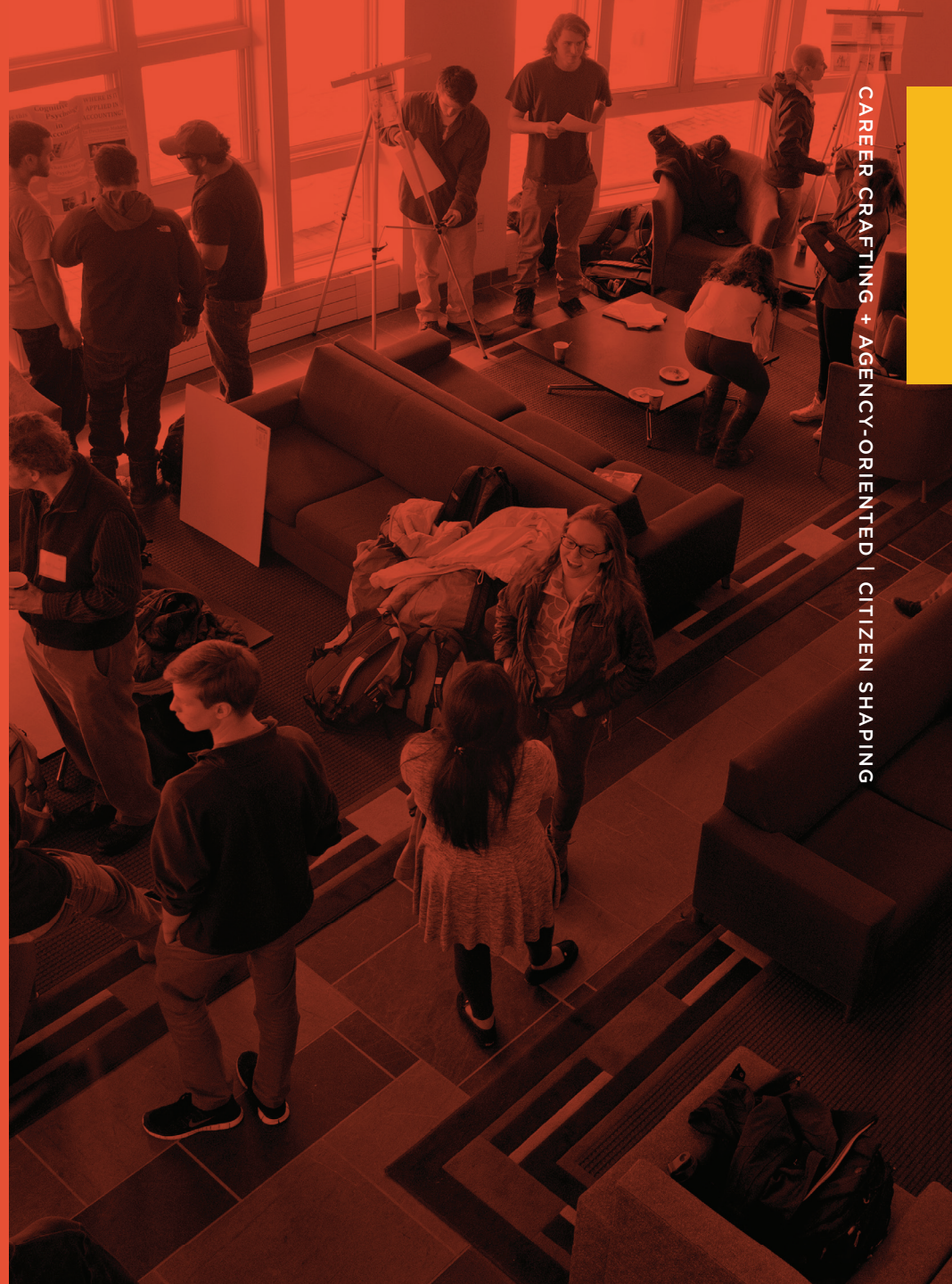


BATES COLLEGE



POINTS OF INTEREST

- Purposeful Work at Bates provides a **purpose-focused student experience, both in the academic and co-curricular realms.** Students consider questions such as “What do you care about?” and “What will you try next?” while developing tools for life-long learning and continual self-discovery.
- Included in Purposeful Work are curricular structures to support career and purpose learning, such as courses like “Life Architecture,” **curricular infusion models, Practitioner-Taught Courses, and Purposeful Work Internships and job shadowing.** For more information, see the At a Glance section.
- In addition to providing students with career readiness and purpose learning, Purposeful Work is an important dimension of the Bates College equity promise—providing **paid internships and other exploratory experiences.**



