

**An Examination of Lynn University's Integrated Co-Curricular Transcript**

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**Dedication**

Without the consistent and loving support of my family, achieving this academic milestone may not have been possible. My parents provided, as they always have, unwavering love, support, and inspiration throughout my life and academic journey. Words cannot express the gratitude and love I hold for my parents—they have been my rock in all that I do. My sisters, Nadia and Diana, have always supported and encouraged me to do my best. Their ongoing influence and support have been crucial in my development and learning. I am incredibly fortunate to have an amazing and wonderful family.

I am grateful to several of my doctoral cohort classmates, Dr. Daphne Klahr, Dr. Daniel Altieri, and Dr. Rita Lopez, for encouraging and supporting me to do my best during this experience. I will always treasure the memories shared and hold our friendship dear to my heart.

My dear friends, Dr. Anthony Altieri, Stephanie Jackson, and Kerst Lehmann, provided encouragement and guidance as well as remained a trustworthy source of inspiration for me. These individuals have all given me the courage to pursue my dreams and overcome any obstacle. Thank you for believing in me and being such an integral part of my life; I am sincerely grateful.

Finally, thank you to Dr. Christine Quinn-Trank, who served as my advisor, for her wisdom, understanding, and knowledge.

These individuals, and many more, have helped me achieve this goal. I am humbled and thankful for every individual who has played a role throughout this journey.

**Abstract**

In 2019, recognizing the critical need for higher education institutions to prepare students for their careers and productive life after college, Lynn University implemented a Co-Curricular Transcript (CCT) program. Adapted from and aligned with the NACE competencies, Lynn's CCT program helps to prepare undergraduate and graduate students for the workforce by offering co-curricular learning opportunities for three core competencies and related skills: self-discovery, critical thinking, and global citizenship. Completion of these activities is then recognized on the student's transcript. Due to lower than expected participation this study was initiated to investigate the Lynn University students' participation in the CCT program and make recommendations on how Lynn University may improve the implementation and operation of its co-curricular transcript program to engage more students. Recommendations for the CCT program at Lynn are grounded in a counseling model that seeks to guide students through critical transitions in college. The model incorporates analysis of students' situations, social support, personal characteristics, and the extent to which they have developed strategies for coping with change.

This project utilized a mixed-methods design that included document analysis of Lynn University materials about the CCT, Lynn University CCT participation and skill level attainment data, and a survey of Lynn students assessing their perceptions of the CCT program. Findings show that there is wide variation in participation. Furthermore, the variation in participation seems to coincide with critical touchpoints in college life—the initial transition to college and the transition to work. Recommendations are directed at improved communication with students about the connection between CCT and their readiness for careers, improving

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campus-wide support of the program among faculty and staff, and outreach and promotion to employers through the university's career center.

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### **About Lynn University**

Lynn University (Lynn) is a private non-profit Division II university located in southeastern Florida with a student body of 3,385, of which 2,640 students are undergraduates (Lynn University, 2023). In 1962, the nuns from the Religious Order of the Sacred Heart of Mary founded Marymount College, a two-year women's school. In 1971, Donald E. Ross purchased Marymount College and renamed it the College of Boca Raton. In 1991, the College of Boca Raton earned Level III accreditation. With the development of master's and doctoral programs, it was renamed Lynn University in honor of benefactors Eugene and Christine E. Lynn. The university offers learning programs in more than 55 fields at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Lynn has five colleges: the College of Aeronautics, the College of Arts and Sciences, the Business College, the College of Communication, the College of Education, and the Conservatory. Almost 70% of the Lynn student body lives on the 2,000-acre campus. Admission requirements include a completed application, personal statement, official transcripts from all previously attended schools, and supportive documents such as a letter of recommendation from a high school counselor or teacher. The college entrance exams are optional for admission to Lynn.

Lynn offers various services to students with learning differences through the Institute for Achievement and Learning (IAL). The IAL provides coaching, tutoring, and diagnostic services and provides students with crucial learning accommodations as allowed under the Americans with Disabilities Act (Tutoring center: Academic coaching, 2023).

Lynn is proud that 17% of its student body hails from 101 countries outside the United States (Lynn, 2023). In 2023, U.S. News and World Report (2022) ranked Lynn among the top

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private schools for the value that students receive, as providing a cost-effective education with reduced debt after college, and as an ethnically diverse school that provides students with opportunities for improved social mobility. In 2020, the United Nations (UN) recognized Lynn as a top achiever for Lynn's work in promoting the UN's Sustainable Goal Development – a call to action that seeks to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity (United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, 2020).

### **Area of Inquiry**

#### **Introduction**

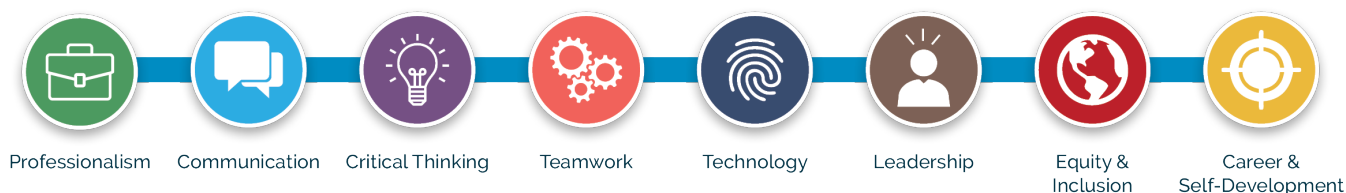
Since 2000, the number of students graduating from four-year institutions with bachelor's degrees in the United States has increased by almost 60%, from 1.2 million in 2000 to over 2 million in 2020 (Hanson & Checked, 2023). During that same period, Lynn's number of graduates with bachelor's degrees increased from 235 to 449, representing a 52% increase (Lynn, 2023). Additionally, since 2003, higher education costs have increased between 134% - 175% based on factors such as in-state versus out-of-state tuition and public versus private institutions (U.S. News & World Report, 2022). Despite the increased costs, students and their families cite improved job prospects as the primary reason to attend a postsecondary institution (Gallup & Strada, 2017). Students report, however, that they feel unprepared for their careers. McGraw-Hill (2018) found that only 43% of college seniors needed more skills for their chosen careers.

Conversely, the cost to employers to provide remedial workforce development training to an unprepared workforce is staggering; Statista (2021) reported that each year, employers spend over 82 billion dollars on training workers and, on average, devote a fifth of that cost to remedial

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workforce development training (ATD, 2016; Casner-Lotto, Rosenblum, & Wright, 2009). The number of graduates competing for employment, internships, and graduate studies highlights the need for colleges and universities to proactively provide soft skills training and standard academic curricula to enhance their students' career readiness in order to address this issue, Lynn University Office of Student Affairs looked to identify eight career readiness competencies (Figure 1) to define career readiness for college graduates. The eight competencies developed by education and corporate leaders include professionalism, communication, critical thinking, teamwork, technology, leadership, equity, inclusion, and career and self-development (NACE, 2023).

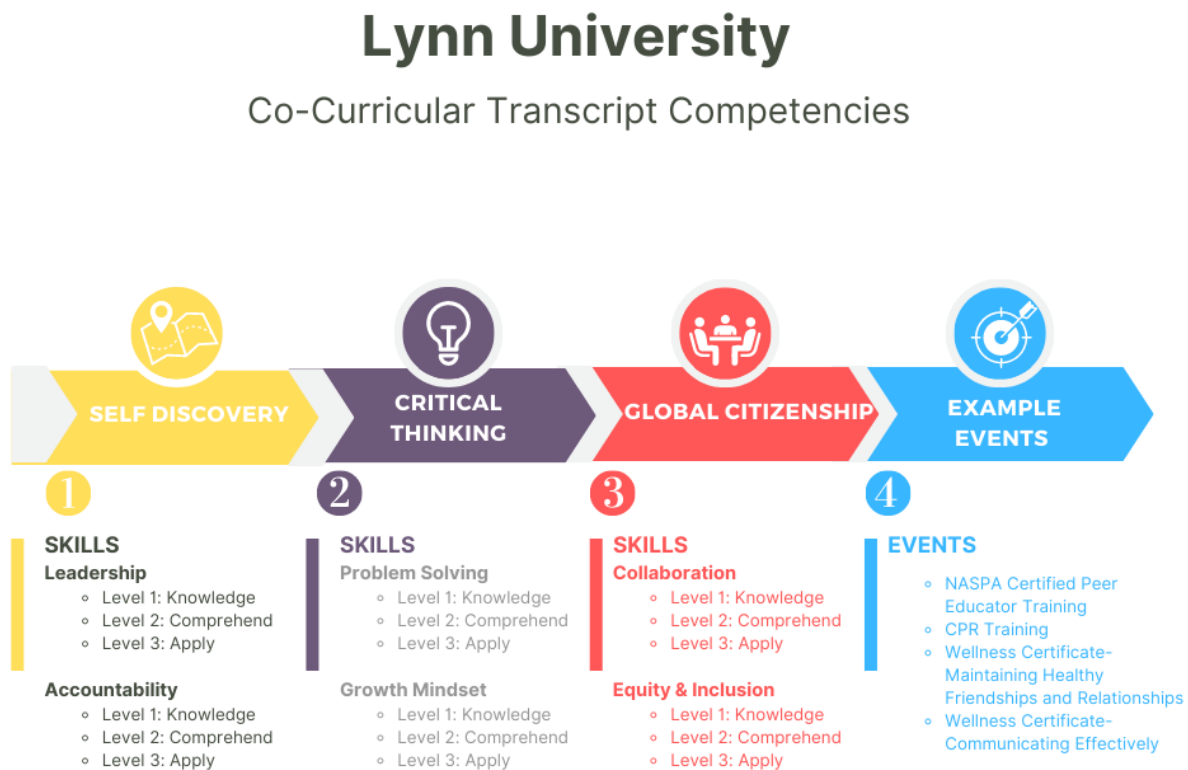
Figure 1  
NACE Career Readiness Competencies



