

# Career-readiness through cross-disciplinary project-based learning

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WSU Everett faculty members from the Edward R. Murrow College of Communication, the Voiland College of Engineering & Architecture and the Carson College of Business observed that several industries challenge Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) education to incorporate business and communication experiences to prepare students for the workplace. These recommendations encouraged WSU Everett faculty to design this experiential learning project for students, as highlighted in their research, "[STEM-Oriented Alliance for Research \(SOAR\) An educational model for interdisciplinary project-based learning](#)." The study was [presented](#) at the 127th ASEE Annual Conference in June.

"We don't want our students just to keep up, we want them to lead," said Lucrezia Paxson, co-author of the study and a career track (scholarly) assistant professor at WSU Everett's Murrow College. "Project-based interdisciplinary learning builds [student](#) confidence, good [communication](#) and group cohesion."

The interdisciplinary teams of communication, [electrical engineering](#), and business students worked to find solutions to real industry challenges by collaborating with their multidisciplinary team for real-life clients, including Boeing and Fluke. Electrical engineering students designed product prototypes, business students produced marketing plans and sales pitches for the products, and communication students created videos and infographics for the final presentations to clients.

Teams participated in a semester-long project that combined instructor meet-up sessions, group projects outside of class, and individual assignments. Projects culminated in a presentation of a final product pitch to clients from the perspectives of engineering, communications and marketing.

"This initiative has been hard work for all involved. However, the cross-discipline learning and the intellectual dexterity it fosters in our students has been worth it," Paxson said.

The WSU Everett team hopes that these [project](#)-based learning projects create cohesion among disciplines and give students the skills to be successful in professional settings. Their research also highlights both the challenges and benefits of working to bring real-world models into the classroom.

Provided by Edward R. Murrow College of Communication

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