

# WOU GROW<sup>®</sup>

Employment during college helps contribute to student success when meaningful connections between learning in the classroom and learning on the job are made evident.



WOU GROW<sup>®</sup> (Guided Reflection on Work) uses brief, structured conversations between student employees and their supervisors to help students connect the skills and knowledge they are gaining in the classroom with the work they are doing, and vice versa. WOU GROW<sup>®</sup> is focused on making student employment a "high-impact activity" - one that requires students to reflect on their learning and connect their learning within and beyond the classroom.

## Four quick questions

WOU GROW<sup>®</sup> conversations are guided by four quick questions:

1. How is this job fitting in with your academics?
2. What are you learning here that's helping you in school?
3. What are you learning in class that you can apply here at work?
4. Can you give me a couple of examples of things you've learned here that you think you'll use in your chosen profession?

## Why GROW<sup>®</sup>?

Research on student employment shows that students know they are learning many "real world" work skills, such as time management, conflict resolution, and balancing priorities. What they may not connect on their own, however, is their classroom learning and their jobs. While some connections are really natural (e.g. a graphic design major working on a marketing team), others require a bit more thought and deliberate attention. Supervisors are very important assets in helping students make these connections between work and school.

Supervisors regularly check in with student employees on work flow, tasks, and assignments. Taking an extra minute or two to periodically check in on how students are doing in classes, and even asking them to relate what they're learning on the job to course work or vice versa can be all it takes to help get some connections firing.

It is our hope that with the tools and information provided here, you can initiate a similar intervention program with your student employees. We have provided the details of WOU GROW<sup>®</sup> and some resources to help you design and implement the intervention in your setting.

The Student Affairs Student Employment as HIP committee has outlined nine outcomes that will be measured in the Student Employee Survey, that we expect students to gain as a result of being a student employee in the Division.

OUTCOMES OF STUDENT EMPLOYMENT	STUDENT EMPLOYEE SURVEY QUESTIONS
1. Writing Skills	1. My job has helped me improve my writing skills
2. Verbal Communication	2. My job has helped me improve my verbal communication skills
3. Diversity	3. Because of my job, I am able to work effectively with individuals with a variety of backgrounds, experiences and cultures
4. Functioning Independently	4. My job has helped me develop more effective time management skills
5. Conflict Negotiation	5. My job helped me develop conflict negotiation skills
6. Problem Solving	6. My job has helped me use critical thinking skills to form opinions and solve problems
7. Preparation for employment outside of college	7. My job has helped me prepare me for the world of full-time employment
8. Learn about career options	8. My job has helped me learn more about career options
9. See connections between work and academics	9. I can see connections between my job and my academic major/coursework

### How can you use the nine outcomes?

The nine outcomes of student employment listed above can be used in your conversations with students. You can use the outcomes to help prompt students when they are thinking about what they've learned in their job and how it connects to what they've learned in the classroom and vice versa. Consider focusing on 1-4 outcomes in your conversations.

#### Examples 1

Supervisor: "What are you learning here that's helping you in school?"

Student: "I don't know."

Supervisor: "Well, what about time management? What have you learned about time management working here that you have used outside of work?"

## **Example 2**

Supervisor: "What are you learning in class that you can apply here at work?"

Student: "Hmmm . . ."

Supervisor: "You mentioned that you are taking a communications course. What have you learned about verbal communication in that course that you could use here?"

## **Example 3**

Supervisor: "Can you give me a couple of examples of things you've learned here that you think you'll use in your chosen profession?"

Student: "I haven't learned anything here that will be useful in my career."

Supervisor: "What about working effectively with individuals from a variety of backgrounds and experiences? What have you learned about working with diverse others here that you could use in your future career?"

Scaffold to support reflection transfer learning between work and academics Method for achieving outcomes – not enough just to have outcomes, need an intervention to accomplish goals. Our students are learning career/work related information in classes, and academics are brought to life through work. GROW helps bring that learning out.

Structured program – this is a structured learning method that also provides a simple step-by-step program with training, support and resources for supervisors

Assessment – the student survey addresses assessment on student learning outcomes that we share in Student Affairs

## **Draft of possible timeline for WOU GROW:**

1. Present to SA leadership – have discussion, get feedback (August '18)
2. Pilot program (Fall '18)
  - a. Create survey on outcomes and send to all student employees in our division – get baseline about what students are currently learning and what type of conversations they are having with their supervisors
  - b. Recruit, select and train pilot supervisors who will act as champions of program, and provide honest feedback on initial implementation
  - c. Provide supervisor resources
  - d. Gather feedback and reflections from supervisors
3. Present results at Student Affairs gathering Winter '19 term
4. Begin program interventions (Spring '19)
  - a. Train supervisors on WOU GROW notes template
5. Track results with SE survey to all employees – compare all students to GROW participants
6. Grow GROW!