

A BLACK COLLEGE OPENS DOORS FOR JOB-SEEKING STUDENTS AND GRADUATES

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This article describes a five-year program, The Advanced Institutional Development Program (AIDP), now in its third year of operation at Grambling State University in Louisiana. The program provides career options for students that may be independent of major and minor fields. Initial funds were provided under Title III of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended.

This program was inspired by the Career Development Movement which has become the center of a "new academic revolution" under way at traditionally black Grambling State University located in rural north-central Louisiana. Not only does this career emphasis address itself to the present unemployment problems among young black men and women, but it also diminishes the survival

threat of an institution which has tried for eight decades to relate its educational programs to the nation's crucial needs.

Careers for minority students have been clearly documented in the *Black Collegian*, the national magazine of black college students. Leonard Hayes writes that a recent study conducted by the Institute for Services to Education, a Washington-based educational research firm, indicated that black colleges are leading most four-year institutions in preparing students for entry and success in numerous fields such as health sciences, engineering, technical, business, industry, and legal endeavors (*Black Collegian*, vol. 8, no. 1, p. 55). Moreover, Hayes states that America needs to assure educational opportunities for black Americans by declaring all traditionally black colleges as national educational

resources to be enhanced and preserved.

Kent G. Mommsen's "Black PhDs in the Marketplace: Supply, Demand and Price," had projected that careers for the 1980s will be mainly concerned with engineering, science, environmental planning, and administration (*The Journal of Higher Education*, vol. 45, no. 4, p. 253-267). Grambling State University has accepted this challenge as a sure bet for employment. Our students are being prepared accordingly.

Since 1973, Grambling State University (GSU) has received grants to support our career-development movement. The first grants received were federally-funded under Title IV-D of the Higher Education Act. Then followed other federal grants which were provided under Title III of the Higher Education Act of 1965,

as amended. An industry cluster composed of nine leading industries, after assessing the on-going career development thrust at GSU, added a new dimension of internships with full financial support. Support from these industrial giants—Ford Motor Company, Hughes Aircraft Company, International Business Machines (IBM), Kroger Company, North American Rockwell Corporation, Northern Illinois Gas Company, Olinkraft, Inc., Owens-Illinois, Inc., Sanders Associates, and the Plans for Progress Corporation—unlike that received from competitive federal grants, gives the impression of permanence and relevance. As a result, at any point in the academic year or summer, one may find GSU students serving as apprentices in industries and businesses all over America. In turn, as a result of their role as an assisting agency for the career development movement in our institution, the cluster members are assured employees who have been prepared by training and experience for their particular needs.

Rationale

The rapid rate of change in requirements and the enormous expectations in the world of work made it imperative that Grambling State University exert continuous effort to effect whatever changes are necessary in its curriculum to make its graduates maximally employable. At the time this program was designed, the number of students who, after graduation, were underemployed or unemployed was considered too high. Many students, especially those who were successful in campus interview situations but were not employed after their on-site interviews, reported to university personnel that their lack of job experience was the most consistent reason which employers gave for not hiring them.

Prior to 1977, Grambling State University provided its students with job-related skills through courses in

major and minor fields. Students who wished to develop additional skills enrolled in elective courses. At that time a faculty-student committee reviewed a collection of job descriptions and concluded that courses, per se, were not tailored to individual jobs, nor should they be. Nevertheless, Grambling State University could and should provide its students with opportunities to develop the personal qualities looked for by employers as well as additional job-related skills.

In consequence of these analyses, certain areas of critical job needs coming up over the next five to ten years were identified. Selected academic departments were identified. Courses were modified, and in collaboration with other departments, additional job-related experiences for students were provided without regard for their majors and minors. With the help of consultants provided by the Grambling State University/ Industry Cluster, appropriate curricular experiences were structured to provide job-related experiences for students in addition to those provided by major or minor field programs.

Purpose/Objectives/Projected Outcomes

The general aim of the Advanced Institutional Development Program (AIDP) is to increase the employability of students who graduate from Grambling State University. The five-year goal is to restructure certain undergraduate programs so that they will provide students with a strong base of career-related knowledge and attitudes. In addition, it is the strategy of the program to enlist the support of sufficient employers to provide additional career-related experiences that will facilitate the employment of GSU graduates in emerging as well as in existing professions and career fields.

