

A Graduate Assistant's
Contribution to Southern Utah University's Career Café

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Chapter 1: Introduction

I undertook a graduate assistant position in the Career and Professional Development Office for a personal reason. I have worked exclusively in part-time student jobs on campus since I became an undergraduate student in 2005, and I knew I was completely naive as to how to pursue a career after graduating. I wanted to learn as much as possible, regarding what was currently available for career searches at Southern Utah University (SUU) and I found out there were a number of services offered. I researched various means and included the below information on theories as credible reference sources in support of these pursuits.

The objectives of my graduate assistant position in the Career and Professional Development Office were to fulfill a personal-focused capstone, serve as the Southern Utah University 1010 (Experiential Education Requirement) course liaison between the five Engagement Center Directors, assist in the monitoring of the Teaching Assistants (TAs or Gurus) over each section of the course, disseminate and post incoming internship opportunities, gain a stronger sense of the services offered by the Career and Professional Development Office, and offer me professional experience. I worked in the position from May 2011 to June 29, 2012. The objectives were met upon the completion of my position. This assistantship will clarify how they were met by including information on my duties, accomplishments, and how the internship forms a capstone between my educational preparation and my professional endeavors. In addition, this assistantship contains the applied knowledge in an analytical approach to interpersonal communication.

As a graduate assistant the experience broadened my ability to think outside my personal experiences and use the knowledge I gained to assist current and future students, parents, and Alumni in their pursuit of knowledge. Throughout the time in my position with the SUU Career and Professional Development Office, I was able to draw on my strengths. As a positive, enthusiastic individual, I used my knowledge at recruitment events when I represented SUU to incoming freshmen, parents, and at graduate and career fairs. My ability to embrace new opportunities on a daily basis by acquiring additional skills created a positive work environment. Overall, this assistantship will consist of my responsibilities, experiences, their pros or cons, I encountered while employed as a Graduate Assistant.

I was hired into a position, which had not previously been filled by an undergraduate or graduate student; therefore, my position was at the ground level in an office that was part of a new concept in college career centers. College career centers were changing, suggesting a holistic career plan approach attempting to reach students from freshman level and continuing throughout their education.

Megen Ralphs (Career and Professional Advisor) and Brent Jones (Career Advisor) engaged in a tour of several University career centers in Utah. They discovered most had a “Career Cafe” within their career services offices. The idea to create a relaxing shop within the office space, where students would be comfortable to search for jobs, pursue internships, write and build their resumes, find career advice, and graduate school information became a priority. In addition the Experiential Education Requirement Program (EER), began its test in the summer 2011. Myself and 13 other undergraduate students were enlisted to run the program in an effort

to launch it in the fall of 2011. The program's mission was to give graduating students the edge over other graduates in career opportunities.

Over the first several weeks, I organized Career Café location, materials, i.e. pamphlets on internships and graduate programs, academic and resume writing information, and also purged outdated items for disposal or repurpose through our campus surplus or recycling. The goal was to create clearly marked sections within the room where students could navigate the information they required. New information was created on the internship bulletin boards along the two public traffic areas, the mall areas outside the Career Café, and in front of the Leavitt Center, within The Sharwan Smith Center.

Within about a month of starting, I began numerous duties in the Experiential Education Requirement Program (EER) on Canvas, an online program, and also participated as a test pilot in training. I was asked to test the program as the most mature in age, among the undergraduate students hired. As a mature individual I have a unique skill set and completely different outlook on a new online program from the younger student body. The testing of the program continued through August. My attendance in the weekly meetings, along with the other test pilots was essential for the program manager and the centers to understand how an older non-traditional student would be navigating the course. It would assist them in understanding a different point of view.

While participating in the EER pilot program I completed several projects: learning to navigate the Hire A T-Bird program (Career Services Operation, aka CSO), and exploring the diverse types of resumes, i.e. video resumes, career specific and general, within Optimal

Resume, and assisted with numerous preparations for the upcoming Fall Graduate Fair. By mid-July, I began posting internships on the bulletin boards and/or disseminating them through email to Internship Coordinators in various colleges on campus. I was encouraged to engage in several personal career assessments for the purpose of understanding the value in them for students and to also understand the types of careers that would be better suited to my personal values and personality. Various other duties were assigned in order to prepare the new Café for fall, either on the SUU website or in the physical location.

A newly assigned duty beginning in the fall was overseeing five teaching assistants (TAs) over the EER Program. I was the student in charge of filtering their questions or issues with students or the program, while leading the meetings when problems were addressed and resolved. Administrative duties were assigned to monitor their attendance and work schedules.

Over the course of my employment, I compiled previous information in an effort to not “reinvent the wheel”, and created several pertinent documents, handouts, and flyers, which were helpful in the everyday duties I undertook or for specific events that took place outside the office, i.e. orientation, open house, Career and Graduate Fairs. The handouts were used in tabling at open houses, orientations, and Graduate and Career Fairs. I became extremely familiar with the CSO program, Hire A T-Bird, by working on internships, employment outside the university, Alumni Mentors, in addition to Optimal Resume.

My employment experience evolved as my duties were defined and redefined. I was fortunate to be hired at a time the Career and Professional Development Office was progressing and expanding personnel and making office space changes. A staff shift occurred before I was

hired and the Career Center Office moved under the University College, effectively replacing a director. Two Career and Professional Advisors was the only staff employed. The location of a Career Café was a trend in universities that SUU joined in, and a number of expectations were in motion when I began my employment. The staff offered me numerous opportunities for personal growth in leadership positions on a regular basis. The experience I had was much more than I expected. During my initial months I was insecure in regards to completing various tasks independently for fear of failure. Shortly after my accomplishments were continually affirmed I began to gain a strong sense of self-efficacy. With data input of Hire a T-bird, I found it to be a challenge. This propelled my inner desire to succeed and allowed me to have a better sense of myself and of the services SUU offers to its students and Alumni, in addition to the community.

An evolution of the Career and Professional Development Office, Career Café, and the EER Program, continued after I left my position, which is summarized at the end of this paper. A number of changes within the office as far as personnel and job duties evolved over time, as well as the physical appearance and online web page. Throughout the development and shifts in structure of the Career Café and the EER Program, I gained an understanding regarding the importance of supporting documentation, such as how to run an internship program, how to input and correspond with Alumni Mentors, and creating flyers for students for tabling (orientation, open house, Graduate and Career Fairs).

This assistantship will be outlined in the following chapters: the literature review, the procedures, and accomplishments, the restructure of the Career and Professional Development Office, and the conclusion. The literature review will define Social Cognitive Theory, present literature and explain how it relates to the assistantship. In chapter three, the procedures will

discuss the systematic way in which I accomplished this assistantship. The following chapter titled outcome, will explain in depth the actual tasks or duties undertaken over the course of my thirteen months as a Graduate Assistant. Within this chapter I will refer to the appendices, which are the documents, flyers, and handouts created during this assistantship. Chapter five will entail the restructure of the Career and Professional Development Office, up to the end of my assistantship. In chapter six the changes to the Experiential Education Requirement Program will be discussed, as they were determined at the end of this assistantship. And the final chapter, the conclusion reflects upon the overall assistantship.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter will define Social Cognitive Theory and self-efficacy, which is the most significant construct of the theory and Self-Authorship and its relationship to this Graduate Assistantship. I chose to apply Social Cognitive Theory over another theory because I agree that behavior is influenced by our interactions with others. After I discovered I had no job description, I decided to use this theory to illustrate my own interactions with individuals, my self-efficacy along the way, and my influence on others. Literature will be discussed as it is related to this assistantship.

Social Cognitive Theory

Albert Bandura proposed Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) in 1986 after he had previously labeled it as Social Learning Theory. His theory is not to be confused with Social Learning Theory of Crime, posited by Ronald L. Akers, which is to discern why individuals chose to act in

deviant behaviors (Akers, 1985). Bandura posited human behavior is determined by three factors. First are cognitive factors or personal factors including (your) knowledge, expectations, and attitudes. Then the behavioral factors are skills, practice, and self-efficacy. And the third factors are the environmental factors of social norms, access in community, influence on others (an ability to change your own environment) (Bandura 1997a). When I began this Graduate Assistantship I entered the office with these three factors. I entered with my current knowledge of office skills and interpersonal communication. I did not know what to expect to do in the job, because it was a new position in a restructured office. My behavioral skills were that of a mature student who had more than a freshman student, and my self-efficacy was good. I felt strong in my environmental factors. When I had completed my assignment, my knowledge had increased in office skills and interpersonal communication, because I influenced others, and had often changed the environment in which I worked.

Prior to 1986, Albert Bandura was aware something was missing from his Social Learning Theory and developed the notion of “self-efficacy” which became the center of the theory (Bandura 1997a). He believed that direct reinforcement did not account for all types of learning, as many of the basic concepts of traditional learning theory did. His theory added a social element, arguing that individuals can learn new information and behaviors by observing other people. Initially being in a new office setting, where new information was in abundance, I learned how to better interact with students and professionals, by observing. Observational learning can be used to explain a wide variety of behaviors (Bandura 1997a). It is controlled by the following four sub-functions. The sub-functions are: attention processes, retention processes, production processes, and motivational processes.

Attention processes, the first sub function, decides what is observed in the abundance of modeling influences and what information is taken from ongoing modeled situations. “A number of factors influence the exploration and construal of what is modeled in the social and symbolic environment. Some of these factors involve the cognitive skills, preconceptions, and value preferences of the observers” (Bandura 1997a, p. 89). The other factors are those that stick out as far as “attractiveness and functional value of the modeled activities themselves” (Bandura 1997, p. 89). Additional factors correlate to affinity, functional worth and pertinence of the imitated activities observed. Through interaction people can relate to one another. An example would be, freshman and new transfer students engaging in a group lesson that assisted them in their total educational experience; therefore, many months later these individuals would be able to have greater personal and class status success.

An active process of shifting and reframing foundational learning patterns regularly in regards to situations is evident when recalling and applying concepts. Impressions are solidified by repetition, evolved knowledge of behavior and by practical continued application of learned patterns. A personal understanding of an underlying structure of the original learned behavior allows for adaptive reconstruction of it by the individual (Bandura 1997a, p. 90). Major sub function two of modeling is retention. This active process of shifting and reframing was vital in regards to career exploration during the assistantship. While reviewing resumes we constantly saw transferable skills that propel a potential employee over other applicants. The students amazing ability to adapt their experiences and skill in various environments also lead to promote ability. Moreover, when a person learned to use a specific type of word processing then sought out other similar software they expanded on their foundation and advanced.

The third sub function of modeling or the “behavioral production process” which is that “conceptions are changed into appropriate courses of action” (Bandura, 1997a, p.90). Behavior is modified based on the compared information compiled resulting in a shift between just having an understanding of a concept to applying the knowledge learned. Once a person has gained adequate skills he can transform it as needed to fit the situation based on the previously acquired modeled information. Those who lack fundamental skill and cannot adapt their knowledge base require further guided interactions.

In the fourth sub function of modeling, motivational processes are the key. Three major types of incentive motivators that influence the performance of observationally learned behavior is: “direct, vicarious, and self-produced” (Bandura, 1997a, p. 90). Individuals are likely to show modeled behavior that has positive conclusions as opposed to detrimental negative results. A vicarious influence can have similar influence as a first hand experience. Individuals are moved into action by observing successes of similar people while not motivated by those who often end in negative outcomes. Another source of incentive motivation are individuals’ personal standards of conduct. Individuals seek out endeavors that are uplifting and affirming, whereas they usually avoid degrading activities. I relate this concept in my modeling of Brent Jones’ presentations when representing the office at events. Seeing him successfully present I was motivated to create that same outcome.

