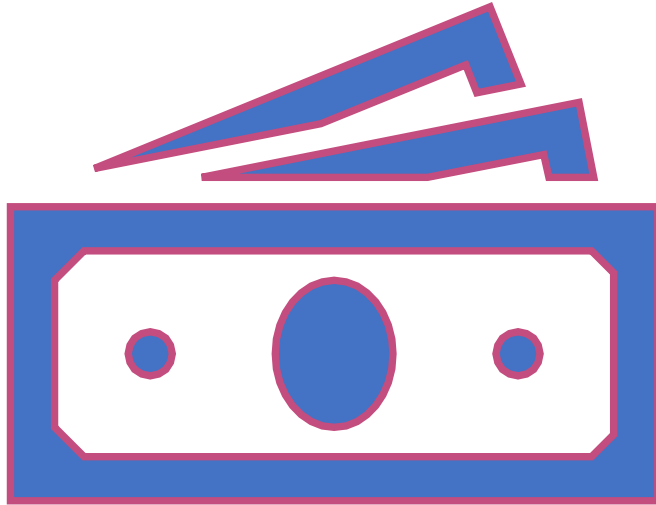

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR A CHANGING WORLD: MODIFYING HDFS CURRICULA TO ATTRACT, SUPPORT, AND PREPARE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS



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Janet Melnick, Robin Yaure, Hobart (Bo) Cleveland

DEFINING THE PROBLEM

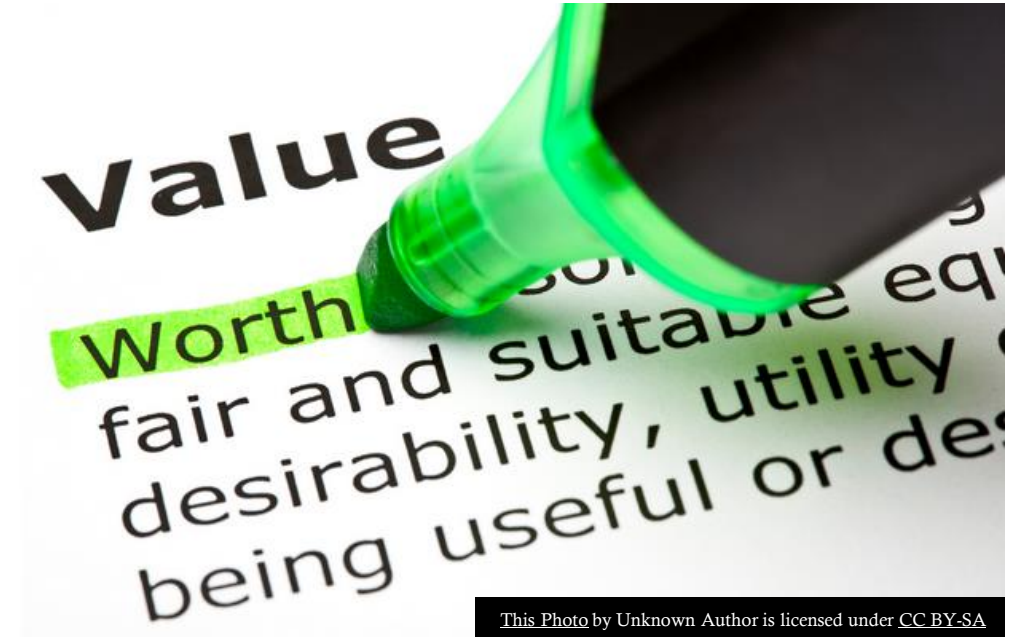


- **Enrollment Considerations**
 - **Cost of Higher Ed + Student Debt Crisis** = policy reform & institutional accountability?
 - **Value: student debt + earning potential**
 - Of those who hold bachelor's degrees, the lowest earners are those in careers frequently occupied by HDFs graduates (Carnevale, Strohl, & Melton, 2013).
-

