Faculty/Staff Application to Offer Beyond the Classroom (BTC) Course/Experience
University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
551 Oak Street, Chattanooga, TN 37408, 423-425-5825, www.utc.edu/think/beyond
Modified source: MTSU QEP Document-2006

For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them. —Aristotle
Experiential learning is learning by doing. Critical thinking occurs during experiential learning.

Faculty Name: Sandy Cole
Email Address: sandy-cole@utc.edu
First Semester the Course/Experience will be offered: ________________________________

How often do you plan to offer this course as an BTC course/experience?
☐ One time
☐ Every semester
☐ Other (please describe) ______________________________________________________

Please check one type of Course or Experience to be evaluated (please see Definitions Section below with questions):

☐ Co-op/internship  ☐ Teacher education (for 3-5 participants only)
☐ Study abroad  ☐ Lab course
☐ Applied learning  ☐ Undergraduate Research
☐ Creative activity  ☐ Service Learning
☐ Independent Study

Course Number: __________________ Course Title: Postsecondary Awareness With Success
(P.A.W.S.)

Explain how your course meets the criteria listed on the back of this form by answering the following questions: (please submit a separate document)

1. How will the learning goals for your students demonstrate experience based understanding of the discipline through at least three of the student learning outcomes listed on the next page?

2. How will you incorporate reflection before, during and after the experience? Journals, self-evaluations, blogs, written peer feedback, or other written or recorded media can document student reflection.

3. How will you incorporate the additional criteria for the type of course selected above? Additional Criteria for each type of course are listed on the following pages.

4. Describe the project that will be required to fulfill the BTC component.

Faculty: __________________  Signature: __________________
Faculty/Staff Application to Offer Beyond the Classroom Experience-P.A.W.S.

1. a) Identify, evaluate and interpret information, by raising pertinent questions and identifying uncertainties

Postsecondary Awareness With Success will provide Beyond the Classroom participants with the ability to identify, evaluate, and interpret information by raising pertinent questions and identifying uncertainties through the operational aspects of one-on-one mentoring. Mentors have to create Individual Achievement Plans (IAP’s) with their mentees. The data collected in the IAP’s provides mentors with the “roadmap” of how to build a successful relationship with their student. In order to do this, it is imperative that they closely identify, evaluate, and interpret their mentees’ level of academia, behavior reports, interests, hobbies, and aspirations. In the one-on-one sessions all of these questions are asked by the mentor, but as the semester progresses they have to inquire further to educate their mentee on how to reach their goals, perform better academically, and become better citizens.

b) Solve problems by determining limitations, making connections, and prioritizing the potential solutions

All three of these abilities are essential for effective mentoring in the P.A.W.S. program. In order for our mentors to make true differences in the lives of our kids, they must understand the students’ limitations, whether it be with academia or social schema. To improve upon these limitations, mentors have to make connections with their students built upon trust, compassion, patience, and understanding. Prioritizing the potential solutions is the means in which the improvements are made in students’ school and social lives. Once the connection has been established, P.A.W.S. mentees trust their mentors to guide them correctly through the semester. This can be a challenging process, which is why we are making it mandatory for the P.A.W.S. mentors that seek Think Achieve points to mentor a child for one full academic year. Sometimes, it can take a whole semester for the trustworthy connection to be established, however, when it is all said and done, not only are the P.A.W.S. kids’ lives better off but the mentors always feel how much they have grown and improved themselves as people.

c) Seek ongoing improvement to integrate knowledge and skill through reflection on their thinking and learning processes.

P.A.W.S. mentors have the opportunity to improve themselves as future educators, social workers, and psychologists. This is not to say that we limit our mentors to these majors, in fact, the majority of our mentors are UTC students from a diverse array of academic majors that want to give their time out of the goodness of their hearts. We do associate with the Schools of Education, Social Work, and Psychology because many of their classes require a field experience component. Often times, students in these fields choose P.A.W.S. as their placement. These UTC students are required to integrate the content they absorb in class and test it out in their field
placements. This gives the mentors the opportunity to be exactly what the professors of the College of Health, Education, and Professional Studies want them to be, “reflexive practitioners.” This work is pure preparation for the future and the structure of P.A.W.S. enables the potential Think Achieve scholars to improve their skill sets beyond the classroom through the actual practice of the knowledge they have gained in the classroom.

2. We will include the pre, midpoint, and post reflections into our actual schedule that we plan prior to each semester. Throughout the semester, we have days scheduled for mentors to come in and share their progress, successes, challenges, and any helpful input they may have to improve our program. To ensure that Think Achieve receives quality reflections at each point from each person involved, we will include a time slot in these meetings for these mentors to have a quiet space to write their self-evaluations.

