Work-Based Learning

Paving the Way for Career Success through a General Education Course

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Your Presenters

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UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
PARKSIDE

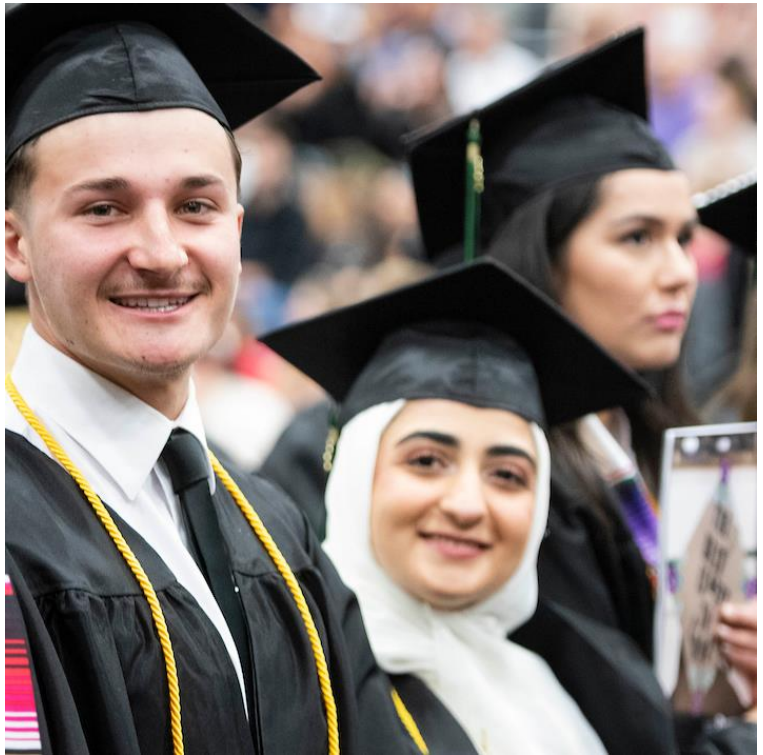
Agenda

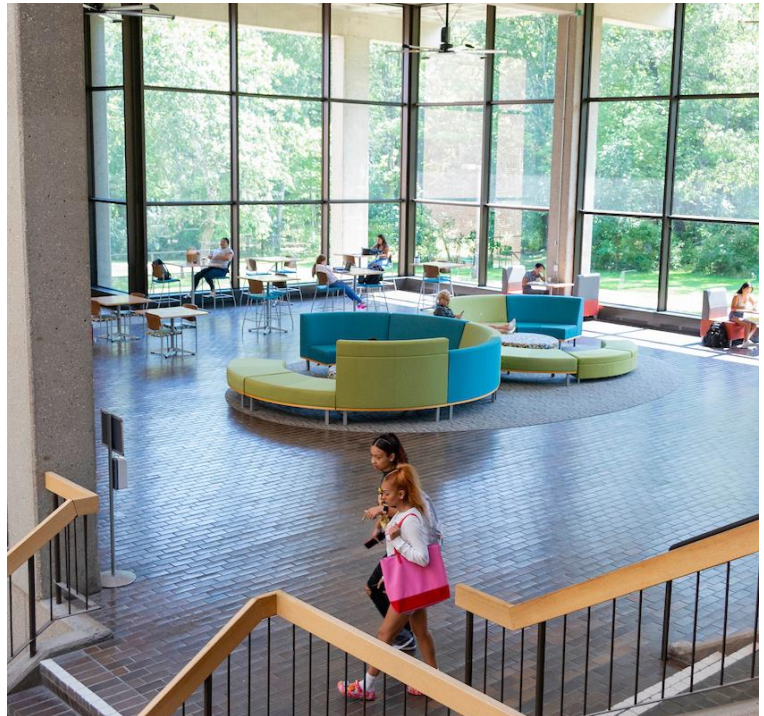
- Snapshot of UW-Parkside
- HIPs – Equity & Access
- Developing the Course
- Early Study Key Findings
- WBL at Your Institution

DROP IT IN THE CHAT

Where are you from?