VALUE

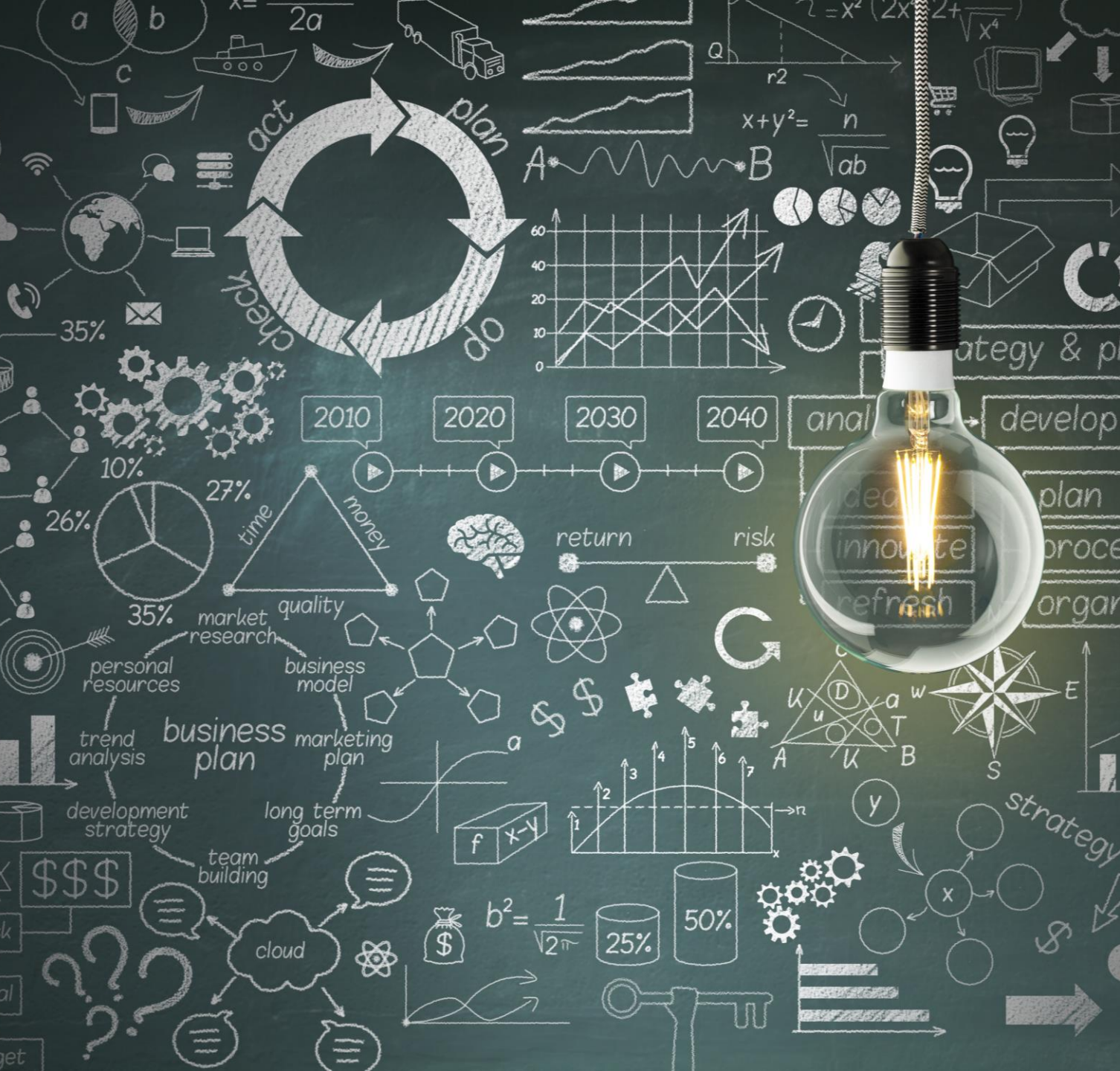
How does HDFS training promote...?

- Successful transition to the **workforce** (in well-paid positions)
- Successful transition to **higher level degrees/education**
 - Preparedness: Skills + Knowledge
 - Decrease time to degree



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To increase value we propose the need to focus on
KNOWLEDGE and SKILLS



OUR PROCESS

- (1) Questions
- (2) Data
- (3) Recommendations / Vision
- (4) Implementation:
 - (1) Consider alignment with university and college priorities
 - (2) Plan – timing/order/strategy
 - (3) Resource Identification & Allocation (e.g., Time, \$, expertise)

MOVING BEYOND: "WHAT IS HDFS?"

