Jobs PLUS

Assessment Plan

Prepared by:
Christopher J. Budnick, M.A.
Graduate Assistant for Assessment and Research
Jobs PLUS
Northern Illinois University

&

Rushika De Bruin, B.A.
Graduate Intern
Jobs PLUS
Northern Illinois University

Program Director
Chad Glover
Jobs PLUS
Northern Illinois University
(815) 753-2056
cglover@niu.edu
1. History and Context

Jobs PLUS was designed and founded by NIU staff member Chad Glover in the aftermath of the university’s Bold Futures Workshops. In 2013-14, NIU President Doug Baker launched the Bold Futures Workshops to provide an opportunity for stakeholders to put forward ideas to help the university realize its mission and contribute to the goal of student career success.

During the Bold Futures Workshops, Glover utilized innovation research to identify ways to supplement and enhance the experiences students were having in college with a focus on access and affordability. Jobs PLUS emerged from this work and is designed to integrate NIU into the portion of student’s life that contains their work experience and create a new type of partnership with the employer community; including the part of that community important to students but often isolated from higher education.

The first Jobs PLUS professional development events were hosted in the Fall of 2015. Jobs PLUS events initially recruited on-campus interns who were part of the On-Campus Internship Program and students completing the Passport requirement in the College of Business. As the program was developing and maturing, the director observed a clear need and immediate opportunity to solicit involvement from additional university programs, on-campus, and off-campus employers. Program participation has continually expanded since that first semester.

In the spring of 2016 the decision was made to connect Jobs PLUS to the NIU PLUS initiative. Jobs PLUS joined Academics PLUS and Engage PLUS to become one of the three components composing NIU PLUS.

Professional development events are the mechanism to accomplish the integration envisioned in the design of Jobs PLUS. Hosted throughout the semester, these events are open and free for any NIU student to attend. If a student’s employer partners with Jobs PLUS, the student is eligible to attend Jobs PLUS events on their paid work time. Jobs PLUS events are facilitated by a mix of faculty, staff, alumni, and employer partners who have expertise in a given area.

The focus of Jobs PLUS events is to build core, transferrable skills that are important across disciplines and careers like leadership, workplace communication, teamwork, interpersonal skills, and ethical decision making. An empirically-based competency model is currently under development that will guide the selection of Jobs PLUS events in future semesters.

The program as it stands today is a result of the initial design and development coupled with the input and contributions of many NIU faculty, staff, alumni, employers, and interested parties.
2. Mission, Goals and Objectives

Mission Statement

Many college students have to work while they are in school. The mission of Jobs PLUS is to shift the paradigm from competition with the work experiences students have to integration with them. The mechanism for this integration are professional development events organized and hosted by NIU. Jobs PLUS events are open to all students. If a student’s employer is part of the Jobs PLUS network, the student is eligible to attend some Jobs PLUS events on their paid work time. Jobs PLUS supports the NIU PLUS initiative by providing unique and recurring career and professional development opportunities for students. The end goal is to create a competitive advantage for NIU students in the job market, and for the university in the recruitment and retention of students.

Unit Goals and Objectives

GOAL 1: Jobs PLUS will manage and coordinate professional development events that develop undergraduate students’ transferable (i.e., soft) employment skills.

    Objective 1.1: Jobs PLUS will collaborate with various university departments to design, implement, and continuously evaluate an empirically-developed competency model that will guide the selection of topics for Jobs PLUS events.

    Objective 1.2: Jobs PLUS will collaborate with various parties on and off campus to host professional development events each semester.

    Objective 1.3: Jobs PLUS will collaborate with various university departments and programs to maximize the number of students who attend Jobs PLUS events.

GOAL 2: Jobs PLUS will track student involvement and satisfaction with Jobs PLUS events.

    Objective 2.1: Jobs PLUS will maintain databases to record student event registration and attendance.

    Objective 2.2: Jobs PLUS will utilize tools to evaluate student satisfaction with the program.