University of Wisconsin-Parkside: A Snapshot





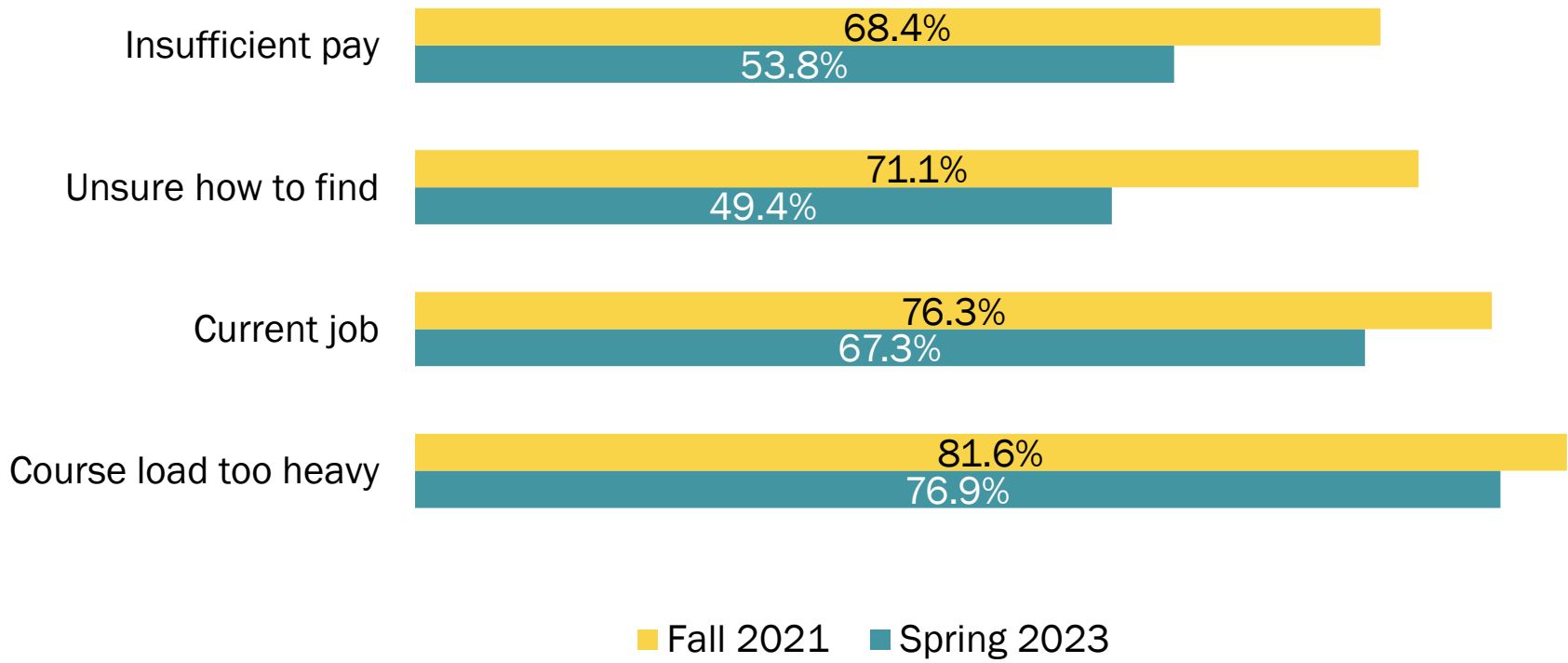
HIPs: Equity & Access

National Survey of College Internships (NSCI)

Key findings from the 2023 NSCI found that:

- **37%** of students were low-income
- **82%** were very/extremely satisfied with their internship experience
- **67%** were compensated for their work
- **41%** of low-income students reported having an unpaid internship
- **67%** of middle and high-income students reported having a paid internship