In 2019, recognizing the critical need for higher education institutions to prepare students for their careers, Lynn implemented a Co-Curricular Transcript (CCT) program. Lynn's CCT program helps to prepare undergraduate and graduate students for the workforce by developing three core competencies and related skills: self-discovery, critical thinking, and global citizenship (Figure 2). Managed by an online portal, Lynn students document their achievements outside the classroom and demonstrate core competencies, including involvement in programs and experiences while enrolled in college. As achievement are documented, skills are attained at three levels. All level one skills are knowledge based. Leave two skills promote comprehension; level three skills establish application of the competency.



Figure 2



### History of the Co-Curricular Transcript at Lynn University

For Lynn University, the CCT is a record that details selected activities and accomplishments that Lynn University students outside the traditional academic experience. The activities contribute to the overall growth and development of the student, as well as to the promotion of expected learning and responsible citizenship. The intended outcome is that the CCT program assist students in transitioning to preparedness for work life after college. The CCT and the academic transcript provide a holistic view of a student's educational experience to the student and other stakeholders. Lynn University's Office of Student Affairs developed the foundation of the current co-curricular transcript in 2014. It aligned with the university's New

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Student Transitional Program, an orientation delivered to all new Lynn students each academic year. At that time, the purpose of the program was to deliver a structured and tiered approach for new students to foster opportunities for social interaction, share new information and knowledge, and increase the potential for retention of Lynn University students (A. Altieri, personal communication, June 4, 2020).

The initial concept and foundation for the CCT evolved into a broad student affairs divisional curriculum in 2017. Considering the necessary aspects of social development on a student's experience and grounded in student development theory (Baxter & Magolda, 1999; Chickering, 1969; Schlossberg, 1989; Kolb, 1976, 1984; Kohlberg, 1975; Gilligan, 1981), the transitional program was intentionally structured to aid in the educational and individual self-developmental process of Lynn students. The 2017 curriculum took the concepts designed initially to assist with student transition and applied them in a broader context to the efforts of all departments within the division. In its current form, the curricular model still preserves the commitment to competency development while meeting the needs of students more directly through assessment and the use of data to inform the purpose and impact of the design. Specifically, the CCT offers a tangible document articulating the progression and development of crucial soft skills aligned with the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) competencies, a nationally recognized standard in student affairs.

Consistent with the university mission, the office of Student Affairs strives to "provide an innovative, global and personalized education that enables students to realize their potential" (Mission and Strategy Lynn University, 2023). The CCT program focuses on self-discovery, critical thinking, and global citizenship, and each concept focuses on developing skills that enhance knowledge, understanding, and application within them. Moreover, each area has well-

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structured milestones that assist students in tracking their progress and acquiring desired soft skills such as self-discovery, critical thinking, and global citizenship. These skills are transferable and may be acquired using a variety of academic and co-curricular activities. Although soft skills are valued in the labor market, their scarcity among students and recent graduates has fostered worries about a skills gap and Lynn capacity to create work-ready graduates (Elias, 2014, p. 1).

Participating in the CCT program involves registering for an online account and completing activities that satisfy the university's competency acquisition requirements. For example, critical thinking competency includes two skills – problem-solving and a growth mindset. Both skills have three levels of mastery: knowledge – that students will be able to identify and recognize critical functions of the skill; comprehend – students will be able to explain and describe critical functions of the skill; and apply – students will be able to demonstrate and implement crucial functions of the skill. If a student wishes to achieve a Level 1 mastery for knowledge, they log into their portal, click on the skill, and view activities they can participate in to achieve that skill level. Students desiring to earn level one knowledge of “growth mindset” from the critical thinking competency must attend one event that mentions “growth mindset” and document the attendance. To earn level two in this skill, the student must attend five events tagged "growth mindset," document attendance, and write a reflection on the experiences. In order to demonstrate mastery of the "Growth Mindset" and earn the skill badge, students must become campus resident assistants, complete this on-campus employment, and write a reflection about the experience. An additional example of experiential learning opportunities includes The Office of Student Wellness “*Wellness Series Certification*, which instructs students in the skills they need to be emotionally healthy adults. The workshops cover

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"Handling Stress in Healthy Ways", "Feeling Comfortable Asking for Help", "Developing Empathy and Emotional Intelligence", and "Focusing and Gaining Self-Control." Students who complete level one or level two earn specific points. Students must complete ten wellness experiences to earn the Wellness Series Certification. The CCT program aligns with Lynn University's improvement goals to "identify and cultivate the next generation of academic leaders and difference makers throughout the university" and develop and promote signature programs.

Additionally, the CCT allows a student to earn recognition for learning soft critical skills such as problem-solving, accountability, and the importance of collaboration in achieving goals. This information, coupled with a student's academic achievements, provides a comprehensive student profile that may be used to demonstrate a student's acquisition of hard and soft skills to future employers or as support for internships, scholarship programs, or admission to graduate school.

Preliminary conversations with Lynn administrators revealed weaknesses in the CCT program, including initial program implementation and operation. Although started in 2019, Lynn's CCT program was only fully operational in 2021, after multiple delays due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Another challenge was understanding what students perceived about the CCT program and its associated benefits. From Fall 2022 through December 2022, 2,065 undergraduate and graduate students (59% of the total enrolled student body) engaged with the CCT program (Lynn, 2023). Most concerning to Lynn administrators is that while student engagement with the most easily attainable skillsets (level 1) was high, only 11% of students attained a level 2 competency, and 0% earned a level 3 mastery. The purpose of this improvement project is to assist the Lynn Office of Student Affairs in better understanding why

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the CCT program has low engagement and to assist them with identifying opportunities to improve and optimize the student engagement of the CCT program so that it becomes the centerpiece of cross-curriculum instruction that the Lynn Office of Student Affairs first intended it to be.

The desired outcome for the Office of Student Affairs is a completely integrated and optimized co-curricular transcript program for all students at Lynn University. With the variety of learners and diversity of the student population in this community, it is essential to consider the cultural and cognitive differences that impact skill development and application within the process. While the program is generally individualized to the student's engagement, considering personal identity characteristics may enhance value and allow for maximization of the tool for potential life-long use and learning. Effective learning occurs outside of the classroom, so the institution recognizes that a high-quality co-curricular learning program necessitates collaboration among all parties involved, including students, teachers, staff, and administrators.

The key stakeholders for this project include Lynn students and their families, Lynn administrators, and staff, the Lynn Center for Student Involvement, which oversees the CCT program, the Dean of Student Affairs, and employers of graduating students.

### **Purpose of the Capstone**

The current study will investigate the perceptions of the student affairs staff on the Lynn University undergraduates' participation in the CCT program. This capstone project explores how Lynn University may improve the implementation and operation of its co-curricular transcript program to improve students' career readiness.

Exploration relating to improving the Co-Curricular Transcript program at Lynn will need to consider the sizeable international student population (A. Altieri personal

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communication, May 12, 2022) and require a deeper understanding of factors relating to a multicultural social learning ecology.

**Project Questions:**

1. How aware are students of the CCT program and its benefits?
2. What students are participating in the CCT program, and how are they participating?
3. How is the CCT program being communicated to students, and how is it implemented?

