

**Resolution for Proposal for  
A Micro-Credential in Workplace Communication and  
Information Technology**

**WHEREAS**, the School of Professional Studies proposed a **Micro-Credential in Workplace Communication and Information Technology**, and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed Micro-Credential is designed to help students cultivate a fundamental knowledge of business communication and information technology, and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed Micro-Credential consists of required courses for Professional Studies majors and will offer these students an additional opportunity to be recognized for their skills in communication and information technology, and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed Micro-Credential will help students prepare entering the workforce and allow current workers upgrade their skills in workplace, and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed Micro-Credential consists of two existing courses and requires no additional resource,

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Faculty Senate approve the proposed **Micro-Credential in Workplace Communication and Information Technology**.

Submitted by Curriculum and Academic Planning Committee (CAP), March 12, 2021

The Program Announcement approved by CAP on March 12, 2021

**[CAP Membership]**

Tejas Bouklas, Svetlana Jovic, Yu Lei, Matthew Lippert, Anissa Wicktor Lynch, Sheyi Oladipo, Dana Sinclair, Kerry Weir, and Ryoko Yamamoto (Chair)

The Proposal approved by the Faculty Senate by unanimous consent on 3/19/2021.

# Workplace Communication and Information Technology

## Micro-Credential

### Overview

#### *Description, Purposes and Structure*

Workers, especially minorities and women, are bearing the brunt of the unemployment caused by the Covid crisis. Worse, their prospects for recovery are threatened by longer term changes in the economy and workplace that favor skills in management and marketing over production and services. Because the SPS' mission is to support the College's mission and serve traditionally bypassed students through "innovative ... programs that meet the needs of working adults," the School is proposing a second Micro-Credential designed to help workers needing to upgrade their skills and students preparing to enter the workforce. This one will complement the "Professional Skills for the Workplace" micro by conveying a basic knowledge of professional communications and information technology to help students secure and succeed in positions in the emerging economy. It will consist of one course in professional communications and one in IT, which together will give students a theoretical and practical introduction to acquire, analyze, and utilize information and communicate effectively.

#### *Learning Outcomes*

Students who complete these courses at the stipulated level will have demonstrated:

- Knowledge and understanding of professional communication fundamentals: theories and principles, leading conferences and meetings, general correspondence, specific writing techniques, purposeful messages, formal and informal lines of communication, report writing, and soft skills development through team collaboration.
- Knowledge and understanding of the fundamentals of information technology: applications, management, computer-based information systems, the significance of big data, analyzing problems, and decision making for multicultural enterprises.
- Awareness of communication and information technology issues that arise within organizations and how to utilize this knowledge to successfully implement solutions.
- An ability to communicate effectively with workers, organizational leadership, customers, peers, and community stakeholders.
- An ability to critically appraise situations and synthesize theoretical knowledge and practical experience.
- An understanding of ethical practices in the workplace and the marketplace to promote a positive work environment for an increasingly diverse workforce, and an enterprise's social and environmental responsibilities.

#### *Assessment*

The Micro-Credential's Learning outcomes will be measured by students' performance on relevant course assignments in each course, using the College's standard assessment rubric. The courses will be assessed as part of the SPS' ongoing rotation of assessments, and the program as part of the Professional Studies department's periodic reviews.

#### *Additional Information or Considerations*

The Workplace Communication and Information Technology Micro-Credential is supported by an advisory committee consisting of two external members familiar with the local economy and minority groups' needs within it, and one from within Old Westbury. The classes that make up the Micro-Credential are already offered by the SPS as part of the core requirements of its Professional Studies degree during Fall semester. The program will therefore complement the existing Workplace micro, with its Spring classes, and will similarly not require any additional costs, support services, or other institutional resources. The faculty teaching the courses are the program's full-time faculty member and the SPS assistant director, who has taught the course many times as an adjunct and while in his current position.

