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High-Quality CTE Teacher & Counselor Preparation

Educator and career counselor preparation is integral to high-quality CTE instruction and career-connected learning. Since 2021, Maryland legislation has required that all secondary students have access to individualized career counseling; this is not a novel concept. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Dr. Donald Maley (University of Maryland) advocated for industrial arts and technology education courses as a vehicle to develop students' career awareness, career exploration and occupational orientation. Additionally, Dr. Robert Lent (University of Maryland) has published extensively on the benefits of career counseling for over four decades.

What distinguishes current efforts from those of Maley and Lent is legisla-

tive support — now codified and backed by state funding. Despite this mandate, Maryland has not established any requirements for P-12 career counselors. Consequently, there are a wide range of hiring, preparation and implementation models being applied with varying results among Maryland's 24 school systems.

Recognizing these gaps, the University of Maryland Eastern Shore's CTE programs office developed the first and only state-approved career-connected learning preparation certificate programs, focused on the intersection of WBL and career counseling. These stackable undergraduate and graduate certificate programs have helped foster a collaborative statewide network for developing essential career counseling skills and sharing of resources. Given the documented benefits of career-connected learning for all P-12 students, and positive outcomes found to be associated with rigorous educator preparation programs, a coherent research-based preparation program for career counselors is warranted.

In some Maryland jurisdictions, local workforce boards, the mayor's office or other outside agencies have been tasked

with hiring career counselors to work in the school systems. Individuals not employed by the school system or who are not licensed educators often do not qualify for tuition reimbursement or professional development funding. This can hinder access to high-quality preparation opportunities. UMES aims to address this barrier without compromising the quality of preparation. With external funding support, we plan to provide an intensive, face-to-face, short-term training experience that will quickly enhance career counselors' foundational knowledge, practices, shared resources and professional networks to enter the field with increased confidence. Based on existing literature, it is plausible to predict that this will improve career counselors' sense of community and self-efficacy, as well as retention and student outcomes.

We're always learning!

“CTE can look drastically different among states or even among different institutions. I have really enjoyed learning about the innovative and inspirational work of CTE colleagues from around the country.”