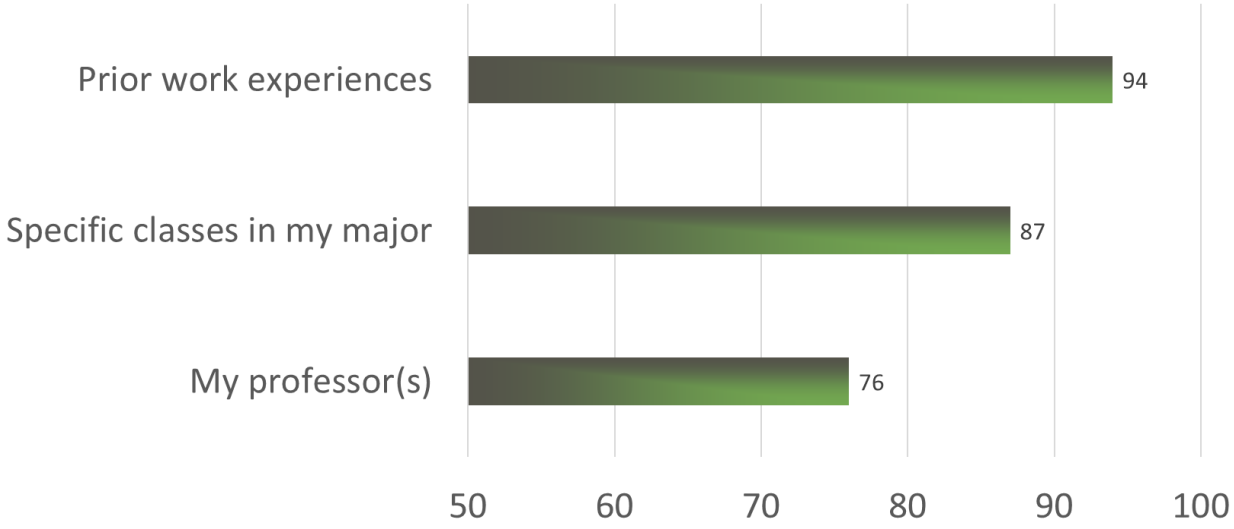
Top 4 Barriers to Internship Participation Fall 2021 vs. Spring 2023



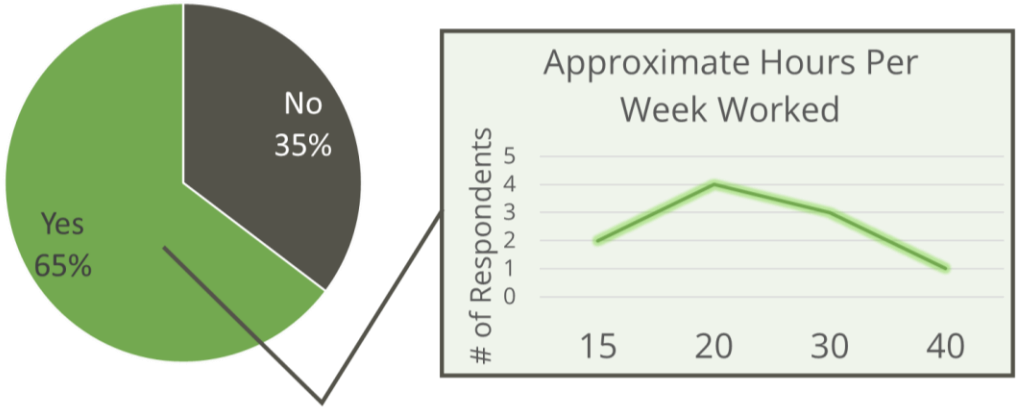
Source: National Survey of College Internships, 2021 & 2023.

Findings of UW-P Student Internship Survey

Sources that best prepared students for their internship



Percentage of students who work another job separate from internship



Responses indicate a strong correlation between academic influences (professors, discipline-related coursework) and feeling prepared for an internship.

Of the 65% of students who worked another job separate from their internship, 100% worked a minimum of 15 hours per week.

Internship Alternatives

LEARNING IN ACTION

- **Community-based learning**
  - 50 courses annually
  - App. 1000 students
  - Community Engagement Certificate

- **Micro-internships**
  - Parker Dewey

- **Campus Employment as a HIP**
  - Structured to be internship-like

- **Undergraduate Research**

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What strengths do you identify at your institution in regards to HIPs programming?

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What weaknesses, challenges, or barriers are preventing you from further elevating HIPs at your institution?