**Research Synthesis**

Student support services at most college campuses support students in academics and extracurricular activities. Extracurricular activities provide students with personal development opportunities and prepare them for careers and civic participation. For these support activities to have their intended effects, however, students must experience them as transitions. Students must understand the meaning of the participation events as they move toward some new role, understanding, or practices. If students have not ascribed such meanings to these events or offerings, they will not be experienced or understood as transitions or have their intended effects (Scholssberg,1989).

One of the most important theoretical perspectives explaining important events in a student's college years is Schlossberg's Transition Theory (STT). The Schlossberg Transition Theory (STT) is a framework that helps to explain how individuals experience transitions throughout their lives (Scholssberg, 1981; 1989). In the context of college years, STT provides a practical way to understand students' various challenges and opportunities during this period.

STT suggests that transitions students experience are complex and multifaceted and that individuals respond to them differently (Sheldon, Ryan, Deci, & Kasser, 2004). Schlossberg,

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outlines the key foundations of SST through four main factors that influence how individuals experience a transition: situation, support, self and strategies (Schlossberg, 1981& 1995).

One student support intervention designed to provide a means for students to construct new identities and make transitions is through the co-curricular transcript. Co-curricular transcripts, or extracurricular transcripts, provide a comprehensive record of a student's non-academic achievements and activities (Furda & Schreiner, 2017). They have been used in higher education for several decades to recognize and value students' contributions outside the classroom (Bresciani, 2015). The student's experiences underpin these contributions in developing how they problem-solve situations, utilize support, implement strategies, and establish themselves (Jungert, Koestner, Lokes, Houlfort, & Schattke, 2013).

### **History of co-curricular transcripts**

Co-curricular transcripts trace to the early 20th century. In the 1920s, some colleges and universities issued "activity sheets" to document student participation in extracurricular activities (Bresciani, 2015). Co-curricular transcripts initially tracked student involvement and awarding honors at graduation. Over time, co-curricular transcripts have become more formal and widely recognized documents. Today, many institutions issue official co-curricular transcripts for students to share with external organizations, such as employers and graduate schools (Furda & Schreiner, 2017).

### **Co-Curricular Transcript Design**

Creating and issuing co-curricular transcripts varies among institutions (Bresciani, 2015). Generally, co-curricular transcripts include a wide range of activities and accomplishments, including leadership roles, volunteer work, internships, and participation in clubs and organizations designed around student development (Furda & Schreiner, 2017). The methods

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used to document and verify these activities and accomplishments also vary but may include self-reported information, signatures or endorsements from advisors or supervisors, and official records from the sponsoring organization (Kinzie & Kuh, 2007). The Lynn University CCT program follows this design.

**The role of co-curricular transcripts in student outcomes and success**

Research on the impact and effectiveness of co-curricular transcripts has shown that they can positively influence student engagement and student transition to post-college (Tierney & Rhoads, 2013). Studies have found that students who participate in co-curricular activities and have their achievements recognized on a co-curricular transcript are more likely to be engaged in their studies and to have better academic outcomes (Bresciani, 2015). Additionally, co-curricular transcripts are valuable to employers and graduate schools, providing a more holistic view of a student's skills and experiences (Furda & Schreiner, 2017). According to research, participation in co-curricular transcript programs varies widely among institutions and student populations. For example, a study by Bresciani (2015) found that participation in co-curricular transcript programs ranged from less than 10% to nearly 100% among the institutions surveyed.

Similarly, Kinzie and Kuh (2007) found that participation in co-curricular transcripts was higher among students at selective institutions and among students in specific majors or career fields. Other studies have highlighted the variation in student participation based on demographic factors such as race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. For instance, a study by Tierney and Rhoads (2013) found that students from lower-income backgrounds and students of color were less likely to participate in co-curricular transcript programs, despite the potential benefits for these students. Institutional policies and practices, student characteristics, and demographic factors described in STT significantly affect student participation rates in CCT programs. Jungart



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et al. (2013) argue that the more successful CCT programs consciously implement programs around the STT factors of situation, self, strategies, and support (4 S's).

I will frame this improvement project around the work of Schlossberg (1981; 1995), who defines a transition as an event or non-event that results in changed relationships and routines. The Schlossberg Transition Theory (STT) helps to explain how individuals experience events as transitions throughout their lives. In the context of college years, STT can help us understand how students experience important events as transitions. Designed to be a tool for student development, the CCT allows for critical transitions to translate into documentation of and engagement in a student's personal growth and career readiness. The question is, is Lynn's CCT program experienced as a student transition event? Why or why not? The STT conceptual framework may help Lynn answer these questions.

Lynn is committed to creating a holistic and comprehensive learning environment to meet the needs of its students. One main objective of the Lynn 2025 strategic plan is to develop student's skills and achievements inside and outside the classroom. The Office of Student Affairs, primarily responsible for the outside-of-the-classroom social and developmental experience, has embarked on a process to formalize, measurably and tangibly, co-curricular learning and interactions as of fall 2022 (Lynn University, 2023). The co-curricular transcript outlines student progress related to skill development specific to the foundations the institution has deemed relevant for personal growth and career readiness. Refined over the last few years, the mapping and tracking elements that serve as a foundational aspect of the CCT have been a consistent focus area for improvement at Lynn.

The CCT is intended to provide opportunities to develop core skills essential for college transitions, such as maturity, career, and citizenship. The transcript notation is a quantitative

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indicator that students can use to determine whether they have completed these crucial changes.

The Schlossberg Transition Theory model enables us to comprehend the circumstances under which students experience and navigate transitions. For example, transitions in higher education may involve retention and identification with the institution, career readiness, self-reliance, and resiliency, all components of the CCT program. In this context, the four S's are necessary conditions for students to encounter and successfully navigate these significant shifts.

In October 2022, Office of Lynn's Student Affairs conducted a nine-hour convenience sample survey in the university cafeteria over three days. The sample survey, entirely optional for completion, contained six questions (Figure 3) concerning students' knowledge of the CCT program and what they felt about the relevance of participating in it relative to their future career goals. Lynn reported (Altieri, Personal Communication, 2023) that 700 unique students utilized the cafeteria over the time the Office of Student Affairs distributed the survey. Of the possible 700 survey participants, 164 returned surveys; 75% of the respondents answered that they knew that the program existed. However, when the Office Student Affairs ran undergraduate and graduate student participation numbers for the CCT program, they found that only 59% of Lynn's entire student body had engaged with the program and completed at least a level 1 competency. While Lynn's CCT program has created career-readiness experiences, there is a need to understand why students are not more engaged with the program.

### **Co-Curricular Transcripts Program Design**

The Office of Student Affairs CCT leadership team adopted a focus on skill development in the co-curricular transcript program desired in the competitive global job market. The recently adopted focus on skill development in the Lynn Co-Curricular Transcript program aligns with

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the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) research on the employment marketplace and the skill competencies most desired in the competitive global job market.

Each competency consists of two sub-skills totaling six skill areas: specifically, leadership, problem-solving, growth mindset, accountability, collaboration, and equity and inclusion. Within the co-curricular transcript, the predefined milestones of each pillar consist of specific tasks that students must achieve. Upon completing each milestone, students will be able to identify and describe the critical functions of each skill and how to implement them in future endeavors.

Lynn's three critical skills align with NACE's framework in the following way:

- Self-discovery is aligned with (1) leadership and (2) accountability.
- Critical thinking is aligned with (1) problem-solving and (2) a growth mindset.
- Global citizenship is aligned with (1) collaboration and (2) equity and inclusion.

Each milestone in each category includes different levels of understanding: knowledge (level 1), comprehension (level 2) and application (level 3). Upon each milestone, the student earns a badge. To ensure students can comprehend and apply the skills, they must complete an assessment for each level to earn the badge.

### **2022 CCT Program Review**

The CCT program at Lynn University is designed to enhance the student experience and improve their transition after college with a measurable and outcomes-focused approach to skill development. The CCT concepts and program foundations were established and modified over several years. The Lynn Office of Student Affairs conducted a minor review in the spring 2022. However, it was unsuccessful in gathering information to improve the CCT program (A. Altieri, personal communication, May 12, 2022).

