

**From Here to Career:**  
**Connecting the Liberal Arts and Professional Development**  
**Wesleyan College, Macon GA**

In a time when many liberal arts colleges face pressure to demonstrate that they adequately prepare students for the job market, Wesleyan College, a liberal arts college for women in Macon, Georgia, has chosen to focus its Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) on the career and professional components of student learning. *From Here to Career* reaffirms the relevance of the liberal arts while challenging the College to create more learning opportunities for students to connect their undergraduate experiences and their post-graduate pursuits.

Our goals are for our students to experience the connections between the liberal arts and the workplace, explore professional and career choices, and develop and demonstrate the knowledge and skills essential for professional success.

The plan envisions a deliberate, carefully-crafted integration of professional development into the liberal arts curriculum. Wesleyan College believes strongly that it is essential for each student to develop knowledge and skills that can transfer to the workplace and to demonstrate their application through a practical experience. This, however, means more than just checking the box. Our plan calls for the creation of curricular and co-curricular mechanisms to facilitate a process of professional and career discernment on the part of the student. Wesleyan intends to make that process one that begins early in the student's undergraduate career, continues consistently throughout, and is embedded in a variety of academic and co-curricular experiences. In conjunction with a scaffolded four-year plan, the College proposes the use of ePortfolios to serve as "integrative spaces across the undergraduate experience" (Bass 2012), facilitating individualized reflection and learning. Furthermore, the QEP calls for Wesleyan to create an opportunity for each student to gain practical, professional experience that involves meaningful learning and is connected to a student's personal, academic, and career interests. In this Professional Development Experience (PDE) students will develop and apply their professional knowledge and skills, allowing them to demonstrate their capacity for professional success.

*From Here to Career* is deeply embedded in the College's mission and sense of purpose and emerges from ongoing, data-driven institutional evaluation and planning. The plan is grounded in research into effective educational practices and commensurate with our institutional capabilities. The plan consists of clearly stated goals linked to measurable outcomes. We are confident that it will be transformative in its effect on student learning in the area of professional and career development.

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