# **Proposal for a Micro-Credential in Workplace Communication and Information Technology**

## **School of Professional Studies**

### **March 2, 2021**

#### ***A. Purpose***

Workers on Long Island today are caught in a perfect storm. On the one hand, the Covid crisis has caused a crash in employment, with layoffs particularly affecting minority and women workers. On the other hand, the prospect of recovery for these workers is diminished due to longer-term changes in the economy and workplace that favor management and marketing positions over production and service jobs. According to Nora Bassett, President of Core Management Solutions and a member of the Board of Trustees of the Old Westbury College Foundation, even production-level workers who remain employed are under increased pressure to handle traditionally managerial tasks as companies are forced to operate with reduced staffing. There is thus a need for programs that will help these workers, whether employed or unemployed, upgrade their knowledge and skills to secure employment as the economy recovers and evolves.

With its Mission to support “the College’s mission by expanding access to higher education” by “offering innovative courses and programs that meet the needs of working adults”, the SPS is designed to provide the kind of program that the current situation calls for. It is therefore proposing to create a second two-course, eight credit Micro-Credential to complement its existing “Professional Skills for the Workplace” Micro-Credential that will equip workers needing to upgrade their skills with a working knowledge of how to acquire, analyze, and utilize data and to effectively communicate with management, peers, and customers. This will give them, and potentially matriculated students preparing to enter the workforce as well, a competitive edge in securing and succeeding in the kind of employment opportunities that are growing even as many traditional jobs disappear.

#### ***B. Demand***

The Covid-19 pandemic has created significant economic losses due to business closures across many sectors. In our region, the unemployment rate for the period ending August 2020 was 10.5% for Nassau-Suffolk and 16.3% for New York City, in contrast to 3.9% and 4.2% in the same period last year.<sup>1</sup> Unemployment among minority groups is particularly high: based on the Labor Department's July jobs report, the rate for Black adults was just under 15%, Hispanic workers just under 13%, and Asian workers 12%, while the rate for White workers was just over 9%.

Just as the impact of the downturn has been uneven, the prospects for recovery are uneven due to longer-term changes in the economy and workplace. The entertainment and hospitality industries, for example, are not expected to recover until the first quarter

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.labor.ny.gov/stats/pressreleases/prlaus.shtml> Accessed 10/6/20.

## **Workplace Communication and Information Technology Micro-Credential Proposal**

of 2024.<sup>2</sup> In contrast, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that "technological advancements are expected to support rapid employment growth in professional, business, and scientific services sectors,"<sup>3</sup> with general and operations managers and sales representatives promising better than average future job growth potential.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, as noted above, even production-level employees are going to need to be able to handle traditionally managerial tasks as companies struggle to survive with reduced staffing. As the economy transitions, new requirements and opportunities are thus emerging that the proposed Micro-Credential will enable displaced workers and graduating students to make the most of.

### **C. Resources**

Like the courses that make up the existing Workplace Skills for the Professional Micro-Credential, the courses that will make up this Micro-Credential are currently offered as part of the program's core curriculum. While the classes in the existing Micro are offered in Spring semesters, the courses that will make up the new Micro are offered in Fall semesters. Like the Spring classes, these are being taught by full-time SPS faculty and staff members and are projected to be well but not fully enrolled, so additional class members can be easily accommodated. These classes are scheduled on the weekends, when the physical facilities of the College are under-utilized. The instructors who currently teach them are experienced professionals with directly relevant training and experience. One, Maureen Keefe, has taught business and economics courses as a visiting assistant professor at Old Westbury since 1976, and is currently teaching in the Professional Studies program. The other, Gary Levanti, was originally hired to teach for the program as an adjunct instructor based on his extensive experience teaching in business programs in neighboring institutions, and is now the Assistant Director of the SPS. They have both already taught the courses they are scheduled to teach, have been observed to be effective instructors, and have garnered positive student evaluations.