3. a) Service learning mentors (majority of mentor participants):

   The first element of the additional criteria for service learning students, that being that the service learning component needs to be a substantial portion of the person’s grade, is already set in place for many of our mentors by their academic departments. These are the field experience students that must complete a program like P.A.W.S. successfully in order to achieve a passing grade in their UTC class. The P.A.W.S. staff closely evaluates all of our mentors because we are responsible to report to these departments. We assure you that Think Achieve will receive the same consideration in our evaluations of the potential Think Achieve scholars involved in our program. If a mentor does not exhibit professionalism, work hard to build rapport with their mentee, or demonstrates poor service learning attributes, then they will not receive a good grade from our staff and Think Achieve will be notified well before it is time to turn the evaluation.

   The second element of additional criteria, that being that this experience entails organized community reflection and includes the three reflections, will be fulfilled in the mentor’s every day experiences at P.A.W.S., as well as in the meetings in which they write all three of their self-evaluations. A Brown Academy teacher once said at a P.A.W.S. end of the year celebration, “it is true that a community is needed to raise a child and P.A.W.S. provides this for our students.” This work is done through mentor collaboration, continuous reflection is absolutely essential for our mentors to be effective. We teach our mentors that it is imperative for them to think about the success of their mentee before, during, and after every single P.A.W.S. session. This is a mainstay of our program, or any successful mentoring program for that matter. We want all of our mentors, field experience and non-field experience alike, to follow the necessary steps of building good relationships with the children of our community.

(Teacher education additional criteria on next page)
b) Teacher education mentors (3-5 mentor participants per semester):

These 3-5 participants will gain actual classroom instruction practice. We interview and select the most qualified interviewees to run our classrooms at P.A.W.S. They are trained to deliver the content from our curriculum, “Achieving the Dream: College Bound.” These mentors have to practice lesson planning, classroom management, and lesson delivery in this experience. This position requires these mentors to give close to thirty hours per semester because of the extra necessary work and weekly meetings that we host with this group. All of them will have no issue with meeting the twenty hour BTC requirement. Engagement and reflection is imperative for our classroom leaders, there is very little observation that occurs because after we train them, then they begin to prepare and deliver lessons to their classrooms. In the classrooms, mentors sit with their mentees and the classroom leader sets forth the objectives for the day, teaches the content, and then the mentors work through the lessons with the kids while the classroom leader monitors the work being done. These additional criteria requirements will be easily met if our project is approved by Think Achieve.

4. PAWS History and Purpose

In partnership with Brown International Academy, PAWS began as an after school initiative where UTC students served as mentors in the program. UTC students were a welcomed part of PAWS as they applied to volunteer to provide mentoring to the fourth and fifth grade participants of the program. UTC mentors were responsible for delivering the programming by means of facilitating activities from Positive Action, providing homework assistance, panels, campus tours, and other special events.

As time followed, PAWS started growing not only by reputation, but also by volunteers and participants. Partnerships with Education, Social Work, and Psychology departments were fostered and it is through these partnerships with those departments and overall campus that students benefited by serving as mentors in order to complete the field placement component or for the volunteer experience.

Goals continued to evolve in the program. As Ms. Cole noticed the fascination PAWS students had in learning about college from their mentors. PAWS evolved from being a program focusing on lowering juvenile delinquency to a program keen on helping elementary-age students explore their postsecondary options. In 2010 the PAWS abbreviation shift emphasis from “Positive Action With Success” to “Postsecondary Awareness With Success.” To make sure materials aligned with the goals of increasing postsecondary awareness a new curriculum was designed to meet the needs of the program. In 2011, the Center for Community Career Education published the comprehensive curriculum Achieving the Dream: College Bound! for the PAWS program.

Currently PAWS has served over 145 fourth and fifth grade students since 2007. As PAWS continues to benefit participants from Brown Academy, the future of PAWS is to expand to more
elementary schools to create a greater impact of postsecondary awareness among fourth and fifth graders.

What mentors do:

In the last six years, P.A.W.S. has made incredible strides promoting college awareness and preventing juvenile delinquency for Chattanooga area children by way of mentoring. Two days a week after school, fourth and fifth grade students from Brown Academy work with UTC students that serve as mentors. The mentors work with the mentees on improving their grades, overall attitude, and behavior. Our mentors open the kids’ eyes to the postsecondary world; it is amazing to witness a fifth grade child transition from a negative attitude to a positive one with high hopes for the future. At our first reunion last year, a former mentee stated, “I want to major in engineering and there are great schools all over for that, but I’ve found that Georgia Tech will probably be the best for me,” this young man has not entered high school yet. We are constantly being encouraged by numerous Elementary schools in the area and by parents to move P.A.W.S. into other schools. If we build an even stronger mentor following, then we will be able to provide other schools with this opportunity. We believe that a Think Achieve experience is an excellent way to develop this following and witness many more UTC students impact the lives of children in our community.

Former P.A.W.S. Mentor:

“Mentoring is one of the most rewarding experiences. Knowing that I had to opportunity to take part in watching these mentees grow is an amazing feeling! I’m glad I could make a difference in a child’s life.”