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Through the introduction of the Co-Curricular Transcript for the students at Lynn, the institution has committed to student development outside of the classroom that is measurable, able to be articulated and institutes critical reflection within its assessments of student progress. The effort, however, was only fully implemented during the 2021-2022 academic year (August-May) and is still beginning its integration into the student co-curricular experience. As a centerpiece effort within the Office of Student Affairs, the ability to establish the Co-Curricular Transcript as a part of the institutional culture and co-curricular experience is relevant to maximizing student potential for employability. Therefore, ongoing evaluation for impact and effectiveness is necessary (A. Altieri, personal communication, May 12, 2022). Upon completion of the first year of implementation, key contributors and developers of the initiative reviewed data and assessed the implementation and reception of the program. Sources of information were gathered as shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1

Method	Focus
<b>Document analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lynn University documents related to the co-curricular transcript program including development, implementation, and operation</li> <li>• Website information related to the co-curricular transcript program</li> <li>• Literature promoting or describing co-curricular transcript programs, including how to enroll and achieve badges for the core competencies and associated skills</li> <li>• Example of a student co-curricular transcript</li> </ul>
<b>October 2022 survey</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Six-question survey containing binary and Likert scale questions regarding student perceptions of Lynn University's co-curricular transcript program</li> <li>• Survey Distribution to students in the school cafeteria on three days over nine hours</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 164 completed surveys out of a possible 700 unique students who checked into the cafeteria during the survey periods (Altieri, Personal communication, 2023)</li> </ul>
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The following information was gleaned through descriptive analysis of the six-question student questionnaire: Freshmen comprised 40% of all participants, and sophomores, juniors, and seniors were 20% participation each, respectively. Seventy-three percent were aware that Lynn had a CCT program. Most participants were either very interested or interested in developing particular skills offered by the CCT program. Developing leadership skills was the highest (62%) and developing equity and inclusion skills was the lowest (59%). Students cited "Being able to track and validate marketable skills for graduate school applications, internships, and future employment" when asked what the benefit of participation in the program was. *Only about half of the survey participants stated they would likely intentionally select programs or engage in experiences that will build their co-curricular transcript. A review of the actual engagement data for the academic year 2021-2022 showed that 59% of the undergraduates participated in just one skill development CCT activity. Thirty-five percent of those one-skill participants are first-year students, with sophomores at 18%, juniors at 19%, and seniors at 20%. Graduate-level students comprise the remainder. Table 2 below illustrates the breakdown of current skill engagement, with self-discovery (1656) being the highest and global citizenship (836) being the lowest. As of December 2022, no students completed a Level 3 skill.*

*Table 2. Number of CCT Skill engagements by Lynn students*

	<b>Skills Earned</b>
<b>Critical Thinking</b>	<b>1397</b>
<b>Growth Mindset</b>	<b>1238</b>
Level 1 – Knowledge	1237
Level 2 –	
Comprehend	1
<b>Problem Solving</b>	<b>159</b>
Level 1 – Knowledge	159
<b>Global Citizenship</b>	<b>836</b>
<b>Collaboration</b>	<b>366</b>
Level 1 – Knowledge	364
Level 2 –	
Comprehend	2
<b>Equity &amp; Inclusion</b>	<b>470</b>
Level 1 – Knowledge	365
Level 2 –	
Comprehend	105
<b>Self-Discovery</b>	<b>1656</b>
<b>Accountability</b>	<b>998</b>
Level 1 – Knowledge	886
Level 2 –	
Comprehend	112
<b>Leadership</b>	<b>658</b>
Level 1 – Knowledge	650
Level 2 –	
Comprehend	8
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>3889</b>

Based on the review of the CCT engagement report by the Office of Student Affairs, staff formed several opinions regarding student awareness of the program. They noted that while there is a high awareness of the CCT program, and those who participate in the program understand its value, there is a lower engagement rate in the CCT program among the undergraduate and graduate student population overall. Further, there has been no confirmation or triangulation of these preliminary findings.

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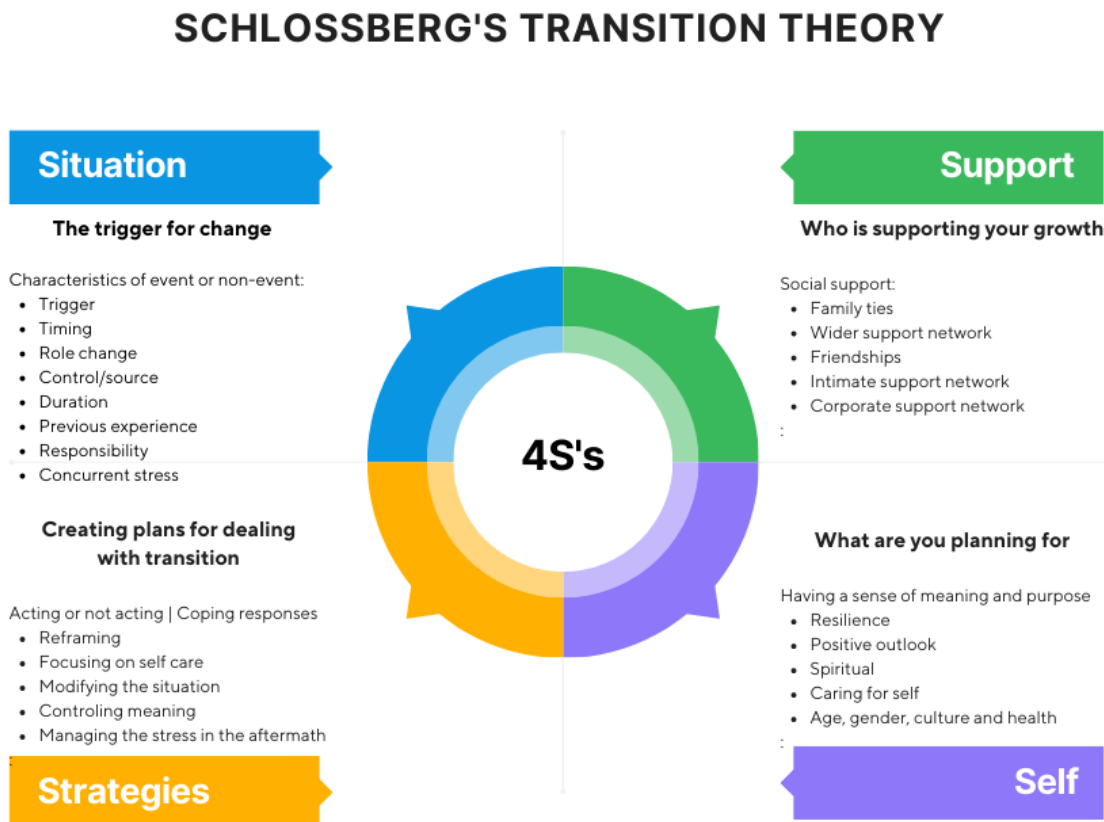
Although co-curricular experiences positively affect student career readiness and successful transitions post-college, the initial data shows that more students need to take up events associated with CCT. Is this a result of the CCT program itself (situation)? Or is it a function of student resources and social support? Or is it a matter of students' strategies for coping with such opportunities? We can look at possible solutions by gathering data on the efficacy of activities and co-curricular programs as events that lead to transitions (or not) (Suskie, 2015).

### **Conceptual Framework –Schlossberg’s Transition Theory**

As noted in the research synthesis, Schlossberg's Transition Theory (STT) has played an essential role in designing, implementing, and assessing student support programs in college. STT helps to explain how individuals experience transitions throughout their lives (1981; 1989). It has been instrumental in examining what occurs in the college years, given the various challenges and opportunities that students encounter during this period in their lives.

The premise of STT is that life transitions and events are complex and multifaceted and that individuals respond to them in different ways (Sheldon, Ryan, Deci, & Kasser, 2004). According to Schlossberg, four main factors influence how individuals experience a transition: the situation, support, self, and the individual's coping strategies (Schlossberg, 1981). Schlossberg (1981) referred to these factors as the four S's – situation, strategies, support, and self. Schlossberg posited that individuals could use the four S's to help identify means to support life changes or transitions (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Schlossberg's Student Transition Theory



*Situation* refers to the context in which someone finds themselves at a time of transition or change and understanding the additional stressors that may affect them. In the context of college years, the *situation* can include factors such as academic demands, social pressures, and financial constraints, all of which can affect a student's ability to adapt to college life.

*Strategies* refer to a person's ability to construct coping strategies for change. Reframing a situation or understanding stressors may help an individual mitigate difficult situations. Within a college environment, *strategies* may include focusing on relationships, routines, and self-care.



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*Support* includes an individual's support network of friends, family, and colleagues, which can impact their ability to manage the demands of college. Additionally, students may look to faculty, advisors, and classmates to help provide emotional support through transition periods.

Finally, Schlossberg's *Self* refers to a person's inner fortitude and hope for life changes. College students may look to academic achievement and social connections to help support their journey to a career or to feel prepared for a life transition. A key aspect of STT is that *individuals' perceptions* of a transition can shape how they respond. For example, suppose a student views college as a positive and exciting opportunity for growth. In that case, they may be more motivated to engage in college life's academic and social aspects. Conversely, suppose a student views college as a daunting and stressful experience. In that case, they may struggle to adapt and be more likely to experience adverse outcomes such as academic difficulties or social isolation (Baker & Siryk, 1986).