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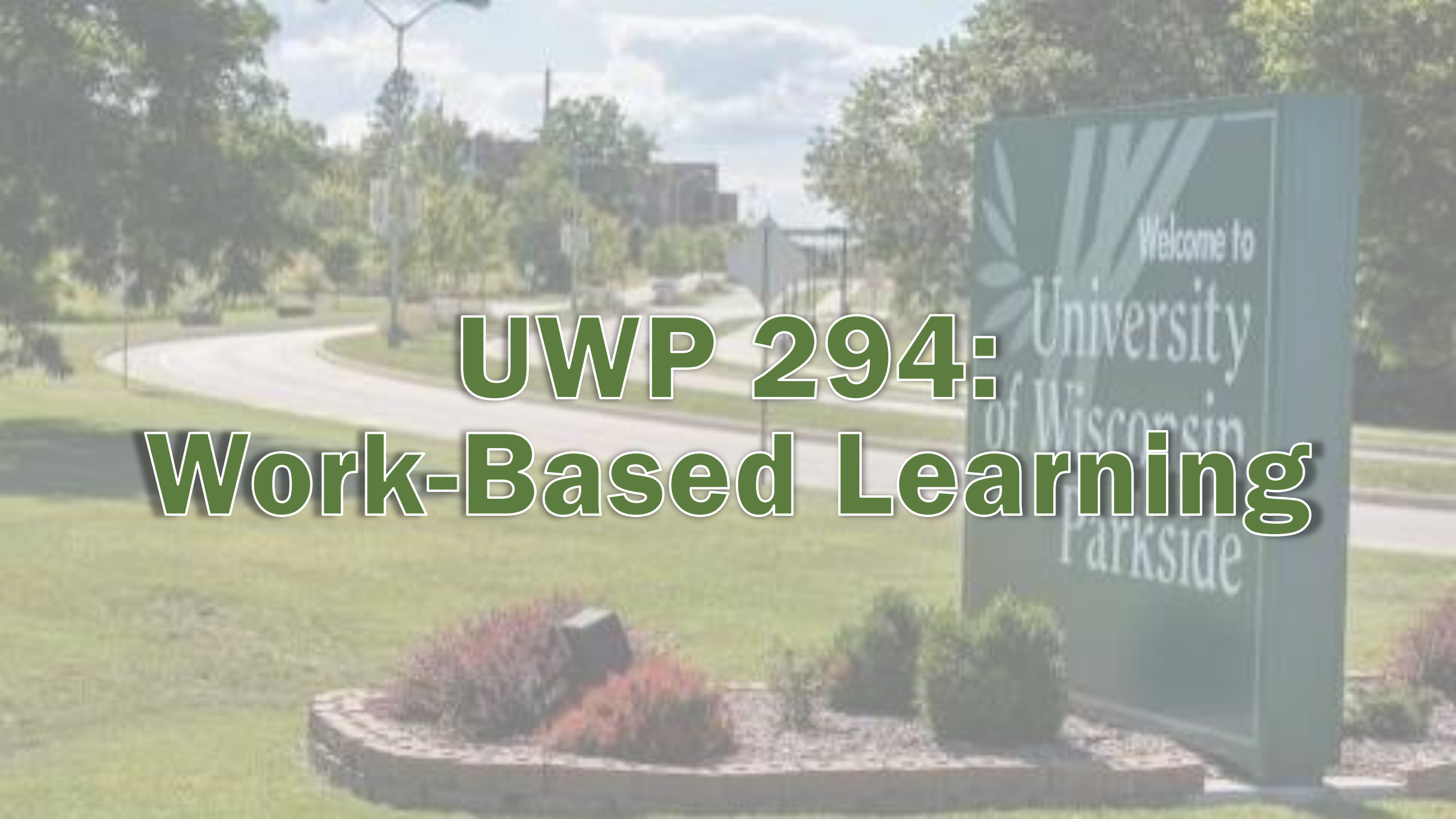


UWP 294: Work-Based Learning

Our Students

- May not have **the luxury of quitting their jobs to pursue an internship**
  - May not possess the **cultural capital to gauge the value of internships**
    - May not possess the **social capital to seek networks and connections** for obtaining internships
      - May not have the **financial security to accept an unpaid or underpaid** internship
        - Are **constrained by academic commitments** in terms of having to pursue a heavy courseload

***YET**, our working students were reporting **high levels of self-efficacy and career adaptability** despite encountering barriers to conventional career development opportunities such as internships*

Why . . .

- *does higher education award credit and integrate internships into the curriculum but will not do so for on-the-job learning?*
- *does higher education place higher value on internship-based learning vs. other on-the-job learning?*
  - *do educators assume that* ***employer expectations****,* ***commitment****,* ***quality of the work environment****, and* ***learning possibilities*** *are* ***lower for paid jobs than for (sometimes) unpaid internships?***

An Equity Issue

- Internships are not accessible to most of our students
- Underscores the need to brainstorm alternate pathways to career readiness.