Program

The program, administered through the Office of Cooperative Education, is a curricular offering of the College of Business and Applied Programs. Its staff consists of a director, a curriculum analyst/field representative, a secretary, and three coordinators who are faculty members of the Colleges of Arts and Sciences, Education, and Business and Applied Programs, respectively.

AIDP was begun in the fall of 1977. During the pre-registration faculty conference the program director and staff conducted a series of one-hour informational sessions. The primary purpose of the sessions was to provide students, faculty, administration, and alumni with more information about the program. Information was made available to area and community business leaders and their staffs. Radio and television announcements, newsletters and brochures produced by the departments of journalism and graphic arts were sent out.

During the month of September the coordinators from the colleges worked very closely with teachers of the basic sophomore-level courses in their respective colleges to identify students as potential enrollees. In the College of Education the basic course used was *Introduction to Education* (ED 200); in the College of Arts and Sciences, *Advanced Composition* (Eng 210); and in the College of Business and Applied Programs, *Professional Development* (GB 200). Eligible students were selected from the three colleges in proportion to the number of participating departments.

Eligibility requirements for regular college students are as follows: (1) the student must be in good standing academically and socially with the University, and (2) the student must have completed a minimum of thirty credit-hours which will qualify him as a sophomore at the University.

The enrollment for the 1977-78 academic year consisted of students distributed among the three colleges and the Division of General Studies as follows:

	Fall 1977	Spring 1978
College of Arts and Sciences	70	82
College of Education	36	49
College of Business and Applied Programs	130	142
Division of General Studies	0	1

Subsequent to enrollment, students identified one or more of the targeted career areas. They were to prepare for those areas in which they wished to seek special training.

The curriculum analyst began the process of curriculum revision during the month of September. His first task was that of ranking the career areas for which instructional packets were to be specifically designed. The frequency of student requests at the time of their enrollment was reconciled with the information provided by the survey. The five most popular career areas were targeted for development during the first year. Career areas selected were: cartography, hotel/motel administration, fashion designing, urban-city planning, and information systems. After five priority career areas were agreed upon, the curriculum analyst and coordinators accepted responsibility for designing an instructional model for each career area.

Because many job descriptions require skills drawn from the curricula of several departments, the content of the models was multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary. Each model was designed to develop entry-level skills for one job within a designated career area. An instructional model contains: (1) some basic understanding about jobs that are derived from academic disciplines; (2) a list of simulated tasks

that appear in job descriptions, and (3) the identification of hands-on experiences that can be provided at the University.

The first phase of an enrollee's program was designed to provide theoretical exposure to the world of work. Students were enrolled for training in *Business and Economic Understandings and Interpersonal Relationships Skills*. These training experiences (referred to as "seminars") met for 18 clock hours each,

a total of 36 clock hours. Upon successful completion of both seminars, a student earned two semester hours credit recorded on his official transcript as General Business 230, *Orientation to the World of Work*. During 1977-78, a total of 249 students completed the seminars.

The seminars, in which students enrolled concurrently with their regular class work, were conducted according to the topical outline which appears in Figure 1.

Figure 1

GB 230, *Orientation to the World of Work*, 2 credit hours
The Seminar on Business and Economic Understanding

- I. The Economic Environment of Business
 - A. Alternative Economic Systems
 - B. The American Modified "Capitalistic System"
- II. Our Value System
 - A. Positive Viewpoints
 - B. Negative Viewpoints
 - C. The Necessity for Compromise
- III. The Role and Scope of Business Ethics
 - A. Is Business Ethical?
 - B. Aids to Ethics
- IV. The Relationship of Business, Government and Unions
 - A. Government Business Interaction
 - B. Business Minorities
 - C. Social Responsibilities of Business
 - D. The Role of Unions and Their Effect on Business
- V. Human Relations and Its Significance in Employment
 - A. Human, Physical and Financial Resources in Business
 - B. A Need for Career Awareness and Preparation for Business
- VI. The Future of Business in America
 - A. The Need for a Steady Flow of Human Resources
 - B. Employee Development and Management Development Programs