Overall, STT provides a valuable framework for understanding the experiences of college students and the challenges they face during this transitional period (Baker & Siryk, 1986). By recognizing the importance of factors such as situation, resources, perception, and coping strategies, educators and practitioners can develop interventions and supports that help students thrive in college and beyond.

Viewing the college student transition experience through the lens of Schlossberg's STT conceptual framework reveals four important, vital components:

1. Environmental factors, such as the college culture and the student's social support system.
2. The individual student, including their characteristics, motivations, and goals.

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3. Developmental tasks or challenges as students' progress through college, such as identity development, independence, and autonomy.
4. The outcomes or changes resulting from the student's experiences, such as increased self-awareness, tremendous academic success, or stronger leadership skills.

Schlossberg (1989) posits that the nature of the transition and the resources available to the individual play a significant role in determining the outcome of the transition. It also identifies four critical resources for a successful transition: personal attributes, interpersonal support, informational resources, and decision-making skills.

Co-curricular transcripts have a long history in higher education and have evolved to become widely recognized documents (Furda & Schreiner, 2017). Nevertheless, for CCTs to have their intended effects, they must be perceived by students as meaningful and as contributors to the construction of the self. CCTs provide a comprehensive record of a student's non-academic achievements and activities and can positively impact student engagement and learning outcomes (Kinzie & Kuh, 2007). Evidence-based practices for a successful and sustainable CCT program are those programs that provide students with opportunities to transition into problem-solvers, be nimble in different situations, critically think and use learned strategies and reflect on their growth (Jungart et al., 2013). The STT framework will guide the research questions to answer the overarching project questions for this study.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

#### **Research Questions**

This quality improvement study explores how Lynn University may improve the implementation and operation of its co-curricular transcript program to improve students' career

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readiness. The project research questions, based on the STT conceptual framework include the following:

1. To what extent was the CCT program designed to create a situation that students can perceive as necessary for their transition to new roles and identities?
2. Is the CCT program structure at Lynn helping students acquire hard and soft workforce readiness skills identified as necessary to aid in successful workforce transitions?
  - a. Does the student's situation provide a trigger for change?
  - b. Does the CCT provide valuable support for students to complete levels 1 – 3.
3. Do students believe utilizing the co-curricular transcript will better prepare them to enter the workforce after college?

### **Project Design**

This improvement project will assist the Lynn University Vice President of Student Affairs and the staff in understanding the participation in CCT program and provide recommendations based on the STT (1989) framework.

### **Data Analysis**

This improvement project is grounded in the Schlossberg Transition Theory (STT), which explains how individuals experience life transitions. The premise of STT is that life transitions and events are complex and multifaceted and that individuals respond to them in different ways (Sheldon, Ryan, Deci, & Kasser, 2004). According to Schlossberg, four main factors influence how individuals experience a transition: the situation, the individual's resources, the individual's perception of the transition, and the individual's coping strategies (Schlossberg,

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1981). Schlossberg (1981) referred to these factors as the four S's – situation, strategies, supports, and self. Schlossberg posited that individuals could use the four S's to help identify means to support life changes or transitions.

In the context of college years, STT can help us understand how students experience important events as transitions. The CCT is an intervention tool for student development that accelerates critical transitions to personal growth and career readiness. The question is, is CCT experienced as a student transition event? Why or why not? STT may help Lynn University answer these questions.

### **Findings**

The following findings are derived from survey data, Lynn CCT participation data, and the application of the STT. Using the STT as the basis for this study, my goal is to understand how Lynn University may improve the implementation and operation of its co-curricular transcript program to improve students' career readiness.

#### **Finding 1:**

*Lower than expected student participation in the CCT. Only 59% of the students at Lynn have participated in CCT. Although this is a strong number for a relatively new program, student affairs seeks greater involvement to create a viral effect among students.*

The first finding is based on the data collected from Lynn University's student database. The data shows that only 59% of the students have participated in the CCT program. Given the program's benefits, the university administration was expecting a higher participation rate. The Lynn University's student data was collected by the Office of Student Affairs department, which is responsible for the CCT program's implementation and promotion. The department analyzed the data to understand the lower-than-expected participation rate and devise strategies to increase

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participation. The department used the data to identify the number of students participating in the CCT program. The data was then analyzed to identify trends and patterns related to student participation in the program.

Based on the data collected, the department identified several factors that contributed to the lower-than-expected participation rate. These factors included a lack of awareness, lack of perceived value, and the complexity of the reporting process.

Lynn University's CCT program is a relatively new program that provides students with a comprehensive record of their co-curricular transcripts. The program is designed to help students market their unique skills and experiences to potential employers. However, the university administration has observed a lower-than-expected level of student participation in the program.

**Findings: 2:**

*Lack of student advancement to levels 2 and 3 of the CCT. Of the students engaged in the CCT (with 3,889 skills earned), only 6% of the skills are at level 2 and no skills earned are at level 3.*

Lack of student advancement to levels 2 and 3 of the Lynn University Co-curricular transcripts (CCT) was evident. Lynn's CCT is a program designed to document students' skills and knowledge through a series of experiential learning opportunities. The CCT is divided into three levels, with each level requiring an increasing level of competence. However, the research has found that there is a significant lack of student advancement to levels 2 and 3 of the CCT. The data for this finding is based on the skills earned by students engaged in the CCT, with a total of 3,889 skills earned. The data analysis revealed that only 6% of the skills earned were at level 2, while no skills were earned at level 3. This indicates that a vast majority of the students participating in the CCT are not advancing in the CCT intercultural competence process.

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The data was collected from the Lynn University CCT program database, which stores information on the skills earned by students. Then, the data was analyzed by reviewing descriptive statistics, such as standard deviation, mean, and median, to determine the percentage of skills earned at each level.

This finding highlights the need for strategies to support students' CCT engagement beyond the program's first year. In addition, the lack of advancement to levels 2 and 3 suggests that the program may not be providing adequate support to help students develop beyond a basic level 1. Additionally, the research finding emphasizes the importance of providing ongoing support to students engaged in the CCT program. The lack of advancement to levels 2 and 3 suggests that students may not be adequately equipped to engage beyond the CCT level 1.

**Finding: 3:**

*Higher CCT participation by first-year and business administration students.*

This research finding suggests that first-year students and business administration majors at Lynn University participate in the Co-curricular Transcript Program (CCT) at a higher rate than other students. The data for this finding was obtained through surveys of Lynn University students conducted during the spring semester of 2022. The surveys were designed to measure student participation in the CCT and demographic information such as major and year in school. The data was then analyzed using methods to identify patterns and trends in participation.

The analysis showed that first-year students and business administration majors had the highest participation rates in the CCT program. First-year students were found to participate in the program at a much higher rate than students in subsequent years. This trend is consistent with Schlossberg's Theory, which suggests that orientation programs can act as a trigger for

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participation in new activities. There are several possible reasons why first-year students and business administration majors may participate in the CCT program at higher rates. One explanation is that the orientation program at Lynn University is designed to introduce students to the CCT and encourage them to participate. This could explain why first-year students participate at a higher rate than students in subsequent years. Subsequently, business administration students are more career-focused and see the value of the CCT program in terms of their future employment prospects. This is consistent with previous research (Lu & Jia, 2022) that has shown that business school students are more likely to participate in career-related programs than students in other majors.

This finding is significant because it provides insights into the factors influencing student participation in the CCT program. By understanding why certain students are more likely to participate in these programs, the Office of Student Affairs can design more effective outreach and marketing strategies to encourage broader participation.

**Finding: 4:**

*Senior students represent the second highest CCT participation category.*

While the largest involvement is first year students (704), seniors represent the next highest (419). This may be an indication that as they near graduation, the transition to work life acts as a trigger. This finding is based on data collected by Lynn University's Office of Student Affairs. The data was sourced from CCT records for the academic year 2021-2022. The records were collected from students who opted to participate in CCT activities and experiences. The records were analyzed to identify the number of students who participated and their year of study. The finding suggests that as students near graduation, the transition to work-life acts as a trigger for increased CCT participation. This finding is significant because it indicates that

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students are aware of the importance of non-academic achievements and are taking steps to showcase their skills and experiences to potential employers. This finding also suggests that seniors actively seek ways to enhance their resumes and make themselves more marketable to potential employers.

