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Please find this letter as my application for the MidAmerican Business Deans Association (MABDA) 2016 Innovation in Business Education Award. The program I will be focusing on in this letter is a brand new course that my department will be offering at Wright State University this fall semester. Whereas I will be the instructor of this course, entitled Managerial Character and Competence, this course is unique because it is has been, and continues to be, the product of a team effort. About a year ago, a majority of the faculty in the department of Management and International Business voluntarily committed to meeting regularly to reassess our management major and sought ways to improve it so it would add more value to our students, faculty, staff, community, region, and country.

Our conversations began with recognizing the need to be able to track the progress of our students. In compliance with AACSB standards, we already track some courses with specific learning objectives. However, we wanted to find a way to assess the competence—the knowledge and skills necessary for effectiveness—of our students when they first enter into the business school and again when they are about to leave. We felt it was important to be able to show students the competence areas they have developed in college, and provide support and guidance for how this will make them effective in their careers. Students already undergo a similar process in their classes now where they are learning competencies and are being assessed in some way (i.e., exams, group projects, papers, etc.) throughout the semester. One aspect of our vision is to provide a framework where students can *make sense* of the multi-level and broad range nature of the competencies that are being developed in their entire college career. As management professors, we understand the importance of sensemaking, which demonstrates how individuals interpret, understand, and then act based on their social environments, and wish to provide students with a platform to further understand their college and work experiences.

Another vital aspect of our vision for this course, and ultimately the full curriculum, is to elevate character alongside competence. In particular, we are interested in developing virtuous character (henceforth character), which represents a set of virtues that are universally considered to be important to well-being and excellence, in our students; as such, we seek to enhance the quality of judgment and decision making in them. The latest business crises have led many to question whether we are missing critical elements of managerial leadership in our discussions, and we believe that character is essential but is often overshadowed by competence in higher education. Our vision is to shift the dialogue to the simultaneous development and integration of these two phenomena in education. Recent academic scholarship has asserted that competence and character represent the raw building blocks of effective and sustainable leadership. In addition, more executives are currently expressing the importance of virtues in the workplace. For example, the Dayton Business Journal published an article on the four virtues that sound leaders possess at the end of June this year. We seek to add to the momentum of developing both character and competence that is currently happening in research and practice by bringing this notion of combining the two in undergraduate and graduate studies.

A course that bridges both character and competence is truly unique. In talking with other faculty around the world, usually one or the other is emphasized in a specific course. However, for our students to truly thrive, we need both to be present in the conversation and they must be integrated with one another. The benefits of having competent students with depth of character are immense. A study published in a leadership journal in 2009 found that a lack of leader abilities and lack of character led to negative leadership, characterized as despotic, exploitative, restrictive, failed, and passive. Our goal is to develop students (and future managers) with positive leadership attributes that will lead to success in their work life and home life. According

to Aristotle's notion of "practical wisdom," when individuals have strong judgment, they are able to identify and understand the particularities of each situation—this is vital to the successful functioning of our students, organizations, community, and so forth. Better judgement is something we can all benefit from and is a worthy endeavor for us all to take part in. Having the opportunity to work with students in developing their competence and character to enhance their judgement is such an honor because I know I will be growing and developing too!

A course like ours is not specific to management majors, though that is where we are starting from, but can also be applied to other disciplines such as finance, marketing, accounting, economics, supply chain, information systems, and so forth. Moreover, a course like ours can be feasibly transferred to other institutions and can be applied to other colleges too, such as nursing, law, and liberal arts. The reason for its ease of transference is that we are using broad frameworks of character and competence that can be used in a variety of settings—if professors wanted to tweak the frameworks for their specific use though, that is very possible to do too. For example, our framework of character, which is provided in the first appendix, consists of 11 virtues: courage, humanity, justice, temperance, transcendence, accountability, drive, collaboration, humility, integrity, and judgment. This list of virtues is grounded in research on practicing leaders and also extends the set of virtues that have been previously identified as not being age or culturally bounded because its contents have been suggested throughout time.