The Seminar on Interpersonal Relationship Skills

- I. Needs as a Consideration in Interpersonal Relations
 - A. Physiology, Security and Safety, Social, Ego, and Self-Actualizing Needs
- II. In Search of Self
 - A. The Four Primary Levels in Human Relations
 - B. A Look at Personality, Character and Inner Resources
 - C. Self-control
 - D. Relationships with the Opposite Sex and with Different Ethnic Groups
- III. Communication as a Key to Good Interpersonal Relationships
 - A. Four Steps in the Communication Process
 - B. One-Way, Two-Way Communication
 - C. Directions: Giving and Following
 - D. Explorations of Body Language
- IV. Communication in Employment Relationships
 - A. Responding to Dissatisfaction
 - B. Responding with Constructive Criticism
 - C. Responding to Administrative Dilemmas
 - D. Responding to Inappropriate Communication
 - E. Accepting Compliments
 - F. Dealing with an Angry Person

During Spring 1978, 16 students were enrolled for the second phase of the program. At that time, the enrollees were given intensive training for job skills considered essential in designated entry-level employment.

Each enrollee was required to spend at least 27 clock hours in training sessions scheduled for evenings or weekends, during which time he was to complete the assignments prescribed by an instructional model. These models, prepared by faculty representatives of the academic disciplines from which the subject matters were drawn, had been developed according to the following general outline (Figure II).

Figure II

- Instructional Model**
- I. Rationale
 - II. Objectives
 - III. Pre-Assessment
 - IV. Enabling Activities
 - A. Basic Concepts
 - B. Simulations
 - C. Hands-on Experience
 - V. Post-Assessment
 - VI. Bibliography
 - VII. Appendix
 - A. Supporting University Courses
 - B. Supervisory Personnel
 1. Basic Concepts and Simulations
 2. Hands-on Experience

After successful completion of an instructional model, a student, upon recommendation from his adviser, could enroll for the third phase of the training experience.

Pre-employment placement for work experience constitutes the third and final phase of the program. The placement experience could take any one of four forms: (1) Pre-employment training with a potential employer as is done in the traditional cooperative education program; (2) internship field experience with an employer; (3) voluntary on-site services for a business, industrial firm or com-

munity agency, or (4) contract-for-pay services supervised by a staff member of the career-oriented program.

A student's level of performance during the "hands-on" aspect of the instructional model is a much more influential factor in determining his readiness for placement than is his classification. The director, upon the recommendation of a college coordinator, decides upon a student's eligibility. By Spring 1979 there were only 23 students who met eligibility criteria at the end of the first year. They were placed for voluntary on-site services. Twenty students who had trained using the instructional model on cartography were placed with T.D. Denmon and Associates (land developers) in Monroe, Louisiana, and three students who had trained using the information systems instructional model were placed in the University Computer Center.

At the close of the Spring 1979 semester the 23 students, having successfully completed the prescribed program, were awarded proficiency certificates attesting entry-level skills considered essential for cartographic aides and key-punch operators.

Summary

New students have been enrolled in the program during each of the four semesters since Fall 1977. Those students who made satisfactory progress have followed the sequence described above.

After five semesters, 30 students have received proficiency certificates. Fiscal management trainees have received cooperative education-type placement with Jim Walters Corporation, Monroe, Louisiana; Union Parish Tax Assessor's Office, Farmerville, Louisiana; and the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, Missouri. A student who trained in fashion designing was placed at the Collegiate Shoppe at Grambling on a contract-for-pay assignment. Other trainees gained job experience for voluntary service by accepting

assignments in the University Computer Center and Jones Brothers Restaurant of Grambling. They were trainees who had used the information systems model and the hotel/motel administration model, respectively. Two hundred fifty-six students have successfully completed the seminars, and 262 students are currently involved in intensified job-related training using the instructional models previously named as well as training models for entry-level jobs in the areas of athletic training, environmental management and stage-theatre technology.

Follow-up studies will be initiated in September 1980, at which time the staff expects the number of program alumni who have sought employment to be large enough to constitute a meaningful sample.

When the program's achievements during its first two years are presented in the context of the original evaluation plan, its success is readily apparent. Because of its accomplishments the program is now viewed by the Grambling State University community as a viable vehicle for the expansion of career options for students.

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