GOAL 3: Jobs PLUS will seek to integrate the program into the work experiences of students by developing and tracking employer relationships on and off campus. An employer relationship is defined as an employer that allows students who work for them to attend Jobs PLUS events on their paid work time.

    Objective 3.1: Jobs PLUS will develop on and off campus partnerships and strategies to recruit and maximize the number of employers in the program.
Objective 3.2: Jobs PLUS will maintain databases to track employer involvement in and satisfaction with the program.

Goal 4: Jobs PLUS will seek to integrate as much NIU alumni and community involvement in the program as possible.

Objective 4.1 Jobs PLUS will work with partners to identify alumni to serve as facilitators of Jobs PLUS events, alumni who can help connect the program to employer opportunities, and opportunities for alumni to contribute in other ways.

Objective 4.2 Jobs PLUS will work with partners to identify opportunities for community involvement and support of the program.
3. Assessment Methods

Explanation of Assessment Methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Method</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>When Data Will be Collected</th>
<th>Person Responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual Assessment Update Report</td>
<td>An authentic assessment of the quality of program activities conducted over the past year. The program will annually report on data collection, analysis, and use of results for program assessments.</td>
<td>The program is at least the proficient level in all areas.</td>
<td>Data is collected in the spring; report written in summer.</td>
<td>Jobs PLUS Director; Graduate Assistant for Assessment and Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jobs PLUS Student Interest Survey</td>
<td>An assessment of student knowledge and interest in Jobs PLUS and the benefits they could gain. Additionally, it also includes an assessment of employment status and employer interest in the program.</td>
<td>Students should show a substantial level (greater than the median) of interest in Jobs PLUS.</td>
<td>Data will be collected in waves, starting from social clubs on campus and moving on to larger campus organizations.</td>
<td>Jobs PLUS Director; Graduate Assistant for Assessment and Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment Method</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Assessment-Level Target</td>
<td>When Data Will be Collected</td>
<td>Person Responsible</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Development Event Evaluation</td>
<td>An assessment of student satisfaction with the professional development event attended. The event characteristics, along with the facilitator, will be evaluated for clarity, convenience, and other aspects. It will also assess applicability of the skills attained, along with any suggestions for future sessions.</td>
<td>All workshops should have an average rating of good (4 out of 5) at a minimum. Additionally, students should be able to understand the information presented and apply the skills acquired.</td>
<td>Data will be collected after every professional development event. Aggregated data is collected in the spring; report written in summer.</td>
<td>Jobs PLUS Director; Graduate Assistant for Assessment and Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jobs PLUS Organization Database</td>
<td>A complete database of all organizations involved with Jobs PLUS, both currently active and inactive.</td>
<td>The program should increase the number of organizations involved, and continue to grow as more community members join.</td>
<td>Data will be collected in waves, updating the database periodically, as organizations join, or change their membership status.</td>
<td>Graduate Assistant for Assessment and Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment Method</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Assessment-Level Target (^a)</td>
<td>When Data Will be Collected</td>
<td>Person Responsible</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Development Learning Assessment</td>
<td>Parallel forms of a test pertaining to the event topic will be provided to students before they attend the event, and after they complete the event. This will help us assess how much knowledge the students have gained from the attended event.</td>
<td>Students should score higher on the assessment taken at the end of the event, compared to the beginning of the event.</td>
<td>Data will be collected before the event begins, and after the event ends.</td>
<td>Graduate Assistant for Assessment and Research</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Note. \(^a\) Assessment-level target is the level of performance the unit hopes to see on the assessment (e.g., 85% percent of participants demonstrate X, Y, and Z).*
### Assessment Methods-by-Outcomes Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Method</th>
<th>Goal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual Assessment Update Report</td>
<td>1. Manage professional development events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs PLUS Student Interest Survey</td>
<td>F, I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development Event Evaluation</td>
<td>S, D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs PLUS Organization Database</td>
<td>F, D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development Learning Assessment</td>
<td>S, I</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*Note. F=formative assessment, S=summative assessment, D=direct assessment, and I=indirect assessment*