Co-curricular transcript (CCT) participation involves activities, experiences, and accomplishments that complement the academic coursework and enhance students' overall educational experience. In addition, CCT allows students to showcase their non-academic achievements to potential employers and graduate schools. Schlossberg's Transition Theory suggests that individuals go through various stages of transition in their lives, which certain events or circumstances can trigger. These transitions can be triggered by graduation, starting a new job, or entering a new phase of life. The transition to work life, which occurs when seniors near graduation, significantly triggers increased CCT participation. The findings suggest that seniors are transitioning and motivated to seek ways to showcase their skills and experiences to potential employers.

The finding that senior students represent the second highest CCT participation category is significant as it indicates that students acknowledge the importance of non-academic achievements and actively seek ways to enhance their resumes. The finding also suggests that seniors are going through a transition phase and are seeking ways to showcase their skills and experiences to potential employers. These transitions can be triggered by graduation and entering the workforce. Finally, this finding has important implications for college administrators, career counselors, and students, highlighting the importance of non-academic achievements and their role in enhancing employability.

**Finding: 5:**



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*Relative participation in the competencies is worth noting. Students participating in the CCT attain self-discovery and the critical thinking competency skills at a higher rate than the global citizenship competency skills.*

Self-discovery, including accountability and leadership, had the most significant participation rate, with students attaining 1656 skills in this category. The competency with the second-highest participation rate was critical thinking, including growth mindset and problem-solving skills, with students attaining 1397 skills. In contrast, global citizenship, including collaboration and equity & inclusion, had the lowest participation rate, with students attaining 836 skills in this category.

The data collected from over 1,500 students who participated in the CCT program over a period of one and a half years can be seen as a reflection of their transition experience. The Schlossberg Theory suggests that transitions involve a process of adaptation, where individuals move from one state of being to another; in this circumstance, the evolution of the student's critical thinking and self-discovery skills. In the case of the CCT program, students transition to the college environment and develop new skills and competencies. The three categories of skills and competencies considered in this finding - self-discovery, critical thinking, and global citizenship - can be seen as important components of the adaptation process. The Schlossberg Theory emphasizes that transitions involve a redefinition of one's identity and sense of self. Self-discovery is particularly relevant in this context. Through participation in the CCT program, students have the opportunity to develop accountability and leadership skills, which can help them redefine their sense of self and their role in the college community.

Critical thinking, which includes a growth mindset and problem-solving skills, is also important in the adaptation process. The Schlossberg Theory suggests that transitions involve a

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process of learning and problem-solving. Through developing critical thinking skills, students are better equipped to navigate the challenges and opportunities of college life.

Finally, global citizenship, which includes collaboration and, equity & inclusion, has the lowest participation rate. The Schlossberg Theory emphasizes that transitions involve a process of integration, where individuals must navigate new social systems and cultural norms. In terms of this finding, it may suggest that students needed to discover self and develop critical thinking prior to processing global citizenship and equity and inclusion. The self-discovery and critical thinking competencies identified in this research finding align with Schlossberg's theory, as they are directly associated with the self-factor of the theory. As college students focus on self-discovery in their personal realm and critical thinking in their academic realm, it is reasonable to consider these competencies as most relevant, especially as they transition into their first year of college life.

Moreover, the finding also aligns with the situational enabling conditions outlined in Schlossberg's theory. Participation in the self-discovery competency is crucial for college students as they try to understand themselves and their place in the college environment. Likewise, critical thinking is essential for academic success and navigating the challenges of college coursework. Finally, the lower participation rate in global citizenship competencies could suggest a need for more support and strategies to facilitate students' engagement in activities that promote collaboration and equity & inclusion.

Overall, this finding underscores the importance of co-curricular activities in promoting the development of essential skills and competencies in college students, as transition events may motivate students to seek certain skills over others. It also highlights the need for colleges and universities to provide various opportunities for students to engage in activities that support the

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development of critical thinking and self-discovery while also providing support and strategies to promote engagement in global citizenship competencies.

### **Recommendations**

#### **Recommendation 1**

*Carefully review mechanisms of communication about the program. The relative success of the orientation rollout may indicate the program is forgotten in subsequent years. College students use social media and keeping CCT on students' radar may be as simple as using multiple types of social media with frequent reminders and announcements of programming. This is consistent with the suggestions of STT and the importance of triggers and timing. Further, it shifts responsibility for reminders from the students remembering to the program reminding, easing the students' burden.*

#### **Lack of Awareness**

One of the main factors contributing to the lower participation rate may be the loss of awareness among students about the CCT program. The benefits of the program or how it can help them in their future careers. To increase and sustain awareness, the Office of Student Affairs can consider several measures, such as promoting the program through various social media platforms. They may also organize information sessions and workshops for students to learn more about the program and its benefits.

#### **Lack of Perceived Value**

Another factor contributing to the lower participation rate may be the lack of perceived value of the program among students. Students may not understand the importance of the CCT

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program and how it can help them stand out in the job market. The Office of Student Affairs department can increase the perceived value of the program by highlighting the success stories of students who have participated in the program and have landed jobs in their desired fields. They may also emphasize the benefits of the program, such as the comprehensive record of academic achievements and the ability to showcase their unique skills to potential employers. Social media-based testimonials should highlight opportunities for development and learning that coincide with critical transition moments and include testimonials from participants and employers about the value of the competencies and CCT.

### **Complexity of the Participation Process**

The complexity of the participation process may also contribute to the lower participation rate. The participation process may be overwhelming, leading students to lose interest in the program. To simplify the participation process, the Office of Student Affairs can provide clear and concise instructions on how to participate in the program. They may update and simplify an online platform where students can easily access and submit their participation content. Additionally, they may consider a mentoring process for a direct, personal commemoration that guides students through the process.

Lynn University's CCT program has a lower-than-expected participation rate, which can be attributed to factors such as lack of awareness, lack of perceived value, and the complexity of the application process. To increase participation in the program, the Office of Student Affairs can take several measures, such as promoting the program through various channels, increasing the perceived value of the program, simplifying the application process, and collaborating with faculty and staff. By implementing these strategies, the department can create a viral effect

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among students, increasing awareness and perceived value of the CCT program, and encourage more students to participate.

### **Recommendation 2**

*Develop CCT program goals that are in line with the Schlossberg's "Helping Model Framework" (HMF) that drive communication content and assessment of the CCT program. Carefully review the content of communication about the program. The HMF recommends modifying student understandings of the program may be critical. Before that, however, student understandings of CCT must be understood. Do students see it as helping them with key transitions to college life? To work life? To independent adulthood?*

In today's increasingly globalized world, intercultural competence is a crucial skill for individuals to have (Deardorff, 2019). Lynn University Co-Curricular Transcript (CCT) is a program designed to develop students' skills and knowledge through a series of experiential learning opportunities. As the Office of Student Affairs considers program goals, emphasis should be placed on situational transitions and triggers, strategies, support structures and the student's self-discovery process. Program goals should be reviewed, evaluated and assessed annually.

### **Alignment with Self-Discovery**

To align the program goals with self-discovery skills, Lynn should consider explicit links to other campus programming, such as leadership development programs, mentorship opportunities, and extracurricular activities that encourage students to explore their interests and strengths. Additional links to activities such as community service, which promotes empathy and social responsibility would promote accountability by encouraging students to take responsibility for their actions and decisions.

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**Alignment with Situational Transitions and Trigger Events**

To align program goals with situational transitions and trigger events, administrators should continue focusing on first-year students (highest participation levels) and senior students (second highest participation levels). Additionally, findings indicate that first-year students and business administration majors at Lynn University participate in the CCT program at a higher rate than other students are significant. By understanding why these groups are more likely to participate in community engagement programs, universities can design a more effective approach to the broader participation.

Schlossberg's Theory suggests that orientation programs can act as a trigger for participation in new activities, which aligns with the finding of this study. Lynn University may consider developing a peer mentorship program that pairs first-year students with upperclassmen who have participated in the CCT program. The upperclassmen could serve as mentors and provide guidance to first-year students, providing an additional support structure through the first-year transition and an opportunity for second- and third-year students.

Goals should include identifying trigger events in the second and third years that can be emphasized with programming that encourages and supports CCT participation for this disengaged population. This could include offering more opportunities for students to engage in co-curricular activities, providing incentives for participation, and creating a culture that values and rewards non-academic achievements.

**Alignment with Strategies**

To align program goals with strategies for student's to be successful within the CCT structure, Lynn cannot limit their approach to assumptions that student's will intrinsically identify CCT value. Offering incentives for participation is a proven method for increasing

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engagement in programs. Lynn University should establish goals related to offering incentives, such as scholarships, academic credit, or recognition on transcripts, for students who participate in the CCT program. This would provide tangible benefits to students and could encourage more widespread participation.