Bandura’s key concept within the theory is self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is developed from experiences and how we perceive ourselves to others. Experiencing self-efficacy is when an individual has the belief in the ability to complete a specific task or competence to do so. Low self-efficacy is lacking that belief, the “I think I can” attitude, whereas high self-efficacy is

having reasonable belief I am able to attain that (Bandura 1997a). The four important contributing factors of attaining high self-efficacy are (1) your previous experience, (2) vicarious experience/modeling, (3) social persuasion (positive or negative) and (4) self-efficacy/physiological arousal (Bandura, 1997b p.4). Previous experience is one of the most crucial factors because it determines whether self-efficacy will increase or if a failure will decrease it (Bandura 1997a). Having a previous experience or having mastery in that experience is when an individual successfully achieves a task creating a rise in their self-efficacy or fails at achieving, which lowers it self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997a). The concept of modeling or having a vicarious experience is when an individual compares himself or herself to someone else. The third concept of social persuasion either positive or negative, in other words encouragement or discouragement has a strong influence on our confidence. And the fourth self-efficacy concept of self-efficacy is “positive affective experiences” (Salanoya, Llorens & Schaufeli, 2011, p. 257). Salanoya et al. (2011) summarized self-efficacy clearly as to “... efficacy beliefs (through cognitive, affective, and motivational regulatory mechanisms) influence how people feel, how much effort they invest in actions, how long they persevere in the face of obstacles and failures, and how resilient they are to adversity” (p. 256). Entering the new office I had an overall good self-efficacy, and was fortunate to have more positive affective experiences along the way, which gave a boost to my perseverance, while facing obstacles and some failures.

In a study by Mark D. Olson (2011), graduate level social work students were surveyed to determine if their perceptions regarding self-efficacy while working with geriatric individuals would be correlated to positive attitudes toward older adults and their desires and further interests in continued work with them. His hypothesis was supported in the correlational and

regression analyses. He discovered in his findings “perceptions of self-efficacy are particularly important with regard to attitudes toward clients, as well as career choice” (Olson, 2011, p. 601-602). It is consistent with the theory, which says multiple factors influence each other, especially regarding the relationship between behavior, individual experience and their environment (Olson, 2011). I can recount several experiences during our TA meetings that I observed as the multiple factors influenced the students’ self-efficacy toward succeeding in the program. Watching their individual experience affecting others to want to create more ways to convey the concepts.

A study, to discover why college students volunteered to be peer health educators, Social Cognitive Theory was applied by Klien and Sondag (1994). The theory assisted in clarifying the complex reasons. Students responded to more than one social learning construct. The expectation construct, which is when a person expects a specific outcome of a behavior, was not significantly connected to their decision. Volunteers served due to environmental influences from their own life, lives of family or own struggles with health problems. Two common themes were, an aspiration to help others and their recognition of the significance of health education. The study discovered the motivations volunteers possessed which assisted in the recommendations for future program structure.

Motivation is categorized as intrinsic or extrinsic to the learner and the behaviors in which learners engage in, for personal interest or want to master, are intrinsic (Bandura, 1997a). Behaviors that are completed for externally prized consequences are extrinsic motivation. In a study by Lim and Kim (2003), 77 undergraduate students were administered a questionnaire between 2000 and 2001 to determine which types of motivation affected learners’ on line

learning and learning application. Five different types of motivation were investigated; course relevancy, course interest, affect/emotion, reinforcement, and self-efficacy. The findings of their study indicated the implication of all motivation aspects, except course interest in online learning and the density of motivation as an influence factor in addition “reinforcement and self-efficacy influence students’ learning application” (Lim & Kim 2003 p. 436). By the EER directors creating modules of relevancy and enlist emotion, reinforcement and self-efficacy, the majority of students were motivated to complete the program. So much so at times, we would hear about their excitement to already have a final project in mind, part way through the first course.

Web-based learning environments (WBLEs) were examined through the perspective of Social Cognitive Theory literature, to design and develop WBLEs by using the frame of the theory in the study by Hill, Song, and West (2009). The focus was on environments that were interactive by nature. Social learning processes were initiated and also sustained by the human interactions within WBLEs and WBLE resources. Learning and knowing are shaped by the kinds of interactions a student has with others and the context within, because cognition is not thought of as an individual process. Modeling is another characteristic of social learning in which the research has provided evidence of its impact on a more meaningful learning experience. The University 1010 course in the EER program was interactive; videos explained assignments and discussion boards provided the students a WBLE to shape their cognition. Midway into the first semester the TAs were creating their own videos to spark the interactions.

Research also indicated the smaller group size could entice students and instructors to more often engage with one another, which aides in social interaction (Hill, et al. 2009, p. 92). By using varied resources (e.g., text, video, sound) from a social learning view, they support the

different ways of learning styles and preferences of the students. According to Hill et al. (2009), “Social interaction plays a significant role in students’ sense of learning community as well as students’ interaction, with peers and the instructor” (p. 98). As a test pilot for the EER program we 13, engaged in discussing what was working and what was not, creating that aid in social learning, supporting one another in our learning. When the program was launched there were assignments when students were to engage with one another, creating that support in learning.

In a Social Cognitive Theory – guided study (Salanoya, Lorente, Chambel & Martinez 2011) to posit a positive relationship between self-efficacy and work environment where a healthy relationship exists between transformational leadership and self-efficacy, it revealed the following: yes, that self-efficacy was a powerful motivator, and a transformational style of leadership did enhance self-efficacy of nurses’. To clarify what a transformation style of leadership is, according to the authors, it is that of creating a closer distance in relationship with subordinates as far as their role of power. As part of this study their subordinates rated the transformational managers (direct manager). The researchers determined the study extended the concepts of the theory to say that there was significance of transformational managers that enhanced “nurse extra-role performance” (defining extra-role performance as meaning the manager rated their subordinate, in as far as their organizational citizenship, i.e. considering what was best for the organization). This study determined the nurses raised their levels of self-efficacy and work engagement. I discovered this first hand. My supervisor created that close distance therefore raising my self-efficacy within the work environment. She never made me feel she had power over me; we were more of a team.

In two longitudinal studies (Salanoya, Llorens, Schaufeli, 2010) the researchers used two independent samples, sample 1 (study 1) consisted of 274 secondary school teachers and sample 2 was comprised of 100 University students working in groups (study 2), to determine if the distinctive types of efficacy beliefs (self-efficacy and collective efficacy) are consistent over time regarding personal choice to engage in certain activities. The results determined efficacy beliefs as far as (enthusiasm), a positive affect, had an indirect impact on activity engagement. (Salanoya, et al. p. 282). Furthermore, a conducive work environment for the individual and the collective is established. This leads to a noticeable increase in enthusiasm, satisfaction, efficacy beliefs, and proactive actions (Salanoya, et al. p. 282). This study assisted in their understanding how over time what positive affect has on activity engagement. I relate this study to the importance our supervisors and directors positive attitude during our testing of the EER program, as a critical affect, which helped us stay enthusiastic, when faced with a number of daily problems. We had proactive actions, being stratified with our results and our efficacy beliefs increase.

In a study by Qin, Qiang, and Kanliang (2011), Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) and “technostress” literature was used to create a conceptual model to study computer-related technostress as consequences of computer self efficacy and technology dependence. Resulting in the support of SCT and self-efficacy, which comprised of workers whom had a confident and secure knowledge of computer technology made it possible to possess positive coping behaviors and good judgment regarding job security too. A second result discovered was technology dependence might increase technostress. Individuals working in computer technology can reach an overload due to working routinely in technology. And the final result indicated individuals

might perceive different levels of technostress under different situations. Employees experience more technostress when they have lower computer self-efficacy and higher technology dependence. I relate this study to the new on-line Experiential Education Requirement Program and numerous computer programs encountered daily in the Career and Professional Development Office as I experienced a lower computer self-efficacy. I spent most of my 4-5 hour days on the programs.

A study by Aryee and Chu (2012) found Social Cognitive Theory was adopted and elaborated on Tesluk and Jacobs's (1998) integrated model of work experience to determine antecedents and outcomes of challenging job experiences. "In effect, the mediating role for task-specific self-efficacy suggests belief in one's capability to execute job-related demands as an antecedent of task performance and promo ability assessment" (Aryee & Chu 2012, p. 229). The results indicated there is an important role for "transformational leaders" in shaping in an employee's perceptions of the nature of their jobs as challenging. Additionally, fostering the behaviors of employees that take the initiative to find endeavors that pose difficult, which result in the confident development of additional skills along with a greater possibility of promotion and higher marks in task performance during assessments. These situations allow for skills to be utilized in various settings, where individual and organization experiences can excel. (Aryee & Chu 2012, p. 229). I felt fortunate to have transformational leaders as my supervisor and the staff in the EER program that presented situations that I found difficult and gave me the opportunities to succeed.

Studies, which used Social Cognitive Theory as a guide, within this literature review, have supported aspects of my Graduate Assistant position. Social Cognitive Theory concepts are

about learning and development as individuals. Albert Bandura said, “Humans don’t just respond to stimuli, they interpret them” (Bandura, 1997a, p.59). We store event in two ways, through visual images and verbal codes. Our ability to model comes by way of abstracting rules not mimicry. “The highest level of observational learning is achieved by first organizing and rehearsing the modeled behavior symbolically, and then enacting it overtly” (Bandura, 2007 p. 27). The “key” concept within his theory is self-efficacy, which is developed from our experiences and how we perceive ourselves to others. In addition within self-efficacy there are four important contributing factors: previous experience, vicarious experience/modeling, social persuasion, and physiological arousal. These four factors, which contribute to self-efficacy, affected how I approached new or familiar tasks and completed them. When this assistantship began the majority of the tasks I completed, navigating new programs, setting up a new career café, and speaking one-on-one to new students or parents, were without previously experiencing them. During the initial times of setting up the tables for orientation I watched and listened to Brent Jones give a short explanation of what the Career and Professional Office offered to the students in the form of modeling, then I later wrote a short script to practice before being tasked to stand alone at the table. With Brent’s encouragement or his social persuasion, after practicing a number of times, I eventually reached the fourth concept physiological arousal or achieving a positive experience about representing SUU. Unconsciously at the time, prior to representing SUU, I learned overall how to stand-alone by echoing the constraints of Social Cognitive Theory, by observing Brent. Unaware of my actual skills I realized after acquiring a healthy sense of self, the four sub-functions: attention processes, retention processes, production processes, and motivational processes assisted me in my self-efficacy.

A study by Lim and Kim (2003) five types of motivation were investigated to discover that four of the motivation aspects, course relevancy, affect/emotion, reinforcement, and self-efficacy were an influence factor in students' learning application. This finding reinforced the way in which the Teaching Assistants interacted with the students in the EER Program via frequent emails and postings on the CANVAS Program. The TAs used the four aspects to motivate the students in the online program. In the EER Program, the test participants were also able to motivate and support the students by creating videos on CANVAS to assist the students in a varied style of learning.

The study by Hill et al. indicated varied resources from a social learning view support different types of and preferences in learning styles. This research determined the smaller group size and varied resources from a social learning view create a sense of learning community, which also was indicated when the test participants met on a weekly basis to discuss what was working in the new EER Program and what was not. In another study by Salanoya, et al., researchers discovered levels of self-efficacy and work engagement were raised when their manager created a closer distance in relationship with subordinates as far as their role of power. This correlates to the interactions shared between myself, and managers Megen Ralphs and Brent Jones. We worked closely on a daily basis and that healthy relationship improved the work environment. Whereas the environment during the testing of the EER Program reflected a "technostress" at different levels due to all 13 of the test participants levels of computer self efficacy. I would say my level of "technostress" was minor, due to the lower level of computer self-efficacy, which I also encountered other non-traditional students "technostress" as a TA and I had an understanding which few of the undergraduates could understand. That was to an

advantage in assisting non-traditional students navigate EER. Yet I encountered “technostress” while navigating the Hire A T-Bird program over the first several months of the assistantship. As I became proficient navigating or my self-efficacy increased, my “technostress” alleviated, as the study indicated.

Self-efficacy and self-esteem are common threads throughout student services theories of Baxter Magolda, Kegan, King, and Taylor (as discussed in Schuh, Jones, Harper, and Associates 2011, p. 212). Student services theories assist student affairs professionals by explaining the way students change and grow while in college, in addition what experiences best influence that growth. Baxter Magolda’s Self-Authorship explains how students develop in relation to this project.

Self-Authorship

Self-authorship is being able to define your beliefs and identity, in relations with other individuals. The Learning Partnerships Model, developed by Baxter Magolda over a longitude study explains how self-authorship is attained. The three assumptions are (1) epistemological, where environments convey knowledge (2) intrapersonal in learning and relationships or internal sense of self and (3) interpersonal, sharing knowledge among peers. “Thus, the three assumptions challenge learners to journey toward self-authorship, while the three principles 1) validate learners as knowers (2) communicate knowledge through surroundings such as a volunteer role, student or job and (3) describe learning as reciprocally formulating meaning, bridge the gap between their current developmental place and authoring their own beliefs, identities, and relationships” (Baxter Magolda, 2004, p. 42). A few studies where Self-Authorship has been applied are as follows.

