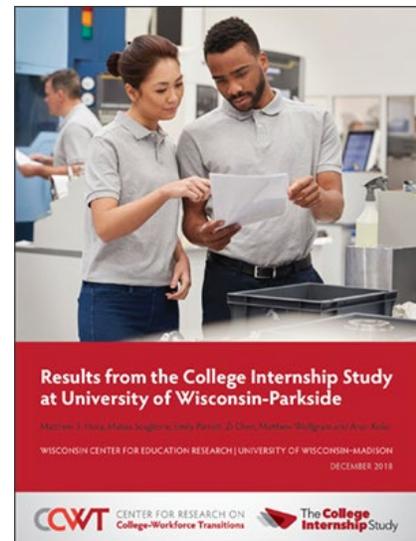
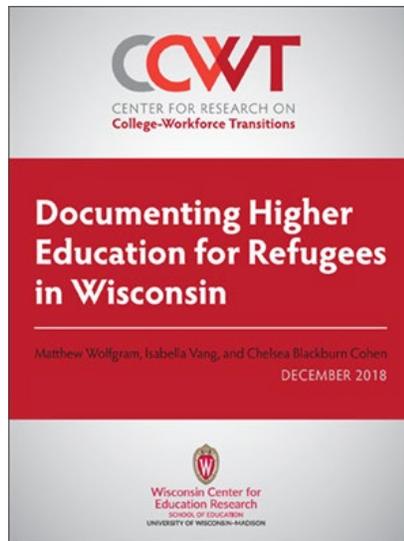
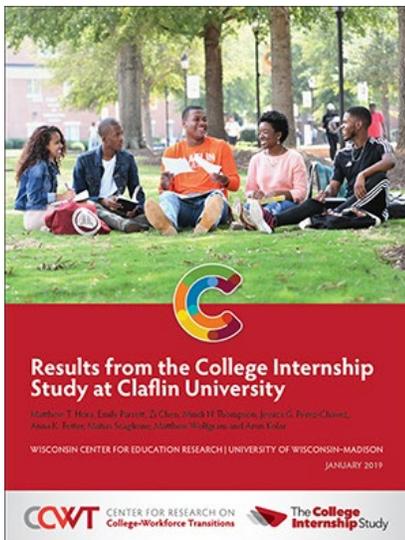
participation and experiences from students, educators, and employers, and their impacts on student outcomes, such as internship satisfaction and developmental values. By May 2019, The CCWT research team has completed the first wave of data collection at five institutions, including two comprehensive universities in Wisconsin that are also Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs), a technical college in Wisconsin, and two Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in South Carolina and Maryland. Analysis of cross-sectional data identified key factors influencing students' internship participation and outcomes as well as barriers that keep students from participating an internship. The second wave of data are currently being collected in order to explore the impact of internships on students' academic and employment outcomes across time. Three new institutions will be participating in this study in the coming fall of 2019.



The **College**
Internship Study

Media Mentions

- On February 4th 2019, The Hmong TV Network aired a feature newscast on the work of the CCWT research group Our HMoob American College Paj Ntaub (starts at 7 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G3eQpfbveYI&feature=youtu.be&t=430>
- Students say 'UW-Madison as an institution is excluding and unwelcoming to Hmong-American students': https://www.channel3000.com/news/students-say-uw-madison-as-an-institution-is-excluding-and-unwelcoming-to-hmong-american-students-/998130999?fbclid=IwAR26E_17Rzu2TFEWm81590hls4i_xaj0KKal2Xj-5-Se_lx401iCGUygl0
- Hmong students consistently feel excluded, unwelcome on campus, new research finds: <https://badgerherald.com/news/2019/02/03/hmong-students-consistently-feel-excluded-unwelcome-on-campus-new-research-finds/>
- Matthew Wolfgram discusses higher education for refugees on Wisconsin Public Television's program, Here and Now Noon Wednesday: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WGmVljRFoag&app=desktop>



New Research and Publications from the CCWT Team

Academic Journal Articles

Hora, M. T., Smolarek, B. B., Martin, K. N., & Scrivener, L*. (2019). Exploring the situated and cultural aspects of communication in the professions: Implications for teaching, student employability, and equity in higher education. *American Educational Research Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831219840333>

Benbow, R., & Hora, M.T. (2018). Reconsidering college student employability: A cultural analysis of educator and employer conceptions of workplace skills. *Harvard Educational Review* 88 (4), 483-515.

