Oral Defense Announcement
University of Missouri – St. Louis Graduate School

An oral examination in defense of the dissertation for the degree
Doctor of Business Administration with an emphasis in Organizational Behavior

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M.H.R. in International Human Relations, May, 1999, University of Oklahoma
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Research and Relationship-based Curriculum – Exploration of How Research and Relationship Experiences in Undergraduate Education Impact Students’ Employability, Graduate Education Intention, and Entrepreneurial Acumen

Date: April 7, 2022
Time: 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Place: Remote

Abstract
After decades of shrinking financial research support (Smith, 2004), continuously rising tuition and student debt (Beal, et al., 2019), and the induction of numerous alternatives (Garrett, 2021), traditional higher education is struggling to provide the value that students are demanding (Woodall, et al., 2012). Student engagement has been positively linked to increased retention (staying in school until completion of a degree) and reduced dropout (leaving school and not returning) rates (Finn & Rock, 1997; Reschly & Christenson, 2012), both of which contribute to how students perceive the value of higher education (Alves, 2011). The purpose of this study was to provide an original validation of a conceptual framework, Research and Relationship-Based Curriculum (RRBC), and explore the relationships between six RRBC independent variables derived from the National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE, Indiana University, 2020), i.e., High-Impact Practices (HIP), Reflective and Integrative Learning (RIL), Quality of Interactions (QI), Student-Faculty Interactions (SFI), Development of Transferable Skills (DTS), and Higher-Order Learning (HOL), and undergraduate students’ Graduate Education Intention as well as perceptions of their Employability and Entrepreneurial Acumen. Our key findings were that greater exposure to HIP, RIL, QI, DTS, and HOL increases students’ perceptions of Employability; that greater exposure to HIP and SFI increases students’ Graduate Education Intentions; and that greater DTS increases students’ perceptions of Entrepreneurial Acumen. These findings provide valuable implications for researchers and higher educational institutions.

Defense of Dissertation Committee
Dinesh Mirchandani, Ph.D.
Jennifer Reynolds-Moehrle, Ph.D.
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