This opened the possibility of exploring

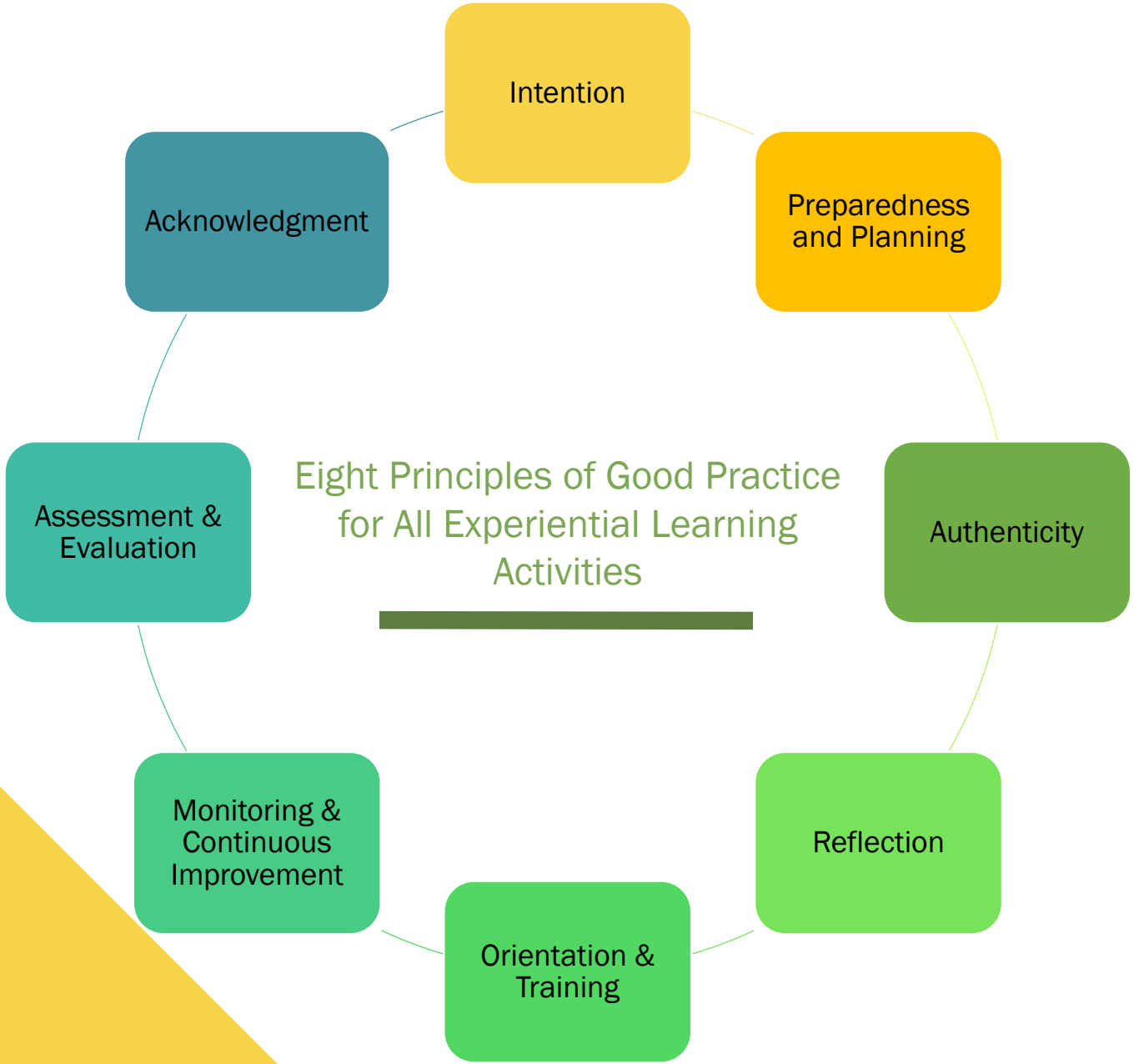
- How career development can be embedded into coursework
- How work experiences of underserved and under-represented students can be harnessed to replicate some of the same advantages that internships offer

UWP 294: Work-Based Learning Development

- Challenges
  - Pushback against awarding credit for “working at McDonald’s”
- CCWT study and recommendations on the potential for work-based learning
- General Education alignment (social & behavioral sciences)
- Requirements:
  - Actively employed during the enrollment term
  - Working a minimum of 6 hours per week

NACE Competencies

Society for Experiential Education (SEE)