Working Papers & Reports

Hora, M. T., Chen, Z., Parrott, E., & Her, P. (2019). *Problematizing college internships: Exploring issues with access, program design, and developmental outcomes in three U.S. colleges*. (WCER Working Paper No. 2019-1). Retrieved from University of Wisconsin–Madison, Wisconsin Center for Education Research website: <http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/publications/working-papers>

Results from the Internship Study at Claflin University: http://ccwt.wceruw.org/documents/CCWT_report_results%20from%20Claflin.pdf

Results from the Internship Study at UW-Parkside: http://ccwt.wceruw.org/documents/CCWT_Results%20from%20the%20College%20Internship%20Study%20at%20University%20of%20Wisconsin-Parkside.pdf

Documenting Higher Education for Refugees in Wisconsin Report: http://ccwt.wceruw.org/documents/CCWT_report_Documenting%20Higher%20Education%20for%20Refugees%20in%20Wisconsin.pdf

Check out the CCWT website periodically for new reports, research and policy briefs, and upcoming events!

New Research on College-Workforce Topics

In this newsletter we feature some new research on the topic of “student employability,” which is something being talked about in colleges, universities, and high schools around the world. A growing body of research focuses on the important issue of measurement, or how to document and then monitor student employability. Here we feature some papers that describe new ways to study employability, and also some more critical analyses of the concept itself.

Clarke, M. (2018). Rethinking graduate employability: The role of capital, individual attributes and context. *Studies in Higher Education*, 43(11), 1923-1937.

Dacre Pool, L., & Sewell, P. (2007). The key to employability: developing a practical model of graduate employability. *Education+ Training*, 49(4), 277-289.

Harvey, L. (2001). Defining and measuring employability. *Quality in higher education*, 7(2), 97-109.

Tomlinson, M. (2017). Forms of graduate capital and their relationship to graduate employability. *Education+ Training*, 59(4), 338-352.

Urciuoli, B. (2008). Skills and selves in the new workplace. *American Ethnologist*, 35(2), 211-228.

Events

2nd Annual Internship Symposium Reminder!

SAVE THE DATE: The 2nd Annual Symposium on College Internship Research will be on October 23-24 in Madison, Wisconsin! The theme of this year's symposium is “Internships & 21st century skills: Exploring issues of language, equity and quality.”

We invite researchers, career services and student affairs professionals, employers, advocates, college students, and legislators to attend this year's symposium. Come ready to learn and partner with your colleagues and:

- Learn about the latest research on internships and their relationship to 21st century competencies from scholars in labor economics, sociology, higher education, vocational psychology, and other fields;



- Hear about problems of practice and strategies to overcome them from practitioners in the field;
- Develop new strategies and ideas about program design, implementation and evaluation for your own institution and student body;
- Help shape and improve state and federal policies regarding internships and 21st century competencies; and,
- Contribute your own ideas and experiences to a growing national movement to create equitable and meaningful internships and experiential learning opportunities for all students regardless of race, class, gender, major, or institutional affiliation.

