

Resolution for Proposal for A Micro-Credential in Professional Skills for the Workplace

WHEREAS, the School of Professional Studies proposed a **Micro-Credential in Professional Skills for the Workplace**, and

WHEREAS, the proposed Micro-Credential is designed to help students cultivate a working knowledge of internal operations in economic enterprises and marketing of goods and services, and would expand career opportunities for those who are among socially and economically vulnerable groups, and

WHEREAS, the proposed Micro-Credential helps develop skills that would give graduating students and displaced workers a competitive edge in securing and succeeding in employment in growing professional, business and scientific services sectors and other fields, and

WHEREAS, the proposed Micro-Credential consists of required courses for Professional Studies majors and could boost enrollment in these courses, 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 Professional Skills for the Workplace**.

The Proposal approved by the Faculty Senate by unanimous consent on 12/4/2020.

Submitted by Curriculum and Academic Planning Committee (CAP), November 13, 2020

The Proposal approved by CAP on November 13, 2020

[CAP Membership]

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

Professional Skills for the Workplace Micro-Credential - Overview

School of Professional Studies

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 Micro-Credential entitled "Professional Skills for the Workplace" designed to help workers needing to upgrade their skills and students preparing to enter the workforce gain basic knowledge of management and marketing to help them secure and succeed in positions in the emerging economy. The Micro will consist of one course in management and one in marketing, which together will give students a theoretical and practical introduction to how economic enterprises conduct their internal operations and promote the goods or services they offer.

Objectives

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

- Knowledge and understanding of the fundamentals of supervision: planning, organizing, staffing, recruiting, managing, motivating, analyzing problems, and decision making for multicultural enterprises.
- Knowledge and understanding of marketing fundamentals: The 4Ps -- product, price, place, and promotion -- and their interrelationships, marketing research, consumer and environmental analysis, international marketing, marketing management, responsible marketing practices and soft skills development through team collaboration.
- Awareness of marketing and supervision 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.
- 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 Professional Skills for the Workplace 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. The program will therefore 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, including as an adjunct for the SPS before moving into his current position.

Proposal for a Micro-Credential Professional Skills for the Workplace

School of Professional Studies

November 5, 2020

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 two-course, eight credit Micro-Credential that will equip workers needing to upgrade their skills with a working knowledge of how economic enterprises manage their internal operations and market the goods or services they offer. 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.¹ 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

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

Professional Skills for the Workplace Micro-Credential Proposal

of 2024.² 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,"³ with general and operations managers and sales representatives promising better than average future job growth potential.⁴ Furthermore, as noted above, even production-level employees are coming 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 make the most of.

C. Resources

The courses that will make up this Micro-Credential are currently offered by the School of Professional Studies in Spring semesters as part of the program's core curriculum. The classes, which are being taught by full-time SPS faculty and staff members, 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 serving as the Professional Studies program's chair. 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 non-matriculated 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 "Professional Skills for the Workplace" is not the title of any registered degree or certificate program.

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.

² <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..

³ https://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/ecopro_09012020.htm Accessed 10/7/20.

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

Professional Skills for the Workplace Micro-Credential Proposal

F. Endorsements

This proposal 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.

In addition, the proposal received letters of endorsement from four associates of Nora Bassett:

- Anthony James, Senior Director, New York City Transit Department of Subways says "In my role I see hundreds of employees come through our division each year. Getting the right training is the key to success. The Marketing for Professionals and the Supervisory course are both good foundation courses for any employee."
- Eva Waldon, an unemployed worker who "always worked entry level jobs" and does "not expect to return to my company," feels "the two courses ... would be good to add to my resume." She endorses the Supervision class because "in the past I have had jobs where I supervised my team. My title was not supervisor but my boss would ask me to help out. I wasn't really taught how to handle things" so "it was hard for me to manage other people. Communication was difficult. I never knew exactly what was expected from me. This course" includes "skills that would be good to have in any company." She also endorses the Marketing course because "the employees that can help a business change with the times and grow are the employees that will keep their job."
- Haveluck Hall, retired Superintendent of the MTA NYC Transit Department of Subways, comments that "Every business is looking to improve ... I cannot think of a more efficient or effective way to do so, than to improve the skillset of their workforce. These two courses do exactly that at a minimal cost ... The techniques" students will "learn are universal," and "without these courses, packaged the way they are, it would be very difficult for these students to acquire these skills all at once."
- Monique Edwards, Senior Business Improvement Specialist comments that, "All working professionals will benefit" from the program since "I have taken similar courses and [they] impacted my work by enhancing my knowledge ... which helped [me] to provide informed contributions to my business unit." She says the program will provide the "key skills required to succeed" in "this challenging economic climate."

This proposal has also been reviewed and endorsed by the nine members of the School of Professional Study's Faculty Advisory Committee on November 5, 2020. The vote was 8 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions, with one vote submitted by email and one member of the committee not present.

G. Additional Materials

Following is draft catalog copy for the Micro-Credential.

Professional Skills for the Workplace Micro-Credential

Sponsoring school: Professional Studies

The Professional Skills for the Workplace Micro-Credential conveys a basic knowledge of how economic enterprises manage their internal operations and market the goods or services they offer. It is designed to help students preparing to enter the workforce and workers needing to upgrade their skills secure and succeed in positions in the emerging economy. It consists of one course in management and one in marketing. Both focus on the applicability of theoretical knowledge to practical situations encountered in the workplace. 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:

PS3330	Professional Supervision	4 credits
PS3430	Marketing 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 the fundamentals of supervision: planning, organizing, staffing, recruiting, managing, motivating, analyzing problems, and decision making for multicultural enterprises.
- Knowledge and understanding of marketing fundamentals: The 4Ps -- product, price, place, and promotion -- and their interrelationships, marketing research, consumer and environmental analysis, international marketing, marketing management, responsible marketing practices and soft skills development through team collaboration.
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- 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.
- 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.