Self-Authorship shifts were studied over the first three college years (Barber, King and Baxter Magolda 2013). When examined, the daily struggles of undergraduates revealed significant shifts in self-authorship. An overall premise was, when students discovered opportunities in meaningful roles and experiences, which appealed their “internal voice” in diverse situations in undergraduate research, leadership roles in jobs, and internships. Within these contexts their supervisors expected the following, “autonomous thinking, problem-solving, effective collaboration with others, and internal voice in decision-making” (Barber, King, Baxter Magolda, 2013, p.871). Within the informal coursework settings, little structure by advisors, supervisors or student affairs educators was given, leading the students to create an inner voice to continue and do well. By realizing their in-action or action in their different roles of student, son/daughter, for friend, made a change, for self and others, it shifted their learning, which they were and developed in the roles. Significant changes into self-authorship were indicated by tragedy or deliberately outlined educational experiences occurred in some students. Students were pressed by their encounters to define their values, and alter their perspectives. It is noteworthy to determine at some time, the reasons significant changes into self-authorship occur when the majority progress slowly. I relate the students shift in learning, by creating a change in themselves or others to the EER program created an on-line environment, which students were encouraged to use their inner voice in various meaningful situations of learning in order to shift to self-authorship.

In a study by Day and Lane 2014, collaboration by faculty-student affairs through participant observation used self-authorship theory to determine what a “good professor” is. They molded the theory around the classroom experiences, as they occurred and were surprised

how effortless their teaching became, due to the students “owning” the course. The authors realized the outcome for faculty was to approach teaching, as a parallel image of the move toward self-authorship taken by students. This study related to my participation and others as test pilots. Our input and outcomes from the staff and professors allowed us to create our teaching environment. After the course was launched some test pilots were chosen to be TAs, who had flexibility to add new ways of learning to the modules, to facilitate another path to self-authorship.

Social Cognitive Theory and self-authorship fit together in how I thought of this Graduate Assistant position because both theories are about defining ourselves in relation to others. Social Cognitive Theory posits our cognitive ability, skills, practice, and environmental influence, shape who we currently are and who we will be in the future. Self-efficacy develops from human experiences and how we see ourselves to others. It is having the belief in the “I can” do it or the competence to do so. Self-Authorship is attained over time, by environments communicating knowledge, having an internal sense of oneself, interaction of knowledge among peers, then three notions confront the student to move toward self-authorship while they are validated as knowing, convey their knowledge through their role as student, volunteer, or job and finally illustrate learning as equally creating meaning, bridge the gap between their current development place and authenticating their own beliefs, identities, and relationships. The experiences I encountered daily in the Career Café’ was filled with interpersonal communication which provided, exchanged, and validated students knowledge. Creating that environment molded the students to who they were and to become in the distant future, as Social Cognitive Theory implies.

Chapter 3 Procedures

This chapter will detail at length the way in which I created this graduate assistant position. Most of the time I kept notes on the duties I completed and any notations of importance, i.e. documents created while sharing my files with my supervisor, Megen Ralphs, via Google docs. I will also discuss how Social Cognitive Theory and Self-Authorship relates to what I accomplished.

Social Cognitive Theory, previously Social Learning Theory, has an added component, social. The social part of this theory says we learn behaviors by observing other people through observational learning, imitation, and modeling. We develop self-efficacy, the “I can or the competence to do so”, from our human experiences. The second supporting theory of this project is self-authorship. It is being able to define my beliefs and my identity in relation to others. The three assumptions are 1) environments convey knowledge, 2) intrapersonal in learning and relationships, and 3) interpersonal or sharing knowledge among peers. Three principles bridge the assumptions and lead to self-authoring or owning my beliefs and identity. The principles are 1) validate learners as knowers, 2) communicate knowledge through being a student, job, or so on, 3) bridging my development at that point and authoring, my own beliefs, identity, and relationships.

Throughout this graduate assistantship I logged what I accomplished and as often as possible noted how long it took to complete my duties. At the end of the workday, I reflected on my experiences and asked myself what I had learned. I noted what I learned from my duties and/or experienced. As I learned new skills and practiced them in the office, I was influenced and shaping who I was and would become, a significant part of social cognitive theory. My self-

efficacy continued to develop based on the experiences I encountered with the staff, other university professionals, and students. As posited by self-authorship, everyday I was implementing The Learning Partnership Model, working toward self-authorship. My environment or office was assumption one, as I reflected upon my accomplishments daily, then it became assumption two by introspecting my learning and relationships. And by sharing my knowledge among my peers, I implemented assumption three (interpersonal communication). I bridged the assumptions by 1) validating students as knowers, 2) the fact I was a student and employed in the office I communicated my knowledge and 3) I bridged my development at that point. My hours of working were limited to five hours per day, 20 hours per week.

The objective under the University College was to serve as the non-traditional student test pilot for the University 1010 course (Experiential Education Requirement Program/EER), during the summer. As an older non-traditional student I brought a slightly different perspective to the EER Program in the test pilot meetings and with directors. I also served as the liaison between the University 1010 course (EER), Engagement Center Directors and Teaching Assistants (TAs/Gurus) in the fall. As a test pilot I worked in an additional environment, where I learned new skills, practiced them and all of which influenced me and the other test pilots, as posited in social cognitive theory. As a group of test pilots our self-efficacy developed from that common human experience. We all benefited as students and individuals in that environment, it created a place where we could share and exchange our knowledge, while reflect what we learned in the program and relationships with one another, once again using The Learning Partnership Model, moving toward self-authorship. Later, I monitored the TAs/Gurus time sheets, availability, absenteeism, and questions. As I worked with the TAs, I was being

influenced by my interactions or my constant communication with my peers. Practicing supervising skills, covering the times needed in the office and checking time sheets for accuracy, influenced who I was and who I would be, under social cognitive theory tenets. In addition in the fall, I also served as an additional TA in the University 1010 course. As a TA over a section I continued to define myself in relation to others as both theories supported this position.

Under the Career and Professional Development Office the objectives were to create materials and unique opportunities to reach students for the purpose of making them aware of the services the new Career Café location would offer them. This is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4 Accomplishments. I entered data into the internship report (actual internships offered) on the Hire A T-Bird website, within the Career Services Operations (CSO) program and created individual internship postings for individual colleges on campus, via email, when applicable. By posting internships on line, I created another environment or a space of information in which students could find support and to implement The Learning Partnership Model. A new physical and up to date environment within the Café location was created. It consisted of an internship information area that provided materials of interest to students. In addition to this there was a designated area labeled “Graduate School Information”, (posting of upcoming GRE tests and various graduate school posters and leaflets). The new physical environment or a place to share knowledge and support of internships, graduate schools, and for general career walk-in preparation, influenced how they would develop as individuals.

Another objective I was tasked to start was entering SUU Alumni and the public, into the Hire A T-Bird mentor program. I entered their data, activating an account, and then I corresponded with a welcome letter. Entering mentor information, created an additional online

environment to further support students in their career interests, moving toward self-authorship. I notified my supervisor of Alumni in locations when indicated for the purpose of future student trips to Alumni employers, where they could meet the mentors working in their future fields of interest, thus again furthering their development in self-authorship.

The progress of my personal professional development objectives indicated by my supervisor, were discussed on a weekly basis in addition to upcoming projects. I discussed my personal development as far as assessments taken and trainings, which benefited the office and myself through evolved self-efficacy, which is further addressed in the Accomplishments Chapter. I created new handouts to assist students and employers, in navigating within the Hire A T-Bird website, to locate internships. By creating the handouts I furthered support to the students in their career pursuit. I created any documents I found to assist me in the everyday duties. By providing crucial documents, related to my position, I had created an opportunity of support for self-authorship to future students in the office. A three ring binder held any documents I created which assisted me as appendices for my final assistantship. I also saved every document I created onto a file for my supervisor to easily access after my departure. I followed up after I completed my employment, to address whether the documents and handouts were helpful to the following graduate assistants and/or office. After a discussion with the remaining Graduate Assistant, John Gally, I concluded my documents were of great assistance to him and the office. They were edited as changes were made in the office.

In the following chapter I will discuss how I reflected my daily duties to the supporting theories and how my course work assisted me in my experiences. Also how I encountered challenges in interpersonal relationships.

Chapter 4: Accomplishments

This chapter will include my detailed daily duties and reflections when in the position of Graduate Assistant, while drawing a substantial connection to Social Cognitive Theory, self-efficacy, and Self-Authorship, as it pertains to communication challenges, interactions and knowledge obtain throughout my position and future careers. In addition I will discuss the knowledge I obtained from the Communication Masters Program and how it assisted in my daily experiences in the office.

Graduate Assistant Job Description

Upon my hiring in May 2011, I was the first Graduate Assistant to be hired in the newly re-organized Career and Professional Development Office. I reported directly to Megan Ralphs (Career and Professional Advisor) and would also assist Brent Jones (Career and Professional Advisor) when he asked. The job description was brief over the summer, but became more descriptive as fall semester began. I will address in order my duties through the remainder of this paper, as they are in the description in Appendix 1 “Title: Graduate Assistant, Career and Professional Development,” beginning with being the University 1010 course liaison. Specifically one of the bullets in the job description, “...personal professional development” address my ability to obtain internal awareness about my actions; therefore, enhancing my sense of worth, professional skills, and retention by repetition and positive affirmation.

University 1010 Course Liaison Between Engagement Center Directors

The University 1010 or first course of the Experiential Experience Requirement Program (EER) was a new online program to examine different learning perspectives within the five Engagement Centers, which was accomplished by completing different assignments within the modules. Three course implementations were: University 1010 (our part - intentional learning), University 3925 (the student's experience), and University 4925 (reflection in an electronic portfolio, then a public presentation of the student's experience). As a test pilot we were to complete the assignments and be thorough in our notes as to problems or positive outcomes. I was the most mature student and I relate my lower computer self-efficacy to the "technostress" I encountered during parts of the new program. Being able to understand why I had a lower self-efficacy, allowed me to confront the future on-line programs I needed to be proficient in, more positively. By researching how the program ran, I was gaining on-line program research knowledge, what happened, and why or how to prevent it. I can see this as an applied knowledge, toward my professional communication degree, to undertake in the future, job or in a volunteer capacity.

Our notes were then discussed in our weekly meetings to work through the issues. I participated not only as a test pilot, but the lead in the meetings when Megen was unavailable. As the leader I used the information learned about sub codes, from the *Nonverbal Communication* course, to conduct the meetings. I used *kinetics* or how I interpret body language, of the students to decipher and react to what they tried to convey or if they needed more information, agreed or disagreed with the subject. I kept good eye contact and full attention to each student's discussion. By responding to their cues in a positive, sensitive manner I conveyed confidence as a leader in our discussions. Our meetings had a specific

allotted time, due to diverse schedules, so I applied another sub code, *chronemics* or the way you perceive and value time. My promptness to start and finish affected our weekly meetings positively affected our interpersonal relationship as a group. Another important course helped me immensely in the meetings was *Seminar in Interpersonal Communication*. The course taught me to be more aware of what my facial expressions were saying and in tune with my verbal message. Another skill I learned was, to use effective gestures while communicating. These skills were extremely helpful in meetings, when I had no experience taking the lead with such diverse students and under a “testing” environment. The skills have and will continue to assist in future employment or volunteer settings. The applied knowledge used in meetings reinforced my course work therefore strengthening the outcome of my professional communication degree. As test pilots, we had a lot of work ahead before the program was to “launch” two weeks into fall semester 2011.

The liaison role I played was to serve as both a middle manager and test pilot, filtering concerns and questions from the undergraduate students, who were test pilots, to the directors, during the summer of 2011. The *Organizational Communication* course helped me realize the importance of our meetings. There are factors that occur in organizations, which can either impede the flow of information or expedite it. Being the middle manager lessened numerous questions given to the managers. If the 13 test pilots were given the opportunity to pose their questions directly to the directors, the directors would have been impeded from creating their module assignments. I was chosen as a test pilot to add a “mature” non-traditional student to discover what pros and cons I would encounter and my “experience” with the course content. The test pilots were chosen from a broad range of majors and class standings, in order to obtain

an overall student interest of the program. We were trained over the course of several days in the computer lab, before we were tasked to begin the testing of the first module. The first day of training in a computer lab was June 6, 2011. Two training days followed during the same week. We were told to expect a certain level of frustration as we navigated through the modules. We were asked to write good notes i.e. “I was trying to do ... and Y happened”. Write what context it was in and if we were using the program on or off campus. The test was not only inputting the assignments, but also if the program worked off campus well. I learned an important concept in the *Leadership in Communication*, be willing to change in your workplace. Everyday we encountered change and we just had to embrace it and continue working. This concept is vital in any career. It shows your employer you are open-minded enough to learn something new and being adaptable helps you succeed in your career and embracing it in life is just as important, or you may miss out on something!