The program will feature 3 tracks that run throughout the panels, breakouts, and workshops: **Strategies for college-employer partnerships, Designing effective learning spaces for 21st skills, and Inequalities in the intern economy: Geography, major, and race/ethnicity.**

Keynote Speakers

Dr. April Kedrowicz

from North Carolina State University, an expert on how to teach discipline-specific forms of communication

Ross Perlin

author of Intern Nation: How to Earn Nothing and Learn Little in the Brave New Economy



Speakers and panelists include:

- Cindy Ann Kilgo, Assistant Professor of Higher Education Administration, University of Alabama
- Alex Frenette, Assistant Professor of Sociology, Vanderbilt University
- Darryl Ann Watkins, United Negro College Fund, Senior Program Manager, Career Pathways Initiative
- Christian Corrales, University of Texas-El Paso, Employer & Community Relations Manager

Register, call for proposals and more information here: <http://ccwt.wceruw.org/symposium.html>

Presenting “Our HMoob American College Paj Ntaub”

CCWT partnered with a student organization at UW-Madison called the HMoob American Studies Committee in a qualitative research project to document the sociocultural and institutional factors that impact the college experiences of HMoob American students.

Presentation and discussion of our research findings was February 1st 2019, noon, at Wisconsin Idea Room (Education Building, Room 159).

Watch the presentation here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8-BXLKzKWRE&feature=youtu.be>



Michael Tomlinson Comes from the UK to Lecture on Managing Transitions from College to Work

Dr. Michael Tomlinson, an Associate Professor at the Southampton Education School at the University of Southampton, UK, provided a critical overview of the problem and construct of graduates' employability, charting its evolution and the ways in which it has been conceptually and politically applied in understanding macro-level changes between higher education (HE) systems and the labor market.

Video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y0ph7JbISEU>



Gary Anderson Spring 2019 Seminar Series on April 29th

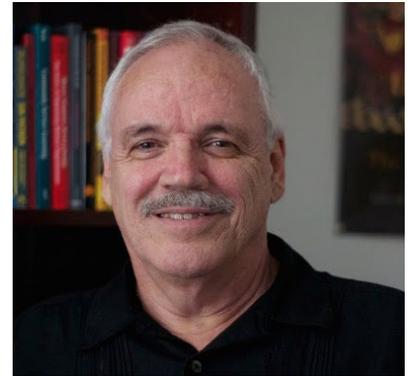
Gary Anderson, NYU Professor, spoke on two things,

Participatory Action Research as a Grassroots Challenge to Policy and Practice in Schools and Universities, Monday, April 29, 2019 • 10am

And

Community-Based Participatory Action Research Workshop and Discussion, Monday, April 29, 2019 • 2-3:30pm

Please see CCWT's website for more information, or to watch the video on Gary's talk: <http://ccwt.wceruw.org/seminar-series.html>



Meet the Expert: A Conversation with Carolyn Lesch

by Jacklyn John-Fischer

CCWT project assistant Jacklyn John Fischer recently had an opportunity to sit down with Carolyn Lesch, an academic advisor and senior lecturer with UW-Madison's Center for Law, Society, & Justice. As part of her work, Carolyn collaborates with her colleague Martine Delaney to manage the Criminal Justice Certificate Program's internship component – a requirement for all students in the program. The Criminal Justice Certificate Program, which has included an internship/fieldwork component since the program's inception, currently supports over 350 students. The Center has also extended internship opportunities to students in the Legal Studies major. Carolyn's interview clearly highlights the importance of intentional outreach and engagement, both with students and with the broader community, when developing an accessible and enriching internship program.



How do your students generally feel about the internship component of the program?

Before, students are interested but they're also afraid. Because, they're wondering, "How do you go about doing this?" It's often outside their realm of knowledge. After, with very few exceptions, the feeling is profoundly happy. They feel so much more connected and have a different confidence in who they are.

I often say to students, "I wish I could take a picture of each of you before you began an internship and after." They have a different confidence going into courses the following semester. They look at everything so differently, because they're looking at it through a lens of, "Yes, this may be true in general, but..."

It changes them on an academic level, and it changes them on a personal level. We've recently started asking students in an exit survey what skills have they learned that will assist them in their professional transition and it's incredible to read.

What are some of the primary challenges of requiring an internship/fieldwork component as part of the curriculum?

