

Professional Development Plan

Student Name

Application to Union University

## Professional Development Plan

### **I. Purpose of the Professional Development Plan**

The purpose of a professional development plan (PDP) is to assist an educator in evaluating areas of strength and weakness and in formulating a strategy with measurable goals and specific timelines for the improvement and correction of the stated strengths and weaknesses. Even in the absence of a formal PDP, the continual task of an educator is to reflect on the instances of both success and failure in an almost obsessive quest to perfect his craft. This PDP will allow me an opportunity to be more decisive in this pursuit and develop a tracking mechanism to ensure its efficacy.

Furthermore, an additional function of developing and implementing a PDP is the facilitation of collaboration. Often, areas of weakness are not the products of intentional negligence but results of professional blindness or inexperience. From working with colleagues and mentors, I hope to gain new strengths and insights and to form new professional bonds for accountability and advice. The collaboration that will result from developing and implementing a PDP will reveal new tools available to me in my endeavors and will provide sounding boards to protect me from unforeseen consequences or unintentional myopia.

### **II. Areas of Professional Strength & Weakness**

After reflecting on my professional practice and completing the *21<sup>st</sup> Century School Administrator Skills Self-Assessment*, I have determined that the following are my three areas of professional strength and two areas of professional weakness, respectively:

#### *Expectations*

One area of personal strength is the high expectations I hold for my students. I demand a higher level of understanding and analysis than what is required from most of my peers and the

state assessments. A constant mantra that my students hear from me is that I'm not interested in them knowing the who, what, or where of a novel but in them explaining the how and why. My class discussions, assignments, and assessments reflect this high level of expectation for their performance.

### *Content Knowledge*

A second strength is my knowledge of my content area. Over the years, I have developed a high acumen in English grammar, writing, and literature. I earned an "Award for Excellence" from ETS for my Praxis score on the English Content Knowledge exam and am consistently chosen as the speaker in both my work and class collaborations.

### *Leadership Skills*

A third strength is my impassive approach to leadership. As a leader in my school, I have used my emotional restraint to help myself and others wade through immensely controversial issues to reach an agreeable solution or to see a valid counterpoint. Often, my ability to remain emotionally detached has allowed me to withhold judgment and see competing sides of an argument that I may have otherwise rejected with counter-productive and ill-advised outburst.

### *Time Management*

Perhaps my most glaring professional weakness that will impact my effectiveness as an administrator is time management. Since my days in college, I have always performed better under the pressures of a deadline. While this tendency might not be overly deleterious in drafting college essays, I recognize its potentially disastrous effect as a school leader. Often many colleagues and peers or even the effectiveness of my school may be relying on my timely completion of tasks and duties, and I must become more disciplined in this area. This weakness

currently reveals itself in the grading of papers and updating of scores in our online gradebook.

### *Frankness*

A second weakness, albeit not always, is my frankness. I tend to say what I honestly think on a subject with little regard to prudence. When I have thoughtfully developed an opinion on a given topic, I speak my mind and care little if those in my hearing may disagree. I generally operate with greater discretion, however, on personal matters such as religion or politics, but on professional matters I tend to be very blunt. While bluntness is not an outright mark against character, my weakness is in not always choosing the appropriate manner and place to voice my opinion.

### **III. Personal Implications**

As I successfully challenge my peers to hold high expectations for their students and to help their students successfully reach those expectations, I will become a stronger mentor and leader. To compel someone to do more than what they typically do and certainly more than they are required to do is a supremely arduous feat, and if I can accomplish as much, it will be because I have worked diligently and patiently as a mentor and leader.

A second implication will be seen in my effectiveness as a teacher. As I become more responsible in my time management, I will be able to provide constant and meaningful feedback to my students concerning their performance. To be able to do so would allow me to modify my assignments and teaching to address deficiencies in real-time. This will enable my students to focus their learning and me to more accurately gauge learning. Furthermore, the celerity with which I complete tasks and duties assigned by my administrators will aid in the solidifying in their mind of my commitment and ability as a school leader and perhaps then yield greater responsibilities for me.

A third implication will be seen in the willingness of my peers and administrators to seek out and value my opinions. If I can treat every dissenting person with deference while still voicing my argument, then a byproduct of that will be the inclination of all to listen to what I have to offer and give me a fair hearing even when they disagree. At the heart of collaboration and teamwork is the ability for all to consider every point of view and offer support or challenges. As I commit to that process, I aim to gain the willing ear of all.

#### **IV. Goals, Benchmarks, and Timelines**

To further develop my aforementioned strengths, I aim to help my colleagues develop higher sets of expectations for their students; increase the number of classics with which I am thoroughly familiar; and increase my leadership role within my school. Benchmarks for these goals would include collaborative units planned with my colleagues; at least five additional titles that I can discuss and/or teach with competence; and my active role in helping our school consider the seven-period day and the trimester concept. I do not make plans and then just sit on them, though, so I anticipate that one year is ample time for me to accomplish these goals.

Turning my weaknesses into positive growth opportunities brings me to the goal of personal growth. I refuse to settle with the “that’s just the way I am” mentality, so my goal is to simply prove that qualities that seem innate can actually be turned around with intentional effort. As benchmarks to mark my progress towards growth in these areas, I will keep a professional journal that documents my blunders and misjudgments. I will regularly connect with an accountability group, perhaps two or three of my colleagues with whom I can share my failures and growth challenges. If I meet with this group once a week, I hope I can manage a turnaround within a few of months. Though this is ample time, according to popular life coaches, to form a habit, I think I will need to keep the accountability process moving even after I feel change.

Each part of the calendar year brings its own challenges and stresses, so I'd like to track my progress for an entire school year even if I see noticeable positive change within a few weeks.