### **D. Cost, Financial Aid, Stackability, Portability, and Unique Title**

Since the Micro-Credential will involve two four credit courses, the cost will be the regular per-credit cost for these classes. Financial aid will be available for matriculated students who take the two courses as part of their degree program, but not for nonmatriculated students. The Micro-Credential will be stackable, as both classes can count toward the major core requirements for students in the BPS in Professional Studies program. The courses the Micro-Credential includes are regular credit-bearing Old Westbury classes, and therefore will typically be transferrable to other SUNY institutions. Information about these items will be included in all marketing materials publicizing it. The name "Workplace Communication and Information Technology" is not the title of any registered degree or certificate program.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/coronavirus-leading-through-the-crisis/charting-the-path-to-the-next-normal/finland-sees-promising-results-after-nationwide-experiment-with-universal-basic-income> Accessed 10/6/20..

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/ecopro\\_09012020.htm](https://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/ecopro_09012020.htm) Accessed 10/7/20.

<sup>4</sup> <https://eab.com/insights/daily-briefing/workplace/the-top-10-emerging-jobs-for-2022/> Accessed 10/7/20

## **Workplace Communication and Information Technology Micro-Credential Proposal**

### ***E. Assessment***

The Micro-Credential will be assessed along with the other programs of the School of Professional Studies as part of its regular five year review process.

### ***F. Endorsements***

This proposal was created based on discussions with and has been reviewed and endorsed by the SPS' Professional Applications Committee, which includes Nora Bassett, Lionel Chitty, and Penny Chin. Nora Bassett is, in addition to the positions noted above, actively involved in employment initiatives in the community. Lionel Chitty is Executive Director at the Nassau County Office of Minority Affairs, has served as President of the Old Westbury Alumni Association, and is directly involved with community relations and job growth. Penny Chin is Director of Alumni Affairs and maintains direct contact with many Old Westbury Alumni and business members in the community.

This proposal has been reviewed and endorsed by the School of Professional Study's Faculty Advisory Committee on March 2, 2021. The vote was 9 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions, with one member of the committee not present.

### ***G. Additional Materials***

Following is draft catalog copy for the Micro-Credential.

# Workplace Communication and Information Technology Micro-Credential

## Sponsoring school: Professional Studies

The Workplace Communication and Information Technology Micro-Credential conveys a basic knowledge of information technology and business communications to help students preparing to enter the workforce and workers needing to upgrade their skills secure and succeed in positions in the emerging economy. This Micro will consist of one course in communications and one in information technology, which together will give students a theoretical and practical introduction to how to acquire, analyze, and utilize information and communicate with management, peers, and customers. Students completing the Micro-Credential's requirements will be equipped to contribute useful insights and operational capabilities to the enterprises that employ them.

## Requirements

Students are required to take 8 credits by completing both of the following courses at Old Westbury with a grade of B or higher:

PS3230	Professional Communication	4 credits
PS3260	Information Technology for Professionals	4 credits

## Skills and Competencies to be Gained

Students who complete these courses at the stipulated level will have demonstrated:

- Knowledge and understanding of professional communication fundamentals: theories and principles, leading conferences and meetings, general correspondence, specific writing techniques, purposeful messages, formal and informal lines of communication, report writing, and soft skills development through team collaboration.
- Knowledge and understanding of the fundamentals of information technology: applications, management, computer-based information systems, the significance of big data, analyzing problems, and decision making for multicultural enterprises.
- Awareness of communication and information technology issues that arise within organizations and how to utilize this knowledge to successfully implement solutions.
- An ability to communicate effectively with workers, organizational leadership, customers, peers, and community stakeholders.
- An ability to critically appraise situations and synthesize theoretical knowledge and practical experience.
- An understanding of ethical practices in the workplace and the marketplace to promote a positive work environment for an increasingly diverse workforce, and an enterprise's social and environmental responsibilities.

## Other Considerations

Both classes can count toward the BPS in Professional Studies, whether taken by current students or by non-matriculated students who subsequently matriculate.