One of the challenges is maintaining relationships in the community. I come from working in the community – I don't come from academia. I cannot imagine how you would go about coordinating a really successful internship program without nurturing those community relationships. Because, the people who are supervising interns, in general, are not being paid. They're doing it out of their own generosity.

In the summer, I try to visit different agencies and just say, "Thank you. Is there anything that we can do to make this relationship better?" You have to nurture those relationships and I think that's something that's often missing. And, because we're sharing what our values are and what our goals are for students, the visits help to build a better learning environment for our students.

Another challenge is maintaining student relationships. I worry that I lose students who I don't even realize are so afraid of the process, or who feel like an internship isn't really for them. We recognize this fear, so we talk about the internship piece whenever we meet with students. I think it begins to seem more and more attainable, but you can still see the fear.

Because of this, we really walk students step-by-step through the process. We start with an internship orientation for all interested students where we talk about the whole process. We offer a speed mentoring event where we bring in 30-50 professionals to talk with students one-on-one. And those professionals often end up being past students. We always set up interviewing workshops, which have been fine-tuned over the years for our specific needs.

We also keep binders of past student evaluations for other students to review. The evaluations talk about what students did, what their supervision was like, whether they received responsibility at the internship, other agencies that they might have interacted with (and would recommend to other students), and whether they had any previous work experience. These [evaluations] give students a better idea of the experience from the intern perspective.

Students will then complete a survey where they can list their top six to ten placements, and then they meet with me in a small group where I can ask them questions about their choices. And we have workshops for resumes and cover letters. We really try to break it all down and clearly explain the next steps throughout the process.

Is compensation ever an issue for students, since I assume many of your students are working for non-profits or government agencies?

Yes. Absolutely.

How do you help students who can't afford to do an unpaid or low-paying internship?

We used to only offer a summer internship course, so offering an internship class during the school year became one of my top goals when I started in the position. Without one, we were missing our first generation students, low income students, students of color, veterans, people who have families and other responsibilities. It was discriminatory. Now the internship course is offered every semester.

We also use some donor money to give scholarships to students. And that's been a faculty decision. They're very supportive. They love the internship component. They see the effect on students who have done it.

We meet with students throughout the internship search process, so we'll also just staple paid internship opportunities like the State of Wisconsin's Summer Affirmative Action Internship Program to the top of their other internship materials. We try – whenever there's something available – to really push it out to our students.

What is one piece of advice for fellow practitioners who want to help ensure that students' internships are meaningful learning experiences?

You have to engage with them throughout the entire process. It's not only the internship search process – it's the actual internship and then their processing during and after the internship.

If you want to help ensure student internships are meaningful...for me, that means making them meaningful for every student. You have to break it down. It can't just be, "Here's a piece of paper of potential internship placements and a phone number."

As I listen to you talk about how you built out your process to support students, my biggest takeaway is the importance of walking side-by-side with students through the entire process.

Yes. There are a lot of programs that simply say, "You can enroll in this internship class if you have already secured an internship." In doing so, programs are just excluding a lot of potential students who are disadvantaged in some way. By setting the same expectation for every student that they will complete an internship and then establishing a clearly mapped out process, we can help build student confidence and enrich the internship starting point for all students.

I hear from agencies over and over again that we have the best-prepared students, which again helps our students feel like they have worth. They have skills. They think, "I can do this."

That's awesome to hear.

Sorry, I get very animated because I just love this job.

If you have any questions about how Carolyn and her colleagues have developed the Criminal Justice Certificate Program's internship component, Carolyn and Martine can be reached at cjcp@ssc.wisc.edu.



**Wisconsin Center for
Education Research**
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

The mission of The Center for Research on College-Workforce Transitions (CCWT) is to conduct and support research, critical policy analysis, and public dialogue on student experiences with the transition from college to the workforce in order to inform policies, programs, and practices that promote academic and career success for all learners.

Center for Research on College to Workforce Transitions (CCWT)

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