Course Structure

Hybrid format

- 15% in class, 85% assignments/work

Learning Goals

- Analyze the essential skills you are developing in a current work experience
- Engage in active information-seeking in the workplace
- Apply communication skills for effective work relationship building and networking
- Analyze the civic responsibilities of organizations
- Reflect on your goals in relationship to work and career

Assignments

- Resume/cover letter
- Interviewing – BigInterview
- Elevator pitch
- Civic responsibility research
- E-portfolio
- Work reflections/discussion boards

Student Profile

95%

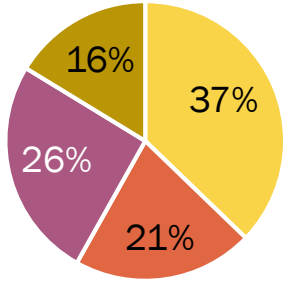
90%

1st & 2nd year students

50%

FIRST GENERATION

Industries

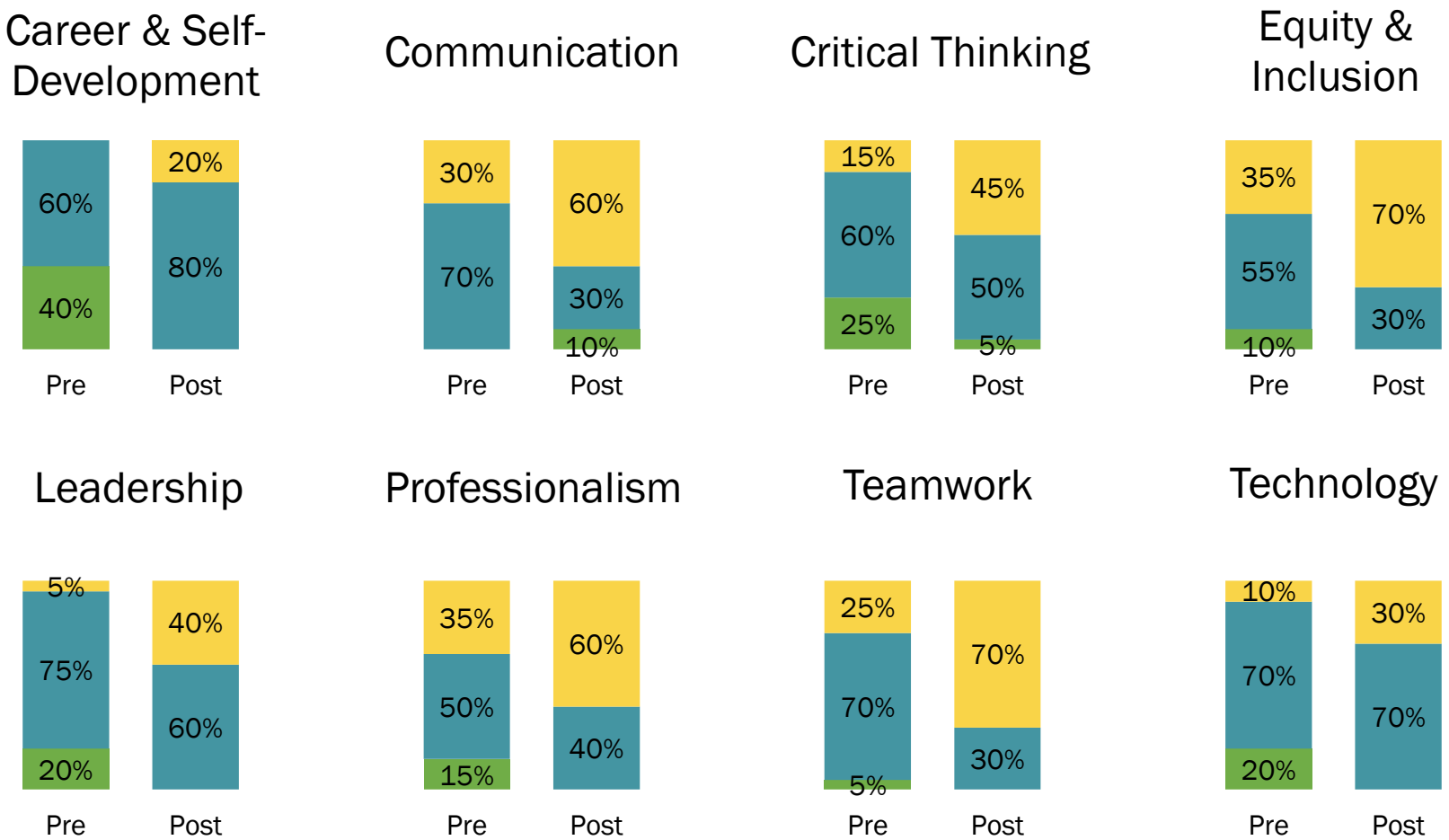


- Retail
- Food Service
- Administrative
- Other

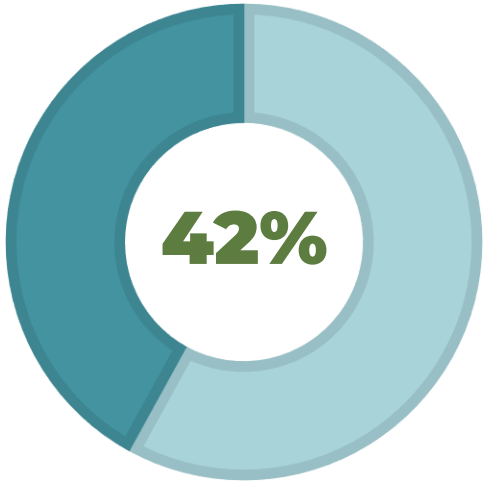
Avg. 19 hrs./week

Early Study Results, Key Findings, and Implications

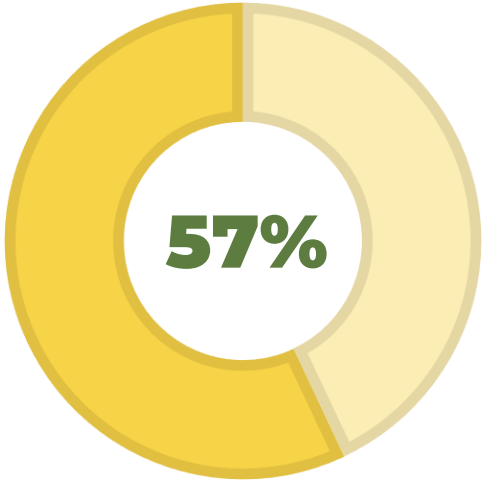
Competency Development



Early Outcomes



Increased use of leadership skills in current job



Improved their communication skills

Increased confidence of their essential workplace competencies

Student Reflections

"Due to the reflections, I was able to also **work on my leadership skills and … let [my managers] know what I'm capable of**. Having leadership and knowing what I want is a way of self-respect and I plan on using this in future careers by voicing what my expectations are from my job and also always asking questions whenever needed."

"This class gave me an advantage into thinking about not only my jobs I hold now, but also my future career in terms of **leadership and professionalism**. I feel **more confident presenting myself to employers**, and to a group of my peers."

"The discussions during class have really helped me grow in **my ability to have more formal discussions within a classroom and within my workplace**. It has given me the practice and confidence to state my opinions and advocate for myself by **verbally communicating** and through **written communication**, such as in our online discussion posts."

