Paper / Proposal Title:
Launching Into Life After College: Imagining What we Don’t Know

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Abstract

Focus group question: When you think about graduating from college, what concerns come to mind?

Student: “I feel like I am standing in the middle of a busy city intersection, with too much noise and too many lights—I am not sure which direction to go.”

This presentation features an innovative course for college juniors and seniors, Launching Into Life After College, piloted at a public regional university. The course is not merely about the transition from college into life; it is the lived experience of transitioning—it is personal and intellectual. It is a problem based project, with the problem being the student’s need to manage her/his imminent entry into life after college. The central objective of the course is to facilitate the transition into life after college. The course encourages the student to explore their emotional and intuitive responses to the upcoming transition, in addition to reflecting on such concepts as success, happiness, and decision making. Beyond emphasis on early career planning, the course takes a broader approach to bring direct attention to unique developmental stresses of emerging adults in modern society, recognizing that navigating these challenges is inextricably related to how well students fare in the post-college transition. Research
findings from the development and piloting of the course, applicability to teaching and suggestions for helping students are highlighted.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):
  Jeanette Andonian, MSW, PhD, LCSW has been on the faculty at the USM School of Social Work since 2001. She is currently serving as the Director of the School of Social Work and the MSW Program at USM. She was the MSW Program Coordinator for seven years previously. She came to social work academia with an extensive social work practice background in healthcare and mental health, and she has worked in major academic medical centers in Boston and New Orleans, doing inpatient, outpatient, and community-based work. She received a B.S in Psychology at Northeastern University in 1984, the MSW degree in 1987 from Simmons College, and a PhD in Social Work at Tulane University in 2001. She also taught in the Tulane University MSW Program for five years. In 2016, she was elected to receive the USM Faculty Senate Award for Teaching Excellence. She has published a number of articles in professional journals and has delivered presentations at numerous national conferences over the years. Common themes that weave through Dr. Andonian’s work in all areas relate to empowering disenfranchised people, promoting resilience and enhancing social justice.

David Bantz, Eng.Sc.D. in Engineering Science
Dave graduated from Columbia Engineering in 1970 with a doctoral degree in Engineering Science, among others. After two years directing programming activities at a start-up, he joined IBM Research, where he worked full and part-time for 38 years. His interests there included personal computing, computer graphics, wireless local-area networking and mobile computing. Dave began teaching as a graduate student at Columbia and has continued, on and off, since 1968. He began teaching at USM in 2003 and teaches the first and second courses in Java programming, Software Project Management, and Web/Enterprise Computing Architectures. In his spare time he enjoys photography, making cabinets and furniture, and attempting to keep his old house in an acceptable state of repair.

Dennis Gilbert M.F.A.
After receiving his M.F.A. in fiction at the Iowa Writers Workshop, Dennis Gilbert parlayed an interest in fine food into an alternative career as a chef. In the ensuing decade, he earned acclaim for his innovative cuisine and wrote extensively on food, cooking, and restaurants for Portland Magazine, Yankee, and Time/Life Books. While he continued to publish fiction, he also began writing poetry; Cormorant Diving, a in a fine arts letterpress edition, was published in 1990 by Muse Press. A growing interest in the interdisciplinary studio led, in 1993, to Insular Harmonies, a collaborative multi-media installation for which he wrote the script and which was supported by the NEA’s New Forms Initiative. At about
this time, his work with word/image dynamics turned him toward the visual arts. He began painting in 1995 and has shown his work in Portland and New York, as well as at USM, the University of New England, and Maine Maritime Academy.

**Lenny Shedletsky Ph.D**

Leonard J. Shedletsky, PhD., Professor of Communication, has been teaching in the Department of Communication at the University of Southern Maine since 1979. With a background in psycholinguistics, **his perspective on human communication is cognitive.** In this connection, he teaches a course on intrapersonal communication and one on meaning. He has published several books on **intrapersonal communication** and numerous articles, chapters and conference papers. In recent years he has become interested in the Internet as a form of cognitive technology, with a special interest in education. He co-authored a book in 2004, Human Communication on the Internet. He regularly teaches Introduction to Communication, Research Methods, Intrapersonal Communication, Meaning and Communication, and Theories of Communication. In 2010-11 he offered a new senior seminar, Discussion (CMS 498) in which students facilitated discussion online and face-to-face. He has taught a course in the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (for people aged 55 years and older), **Internet for Seniors**, and offered an undergraduate course in tandem on Intergenerational Communication and the Internet.