Every week all of the test pilots met for approximately one hour, with Professor Petersen, Creativity Center Director, and my supervisor, Megen Ralphs, to discuss the current and any future concerns of the program. By having a small group size we supported one another within our peers and instructors (Professor Petersen and Megen Ralphs). We also created a sense of learning community by frequent emails. We were advised of due dates and how long we would have to complete the next module. Problems occurred with the ability to load documents or pictures occasionally, in addition to a myriad of new program issues. Problems were written down in detail, by the “test pilots”, so that they could be solved through the programmers. The goal was to work out as many issues as we came across or anticipate, over the summer. To work

under constant changing interpersonal communication, gave us an idea what the professional environment resembled.

As a test pilot, I completed the assignments and submitted them through the Canvas (online program), as a student would navigate the new course. I noted difficulties and positive reflections then presented them along with the other students. I also was assigned to glean the important questions/concerns then addressed them at the Directors (each director of an Engagement Center) meetings. The *Interpersonal Communication* course assisted my understanding discussions in the directors meetings, by gleaning information and expressing myself well. An additional course, *Professional Writing and Presentations* assisted me in delivering the information with composure and confidence in the meetings. I had little experience in meetings prior to this where I was an important participant. But I used what I learned in the course and quickly established a rapport with the directors by smiling and maintaining eye contact while minimizing my gestures at the table. As I participated more often, I gained a stronger self-efficacy about my role as a liaison. This skill of presenting information in a professional, confident manner strengthens my coursework into applied knowledge with a professional communication degree.

I was in a leadership position over the other test pilots, who required constant email communication between the directors and test pilots to inform them of changes and updates within the program from Professor Petersen, Megen Ralphs, and the five newly formed engagement directors from; Community Engagement, Creativity Center, Outdoor Engagement, Leadership Engagement, and Global Engagement Center. This is where I had to expedite the information with concise messages, insuring our goal was being met. Sometimes I had to write

the problem verbatim, but most of the time I had to use what I learned about concise writing, from the *Professional Writing and Presentations* communication course. Understanding the importance of an organizations information flow, from the *Organizational Communication* course helped me function well in this position.

Beginning fall semester, a new duty was assigned insuring the Teaching Assistants (TAs\Gurus) were available in the Career Café to answer questions and discuss concerns of the students regarding their assignments or the overall program. The overall interpersonal communication skills I learned in the *Seminar in Interpersonal Communication* course were extremely useful and assisted in my successful interactions with the TAs on a weekly basis. I improved my problem solving and assertiveness skills, which made the assignment better. Skills I reinforced in this experience gave me supervisor experience I can use in future jobs. The Teaching Assistants also used this time to grade their prospective sections of 100 students. Grading 100 students was an undertaking when you are also a student. Professor Petersen suggested to all to grade no longer than 30 minutes at a time, and then take a break. To indicate TA availability, a large schedule, with the TA's name and when they were available during Monday through Friday, visibly covering the entire width of a large bulletin board in the Career Café. A Teaching Assistant was usually sitting below the board with a sign (Guru) at their workstation.

I monitored the TAs\Gurus time sheets, their availability and absenteeism and reported the information to my supervisor. By making sure I was providing a TA on the schedule I was fulfilling that support to students in the program. That interaction was crucial to the success of EER. The TAs\Gurus had assigned hours in the Café, for students to direct their questions and

concerns with assignments and any over all questions with the EER program. I also remained on the schedule of teaching assistants in the Café. I sent out a doodle every week to the TAs to determine when they were able to meet to discuss their problems or concerns with the program and or students. Learning how to gather five students and cover shifts were more supervisory skills I could add to my resume and knowledge toward my professional degree.

Students who would be enrolled in the first course of the EER program (University 1010) would become familiar with a part of the Hire A T-Bird called *Optimal Resume*. They would have specific assignments within that part of the program. I was tasked to become familiar with the program over the summer so I could answer questions, which could arise with the new students. In addition there may be other students who were not in the EER program who could walk into the Café and ask questions when I was working. There were a few videos of instruction I watched to help me navigate through it, and then I set up my profile and resumes. As I navigated through the program it became more familiar raising my self-efficacy as to my computer knowledge. Learning this tool in Hire A T-Bird and teaching it gave me additional written communication and verbal skills, which are paramount to careers.

I met with the five TAs\Gurus often in the fall of 2011, now graders/TAs with each of their prospective engagement centers, to discuss current problems with the program and students. There was one specific incident, which assisted in my self-efficacy at that time. One morning when an older non-traditional student was extremely negative in regards to her struggle over an EER module she was attempting to complete, I was the teaching assistant working for that hour. Being a “mature” non-traditional student I could relate with her computer understanding and frustration. I was able to calm her down enough to listen to my instruction, without devaluing

her ability, thus assisting her in how to complete it. Megen had over heard the conversation and commended me on how great I “handled it.” That encouragement boosted my self-efficacy at a time I thought I was not communicating effectively. Megen had used social persuasion to raise my self-efficacy. And learning about how individuals convey information and the way it is delivered, in *Communication Theory*, assisted me to more fully understand why she was so upset. Navigating a new on-line program and expected to complete assignments was just too overwhelming to consider. By having the skill to understand her problem and solve it was great.

By the end of fall semester, I was pleased to have my supervisor released me as middle manager; filtering questions, which were intended for the directors and had me, fulfill other duties. The program flow of communication was better suited when she had the TAs report directly to their center directors.

In mid-Spring semester, I created a sheet to instruct the TAs/Gurus how to locate the late time card sheet on-line. A few of them would forget to input their time on line by the deadline, so hence after I had created the document, I could access it on Google Docs and email it (see Appendix 2). This was a teaching experience the TAs usually only did once. By missing the deadline they had to wait another pay period to get paid. It was a consequence learned in the working environment. This time saver helped me, to keep up with my other pressing duties.

As a dual responsibility to the University College, I shifted from my primary duty over the TAs\Gurus, to coordinating mass communication between the colleges and departments regarding new internships. I took the skill of writing a clear, concise narrative and implemented into a standard narrative I inserted into the emails sent, from the course *Professional Writing and*

Presentations. On a daily basis my priority was to select valid internships and determine which college or colleges would be suitable choices. I will explain the process in which I disseminated the internship opportunities to the students' colleges.

Disseminated and Posted Incoming Internship Opportunities

Over the summer as a test pilot, I was assigned the task to create three new Internship bulletin boards that previously housed student job postings in the hallways of the Sharwan Smith Center. Before posting a select number of internships, due to the confined space of three physical bulletin boards in the Sharwan Smith Center, I had to create a bulletin board with background and headings to highlight if they were local, national or international. In addition, a disclaimer had to be displayed (see Appendix 3). After I had completed the backgrounds and headings to display on the bulletin boards I displayed a few distinct internships. I either received the internship notices via email or through the Career Services Operations (CSO) on line program, via the Hire A T-Bird link under the SUU Career Services website. I often translated internships from Chinese translated to English unprofessional, into brief narratives. Once again my ability to write a brief professional narrative I learned from *Professional Writing and Presentations*, at a moments notice was very helpful to my time constraint of part-time. A few internships were emailed as attachments, from the "Café" email account, were displayed in addition to a few from the Career Services Operations (CSO) program. The CSO program, not only houses internships, but also full and part-time jobs. The steps taken to "pull" an internship report had specific wording to obtain internships, exclusively.

In order to post an internship, into the CSO program I logged into the following URL: <http://suu.edu/uc/career-employ.html> and used an administrative login to run the internship report (see Appendix 4). This internship database was updated and saved to my desktop. The actual report was not printed due to its size (contained in excess of 600 employers). The report would list the new internships at the beginning of the onscreen report (see Appendix 5). I first determined if the internship was valid to change the status from “pending” to “active”, based on the information given in the description and employer, and then I would copy, paste, and edit the information into a word document for posting onto the bulletin boards or sent via email to the *Internship Coordinators*. I would create a double-spaced word document from the single-spaced document in the report. Often times I edited the information due to the incorrect translation from another country. This purpose of creating a word document was to create a more clear and concise announcement (see Appendix 6). Upon creating the new clean postings I would then delete the report off the desktop, to free up space on the program, for future postings. I approached creating the postings of internships as a message, compared to patient-provider interaction, from the course, *Health Communication*. The Career Café’ was the provider of information to further students career goals, via internships. Internships have become an important part of students’ college experience, to be a successful in their careers and life upon graduation.

Every day, the priority of my position was to read my emails that were in my personal email account, marked Career Café. When an employer requested to post an internship, I would create a word document with the pertinent information and either send it to the appropriate Internship Coordinators (see Appendix 7), post it on the bulletin board, and/or into the CSO

program. Before I began to use *The Internship Coordinators* list I was given I updated it with a number of changes. Often times via email, I answered questions regarding how to post an internship by employers, attaching the form I created, titled “How to set up a profile in order to input new internships” (see Appendix 8-A). I created the form on July 1, 2011, after I had encountered problems such as being “kicked out” after taking too long to log in the information and discovered numerous employers asked how to set up an employer profile. I determined a new document would be of assistance to employers, and future employees, of the Career and Professional office, and myself. By creating that document I was keeping the flow of internships unimpeded by offering a quick solution for the employers, thus using what I learned in *Organizational Communication*.

As the spring semester of 2012 began, the amount of incoming internships increased significantly due to upcoming summer, and I encountered a few errors on my part as I quickly entered the data, so I created a cheat sheet for myself to eliminate the number of errors. I created “Internship Notes” (see Appendix 8-B). As the bulletin boards became full I had to determine which were to be removed. I kept a close watch when deadlines had passed to remove them. I also checked upcoming expiration dates in the internship report daily to notify employers, via email. I asked them if they had received enough student contacts and if they wanted to extend the deadline or to remove the notice. I would send a blind courtesy copy (BCC), via email to my supervisor to keep her informed. Also I would occasionally receive emails forwarded from Megen and would post and/or forward directly to Internship Coordinators. Large companies would send an email indicating a URL, listing internships. Then my job was to print any that had flyers or information, and post or email to the appropriate Internship Coordinators. After

several conversations Megen had, with the *Alumni Relations Office*, in reference to future internships from Alumni employers, our office was asked to take over a task that was previously taken care of by their office, the SUU Mentoring Network.

Correspondence to Mentors in the SUU Mentoring Network

A new assignment was passed on to me in the Career Café to assist students in connecting with a mentor in their career pursuit. The Mentoring Network invites community members and SUU Alumni to become a mentor to students and Alumni, through informational interviews, job searching, and guest speaking in their career.

I received emails from “web services” tagged Career Café, in my personal email. I would open the Mentor Database within Hire A T-Bird, typing my administrative log in, then copy and paste their information into the database. I created this instruction sheet for myself and any future student tasked to this job (see Appendix 9-A).

Upon entering their personal information I sent an email (see Appendix 9-B) thanking them for signing up on the network. I saved more than one draft in my email account to save time when more than one would arrive at a time. Every email was a Blind Courtesy Copied (BCC) to my supervisor, per her request. Attached to the email would be a “Welcome Letter” giving them a temporary username and password to go into the database and review what I had entered, for accuracy and also to change their log in information for future changes, (see Appendix 10-A & B).

I informed my supervisor, per her request, of various mentors that had just entered into the program and she later used their contact information to enlist their assistance in creating a business and accounting students trip back east to visit several mentors and their employers. The trip was extremely helpful to the students in their career pursuits.

As part of possibly improving the way in which mentors navigate through the CSO program, I was tasked to research SUU's thirteen "sister" colleges In June 2011. The "sister" colleges were those with similar enrollment numbers. I critiqued how easy it was to navigate their program and gleaned four ideas (pros and cons) for each school. Overall, I discovered only four of the thirteen colleges offered alumni mentoring programs under their Career Services' offices. I submitted my proposed changes to my supervisor and she took the information from there. I did not receive any feedback, in regards to my ideas, which was not uncommon after I had completed some research. I used my research skills learned in *Health Communication*, to decipher what the message/services were in their program and how I navigated through them.