The content found in this character framework is very new and from my knowledge, is only be used in a couple of classes in Canada so far. I have been talking with an array of professors and executives in industry to find ways to apply this content creatively in the course. One creative application we are using is having students work in teams to complete an interactive business case study game, where they will practice activating on character in the four

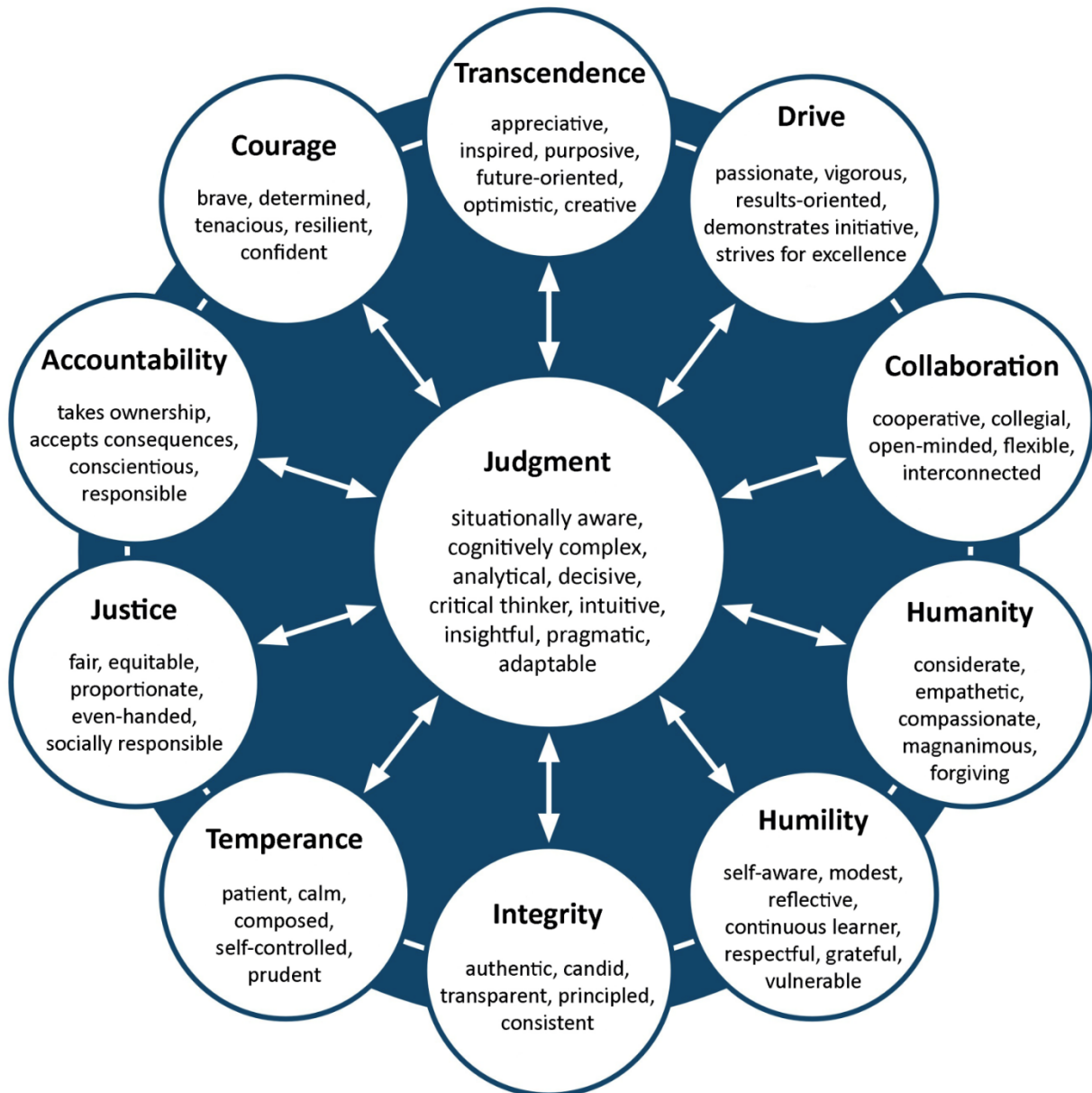
different crises they will face as an executive team in the simulation. This game from Recurrence has been on the market for less than one year and only a handful of universities currently have access to it; I am excited to be using it in the course! Another creative way that we are applying this content is through role play scenarios. I am currently talking with managers at a number of local organizations who are interested in coming in to the class to walk student through some realistic role play scenarios where they can practice enacting virtues alongside competence.

The competence framework that will be used in the course is the Competing Values Framework (CVF), which is attached as Appendix 2. This framework consists of four groupings of competence that comes from an initial list of over 250 competencies that were generated by managers, administrators, and others: controlling, collaborating, competing, and creation. We have organized the course into two-week blocks, with four of the blocks targeting the four groupings of the CVF, where students will be self-assessing and working on activities that will develop these competencies. One creative way we plan on applying this content in the course is to have students work through the Intentional Change Model (please refer to Appendix 3) where they will work in teams to further understand their ideal self, their real self, and then create a plan to close gaps between the two as they move forward in their careers. Also, another creative application in the class is that the students will be writing a “CV of failure”. This idea comes from a Princeton professor who has published a CV of programs, journals, and grant applications that said “no” to him. Whereas competencies are about knowledge and skills that lead to effectiveness, it is important for students to understand that there will be disappointments along the way to success and they can use these moments to further develop themselves.