"I hope to one day be a leader of my own law firm and **this is only the beginning of the basic fundamental skills that will be essential** in this career field. Overall, this course has taught a lot of life skills that are all necessary for my future career."

Key Findings and Implications

Transformative

- Workplace experiences convert to meaningful career competencies
- Sends message to students that their work has value and is valid

Career Relevant

- Builds confidence in their abilities
- Increases motivation to show initiative
- Cultivates networking skills
- Fosters connections with supervisors, senior leadership, and other professional relationships

Equitable

- Meets students where they are at
- Better prepares students to pursue additional career-building opportunities in the future
- Improves employment prospects for students

Work-Based Learning into the Future

- Additional Gen Ed alignment or college-specific course offering
- Creative solution for greater access and equity
    - Online/asynchronous offering in summer
    - Exploring UWP 294/394
- Recruitment strategy
- Impact on retention and graduation rates
- Impact on employment and promotion prospects
    - Check-in survey to previous cohorts

Work-Based Learning at Your Institution

Closing Self-Reflection

1. How do you **currently embed career readiness** into curricula at your institution? Ex: freshman seminar, major-specific prep courses, professional development built into courses, etc.

2. Identify **one area** to further embed career readiness into the student academic experience at your institution. What is your **first step**? (a conversation, a presentation, a proposal, additional research, etc.)

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Five years from now, what would you like curricula-embedded career readiness to look like at your institution?

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Resources and Contact Info