Cover Photo: (Photo Credit: Phyllis Graber Jensen/Bates College)
Clayton headshot (Photo credit: Phyllis Graber Jensen/Bates College)
Allen headshot (Photo credit: Ivy Pelletier)
Rebecca Fraser-Thill headshot (Photo credit: Rebecca Drouin)

YOUR GUIDES



Clayton Spencer
President



Allen Delong
Senior Associate
Dean for
Purposeful Work



Rebecca Fraser-Thill
Director of Faculty Engagement
and Outreach for Purposeful
Work and Visiting Instructor
in Psychology

In today's rapidly-changing world, the notion of 'career' has dramatically evolved, from entering a job at a company where you might expect to remain for years, if not a lifetime, to a much more dynamic process. The average college graduate can expect to have more than 11 distinct jobs before the age of 50—many of which don't yet exist.

This new reality, coupled with Bates College President Clayton Spencer's own significant career pivots early in her work life, inspired the focus on Purposeful Work seen at the college today.

Clayton's initial chosen career path of litigation turned out to be a mismatch in preferred skills "because litigation is always about past events" while she is "fundamentally an institutional person, a team builder, future-oriented, and optimistic." In her early forties, Clayton took the plunge and made a career switch into higher education, a decision she said "changed her life." Now as President of Bates, she seeks to afford every student the opportunity to find a meaningful match between work and their unique talents.

According to Clayton, "one of the strongest motivators in human life is a search for meaning or purpose." Research backs this up. Young people find it increasingly important to derive a sense of purpose from their work, but about half of college graduates struggle to find it, according to a recent Bates/Gallup study.

Therefore, students need agency and adaptability to create individually-defined, purposeful career paths and to navigate today's increasingly complex world. Higher ed institutions can help.

With that perspective in mind, Clayton's objective became "loading [the students] with the software that lets them become agents in creating a meaningful and economically viable life." At Bates, this means equipping students with the tools to continually iterate along their path to create a sustaining and fulfilling life that also has a meaningful impact beyond themselves.

Purposeful Work factors prominently in this endeavor. The faculty and staff at Bates work with students from the moment they set foot on campus to identify what brings them meaning, so that they'll have the mindset and skills to continue to do so over the course of their lives. "They are most likely to find meaning and purpose if what they do is related to their interests, values, and strengths," Clayton explains. The college prioritizes providing all students with equal access to the tools that do just that, along with a range of work experiences, including funded internships.

Students are encouraged to discover and develop these interests through a trial and error, gradually determining what 'purposeful work' means to them. It's not about knowing or picking the 'right choice,' but rather following various points of interest and seeing what creates a sense of engagement and impact.

Clayton decided to bring the concept of 'purposeful work' into the fold of students' education within a year of becoming the President of Bates. The idea was to start small: she brought together faculty and staff during two informal, open lunches to discuss the idea. There, she identified the people who seemed interested and well-equipped to take on the challenge and then formed a working group in May 2013.

The working group was co-chaired by faculty and drew from all parts of the

college, including faculty members from a number of departments; staff members from Admissions, Career Development, and Student Affairs; and students from all class years. The group reported back in August 2014 with an articulated philosophy that defined Purposeful Work at Bates and a set of pragmatic tactics to pilot. The initial tactics included introducing five Practitioner-Taught Courses during a Spring mini-semester known as Short Term, a grant to incorporate "purposeful work" into the academic curriculum, and the development of an internship program.

Practitioner-Taught Courses (PTCs; see box for explanation) posed a unique challenge: how would faculty feel about non-faculty members teaching credit-bearing courses? To preempt any roadblocks, administration devised two solutions: first, a tenured faculty member would lead the design and initial implementation of the PTC pilot.