### **Alignment with Support Structure**

To align program goals with support structures that encourage student success in the CCT program, Lynn should consider multiple support mechanisms. For example, mentorship is a valuable strategy that can help support students' development beyond the first year of the program. Providing students with a mentor who can guide them through experiences and offer advice and support can help students develop their intercultural competence (Lustig & Koester, 2013). Mentorship can also help students build a sense of community and belonging, which can be particularly important for students from underrepresented groups who may feel isolated on campus (Gudykunst, 2003).

Schlossberg's Theory of Transition can provide a framework for Lynn University to establish program goals that will lead to the CCT supporting students' adaptation to college life and promoting their development of essential competencies. To align with this theory, Lynn should consider the situational enabling conditions, the student's self-discovery process, support structures, and strategies that can facilitate students' transition process. Specifically, Lynn University should focus on providing opportunities for self-discovery and critical thinking, which align with the self-factor of the theory. Additionally, Lynn should offer support and strategies to enhance global citizenship competencies, which has the lowest participation rate.

### **Recommendation 3**

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*Work with employers who recruit Lynn students to expect and appreciate the CCT. If students do not see CCT as relevant to employers, the arguments about their usefulness in work transitions will not be accepted. This requires outreach to employers through the university's career center. It also requires careful assessment of the types of information and experience important to employers. Students must understand the value of each of the competencies and connect co-curricular activities to transitions in order to accept the significance in their self-development, career readiness, and life-long citizenship.*

The Co-curricular Transcript Program (CCT) at Lynn University is designed to promote community engagement, social responsibility and career-readiness among students. The program offers various opportunities for students to engage with the community, such as volunteering, internships, and leadership positions. Employer endorsement is key to student's recognizing the value in the CCT program and should be accessed primarily through the Lynn University Office of Career Connections.

### **Career Counselors as Mentors**

Career Connections counselors could be utilized to work closely with students to help them identify and pursue CCT experiences that align with their career goals and aspirations. This could involve conducting assessments to identify students' strengths and interests, providing guidance on the types of experiences that are most valued by employers. Additionally, career center counselors should educate students on the benefits of CCT participation and the role it plays in enhancing employability. Counselors must be fully trained in the CCT process to ensure this is an additional support structure for students.

### **CCT Achievement on the Resume**



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Career Connections counselors may help students articulate their CCT achievements in their resumes and cover letters. This will encourage students to take an active role in seeking out CCT experiences and using them to enhance their resumes and marketability to potential employers. This could involve researching and pursuing opportunities that align with their career goals, participating in leadership roles within the Lynn CCT program, and using CCT records to showcase their achievements to potential employers. Additionally, students should seek out guidance and support from career counselors and other campus resources to maximize the benefits of CCT participation.

**Partner with business organizations to promote the CCT program**

Research has shown that business administration students are more career-focused and may see the value of the CCT program in terms of their future employment prospects. Therefore, Lynn University should consider partnering with local businesses to promote the CCT program to business administration students. This could include offering internships and other career-related opportunities that are specifically designed for CCT participants.

**Recommendation 4**

*Develop support with other Lynn community members (students, faculty and staff) with the intent of fully integrating the CCT into the Lynn University narrative. The more the CCT is integrated into Lynn's story, the more it is perceived to be validated. STT suggests that support comes not just from friends and family, but normative expectations in the broader community.*

The finding that senior students represent the second highest CCT participation category highlights the importance of co-curricular activities and experiences in enhancing students' overall educational experience and employability. Based on this finding, several

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recommendations can be made to help Lynn administrators, career counselors, and students develop support of CCT participation.

### **Campus-Wide Support**

As previously mentioned in recommendations two and three, pathways exist for support structures to be developed with the Office of Career Connections and through peer-mentoring. These relationships will continue to integrate the CCT into the Lynn University narrative.

### **Collaboration with Faculty and Staff**

The Office of Student Affairs may collaborate with faculty and staff to increase participation in the CCT program. Faculty members could integrate the program into their courses and assignments, encouraging students to participate. Staff members could promote the program in their respective departments and provide guidance to students interested in the program.

### **Academic Course-Related Activities**

Student Affairs may collaborate with the Office of Academic Affairs to provide opportunities for students to engage in academic course-related activities, such as case studies, simulations, and experiential learning projects. Faculty members may also tie critical thinking-based activities from their coursework to the CCT, emphasizing skills in analysis, evaluation and synthesis. Moreover, faculty may connect the CCT to growth mindset by promoting the idea that intelligence and ability can be developed through hard work and dedication.

Lynn administrators, faculty, career counselors, and students should work together to develop and implement programs that encourage and support CCT participation, align CCT experiences with career goals and aspirations, and maximize the benefits of CCT participation.

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By doing so, students can enhance their resumes, stand out to potential employers, and successfully navigate the transition to work life.

### **Recommendation 5**

*Based on the research finding that students participating in the CCT attain self-discovery and critical thinking competency skills at a higher rate than global citizenship competency skills, it is recommended that Lynn University prioritize the development of these competencies for students, especially during their first year of college.*

Focusing on increasing student engagement in these competencies for level one skills, and subsequently supporting students to move to level 2 and 3 in these competencies will further integrate the CCT into the Lynn narrative, as described in recommendation 4. As such, the pathway for participation in the global citizenship competency will be a natural transition for students.

### **Ongoing Skill-Building Activities**

To support students' development beyond the first year of the program, ongoing skill-building activities should be incorporated into the curriculum. These activities could include workshops, seminars, and cultural events which link self-discovery and critical thinking competencies with the opportunity to learn about different cultures, gain knowledge about intercultural communication, and practice their intercultural skills (Bennett, 2012). These activities could be integrated into courses across different disciplines to ensure that students continue to increase participation in self-discovery and critical thinking while initiating an unnoticed trigger for global citizenship competency opportunities.

### **Provide Diverse Experiences**

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To enhance global citizenship competencies, Lynn University should provide opportunities for students to engage with diverse perspectives and experiences. This can be achieved through activities such as study abroad programs, intercultural exchanges, and multicultural events. In addition, Lynn should promote collaboration by encouraging students to work together in teams and engage in group projects. Furthermore, Lynn should prioritize equity and inclusion by promoting social justice initiatives and creating safe and inclusive spaces for all students.

### **More Extensive Intercultural Immersion Experiences**

When considering long term growth of the global citizenship competency, additional extensive intercultural immersion experiences may be effective. Intentionally linking more extensive intercultural immersion experiences, such as study abroad programs or internships in other countries to the CCT will create additional strategies and support structures for student success. These experiences can provide students with the opportunity to immerse themselves in a different culture and develop their intercultural competence by learning to navigate cultural differences and adapt to new environments (Lustig & Koester, 2013), contributing to their global citizenship competence development.

The CCT is divided into three levels, with each level requiring an increasing level of intercultural competence. The research has found that there is a significant lack of student advancement to levels 2 and 3 of the CCT (Lynn University, n.d.). Increased mentorship, more extensive intercultural immersion experiences, and ongoing intercultural skill-building activities are recommended to enhance students' intercultural competence development (Deardorff, 2019). This provides for additional strategies and support structures to move students into level two and level three of the CCT.

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The findings indicate that the development of self-discovery and critical thinking competencies is more prevalent among students participating in the CCT program than global citizenship competencies. Based on these findings, Lynn should prioritize the development of self-discovery and critical thinking competencies, especially during students' first year of college. In addition, Schlossberg's Theory of Transition can provide a framework for Lynn to support students' adaptation to college life and promote their development of essential competencies.

It is also essential to continue supporting students' intercultural development even after they have completed the CCT program to ensure that they are prepared to navigate intercultural interactions in a globalized world (Lustig & Koester, 2013). By implementing these recommendations, universities can better support students in developing intercultural competence and prepare them for success in a diverse and interconnected world.

### **Conclusion**

This study analyzes participation rates in the Lynn University co-curricular transcript (CCT) for personal development and career-readiness. In addition, this study investigates the perceived benefits and difficulties reported by students who utilize the co-curricular transcript, contributing to the existing literature on the topic. Specifically, this study makes recommendations for the Office of Student Affairs at Lynn University in improving the participation rates including number of students, community involvement and depth and breadth by which students participate. Further, the study examines how Lynn University can enhance the execution and management of its co-curricular transcript program, to strengthen students' preparedness for their future careers.