What is HDFS?



- **Who** do we serve?
 - **How** do they find us?
 - **Why** do they like us?
 - **What** do we uniquely offer?
(*value*)
 - **How** should/could we evolve?
-

FOCUS GROUPS

- **Goal:** Hear from undergraduates; inform survey creation
- 8 focus groups conducted across 5 campuses
- **Questions:**
 - how students select majors/minors,
 - HDFS reputation and process,
 - how students describe HDFS, and,...
 - Careers, discovery & future directions

Brief Takeaways:

Students like...

- Degree breadth & flexibility; opportunity to explore
- The prospect of more structured guidance (towards careers), but not more rigid requirements...
- Opportunities for personal growth & becoming a “better person”

Students describe HDFS...

- With an emphasis on “helping”
 - But, struggle to describe/explain/distinguish from psych (& other social sciences)
-

STUDENT SURVEY (SPRING 2019)

- **Qualtrics Survey -1459 responses:**
 - HDFS majors (20%)
 - In HDFS courses, but not HDFS majors –or- undecided (80%)
 - 1st or 2nd year students (68%)
- **Questions:**
 - How/when chose major/minor and why
 - Ideas about HDFS visibility, perceived status, and marketing;
 - What like/dislike about major;
 - Ideas about how to improve major (make more desirable) etc.



Brief Takeaways:

- HDFS and non-HDFS students look similar
- Lack of understanding about HDFS
- HDFS majors select major later
- Strong interest in options to specialize/clearer pathways to careers
- Feelings about internship and rigor differ by major status
- Differences across groups with regard to how HDFS fits with careers
 - HDFS majors less clear (than expected) about how HDFS major aligns with government, non-profit, or advocacy work
 - Non-HDFS majors more clear (than HDFS majors) about how HDFS major aligns with education and medical-oriented careers