Second, alongside these PTCs, the college introduced the concept of allowing five academic faculty to use Short Term to design or redesign courses for the regular curriculum. Redesign faculty select a small team of students who have taken at least one of their classes to work with them in Short Term to design a new syllabus, create classroom or homework assignments, and serve as a constant focus group in the development of a new course. Because they earn teaching credit for the course redesigns, faculty are able

to make significant curricular innovations without losing precious summer research time. The bundling of the PTCs and redesigns allowed Practitioner-Taught Courses to take place, while making space for a desirable outcome for faculty as well.



STUDENTS IN THE MUSIC PRODUCTION PRACTITIONER-TAUGHT COURSE HAVE HANDS-ON STUDIO TIME

Photo credit: Josh Kuckens/Bates College

Once the working group concluded its efforts, Clayton strategically held Purposeful Work in the design space—separate from existing programs and offices on campus—for three years to develop the programming, develop and refine the pilots, build momentum, and continually assess to see what was and wasn't working.



URBAN PLANNING PRACTITIONER-TAUGHT COURSE SET UP A PUBLIC BIKE LANE DEMONSTRATION

Photo credit: Josh Kuckens/Bates College

The initial design team was limited to a few individuals whose work was funded by start-up money raised from Trustees and alumni. Only once Bates had a set of functioning, well-tested programs did they hire Allen DeLong to be the Senior Associate Dean for Purposeful Work. Allenthen integrated Purposeful Work programming with the existing career development center to create the Bates Center for Purposeful Work.

“Purposeful Work had been insulated on campus in the design space intentionally,” Allen explains. “And then it was time to integrate both the philosophy and the programs into the work of the college; that was my priority.”



AT A GLANCE:

PURPOSEFUL WORK AT BATES

PURPOSEFUL WORK INFUSION PROJECT

The Purposeful Work Infusion Project gets faculty members talking explicitly about meaning, purpose, work, and careers in their classes through discussions and reading and writing assignments. This is achieved via “curricular infusion,” a pedagogical approach in which key topics are interwoven into course material in a seamless manner.

PRACTITIONER-TAUGHT COURSES

Practitioner-Taught Courses (PTCs) are credit-bearing classes offered during Short Term on skill-based topics outside of the existing Bates curriculum, such as music production, entrepreneurship, and science journalism. The courses are taught by alumni and friends of the college rather than by faculty members. Students who take PTCs get to test out an area of interest, gain a set of tangible skills, and form a professional network through their instructor, guest speakers, and field trips.

LIFE ARCHITECTURE

Bates also offers a class specifically focused on purposeful work, called “Life Architecture,” which is offered during Short Term. Drawing on the ideas found in books such as *Man’s Search for Meaning* and *The Defining Decade*, and lessons

from design thinking like those offered in *Designing Your Life*, the students learn the tools they need to bring meaning and purpose into their lives. The class incorporates four different threads. The first, plant yourself, is about evaluating one’s values, interests, personality, and strengths. The next is about what really matters, looking at meaning and purpose in the context of life. The third is about creating a network and crafting a job, and the last looks at practical matters, such as preparing your taxes and making and maintaining friendships.

BATES CENTER FOR PURPOSEFUL WORK

In addition to typical career development services, the Bates Center for Purposeful Work offers two unique programs:

First, the Purposeful Work Internship Program offers two routes to gain a summer internship: through the core employer program, a set of organizations that prioritize hiring a Bates student for the summer, or by applying for funding for an internship a student finds or creates on their own. The Program is anchored in the Bates equity promise and seeks especially to help students who arrive on campus with less developed social and professional networks, often

those on financial aid or first-generation college students.

Bates raises \$350,000 in annual funding to support students who are doing Purposeful Work Internships, allowing them to pursue these opportunities without foregoing a salary. The Program includes preparation, ongoing reflection, a virtual cohort model, and a requirement to present in the fall after their internship, driving home key elements of the design thinking process.

Second, the Purposeful Work Job Shadow Program allows students to test out career paths by shadowing professionals in various careers and incorporates reflection and iteration into the model, using the Purposeful Work philosophy. Bates offers close to 1,200 opportunities, most of which last a single day, but can go up to five. Students can participate in up to three job shadows each year over the course of their four years at Bates. Job shadows inform students’ internship choices and give them a better idea of what they do and don’t want in a job at Bates or after graduation.

