



AU PRO: Professional Readiness Opportunities Beyond the Classroom
Anderson University

Executive Summary

Anderson University's Quality Enhancement Plan, *AU PRO: Professional Readiness Opportunities Beyond the Classroom*, will equip students with a stronger sense of professionalism—a core career readiness competency that is foundational for other skills, knowledge, and competencies. This professional preparedness project aligns with Forward 2021, Anderson University's Strategic Plan, which identifies the goals to “integrate career development and employment acquisition skills across the curriculum,” and to develop programs relating to “life skills” across the curriculum and co-curriculum. AU PRO's focus on professionalism will also strengthen Anderson University's mission to graduate true servant leaders.

In a continued effort to provide a competency-based professional preparedness curriculum, the overall student learning goal of AU PRO is for students to demonstrate professionalism through written communication skills, nonverbal indicators of a professional image, and oral communication skills. AU PRO utilizes a two-part structure that creates an integrated, university-wide approach to teaching the much-needed skills of professionalism.

AU PRO will enable students to:

- Learn and apply professional written communication skills for multiple purposes, audiences, and platforms.
- Apply professional oral communication skills appropriate for interviews and networking.
- Learn the value of maintaining a professional work image.

The Signature Series. AU PRO will leverage the framework of co-curricular learning opportunities beyond the classroom to increase students' sense of professionalism. All students will participate in the Signature Series, which requires students to attend one professionalism workshop per semester for their first three years on campus. The fall and spring workshops each year will address one of the Student Learning Outcomes: written communication skills (first year), nonverbal indicators of overall professional image (sophomore year), and oral communication skills (junior year).

Discipline-Specific Events. Individual academic units will select academic liaisons, who will provide customized programming based on the specific needs of each academic unit, including at least four AU PRO events per year. Academic liaisons will serve as the connection between centralized career services and will provide the unique perspective of professional opportunities within the specific field.

AU PRO will be assessed using multiple measures. The use of pretests and posttests of the Signature Series workshops will provide a direct measure of the increase in knowledge in the various areas of professional communication. Students may elect to opt in to the AU PRO Briefcase program, which would provide feedback to students who create the recommended artifacts that would prepare them for a successful job search. A sampling of these artifacts will be evaluated by a board of external reviewers. Various indirect measures of surveys will document the student perception of the institution's commitment to this facet of student development. Participation rates in the Discipline-Specific Events and the AU PRO Briefcase program will gauge the campus impact of the initiative. This combination of assessment measures will be vital to tracking the anticipated cultural shift regarding professional preparedness for Anderson University.

Contact: Ms. Tracy Austin, Associate Director of the Center for Career Development and QEP Director, taustin@andersonuniversity.edu or Dr. Daryl Couch, Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness, dcouch@andersonuniversity.edu.