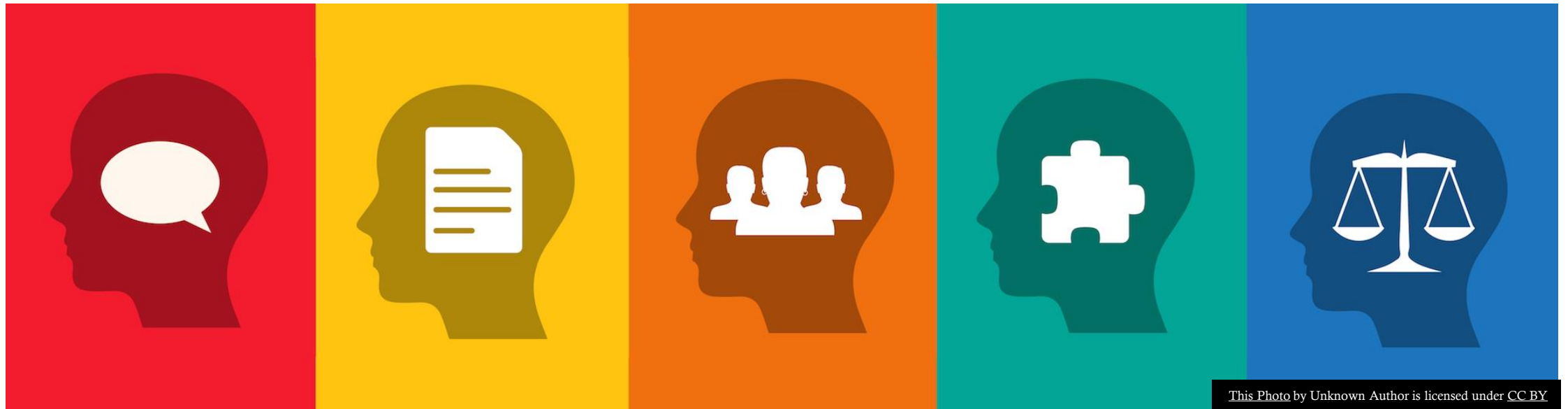
INTERNSHIP SUPERVISOR SURVEY

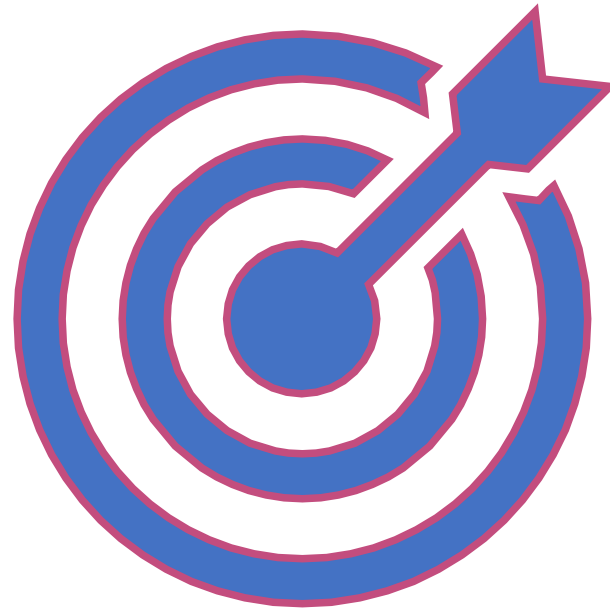
- Sent to ~500 internship supervisors who supervised HDFS interns over past 3 years
- 175 respondents
- **Questions:**
 - **skills** to be successful in workplace;
 - **experiences** they feel are meaningful when they see on resumes (e.g., internships, job shadows, volunteer experiences);
 - how HDFS students “measure up”



Brief Takeaways:

- **Important skills:** group facilitation; ability to manage a caseload; ability to find & apply evidence based information to inform practice; ability to gather data to assess programs and services; communication skills (written and spoken); interpersonal relationships; work ethic
- Would find “specializations” helpful
- Supportive of wide variety of hands on learning experiences