Weekly meetings with supervisor

I met with Megen to discuss upcoming projects and my personal professional development. During the first two months of summer, I was tasked to learn how to put work orders in to have the furniture and rugs cleaned. In addition, I filled out numerous surplus forms online to dispose of unwanted file cabinets, tables and any other excess items the new Café would not use. I spent a considerable amount of time discerning what handouts or binders of sample resumes and other paper materials used by the previous Career Department to recycle, which was outdated. This was part of preparing the Café location for Fall 2011.

Upcoming projects were a Career Fair and Graduate Fair planning. As part of preparing for the fairs, the first task was on June 29, 2011, I inserted more accurate directions to SUU (see Appendix 11), on our office website. Then working with Megen I created a contact list for the events (see Appendix 12). I called to reserve blocks of hotel rooms for the vendors well ahead of the events, after checking on the best rates locally. Then I systematically went down the list of contacts to prepare for the events, and completed the list either on a daily basis or weekly, depending on the task. This experience helped me develop the tools to create an event and demonstrate the follow through I can bring to any organization. Event planning is a transferable skill I will be able to use in career opportunities.

As part of my personal development, I was encouraged to take the *Strengths Quest* assessment. Then on August 1, 2011, I went online, logged in, and took the assessment. This assessment is offered to students and Alumni for a small fee. It can be of great use in selecting a career, interpersonal relationships, and other aspects of life. After I had completed it, several days later I discussed the results with Brent Jones, who is the authority in assessments, in the office. A 29-page report summarized my strengths to assist me in understanding my strengths. The Top five Themes determined the following: Learner, Intellection, Positivity, Futuristic, and Input. Here is a brief explanation of my strengths/themes. Learner means that I enjoy the process of learning, yet not necessarily the outcome and want to always improve. The theme, intellection is described as being introspective and enjoys intellectual discussions. Having positivity, as strength is being enthusiastic to the point, that it is contagious. The futuristic theme describes individuals who are inspired by the future and the possibilities. Lastly, input means a craving to know more. Often individuals enjoy collecting and archiving all types of information.

Upon reading the 29-page report I felt I understood why I felt so comfortable in this Graduate Assistant job. Almost everyday I was learning new tasks, programs or a new unique learning experience. I was constantly being stretched and challenged. It also solidified why I want to work in a higher education. My desire to learn can be filled by taking classes, listening to campus guest speakers, while employed in some capacity. It explains why I have enjoyed my academic experience so much and do not want it to end. Understanding my strengths has enabled me to understand what I can offer to a new career, which may not be in higher education and what is important as far as strengths, in my life.

In regards to my personal professional development that also benefitted the office front desk, which was shared by Student Services I attended the Scheduling and Reporting System (SARS) training on August 25, 2011. The SARS online program is a scheduling program that was used to schedule Brent Jones and Megen Ralph's appointments with students or Alumni. As a part of my employment I was asked to work at the front desk, when deemed necessary. I scheduled students with appropriate appointments and filtered questions either by phone or in person. During the training, I recorded how to proceed in scheduling appointments, so I would have a reference when I occasionally filled in for the desk, (see Appendix 14). Learning this scheduling program gave me another experience in a new program, which gave me the confidence to embrace future computer trainings I may encounter in future careers.

Early September 2011, I was given the task of submitting into the Banner Program, events, workshops or walk-in resume times into the SUU online Calendar. I often had to briefly describe the event, while making sure the information was accurate. As I became aware of them, through Megen or Brent I would immediately input them into the program. Sometimes I had

minutes to submit the information so I had to think quickly and be concise. In addition, I began inputting various documents, i.e. my duties, either daily or monthly, “how to” documents, and flyers/bookmarks which I had created, into *Google docs* for Megan or Brent to access.

In the spring of 2012, I attended Brent Jones, (Career and Professional Advisor in the office), Career Decisions course, University 1020. I found the results of the *Strength's Quest*, assisted me in career options to pursue and another assessment I took, while in the course, and was the *Strong Interest Inventory College Profile*. The profile indicated what my most important interests were to me in my overall lifestyle. The top three themes were of most interest to me were: Social (S) Empathic Helpers (Social students prefer to take a helping or altruistic approach involving teaching, developing, or caring for others). Artistic (A) Creative Communicators (Artistic students prefer to take a self-expressive or creative approach involving art/design, music, or writing). Conventional (C) (Conventional students prefer to take an orderly approach to organizing and managing finances, procedures, or data).

Brent reviewed the interests in the course in more depth, after we had all taken the assessment. I found his course was helpful in giving me the opportunity to more fully understand myself, and how important it is to look at the big picture as far as all aspects of a job or career so it can accurately fit me in diverse settings. While attending the course I was given numerous tools to assist me in my possible career options and lifestyle interests. With the matter of communication, this course assisted me greatly because of it I am able to understand how to interact with others while fostering my known profile traits and theirs. For example, I take a service approach where others can benefit from my desire to assist. This is essential in a work environment because knowing the skills and strengths of people is helpful, pairing up coworkers

based on their joint personalities can lead to greater success of various tasks simply do to their great ability to work together.

While enrolled in the Career Decisions course, I took another assessment titled the *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator*. This assessment can be helpful in the same aspects of life, as the *Strength's Quest*. The results indicated the following: 1) Introversion, 2) Sensing, 3) Thinking, and 4) Judging. Here are my explanations of my gifts of preferences: 1) Conceptualizing the problem and looking deeply into issues, 2) Knowing facts and realities needed in planning stages. Working out details in implementation stage. 3) Seeing cause and effect and spotting flaws and inconsistencies of a plan, and 4) System, organization, and decisiveness.

In retrospect this gave me an understanding of my enjoyment of past jobs or why I did not enjoy particular jobs. This assessment assisted in my career options during my exploration at that time. It also gave me a tool in which to research careers that fit my personality and character strengths. Brent reviewed my results in a 30-minute one-on-one follow-up session. He also spent time in the course reviewing more in depth indicators, which I found helpful in understanding myself in the workplace and outside of it. By understanding myself more clearly, I can explain to future employers what I can offer their organization.

As another part of my personal professional development, in mid-September 2011, I attended a 30-minute Excel training with Abe Hunt, which had two follow up longer trainings with SUU staff, in October and November. The training assisted me in gaining a better understanding and proficiency with the program. Over the next several months I used Excel for a number of tasks assigned to me, with much more ease than before I had taken the training. For

instance, in Appendix 7 – Internship Coordinators, I was tasked with updating, names, titles, and various, contact information regularly. After sometime, I navigated the fields within this spreadsheet with a greater confidence. The ability to ease through Excel is an important skill I will use in most any job I undertake and in my personal life.

To further pursue my desire to become a college academic advisor, my supervisor highly suggested attending a Utah Advising and Orientation Association (UAOA) conference in May 2012, which I did and found the experience extremely helpful in understanding the career of academic advising. I reflected upon the workshops I participated in and concluded I would bring a number of personal experiences and skills to academic advising, due to the fact I started college 35 years after graduating high school.

Often I had several flyers or handouts for students as, works in progress. The flyers were for either indicating upcoming workshops or handouts for familiarizing students with the Hire A T-Bird online program, CSO. I spent a considerable amount of time making sure the information was correct, concise or improving while multitasking. This experience improved my organizational skills.

Created new reference materials for students

The first bookmark created was an important one to familiarize the students and parents with the services offered in the Career and Professional Development Department. It was titled, “Career and Professional Development Services” (see Appendix 15). I created one bookmark then copied it, allowing for two to be on one sheet of paper because two would not fit in two columns. I would copy it on either bright yellow or another colored bright copy paper to make it

stand out, then cut them in half on a paper cutter. One master copy was filed in the cabinet, for fast access to copy, and then a stack was kept for the future events and to display on the front desk. The idea of a colored bookmark was to have the students keep one to familiarize them with the services offered to them. This tool was a unique way to advertise the services.

A second split bookmark titled “How to find internships on Hire A T-Bird” (Appendix 16A & 16B) was created to “walk through” the process of how to locate internships in the online program, familiarizing the students with Hire A T-Bird. Initially it was posted on the Internship Bulletin Boards and the front desk of the Career Café location within the Career and Professional Development Department. Then it was quickly integrated into the events because the students were unaware of how to locate internships in the program (i.e. Orientation, Career Fair, etc). A master (hard) copy was kept in a file so as to quickly copy for different events. The black and white version was copied onto bright yellow paper to catch the students’ eye. A color copy was displayed on the table at events, because color copies are less cost effective than black and white. Having that understanding students and career exploration was shifting from paper listings to online; the office provided how they could research through the bookmark.

I created a flyer to announce the new revised Graduate Requirement Exam (GRE) at half the cost (Appendix 17). It was also disseminated, via e-mail, to Internship Coordinators for displaying on their department bulletin boards and to contact various students directly. Early in the summer the office received several “revised GRE” DVDs which I was tasked to watch and take copasetic notes for Megen. This was part of the research I would do in the office. I had already taken the GRE, so I was able to provide a better perspective of the changes. By providing different ways to inform students of the services we offered numerous tools to pursue

their career path. When I implemented them in various professional settings, I continually practiced my skills in presentations and personal teaching of that service or services. By presenting the materials, I was reaching the students, as a provider does in the health field. I was advertising and presenting the important message of the services offered. Understanding how to be clear and concise in getting your message across, from the *Health Communication* course clearly facilitated my success in the office. The last requirement of my job was to represent SUU and the Career and Professional Development office at events (i.e. Orientation).

Represented the Career and Professional Development Office

On several occasions throughout the summer and following academic year I represented the office at events in professional dress (i.e. Orientation, SUU at a glance, Open House, etc). I staffed the Career and Professional Development table, for the purpose of explaining the services offered to students and Alumni by the department. I was also tasked to keep a box of handouts, the two career advisors business cards, two small easels displaying particular items for the table, and magazines (i.e. Career Rookie). Each event would determine what handouts I changed out, depending upon the audience, such as not displaying the “How to find Internships on Hire A T-Bird”, for a High School Recruitment event.

When I represented the office the first few times, I struggled, as an introvert, to push myself out of my comfort zone. I thought, “I’m not sure if I will be able to present the information with so much confidence as my supervisor, Brent Jones does.” I relate this experience to the vicarious experience/modeling as one of the four contributing factors of self-efficacy. The first time I represented the office or Career Café, I was so nervous, with butterflies

in my stomach, I felt I could not do a good job, which lowered my self-efficacy as it had done in class presentations to my peers, but I discovered after becoming so familiar over summer, with the services offered and how the presentations at tabling were mere snapshots, not full presentations, I eventually “mastered” that experience, minus the butterflies! By mastering that experience in positive outcomes my self-efficacy was increased. I knew the material and used my enthusiasm as my fuel to clearly express the information to students and parents.

Additionally, after speaking with Brent on numerous occasions, I asked questions pertinent to the situations. He had observed me at various times and was a credible source to obtain feedback. He reassured me that I was doing a great job. Over a number of tabling events I had “mastered” the experience, thus helping me to be less nervous and raised my self-efficacy.

In the communication course *Professional Writing and Presentations*, I learned how to manage my anxiety, by recognizing what I was really afraid of, find out what brought it on, always be prepared with 3 by 5 notes in the box, practice, and finally look at the opportunity to present as a positive skill I will improve on and bring to any career or personal life. An important skill I implemented was to get a hold of my sense of control, by way of visualizing, breath, and use gestures in a natural way. I kept in mind the students or parents were going to listen to the message and not evaluate me. I reminded myself; I had the ability to influence the audience with my message, the services we offered. I persuaded and informed my listeners. This ability to present or speak publicly in various situations will be essential in my future careers. The experience of representing the Career Café’ was my ability to take course work and apply it, which is making that communication connection toward professionalism. Presenting well also gave me many valuable skills; I could take from one job to another.

Quantitative Research Methods and Statistics taught me how to interpret and critique research and its statistical data. By understanding how to take social science data (like female and male) and manipulate observations and change it to numbers, in order to analyze it through a computer program such as SPSS, the researcher is then able to describe and explain what the observations reflect. This course helped me how to choose valid literature for my review. In the course *Qualitative Applications for Communication Research*, I learned how qualitative studies examine and interpret observations to discover fundamental meanings and patterns of relationships. I was able to use this knowledge for the same purpose to compile my literature review, and future research in work or personal life. Research skills are important in life because it examines life in detail and provides points of reference.