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SO WHAT DOES PURPOSEFUL WORK AT BATES NOW LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE?

There are a number of components: the Purposeful Work Infusion Project, Practitioner-Taught Courses, and the Bates Center for Purposeful Work, which includes Purposeful Work Internships, a Job Shadow Program, and the Spotlight on Career Series.



PURPOSEFUL WORK INTERNSHIPS

The most broadly diffused effort is the Purposeful Work Infusion Project. The model gives faculty the freedom to inject “purposeful work” into their curriculum in their own way. The only constant is that they talk about work, meaning, purpose, and careers as it fits within the context of their course, and also require a reading and a writing assignment on the topic.

“The prerequisite,” explains Rebecca Fraser-Thill, Director of Faculty Engagement and Outreach for Purposeful Work and Visiting Instructor in Psychology, “is that you have to be willing to allow faculty autonomy. The challenge with curricular infusion is that the faculty members will all do it slightly differently, which is actually the beauty of it.”

The Project started with a pilot of five faculty members from different disciplines. As of 2019, 46% of faculty—from every department and program at the college—have been involved.

Through all of these initiatives that comprise Purposeful Work at Bates, students are encouraged to break out of what Rebecca describes as an ‘identity-foreclosed mindset’ and craft work that has a purpose. Identity foreclosure, Rebecca explains, is “making a decision about one’s direction without adequate exploration.” Such a person is likely to choose “the most obvious path for them, often because they’ve seen parents or relatives doing the work, and/or because society often mentions the profession.” When the goal is breaking out of an identity-foreclosed mindset, going to college becomes about much more than simply choosing a major, taking some classes, and getting a degree. Students try out interests, reflect on their

experiences as they make decisions, and refine their choices in an iterative process.

The efforts have paid off: Jake, a student who graduated from Bates in 2019 and took a handful of Purposeful Work infusion courses, says that “Purposeful Work has changed the way I think about the world and my life every day.”

Rebecca B., a 2016 graduate, agrees. “Purposeful Work specifically forces you to examine how what you’re doing in the classroom can apply to something real. And the biggest difference I’ve seen is, I think a lot of Purposeful Work kids feel a bit more empowered.”

“What I love about the program is that they’re not holding your hand,” she adds. “What they’re saying is, you are getting this practical experience—value that experience for what it is right now, understand the value of how that applies to the classroom and what you’re learning. If you can synthesize that, and get ready for the jobs that aren’t even created yet, that creates the strongest future candidate.”

Creating meaningful contributions to society hinges on knowing how to create purpose in work based on one's unique interests, skills, and values. Learning how to do this while navigating the college experience prepares students for the ambiguities of life post graduation.

"We all have moments when we know we're off-target," Clayton says. "Offering a toolkit for every time our graduates are going through the re-exploration process will support them as they define and iterate along their own unique path."

HOW DOES BATES THINK PRACTICALLY ABOUT PURPOSEFUL WORK?

CURRICULAR	CO-CURRICULAR	WORLDS OF WORK
Practitioner-Taught Courses	"Unplugged" Speaker Series	Roadshows
Purposeful Work Infusion Project	How to Adult Life Skills Series	Purposeful Work Job Internship Program
Life Architecture Course	Bobcat Ventures Entrepreneurship	Spotlight Series



INSIDER TIPS

Start small: Despite the blessing from leadership in Bates' case, portions of the Purposeful Work initiative started small and scrappy. For the Purposeful Work Infusion Project specifically, all it took was five faculty members who were willing to try something new.

Engage the right team: To identify those early participants, Rebecca remembers that the Dean of Faculty told her to look for the "people tapping their toes around the edge of the dance floor." She looked for the people who appeared open to pedagogical experimentation by demonstrating their interest or capacity for it in the past. Ideally, she says, these people are known on campus and have some gravitas "so that they can spread the word." They also built a pilot team from different departments in the college and from different stages of faculty members' careers.

The five met twice a semester to check in and compare notes about what they were trying. While they bounced ideas off each other and had shared expectations of what it meant to "infuse," each faculty member was given near complete autonomy on how they wanted to put the curricular infusion into practice in order to blend it best into their own curriculum.