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Lynn University's Office of Student Affairs has observed a lower-than-anticipated level of student participation in the CCT program, which provides students with a comprehensive document of their co-curricular transcripts. The office identified several factors that contributed to the lower-than-anticipated participation rate, including a shortage of awareness, the perceived value of the reporting process, and the complexity of the engagement process. While participation is at 59% in the level one skills attained (basic knowledge area), there is a lack of advancement to levels 2 and 3 of the CCT, with only 6% of the talents at level 2 (comprehension) and none at level 3 (application). The research indicates that first-year students and business administration candidates at Lynn University are likelier than other students to participate in the Co-curricular Transcript Program (CCT). Furthermore, the data compiled by the Office of Student Affairs indicate that as students approach graduation, the transition to the working world stimulates increased Co-curricular Transcript (CCT) participation than during the second and third years of college matriculation. Data for this study was collected through document analysis, student survey data and participation rate, competency and skill level attainment data. All data was sources from the Lynn University Office of Student Affairs.

Schlossberg's Transition Theory and a helping model framework from counseling were explored and applied to the CCT program and data collected. Specifically, data analysis identified areas of situational transitions and triggers, strategies, support structures and the student's self-discovery process relevant to the CCT program. The Schlossberg Theory emphasizes the importance of rediscovering one's identity and sense of self during transitions. In addition, the Schlossberg Theory suggests that changes influence learning and problem-solving and that critical thinking skills are crucial for college success. CCT engagement facilitates development essential skills and competencies among college students.

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This study found that student participation in the CCT was lower than expected by the Office of Student Affairs; students engage in level 1 of the CCT, but do not progress to levels 2 or 3; first-year students and business administration students participate at higher rates; senior students participate at the second highest rate; students engage in the self-discovery and critical thinking competencies more frequently than the global citizenship competency.

In order to further the objective of the Co-curricular Transcript Program (CCT) at Lynn University, five recommendations were outlined. Communication strategies should be reviewed and updated to meet students where they are, specifically social media platforms. Messaging should use student and expert testimonials on CCT significance.

Relationships with Career Connections should be developed, highlighting their CCT achievements in resumes, cover letters, and employer preferences, establishing external support for the CCT program. In addition, relationships within the Lynn community can be leveraged to create support structures and strategies for engagement in the CCT in academic areas. Peer mentoring may also be used as an additional method of support. Engaging these community members will further engrain the CCT into the Lynn narrative, leading to further validity in the eyes of students.

Students who participate in the CCT program develop their own identities and critical thinking abilities more so than their global citizenship competencies. Initial efforts should focus on expanding reach at the self-discovery and critical thinking competencies, building on this strength. Subsequently, intensive intercultural experiences, and ongoing skill-building activities are advised to improve their intercultural competence and perceived need for global citizenship competency attainment.

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The Lynn University Co-Curricular Transcript program encourages students to be civically engaged, responsible citizens, and career ready. By applying Schlossberg's model and using the finding to drive recommendations for improvement, the Office of Student Affairs has the potential to expand the reach and effective of the CCT program.



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## Appendices

## Appendix A

## Screenshot approval email from Dr. Altieri

Capstone Project Inbox x

Anthony Altieri

to me ▾

12:17 PM (10 hours ago)



To Whom It May Concern:

This email records our May 22, 2022, phone conversation in which Lynn University agreed to collaborate with Mr. Mohamed Abdalla on his Vanderbilt University Doctoral capstone project.

The project will examine how the co-curricular transcript (CCT) program aims to increase students' professional preparedness upon graduation. In addition, the study will analyze the existing CCT program at Lynn and analyze student views of the program's value.

Lynn University is an independent college based in Boca Raton, FL, with approximately 3000 students from nearly 100 countries. U.S. News & World Report has named it among the most innovative international Universities. Colleges can properly monitor student involvement by having a centralized system for recording extracurricular activities. There are three focus areas that the CCT will focus on: *Self-Discovery, Critical Thinking and Global Citizenship*.

We look forward to collaborating with you in the upcoming months.

Sincerely,

Dr. Anthony R. Altieri  
Vice President, Student Affairs  
Lynn University



Dr. Anthony R. Altieri  
Vice President  
Student Affairs

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**Appendix B**

Mohamed Abdalla

[mohamed.g.abdalla@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:mohamed.g.abdalla@vanderbilt.edu)

Participant Name, Title

Address

Email address

March 2023

Dear [Name],

As a doctoral student in the Leadership, Learning and Organizations program at Vanderbilt University, I invite you to participate in a capstone project about how Lynn University (Lynn) can improve its co-curricular transcript (CCT) program to promote career readiness for graduating students. The project will examine the current CCT program at Lynn and review student perceptions about the value of the program. You have been identified as a potential interviewee for this study because of your experience working at Lynn.

Your participation in this study is significant to Lynn and me and will inform future CCT program decisions for students at Lynn. Should you agree to participate, I will contact you to schedule an online individual interview via Zoom in March 2023. Individual interviews should be at most 1 hour. Participation is entirely voluntary, and you will have the option to not respond to any question that you choose. Agreement to participate will be interpreted as your informed consent to participate and that you are at least 18.

If you have any questions about the project, please contact me via email at [Mohamed.g.abdalla@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:Mohamed.g.abdalla@vanderbilt.edu) or our faculty advisor, Dr. Chris Quinn-Trank, at [chris.quinn.trank@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:chris.quinn.trank@vanderbilt.edu). If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant, contact the Vanderbilt Institutional Review Board (IRB) at (615) 322-2918. Please print or save a copy of this page for your records.

Sincerely,

Mohamed G. Abdalla

I agree to participate in Mohamed Abdalla's Quality Improvement Study as part of his fulfillment for a Doctor of Education degree from Vanderbilt University.

X

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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**Appendix C**

October 2022 Sample Survey Data, Lynn University Co-Curricular Transcript Program

Sample Survey Questions	Number of Responses						Key Findings
<p>Are you aware that Lynn offers a co-curricular transcript to document your outside of the classroom engagement on campus?</p>	Answer						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students are aware of the co-curricular transcript.</li> </ul>
<p>How interested are you in being able to track and articulate skills developed outside of the classroom such as:</p> <p>Very Interested Somewhat Interested Somewhat Not Interested Not Interested</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Leadership</li> <li>- Problem Solving</li> <li>- Growth Mindset</li> <li>- Accountability</li> <li>- Collaboration</li> <li>- Equity and Inclusion</li> </ul>	Question	Very Interested	Somewhat Interested	Somewhat Not Interested	Not Interested	Total	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More than 62 percent of respondents to student surveys said they were interested in strengthening their talents in environments outside of the classroom.</li> </ul>
	Leadership	100	48	8	6	162	
	Problem Solving	96	51	9	5	161	
	Growth Mindset	99	48	10	4	161	
	Accountability	90	51	11	8	160	
	Collaboration	98	48	8	7	161	
	Equity and Inclusion	95	53	9	4	161	
<p>What do you see as the benefits of having a co-curricular transcript?</p>	Answer		Count				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Students were able to select multiple responses, and the results show that primary interest lies with acquiring marketable skills and tracking their involvement in real time.</li> </ul>
	Real-time tracking of involvement		114				
	An official way to track all memberships and experiences during your time at Lynn University		107				
	Being able to track and validate marketable skills for graduate school applications, internships, and/or future employment		123				
	A vehicle with which you can reflect on your learning		73				

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	I do not see any benefits of having a co-curricular transcript	19													
	Total	436													
Are you aware that you can view, print, or attach your co-curricular transcript to another document?	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Answer</th> <th></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>107</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>57</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>164</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Answer		Yes	107	No	57	Total	164		- The poll showed that 53 percent of the students had prior knowledge of the co-curricular transcripts.				
Answer															
Yes	107														
No	57														
Total	164														
Are you aware that you can use your co-curricular transcript along with your resume to apply for an internship or a job	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Answer</th> <th></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>115</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>49</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>164</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Answer		Yes	115	No	49	Total	164		- According to the survey findings, 43 percent of the students knew they could include the co-curricular transcript with their Resume when applying for internships or jobs.				
Answer															
Yes	115														
No	49														
Total	164														
How likely are you to intentionally select programs or engage in experiences that will build your personal co-curricular transcript	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Answer</th> <th>Count</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Extremely likely</td> <td>88</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Somewhat likely</td> <td>61</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Somewhat unlikely</td> <td>13</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Extremely unlikely</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>164</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Answer	Count	Extremely likely	88	Somewhat likely	61	Somewhat unlikely	13	Extremely unlikely	2	Total	164		- 149 students selected both an extremely likely and a somewhat likely likelihood to choose programs or participate in events that will create
Answer	Count														
Extremely likely	88														
Somewhat likely	61														
Somewhat unlikely	13														
Extremely unlikely	2														
Total	164														

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		their co-curricular transcript.
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