A STRATEGIC VISION

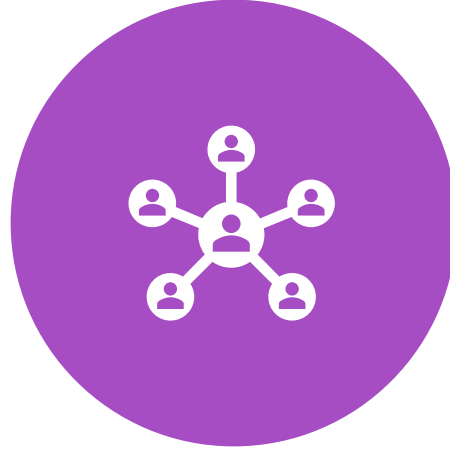
THEMATIC TRANSFORMATIONS



**CREATE AND HIGHLIGHT
PATHWAYS TO CAREERS**

+

**SCAFFOLD CAREER
EXPLORATION &
DEVELOPMENT ACROSS
CURRICULUM**

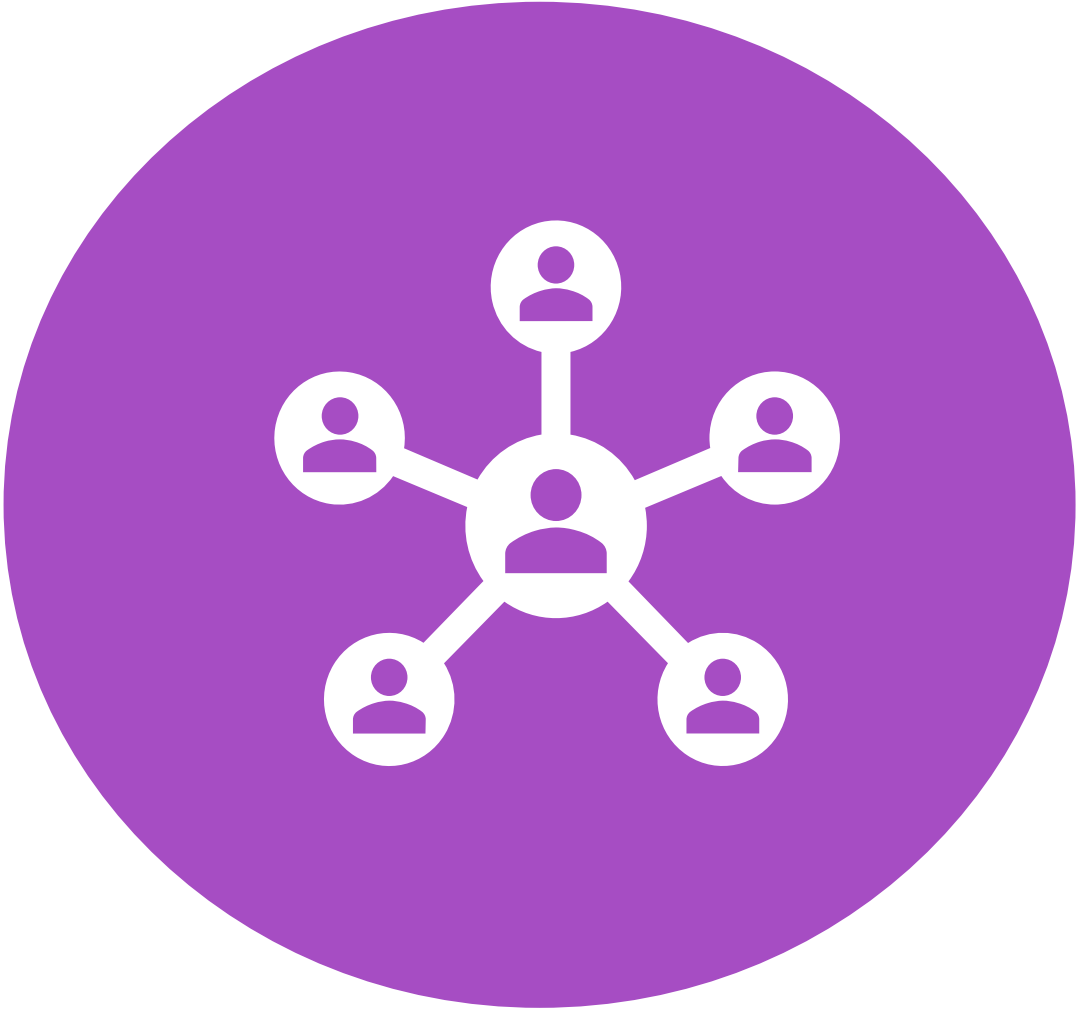


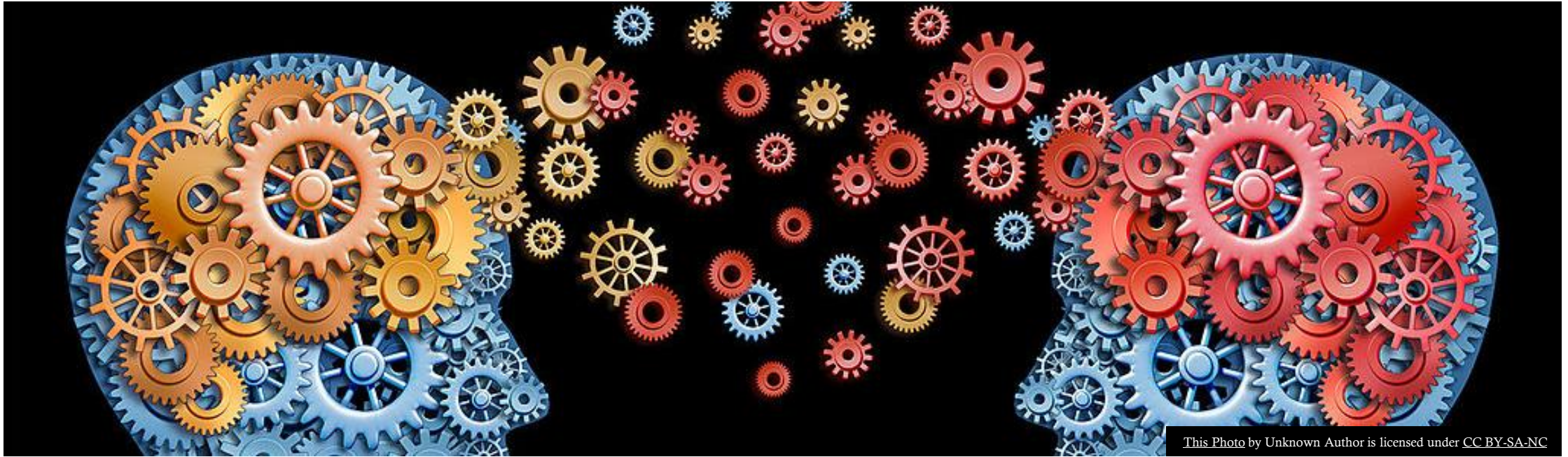
**BECOME THE
“ENGAGED”
SOCIAL SCIENCE MAJOR**