In sum, the purpose of our course is to have students thrive in the next phase of their life and we believe the focus on competence and character in this course will help them to succeed!

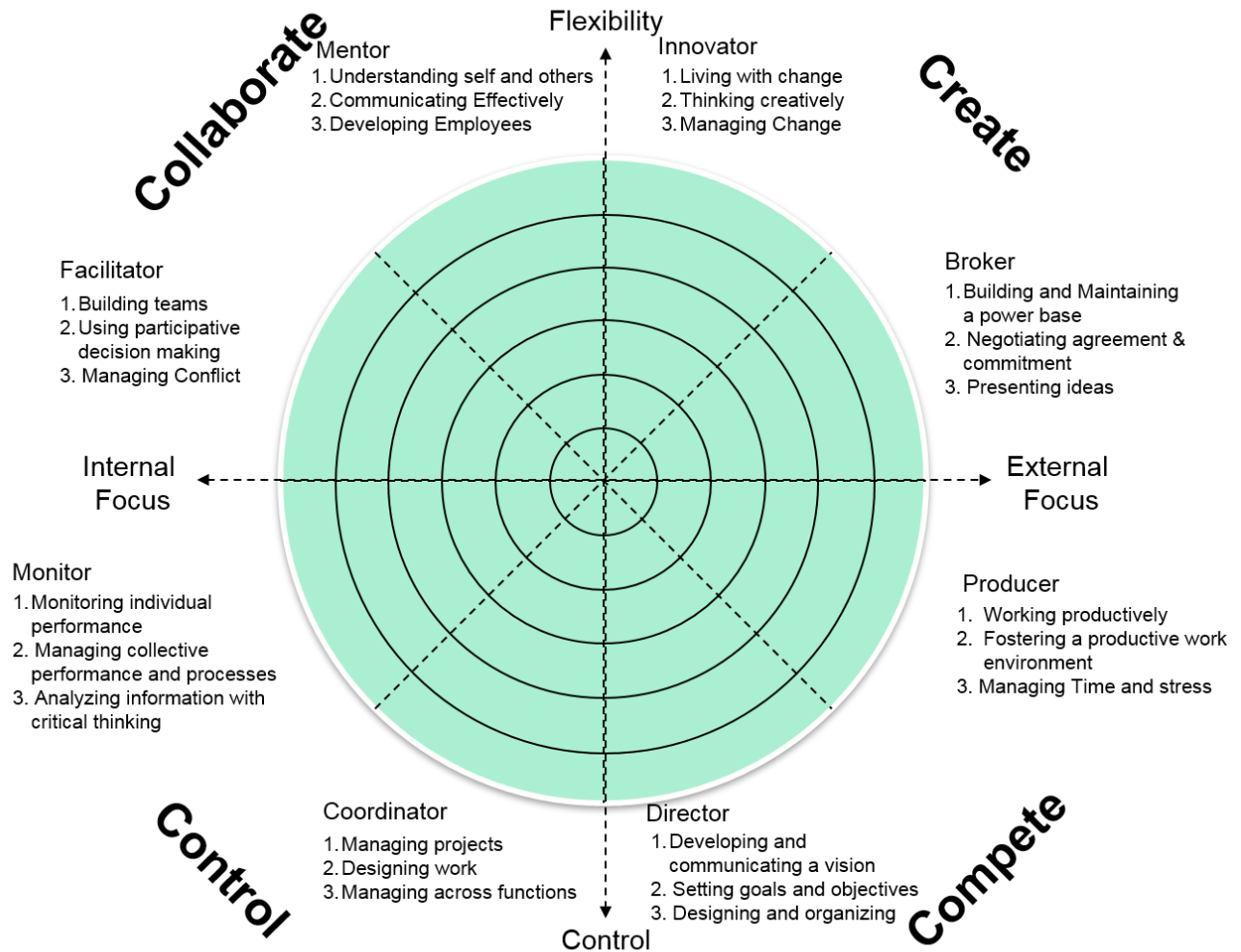
Appendix 1

Framework of Virtuous Character



Appendix 2

Competing Values Framework of Competence



Appendix 3

Intentional Change Model

