

Chapter 58

Ernst & Young Leadership and Professional Development Center: Accounting Designed for Leaders

Jennifer Butler Ellis

Northern Illinois University, USA

Timothy D. West

Northern Illinois University, USA

Angela Grimaldi

Northern Illinois University, USA

Gerald Root

Northern Illinois University, USA

ABSTRACT

This case highlights a unique program for students pursuing a graduate degree in accounting. The program's mission is to prepare students to be effective leaders and communicators in their careers. To accomplish this mission, the program has developed a Leadership and Professional Development Center (LPDC) that uses physical, virtual, and external space to support programmatic goals through cross-disciplinary collaboration. The LPDC houses trained consultants who provide services such as feedback on written documents, mock interviews, presentation assessment, and self-awareness development. The LPDC also hosts workshops on a variety of leadership and professional development topics. Furthermore, consultants partner with faculty and professionals to provide instruction and experiential learning inside and outside the classroom. The goal of this chapter is to highlight how cross-disciplinary partnerships promote learning in physical, virtual, and external spaces. Recommendations for navigating and utilizing cross-disciplinary collaborations are provided as well as suggestions for implementation in various learning spaces.

ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

In partnership with the Accountancy Executive Advisory Council, the Department of Accountancy at Northern Illinois University developed the Leadership Master of Accounting Science (LMAS) program. The LMAS program consists of thirty semester hours that integrate a nationally recognized accounting curriculum with various leadership and professional development opportunities inside and outside the classroom. The goal is for students to exit the program and step into the accounting workforce prepared not only to contribute from a technical standpoint but also to possess the skills needed to be a trusted advisor and leader. This unique program emerged from a growing desire to prepare students to be more effective and help them launch successful accounting careers.

A substantial body of literature describes the importance of strong professional communication skills for entry-level accounting professionals. Supervisors of entry-level accountants reported dissatisfaction with the communication level of accountants and the desire for new hires to have stronger skills (Bunn, Barfit, Cooper, & Sandifer, 2005; Norvin & Pearson, 1994). In addition, accountants at varying levels of career progression indicated a desire for better communication skills to improve personal job performance (Stowers & White, 1999). Specifically, accounting professionals indicated that professional communication skills are critical for career success (Maturo, 2007; Smith, 2005; Stowers & White, 1999). Stowers and White (1999) summed up the value of professional communication skills, “No longer something to be acquired later, students will be hired at the prestigious firms because their schools had the foresight to include communications in their curricula” (p. 39).

Thus, in response to concerns from employers and alumni, the process of designing and developing the LMAS program began in 2006. In 2009,

the Department of Accountancy at Northern Illinois University officially revised their graduate program in accounting and created the LMAS program. Furthermore, they partnered with a corporate sponsor to design a space dedicated to helping students build leadership and professional skills.

SETTING THE STAGE

Funding and Collaboration

In 2010, the Department of Accountancy contacted Ernst & Young (E&Y) about providing support for an innovative space designated to assist LMAS students’ leadership and professional development. In exchange for naming rights, E&Y agreed to endow the space with an initial commitment of \$500,000 funded over a five-year period. The endowment generates an estimated income of \$20,000 per year and provides funds needed for technology, workshops, student activities, and self-assessment tools.

The LMAS program and the LPDC represent extensive collaboration efforts and cross-disciplinary coordination inside and outside the academy. Outside the academy, the corporate sponsor provides not only funding for the space, but also a needed external and employer perspective. E&Y partners and professionals serve on the Department of Accountancy’s executive advisory council and provide regular feedback to faculty about curriculum issues and perceptions of student technical and professional skills. Inside the academy, the LMAS program utilizes the management department housed in the business school to teach a required course examining managerial leadership. Individuals from a variety of disciplines inside the academy also have partnered to contribute leadership and programmatic direction for pedagogy within this space. Specifically, individuals from communication, English,

18 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

www.igi-global.com/chapter/ernst--young-leadership-and-professional-development-center/105293

Related Content

Transition to ePortfolios: A Case Study of Student Attitudes

Corey Hickerson and Marlene Preston (2006). *Handbook of Research on ePortfolios* (pp. 460-473).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/transition-eportfolios-case-study-student/20335

ICT as a Catalyst in Problem-Based Learning Processes?: A Comparison of Online and Campus-Based PBL in Swedish Fire-Fighter Training

Robert Holmgren (2013). *International Journal of Adult Vocational Education and Technology* (pp. 1-14).

www.irma-international.org/article/ict-catalyst-problem-based-learning/78268

Instructional Design for the Future of Undergraduate Journalism Education

Christopher J. Farmer (2012). *International Journal of Adult Vocational Education and Technology* (pp. 51-62).

www.irma-international.org/article/instructional-design-future-undergraduate-journalism/62983

The Promise of Protocols in the Virtual Classroom: Using Microstructures to Enhance Adult Learning

Harriette Thurber Rasmussen, Amy Baeder, Margaret A. Hunter and Jane Chadsey (2018). *Handbook of Research on Student-Centered Strategies in Online Adult Learning Environments* (pp. 241-263).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-promise-of-protocols-in-the-virtual-classroom/205911

A Guide to Professional Learning for Secondary Mathematics Teachers

Karen M. Hamond (2018). *Handbook of Research on Student-Centered Strategies in Online Adult Learning Environments* (pp. 287-318).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/a-guide-to-professional-learning-for-secondary-mathematics-teachers/205914