Upon my departure from the office, a restructure took place with personnel and job descriptions in addition to a budget increase. The following chapter will detail the restructure of the office. In addition, I will discuss my impact as far as the documents I created at the conception of the office.

Chapter 5 The Restructure of the Career and Professional Development Office

The following chapter will discuss at length the restructure upon my departure up to the point of this assistantship. Information was derived from interviews taken by Graduate Assistant, John Gally, Stuart Bunker, Career and Internship Advisor, and an article from the SUU Journal reporter, H. Linford. The duties shifted and were redefined by newly hired Graduate Assistants. Prior to my supervisor's departure a new staff position was created entitled, Career and Internship Advisor. When my supervisor departed, her position was not filled, but a

new director of the office was created. In addition to a new director, a new idea to connect the career services to the undergraduates was created by hiring undergraduates to be “ambassadors”. And finally student employment was shifted from the Human Resources Department to the Career and Professional Development Office.

I began my job as a Graduate Assistant in the Career Café, as the only student worker. In my position there was a continual effort made to draw in students with a relaxed atmosphere of a Café while introducing them to Hire A T-Bird and services offered. After I left my employment, the office began to restructure personnel and duties.

Upon my departure two other graduate students were hired and the duties I performed were divided and expanded among three graduate students. They worked on preparing for the upcoming career and graduate fairs. One of the graduate students was immediately in charge of creating Twitter and Facebook accounts for the office. The other graduate student remained in the office, after I left, as the Graduate Intern working on his practicum for his master’s program in Career Services, while completing the tasks of internship opportunities and the Mentor Program. I interviewed one of the graduate students to discover if any of the three-ring binder of documents and handouts, in addition to a flash drive, I created assisted him in his job. He found the information I compiled extremely beneficial. By having the original handouts for events he did not have to recreate them. The structure began to change for new full-time positions, before Megen Ralphs left her position. Stuart Bunker was hired full-time as a Career and Internship Advisor. He was to be in charge of the *Small Business Internship Program* funded for a year by a grant, written by Megen. Then, in July 2013, Brandon Street was hired as the director. There was no director up to this time, in the office. Megen Ralphs left after Heidi and Erin graduated

in May 2013 and the new director filled her office space and position with additional duties as director. (J. Gally personal communication, August 2013).

Stuart Bunker's position has evolved as the office has changed. He began by conducting outreach that included employer site visits to local small businesses assisting them in the process of creating internships and recruited students into positions. He created the first *Small Business Fair* on the campus, the following Fall 2012. All the social media for the office was taken over by him, which Heidi Essyler previously completed a portion. During his first year in the position he spent approximately 25% of his time creating templates for all the advertising in the office. The advertising included posters, flyers, and any other advertising used at office events.

Another change occurred in his position after my supervisor, Megen left her position and the Graduate Assistants graduated, leaving the office. Stuart was then in charge of managing the Career and the Graduate School Fairs in addition to continuing the *Small Business Internship Program*, without the grant. The social media remains his task in addition to continually checking and changing advertising, when it is appropriate. (S. Bunker personal communication, March 2014).

As the Career and Professional Center seems to be evolving, the undergraduate ambassadors were hired over the winter break of 2013 and they began working this spring semester 2014. The ambassadors will be the connection to students; the goal is to fill the "gap" the office felt existed between the office and students. Ambassadors are undergraduate students who are required to work 3-6 hours per week, contacting employers, getting the word out to students about the services offered in the office, and providing student feedback. (S. Bunker

personal communication, March 2014). The ambassadors also “help the students build their resumes and to find jobs and internship opportunities” (Linford, H. 2014 *SUU Journal*). Stuart Bunker supervises the ambassadors and he then reports to Brandon. The ambassadors are required to contact two small businesses to promote/create internships and EDGE projects. In addition, they are to follow up with employers who attended the Career Fair to gain feedback and if any students were hired. Ambassadors are to meet weekly and wear their “ambassador” t-shirts to student events and to promote the services offered by the office. In Fall 2013, a Graduate Intern was hired, Ugi Mendbayar and has a number of duties. She reserves SUU rooms for events, posts internships, and works with the new student ambassadors. Currently Stuart still continues to contact local small businesses for internship possibilities but spends less time than he did at the start of his position. Now he assists students like Brent Jones, does except for assessments. In a week, registration for the Graduate School Fair in the Fall 2014 will open for the eight colleges in the consortium. SUU is in charge of the registration this time, which brings a monetary sum to the department. This will be the busy beginning of several months. He will have just one day a week to assist students directly as an advisor. He is also planning a new and separate *Accounting Fair* in the Spring 2015 (S. Bunker personal communication, March 2014).

A new duty of the office will be managing student part-time employment, because Human Resources is not staffed to maintain the service. The extra bulletin boards will appear and be different from the old announcements, as the announcement number and information will appear, but the application process will be through the CSO program on the T-Bird Career website. The intent is to push students to the program, thus becoming familiar with T-Bird

Career. The bulletin boards as a whole will be used to announce future events. (S. Bunker personal communication, March 2014).

In February 2014, I attended an open house in the office that announced the name change from Career and Professional Development to the Career Center. The Career Café was no longer used in the office space. The event included staff, Graduate Interns, and Ambassadors in attendance to answer student questions as to the services offered in the office. Food and drawings were available as is usual in an event on campus to draw in students. The overall office I had worked in had new branding and a more professional look than the previous casual “café” appearance. It felt strange to be in area where I had been a test pilot for the EER Program and worked on different projects for a year.

The Experiential Education Requirement Program also adopted a new title and a new director position was created. The program had essentially the same purpose, giving SUU students the edge over other universities, which do not offer such a unique program. The following chapter will clarify the changes that took place upon my leaving the Career and Professional Development Center.

Chapter 6 Moving from EER Program to EDGE

Chapter six will discuss the Experiential Education Requirement (EER) changes from the beginning to the time of this assistantship. There were staff and responsibility changes, while the mission remains the same. Just as there were shifts in duties in the Career Center the EDGE program duties or responsibilities shifted.

When I worked with the Experiential Education Requirement (EER) Program as a test pilot and the first semester, there was no one director over the program; each Engagement Center Director was over his/her section or module of the program. Dr. Todd Petersen, the Director of Creativity and Innovation Center was the EER Program Manager, more or less the director. The weekly meetings were held with the Dean of the University College, Dr. Patrick Clarke, Dr. Petersen, each Director, Megen Ralphs, and myself. Occasionally all of the test pilots were in attendance. The program evolved to moving Dr. Todd Petersen, into a new position as the first EDGE program director.

Two years ago, the EER Program title was changed to EDGE. It was changed upon the recommendation of an outside media consultant, Dian Thomas. EDGE stands for Education Designed to Give Experience, which allows the university to focus on the purpose of the program, which is to give students an edge over their competition. The name *Guru* was determined to not be politically correct for a teaching assistant. Hence it was changed to “mentor”.

There have been significant refinements to the program. There are now two tracks: Original Projects and Select Projects. Original Projects are self-designed unique projects that require a full proposal. Select Projects are pre-established programs (like Alternate Spring Break) that students can simply sign up for when they desire. They are ongoing and meet the EDGE program requirements in general, but don't require a full proposal because we're aware of the programs and have deemed them appropriate for the EDGE requirement. (T. Petersen, personal conversation March 31, 2014)

According to Jeb Branin, Associate Dean to the University College, who is in charge of the program mentors, the pay rate for the mentors was changed to being based on the years of service and leadership responsibilities amongst other mentors. (J. Branin, personal conversation March 31, 2014)

The EDGE program has been refined and the ease of navigating CANVAS has benefited the students from the time of its inception, while the purpose has remained the same. I feel privileged to have been part of a unique program and often wished I had been an undergraduate at the time, to take part in the total experience. It is an important part of higher education that has been lacking for some time. In the final chapter of this assistantship I will conclude the overall capstone.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

This final chapter will reflect my assessment of the overall assistantship and my personal growth. This graduate assistant project is a detailed reflection of my personal growth as an individual in a new student position at SUU, how it pertains to a professional communication degree, and to future career and my personal life. I worked in the position from May 2011 to June 29, 2012, which during that time I kept a binder of my daily notes and ongoing office projects, in order to create this assistantship. Within that time frame I worked in a position that began with a few responsibilities and as the months past, more responsibilities were given. This graduate assistantship was new to the Career and Professional Development Center/Career Center as were the responsibilities. Reflecting back I had far more new tasks or projects within the first six months than the last seven months. I looked at it as a new adventure everyday,

which was not always pleasant. The unpleasant experiences I faced, occurred during the times of struggle with my own insecurity or my lack of self-efficacy, to achieve an understanding of why something was not working or something was missing with the procedure. I embraced the important concept of being adaptable in an office setting. This is an important skill in any career and in life. Change is inevitable in life and the professional world. Most of the thirteen months were positive and extremely rewarding and I was fortunate to have, I considered two great supervisors, Megan Ralphs and Brent Jones whom gave me encouragement and shared experiences. Both created opportunities to become stronger in my self-authorship.

Megen also contributed immensely to my self-efficacy in a positive manner, as did Brent, by being patient with my struggles in new computer programs. I was learning to navigate through three databases in the Hire A T-Bird website, while test piloting a new on line course program EER, now EDGE, while preparing the Career Café physically and on its website during the summer of 2011 (May – mid Aug), in a time frame of five hours, five days a week. This experience sharpened my organizational skills immensely. It gave me a glimpse into what is expected in the professional world. Bringing the knowledge learned in the communication program into the experiences gave me the applied knowledge important to a professional communication degree. By gaining an applied knowledge this degree increases in its value. I explain how Social Cognitive Theory was an important part of my overall experience.

Social Cognitive Theory, previously known as Social Learning Theory, has an added component, social. The social part of this theory says we learn behaviors by observing other people through observational learning, imitation and modeling. During my thirteen months in the position I know I imitated and modeled frequently over the first few months and less toward

the end of my assistantship. I discovered at the beginning of my position, when I had no “previous experience” to base my ability on with the EER program, it sometimes affected my self-efficacy negatively. My self-efficacy was low at times when asked questions by the TAs/Mentors, to which I had no answers unless I had just been given an answer, minutes prior to another TA. I just had to pass the questions along to the creativity director, Dr. Todd Petersen. Being the middle manager was crucial to the test program by keeping the information flowing in an expedited manner. I often “modeled” Megan’s behaviors or Brent’s, early on being unsure in interpersonal situations, i.e. meetings or tabling at events, at the beginning of this position. In addition to modeling during my assistantship, I was fortunate to have “encouragement,” during those times of frustration with the TAs/Mentors, when they would forget I was a “test pilot” also in EER/EDGE. I was also fortunate to rely on Brent to “bounce off” how I felt after the first few times representing the office while tabling, that my experience was not a reflection of inability but a factor of self-efficacy (physiological arousal/how excited I was), which were the butterflies in my stomach before, during, and after. Reflecting full circle the four self-efficacy concepts, my self-efficacy rose over the following months when representing the Career Center to the point of creating a “previous experience.” Also what I learned in the *Professional Writing and Presentations* was crucial to my self-improvement in presenting. The ability to present material is a valuable skill for professional and personal experience.

When I began my assistantship, the job description I was provided had few responsibilities. As the months went on, my duties and expectations were increased. My adaptation skill was important as I was expected to have several tasks going at once. The first responsibility I was assigned was to prepare the physical location of the Career Café, more

specifically the open area within the Career Center. For several weeks I learned out to access and submit work orders, surplus, and recycled outdated items and documents. The new physical location created, revealed a location for graduate school, internship, and career information. By mid-June, another responsibility began which was a test pilot for the new Experiential Education Program (EER program). I was asked to test the program for the purpose of discovering the perspective and skill set of a mature student (in age and length in class standing). I was the only graduate student of the 13 other students chosen. In addition to navigating the program through the course requirements, I was the liaison between the five Engagement Center Directors, Mentors, and students via email and weekly meetings. I found my most difficult responsibility was being the “middle manager” funneling questions from the other test pilots to the creativity director. More often I was unable to answer the TAs questions because I too was a test pilot, but had to pose them to the director or the Engagement Center Directors. During this time, I coordinated continual mass communication between the Engagement Centers, TA’s, Dr. Petersen, etc. notifying course updates. I also learned how to navigate the three databases on the Hire A T-Bird website, in addition to assisting in the preparation of the Fall Graduate Fair.

