

## **Graduate Showcase Proposal**

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### *Proposal:*

As part of our Statistics and Measurement graduate course, our capstone assignment entailed working with an on-campus initiative on two facets of the assessment cycle. We chose to work with James Madison University's Dux Leadership Center because of a new visionary program for student learning. We consulted with Michael McCleve, Associate Director of Leadership, and Marc Lonnet, Leadership Program Specialist, at the Dux Leadership Center throughout the semester. After first understanding the major goals of the program, we mutually agreed to focus on the first two facets of the assessment cycle: writing learning objectives and mapping objectives to the program.

The Dux Leadership Center at James Madison University (JMU) created On the Road for Change Spring Break Experience to provide undergraduate students an opportunity to develop leadership and ethical reasoning skills in a creative, interactive way. In the context of a spring break service experience, this program challenges students to apply leadership and ethical reasoning outside the classroom. The eight-week experience engages students in the Student Leadership Challenge (SLC), developed by James Kouzes and Barry Posner, and JMU's Eight Key Questions (8KQ) established by the Madison Collaborative.

This pilot spring break experience commenced at the beginning of the 2017 spring semester with a series of six pre-trip workshops. During each workshop, two Break Leaders facilitate learning opportunities for the sixteen participants to discover one of the five practices of exemplary leadership derived from the SLC. Madison Collaborative will use the workshops to help participants learn how to identify an ethical dilemma and apply the 8KQ as they reason through the situation. In addition to the workshop series, participants will be put into pairs and charged with the responsibility to plan a half-day service experience for the rest of the group while on the trip. Each participant's ethical reasoning will be put to the test during several "mock" ethical dilemmas, offering an opportunity to utilize the Eight Key Questions they studied.

On the Road for Change Spring Break Experience breaks new ground, as the program attempts to move students toward behavior change in their leadership abilities and ethical reasoning. The Dux Leadership Center desired a way to measure participants' learning and therefore success of the program. They sought to determine why the program was either a success or a failure. If the program proved to be efficacious, the Dux Leadership Center wanted a clear, tangible way to communicate why their program resulted in participants' behavior change. This is where the assessment cycle is paramount. As a team, we delivered a user-friendly assessment portfolio to the Dux Leadership Center with five measurable, specific learning objectives, mapped each learning objective to programmatic learning opportunities, and formative and summative assessment.

### *Project's contribution or relevance to its discipline:*

In higher education, assessment is used to intentionally develop, implement, and modify programs. Assessment results highlight program effectiveness, or lack thereof. This gives

facilitators the chance to improve components of the program in order to increase student learning (Meixner, 2016). Assessment also creates a sense of accountability offering methods to justify the value of a program, especially with limited time and resources. Therefore, we chose to focus our efforts on the core of assessment by developing On the Road for Change's learning objectives. Additionally we mapped program components to each learning objective in order to effectively facilitate student learning. In essence, we contributed an exceptional model for developing program assessment to On the Road for Change, the Dux Leadership Center, and Student Affairs and University Planning division at JMU.