

Helping More Students Build Experience Through Coursework

A Faculty Brief for Service-Learning, Experiential Learning, and Student Success

Students need experience. Faculty help create it. We're making it easier.

Experience compounds.

Students who begin earlier have more time to build Experience, Proof, Relationships, and Visibility.

The challenge isn't belief.

Most faculty members do not need to be convinced that high-impact practices create value for students. The challenge is creating enough meaningful opportunities while managing:

Limited time

Partner coordination

Project logistics

Reflection and assessment

Student supervision

Changing schedules

Existing course responsibilities

Uneven student readiness

Nearly 90% of employers say they look for evidence of a student's ability to solve problems when reviewing resumes.¹

Students need more opportunities to apply learning. Universities want more students participating in meaningful experiences. Employers continue asking for evidence of capability.

The question is not whether these experiences matter. The question is how to make them practical, repeatable, and sustainable.

1. NACE, *Job Outlook 2025* (Nov. 2024).

Why this matters now

Not every student will secure an internship, and students cannot wait until junior or senior year to begin building meaningful experience.

Roughly four in ten currently enrolled bachelor's students have completed an internship.²

Students need opportunities to apply classroom learning, contribute to meaningful projects, build professional relationships, create Proof, and develop confidence through contribution. The goal is not to rush students into employment. The goal is to help students start building momentum.

Faculty create experiences. GradPlanHQ helps students convert those experiences into Proof, Relationships, Visibility, and future opportunities.

2. Gallup, "Four in 10 College Students Have Had Internship Experience" (Aug. 16, 2023).



How GradPlanHQ helps

GradPlanHQ is a professional-development community and the GradPlanHQ Practice Field, where students and recent graduates build Experience, Proof, Relationships, and Visibility through four connected parts:

- 1 Growth Cycle** — Connect goals to strategy. Build through meaningful action. Grow by reflecting and capturing Proof. Repeat with stronger Experience, Proof, Relationships, and Visibility.
- 2 Action & Momentum Meetups** — Recurring sessions, each built around one professional-development process.
- 3 Community App** — Support continues between sessions.
- 4 Project Launchers** — Optional ways to build Experience when it's missing.

Students begin with free tools. Framework Discovery connects academic frameworks such as Design Thinking, Systems Thinking, Shared Value, and Project Management to real projects.

Built to Complement Existing Curriculum.

Project Launchers are designed to complement the curriculum, not compete with it.

GradPlanHQ helps students apply ideas they may already be learning through meaningful projects and experiential learning.

The full system is in *Developing Talent From Within: Field Guide for Community Leaders*.

Students do the work. Faculty approve, guide, or host.

Option 1: Approve an Additional Project

A faculty member may approve a GradPlanHQ Project Launcher connected to an existing course, assignment, discipline, or learning objective. The student participates independently and uses GradPlanHQ tools, Action & Momentum Meetups, community feedback, and accountability to move the work forward. A completed project may become a Service-Learning experience, community contribution, capstone extension, portfolio piece, leadership experience, career story, or source of Proof and professional references.

Option 2: Service-Learning Partner

GradPlanHQ can serve as a project and implementation partner for an entire course or cohort. Included: faculty planning session, three live class sessions, project framing and materials, student project briefs, Proof artifacts, Growth Cycle support for reflecting on and capturing Proof, term-end summary, and an optional continuation session. A Course Partnership is not a student membership. Community App access and Action & Momentum Meetups are not included unless separately arranged.

Founding Faculty Cohort

Each semester, GradPlanHQ offers up to three new free Course Partnerships. Returning courses keep their place if they choose to continue participating. Participating faculty receive the complete Course Partnership experience at no cost.

Planning Starts Before Registration

Service-Learning and community-engaged courses are often planned months before students enroll. Faculty considering next semester should begin the conversation while course schedules and project structures are still being developed.

Faculty Resources

Course Project Planner	Explore project patterns, deliverables, desired outcomes, and adaptable term plans.
Service-Learning Project Bank	Browse projects organized by discipline, level, and partner type.

What Success May Look Like

Participation	More students participating in high-impact practices
Timing	Earlier student participation
Experience	More students building Experience before internships
Learning	Stronger evidence of student learning
Visibility	More visible student accomplishments
Practice	Better connection between learning and professional practice

Success is not simply participation. Success is helping students build Experience, Proof, Relationships, and momentum that continue creating opportunities after the semester ends.

Ready to Explore a Fit?

A faculty member may begin with:

One student

One project

One course

One Service-Learning course

One Founding Faculty Cohort partnership

START A FACULTY CONVERSATION

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