After learning to navigate the internship database well, by mid-July I was disseminating and posting on Hire A T-Bird, on bulletin boards, and or via email to departments. Posting internships was an ever-changing task. I would receive so little information from the employers at times I had to complete some research on my part, via the company’s website or correspondence via email, gleaning pertinent information. Whereas there were times as I recreated the posting, due to foreign language had to be made clear in interpretation to English as to the terms of the posting. A significant number of internships increased in early spring so

much so it was the top priority of my day, when I arrived and throughout my 5-hour workday. Gaining the experience of working under time constraints, gave me transferable skills in future jobs.

During July and August I continued to test the EER program to ready it for Fall 2011 while corresponding through another database in the CSO program, Alumni Mentor. Throughout this time I continued to create documents that were pertinent to the office, for students, employers, and future graduate assistants.

As part of my personal professional development I took part in a person assessment titled, *Strengths Quest Assessment*. I discovered this a useful assessment in understanding myself and to career options. In the spring I gained a far more extensive understanding of it in the Career Decisions Course. Within that course I took the *Strong Interest Inventory College Profile* and *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator* assessments which where equally helpful in broadening my career exploration and a better understanding of myself. The assessments provided me with skills I could list on my resume, when applicable to a position.

To broaden my personal professional development I attended Excel training sessions in addition to the SARS scheduling program, and a UAOA Conference. The trainings helped me more fully in my tasks and larger responsibilities in the office and future careers. And the conference gave me a broader understanding of academic advising in Utah.

To maintain priorities of my responsibilities, weekly meetings with my supervisor were essential. Often I had several tasks, larger projects, and or research in progress, so updates and or questions were taken care of at that time or daily. Meetings were also for planning events or

going over the monthly calendar with my supervisors, Megen and Brent. I also input weekly and monthly information into the online student calendar, which popped up under “Academic”, Walk-In Resume times, events, and workshops. This was a new and significant responsibility if the office was to reach the students.

In order to reach the students with the information/services the office provided, I created a split bookmark that was just as important as an online calendar. Also to encourage the students to begin using the Hire A T-Bird online program I created another split bookmark. It listed the steps to navigate the program, in order to locate internships. The two bookmarks became part of the materials for events and were also put in strategic places, bulletin boards and the Career and Professional Center/Career Center front desk.

Representing the office over the summer and briefly the following year was an experience where I gained enough positive self-efficacy and applied the basics of presentations, from *Writing Professional and Presentations* to actually looked forward to the task. I took my organized box of materials (bookmarks, career magazines, etc.) depending on which event. The presentation was always brief and I discovered the overall positive energy at the event assisted me in relaxing to the point of enjoying standing for the allotted time.

My role or responsibilities in the office was restructured among three students after I left my position. In addition, an undergraduate student became the supervisor of the mentors in the EER program, for a semester. Then in the Spring EER became EDGE and Jeb Branin, became the supervisor over the mentors. Two graduate assistants were hired and John Gally remained as a graduate intern. The two graduate assistants became responsible for preparing for the Career

and Graduate Fairs. They also increased their responsibilities by creating and maintaining new Twitter and Facebook accounts. I discovered they had more time to devote to taking over the 600 plus employers contact list for the Career Fair, which freed up time for Megen to accomplish her internship outreach and other responsibilities. They had more time, because John was tasked to take over the three databases: part-time jobs, internships and mentors, in addition to creating frequent flyers for office workshops.

John found it extremely helpful that I had left him electronic copies (on a flash drive) of the bookmarks and Mentor welcome letter so he had the ability to simply change the content or individuals which no longer worked in the Career and Professional Development Center. During his employment in the office, he was also working on his practicum hours with Brent Jones, in his graduate program in Career Services (online program through Walden University). By creating the documents and leaving them for future employees, I made a significant impact.

Another change or evolution so to speak in the office was the hiring of an individual, in a new position as Career and Internship Advisor, Stuart Bunker. In a conversation with Stuart, I discovered he had been responsible for the office social media. That meant he improved the “services” bookmark to a more professional look than the one I created. I expect the budget in the office has increased over time, since my departure, because he had magnets and a few other items to hand out at events, we did not have when the office began its evolution in the summer of 2011. Stuart was hired to be responsible for the *Small Business Internship Program*, which Megen had written the grant. Megen Ralphs’ departure necessitated hiring a Director to take her responsibilities as advisor and more. The office then evolved as far as the hiring of another Graduate Intern, which has a few responsibilities to complete in her 20 hours a week, as John

had also. She posts the internships on bulletin boards far less because there is greater access and ease to online resources. The Career Center has the opportunity to use the previously Human Resources owned bulletin boards to push the students to access the application process in the CSO program. The Career Center has now evolved to another point.

The Experiential Education Requirement (EER) has changed its name, but not the purpose since it was launched in 2011. The program name has been changed to EDGE and a director has been in place that had not previously existed, which is fitting to place Dr. Todd Petersen as he had been in the program from its inception. From the programs' beginning the Career Café/Career Center has been the location for students to receive assistance from the TAs/mentors. A mentor can still be found in the office, but Jeb Branin (Associate Dean to the University College) supervises them, yet the Career Center has no administrative responsibility over the mentors. Currently, there is not an existing banner displaying scheduled hours of the mentors in the Center. Instead, a small white board at the front desk is used to indicate if a Mentor is available at that time. The Café logo has been removed from the services bookmark, but a more professional look remains. The designated area I chose to place graduate school and career information in is still being used and accessed in the exact location. In place of the bright yellow bookmark to locate internships, Ambassadors are wearing their Ambassador T-shirts, quietly out reaching to students in events on campus speaking about how to locate internships that are important to their future. They also talk about the importance of accessing the services of resume writing in a way the students are receptive. Ambassadors are also working off campus connecting to small businesses to assist them in implementing internships and following up on past EDGE projects. They are filling the gap between the office and the services offered in the

Career Center. Although there were many challenges during my internship, I am grateful to have had the opportunities that I did, which propelled the program and myself in countless positive ways.

Being a mentor along side other mentors, was an essential part of the EDGE program. We created a learning partnership, by listening to one another and expressing ourselves, while communicating concepts, moving others and ourselves to self-authorship. That experience gave me stronger interpersonal skills by having the ability to apply my knowledge from the communication program to the experiences on a daily basis.

The most valuable skills I learned are transferable. Employers find great value in employees who have the abilities to adapt and accomplish vast, diverse tasks. Interpersonal communication, leadership, and organizational skills allowed me to fill many roles. The skills I learned are just as important in a career, personal and social life. I am more optimistic about life, and have stronger perseverance than when I began as a Graduate Assistant, because of the various experiences and the ability to apply the knowledge gained from the communication program. My success in those experiences has given me much broader career options and an understanding of people. I am privileged to have had the support of my supervisor, professors, and students in my journey.

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APPENDIX 1

Title: Graduate Assistant, Career and Professional Development

The Career Café is the location for students to find Career and Professional Development services related to their academic studies, career decisions, internships, and after graduation plans. Some of the services the Career Café provides are:

- Career Assessments
- Resume/Cover Letter reviews
- Job/internship search techniques
- Interviewing skills/mock interviews
- Graduate school preparation
- Mentor Network
- Career Workshops

Internship Description:

- Dual responsibilities in the University College and Career & Professional Development Office
- Serves as University 1010 course liaison between the Engagement Center Directors, Teaching Assistants (TAs), and the students
- Monitor TA's time sheets, availability, absenteeism, and questions
- Serves as teaching assistant (Guru)-mentor students in University 1010 class
- Coordinates mass communication between departments, TA's, etc. for course updates, new internships, etc.
- Disseminate and post incoming internship opportunities in "Hire-A-T-Bird" (CSO program and departments
- Correspond to mentors in the SUU Mentoring Network
- Attend a weekly one-on-one meeting with supervisor to discuss upcoming projects and personal professional development
- Attend meetings with supervisor to plan events such as: Graduate Fair, Career Fair, and monthly office calendar
- Create and set up materials for display in recruitment of High School Freshman, Open Houses, and Orientation events. Represent the Career & Professional Development Office in recruitment, at Career and Graduate Fairs

APPENDIX 2

1. From the Current Students page
 2. Under heading Financial Resources: Student Employment, Employee
 3. Forms, Hourly Late Time Form
 4. Type in hours and dates
 5. Sign and ask Megen to sign
-
- Hand carry to the payroll office and leave in the box on desk.

APPENDIX 3

Southern Utah University's Academic, Career & Development Office posts positions for Equal Opportunity Employers and is fully committed to the principle of nondiscrimination in all employment-related practices.

DISCLAIMER

Southern Utah University's Academic, Career & Development Office acts only as a referral service and makes no particular recommendations regarding employers' safety, wages, working conditions or other aspects of positions posted by this office. Due to the volume of jobs received by this office we are unable to research the integrity of each organization or person that lists a job with us. Therefore, **you are urged to undertake this responsibility yourself.**

APPENDIX 4

1. Log into Hire A T-Bird switch to Admin in URL with my admin log in
2. Tools
3. Reports
4. Report Search
5. Report Category
6. Job Reports then Search
7. Search “Megen Internships”
8. Generate Mail Merge (**Before clicking on Megen’s form make sure a form is on your desk top**) by **“Opening Internships Merg.doc”**
9. Open download
10. Enable & save to desktop
11. Pull out the new Internships to send to Internship Coordinators

APPENDIX 5

Actual posting from the CSO Program

Job Title: Paralegal Assistant

Job ID: 4263

No of Openings:

Work Schedule: Flexible

Hours:

Wage/Salary: Unpaid

Anticipated Start Date:

Supervisor: Kevin

Job Description: Organizing files, dealing with clients, preparing cases for litigation, and litigation tasks.

Qualifications: Willing to be flexible with the duties as assigned.

Application Instructions: Send via e-mail cover letter & resume to Selena:
sashment@robertdebry.com

Location: St. George

Position Type: Internship

Job Category: Business: Mgt/Sales/Marketing, Communication

Majors: College of Humanities & Social Sciences, College of Science, School of Business

Deadline: 05/04/2012

APPENDIX 6

The actual recreated posting sent to the Internship Coordinators

Internship

Job Title: Paralegal Assistant

Job Category: Business: Mgmt/Sales/Marketing, Communication

Majors: College of Humanities & Social Sciences, College of Science, School of Business

Deadline: 05/04/2012

Work Schedule: Flexible

Wage/Salary: unpaid

Supervisor: Kevin

Job Description: Organizing files, dealing with clients, preparing cases for litigation,
and litigation tasks.

Qualifications: Willing to be flexible with the duties as assigned.

Application Instructions: Send via e-mail cover letter & resume to Selena:

sashment@robertdebry.com **Location:** St. George

APPENDIX 7-A

1. Go to suu.edu
 2. Click on Academics
 3. Click on “University College” under colleges and schools tab
 4. On left hand side of the section, click on Career & Professional Development
 5. On right hand side click on Employers and Recruiters
 6. Go to Employer login under Hire A T-Bird
 7. Type your email & password
 8. You are now on the Home Page where you will click “My Profile” and complete the information.
 9. Click on “My Jobs” to create a new job
 10. At the end, there will be a job status box where you will mark “pending”
 11. After our office approves a job, we will assign you a job “active” status.
- **If you are inactive on the site too long, it will kick you off. So you have to log on to finish. I suggest that you quickly insert the data.**

APPENDIX 7-B

Internship Notes

When typing in Internships, make sure “internship” is in the **Job Title, so that they will appear on the Internship Report, not the Job Report.**

How to add a job/internship in Hire A T-Bird:

1. Go to Employer Database
2. Click on Job Search
3. Click ID # or job title
4. Click Add Job
5. Insert info from word doc (click & insert)

How to find information without contacting the employer, to speed the process:

Google

Look up a physical address or phone number: yellowpages.com

If there is no web site you will have to email the employer to obtain the needed information.