**REDUCE PRESCRIPTIVENESS
+
INCREASING STRUCTURED
GUIDANCE**

LET'S DISCUSS....





KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Our process brought us full circle back to an emphasis on
(perceived and actual) DEGREE VALUE

→ focus KNOWLEDGE and SKILLS

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Questions:


- What is the non-negotiable knowledge that should be at the core of any HDFS undergraduate curriculum?
- What are the skills every HDFS graduate should have?...
- What are the applicable, high value skills that should define areas of specialization and can help students transition to (and advance in) the workforce?




KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Our Steps/On Horizon:

Creation of learning modules focused on skills (e.g. writing, finding and applying quality information)



Exploring how to differentiate between skills everyone needs and skills that are more specialized for those pursuing specific paths



Creation of 1-credit special topic offerings



Evolving our undergraduate stats/methods courses – more applied and focused on what is most relevant to human service work



CONNECTING WITH CAREERS

Students should be guided to think about and explore careers early; starting early will allow them greater opportunity to build skills, knowledge, and structure their courses & hands-on experiences to align with longer term goals.

*Should also help with marketing.

CONNECTING WITH CAREERS

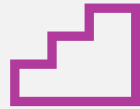
Questions:

- How to encourage early career exploration (without boxing in)?
 - Pros/cons of generalist vs. specialized pathways?
 - What careers should we emphasize?
 - How do we best prepare students for specific careers (*without eliminating the attractive breadth and exploration*)?
 - What adds value? (e.g. positively impacts employability, earning potential, or prepares/eases transition to additional education)
-



CONNECTING WITH CAREERS

Our Steps/On Horizon:



“Helping People 101” (Introduce Ways of Helping/Careers early + General Education Innovation and Degree Marketing)



Still exploring how to create and manage opportunities for specialization. Finding many challenges, opportunities, and considerations...

Graduate program partnerships (e.g. MSW, MPH)

Undergraduate program accreditations

Mini-credentials?

Embedded certifications?



ENGAGED LEARNING

Learning should be happening within and outside the classroom, across undergraduate journey.

Engaged learning should facilitate growth in knowledge, development of skills, and opportunities to explore.

ENGAGED LEARNING

Questions:

- What are the experiences, beyond traditional internships, that can help students explore careers, build knowledge, and develop and move towards skill mastery?
- How can we support instructors to integrate these kind of non-traditional experiences into curriculum?
- What are the challenges or drawbacks with integrating these kind of experiences/expectations –
 - For faculty? For students?



ENGAGED LEARNING:

Our Steps/ On Horizon:

Connecting Beyond the Classroom:

- Career panels and career and sight highlights (lesson/videos)
- Informational interviews (+ building networking skills)

Offsite/experiential offerings:

- 200/Gen Ed Level: Site visits, service-learning, certifications (e.g. MHFA)
- 400/Upper Level: Site visits, organizational partnerships, conference participation

Internship alternatives & flexibility

New courses:

- Remote service delivery (skill focused)
- Resilient Adaptation (project-based)

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Responsive Adaptation & Timely opportunities
 - Strategic partnerships
 - Leveraging resources: technology & expertise
-