APPENDIX 8-A

Mentor Registration Information

1. You will receive an email from webservices@suu.edu. This will be information you will **copy and paste** into the “**Mentor Database**” of **Hire A T-Bird**. This is how you will proceed:
2. Open “Hire A T-Bird” through your Portal and **change** the URL from Student to Admin, then log in with your username and password.
3. Click on **Data Bases** at the top, then **Mentor**
4. **Cut and paste the information** from our email.
5. Type the Alum’s first initial of their “first name” and last name as their **Username** such as Debbie Hunt would be **dhunt**
6. The **password** is always: **mentor**
7. **Double check** the information as correct, and hit the **Edit** if you need to change it after you complete it. Then hit _____
8. Now take the “**Welcome Letter**” from the jump drive and change the following information:
date, name, salutation, and username and password
9. Then attach the letter to the email of the Alum. Double check that the SUU Mentoring Network, letter is correct. **Save** the letter as a pdf document and “save as” both the Microsoft document and pdf, onto the jump drive
10. The following is an email you will receive (Mentor Registration Information).

APPENDIX 8-A (Cont.)

EXAMPLE OF EMAIL

Southern Utah University Mail - Mentor Registration Information

https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?ui=2&ik=da2fc2cd1a&view=pt&se...



Deborah Hunt <debbiehunt@suuemail.net>

Mentor Registration Information

1 message

webservices@suu.edu <webservices@suu.edu>
To: alumni@suu.edu, careercafe@suu.edu

Wed, May 30, 2012 at 12:55 PM

Category: SUU Alumnus
Full Name: Mr. [REDACTED]
Maiden Name:
Degree/Major: BA / Criminal Justice & Sociology
Graduation Year: 2004
Employer: University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Position/Title: Academic Advisor
Industry: Education
Home Phone:
Work Phone: [REDACTED]
Cell Phone: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]
Home Address: [REDACTED]
Home City: [REDACTED]
Home State: [REDACTED]
Home Zip: [REDACTED]
Work Address: [REDACTED]
Work City: [REDACTED]
Work State: [REDACTED]
Work Zip: [REDACTED]

Arbett (circled)
*use
ID*

Brief Job Description: Primary responsibility: Developmental advising of undergraduate students; I subscribe to strengths-based theoretical approach which means I try and use positive and encouraging words. I don't ignore a weakness, but rather help the student identify what they do/are doing well and then try to strategize ways to do more of that. This approach in a paradoxical way can transform and revolutionize a student's pathway onto more successful grounds. My goal is to help students become their best and reach their fullest potential during the formative college years and learn to take charge of their existence.

Preferred Method of Contact: Email, Work Phone, Cell Phone

I Would Like to be Contacted: 1-2 times per month

Mentor Activities: Informational Interviews, Job Shadowing, Guest Speaking

Post Jobs/Internships, View Resumes, and Recruit on Campus: No

APPENDIX 8-B

e-mail to send

The following email is to send and keep one or more in your drafts ready when you receive more than one at a time:

Dear Mentor

Thank you for signing up on the SUU Mentoring Network. Attached you will find a brief letter with your mentor profile information. Please review the document and contact us with any questions. Thank you and Go T-Birds!

APPENDIX 9-A

WELCOME LETTER SENT AS AN ATTACHMENT WITHIN THE EMAIL

May 21, 2012

Dear Ms [REDACTED],

Welcome to the SUU Mentoring Network! We are thrilled you are joining our SUU Alumni and Friends in this worthwhile program. Your connection to the students is invaluable as they begin the journey of developing their own career paths.

Your Mentor Account has been established in our "Hire-a-T-Bird" database which allows our students to access the mentoring network online. We encourage you to review your profile, [change your password](#), and add any additional information you feel might be helpful to our students. Access you mentor account by clicking [here](#)

Username: ehiatt
Password: mentor

Thank you for joining us in sharing your experience and direction to assist our students in their career exploration. For questions or comments regarding the SUU Mentoring Network, please contact us at careercafe@suu.edu or 435-865-8784. We are grateful you have chosen the opportunity to "**Take a T-Bird Under Your Wing!**"

Sincerely,

Career & Professional Development Office
Michael Carmine
Brent Jones
Megen Ralphs

Alumni Relations Office (435.586.7777)
Mindy Benson
Ron Cardon
Linda Bauer
Ryan Richey

APPENDIX 9-B

Welcome Letter



Career & Professional Development Center

351 W. University Blvd.
Cedar City, UT 84720
Office: Sharwan Smith Center 177
Phone: (435) 865-8677
Email: hireatbird@suu.edu

August 9, 2013

Dear Ms Hiatt,

Welcome to the SUU Mentoring Network! We are thrilled you are joining our SUU Alumni and Friends in this worthwhile program. Your connection to the students is invaluable as they begin the journey of developing their own career paths.

Your Mentor Account has been established in our "*Hire-a-T-Bird*" database which allows our students to access the mentoring network online. We encourage you to review your profile, change your password, and add any additional information you feel might be helpful to our students. Access you mentor account by clicking [here](#)

Username: ehiatt
Password: mentor

Thank you for joining us in sharing your experience and direction to assist our students in their career exploration. For questions or comments regarding the SUU Mentoring Network, please contact us at careercafe@suu.edu or 435-865-8677. We are grateful you have chosen the opportunity to "*Take a Thunderbird Under Your Wing!*"

Sincerely,

Career & Professional Development Office

Brandon Armstrong
Stuart Bunker
Brent Jones
Megen Ralphs

Alumni Relations Office

Mindy Benson
Ron Cardon
Linda Bauer
Ryan Richey



APPENDIX 10

Directions to SUU

From Las Vegas, Nevada

- I-15 Via Exit 76B toward Salt Lake City
- Take Exit UT-56 toward Cedar City
- Turn left onto W. 200 Street
- Turn right onto N. 300 W. (which is just past N. 400 W.)
- Take the 2nd right onto University Blvd. / W. Center Street

From North of Cedar City, Utah

- I-15 South
- Take Exit 59
- Turn right onto 200 North
- Turn right on 800 West
- Drive 2 blocks to SUU

APPENDIX 11

Contacts for events

1. Contact Centralized Scheduling at phone # 8100 and reserve a table in the Sharwan Smith mall, 2 weeks prior. Purpose: hand out ¼ sheets to announce the fair, in lieu of posters on bulletin boards. Ask SUUSA to man the table, for 2 days prior.
2. Put on SUU calendar: need admin access
3. Contact Jen Burt: Run event on front page of SUU website, via her email on her site.
4. Contact THOR: thorsuu@gmail.com Determine prior what he is to do.
6. Article in JOURNAL?
7. Publicity: Toilet times & page 2
8. For any questions regarding publicity, please email suusa.publicity@gmail.com
SUUSA Publicity
P: [801-856-9853](tel:801-856-9853)
E: suusa.publicity@gmail.com
Sharwan Smith Center ST205
9. Contact Jane for donations from the Bookstore.
10. Reserve parking lot spaces with Parking Services.

Day of:

Set out reserved parking in Library lot. Put our lawn posters across campus.

APPENDIX 12

SARS Training Notes

There is a 2 week span (Current)

F 3 – Forward

F 2 – Backwards

History

Time frames for Brent's Appointments:

90 min "Career"

30 min "Resume"

30 min "Advising (Nursing – specifically)"

60 min Mock interview

Resumes – Megen may extend to 1 hour

DBL Click to see who it is

Cancel – Have to put my initials

It will give "Prep Time" stays open

To Sched: (Yellow is open time to make appts.)

** Make sure you put the phone # of student! You may have to reschedule.

Type T#

REASON CODE:

Worry about Career – Megen/Brent

Grad school – Megen

Internship Exploration – Megen

APPENDIX 12 (CONTINUED)

REASON CODE:

1.5 SO BLOCK TO 2 – Mock Interview – Brent

30 min - Resume – Megen/Brent

Commit, Initial, Tes

Extend for > time

R click over box to un-extend or extend or copy to make another

Move to change time

F9 – In no T#, it will give a student guest # (add) (Alumni)

Hit F9 to create #

WALK – IN HRS:

Opening, Drop in

Add – T# or Last Name

Select Advisor

Commit Drop in

If they have to leave DBL Click Name

APPENDIX 13
Career and Professional Development Services Bookmark



Career and Professional Development

Services

- Career/Major Decision making
- Career Assessments
 - Myers-Briggs Type Indicator©
 - Strong Interest Inventory©
 - StrengthsQuest©
- Resume/Cover Letter reviews
 - Walk-ins
 - One-on-one appointments
- Job/internship search techniques
- Interviewing skills/mock interviews
- Graduate school preparation
- Mentor Network
- Referrals to other resources

Career Resources

- Library
 - Books
 - Periodicals
- Hire A T-Bird
 - Full and part time job databases
 - Internship databases
- Optimal Resume
 - Resume development
 - Portfolio development

What Can I Do With a Major In....information

Credit Courses

- University 1020 – Career Decisions
(2 elective credits)
- University 4920 – Career and Professional
Development Workshop
(2 elective credits)

Workshops

- Resume development
- Job/Internship search techniques
- Various Other Career Café workshops

Located in ST 177 or 435.865.8677 for appointments

APPENDIX 14-A

How to find Internships bookmark in black and white and color



FIND INTERSHIPS ON :

Here's how:

Step #1: Log into your MYSUU portal

Step #2: Under SUU Apps, click on "Hire A T-Bird"

** New students to this site follow the few prompts to complete your profile*

Step #3: Click on "Job Search"

Step #4: In "Position type" click Internships

Step #5: Click "Search"

Helpful Hints:

- Narrow criteria by completing other fields if desired
- Search by: Location, Industry, Job categories
- For best results – Keep search criteria broad



FIND INTERSHIPS ON :

Here's how:

Step #1: Log into your MYSUU portal

Step #2: Under SUU Apps, click on "Hire A T-Bird"

** New students to this site follow the few prompts to complete your profile*

Step #3: Click on "Job Search"

Step #4: In "Position type" click Internships

Step #5: Click "Search"

Helpful Hints:

- Narrow criteria by completing other fields if desired
- Search by: Location, Industry, Job categories
- For best results – Keep search criteria broad



APPENDIX 14-B

FIND INTERNSHIPS ON:



Here's how:

- Step #1: Log into your My SUU portal
- Step #2: Under SUU Apps, click on "Hire A T-Bird"
- * *New students to this site* follow the few prompts to complete your profile
- Step #3: Click on "Job Search"
- Step #4: In "Position type" click Internships
- Step #5: Click "Search"

Helpful Hints:

- Narrow criteria by completing other fields if desired
- Search by: Location, Industry, Job categories
- For best results – Keep search criteria broad



FIND INTERNSHIPS ON:



Here's how:

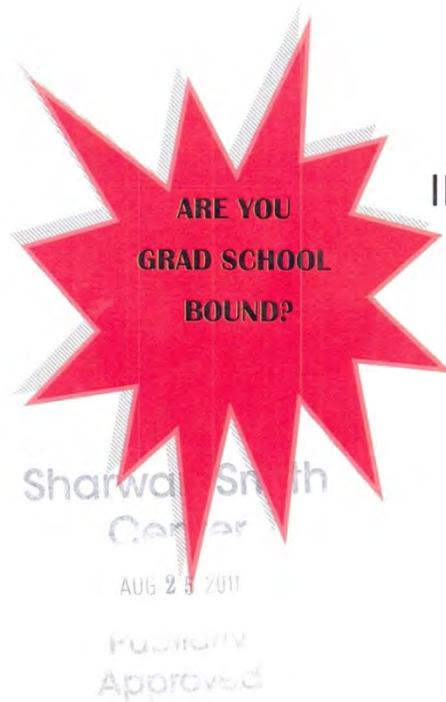
- Step #1: Log into your My SUU portal
- Step #2: Under SUU Apps, click on "Hire A T-Bird"
- * *New students to this site* follow the few prompts to complete your profile
- Step #3: Click on "Job Search"
- Step #4: In "Position type" click Internships
- Step #5: Click "Search"

Helpful Hints:

- Narrow criteria by completing other fields if desired
- Search by: Location, Industry, Job categories
- For best results – Keep search criteria broad



APPENDIX 15
Flyer for GRE



IF YOU WERE THINKING OF
TAKING THE GRE
YOU CAN TAKE THE GRE
revised
FOR 1/2 OFF!

REGISTER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

IN ORDER TO TAKE IT BEFORE
SEPT. 30TH
YOUR SCORES WILL BE SENT
BY MID-NOV

FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THE GRE *revised*:
www.ets.org/gre/testtakernews/signup