Hardwiring Student Engagement with Career Development

A Road Map from Admissions to Graduation and Beyond
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In 2013, career services remains a top priority for higher education institutions across America, with the rate of under- and unemployment among recent graduates continuing to hover around 50% in 2012. Major news outlets are also highlighting the huge amount of debt that students are taking on; in 2012 the total amount of student debt that U.S. students held surpassed $1 trillion for the first time.

### A Tough Job Market

**Recent Graduates Face Uncertain Prospects**

- **53%** Bachelor’s degree holders under 25 under/unemployed
- **1.5 M** Number of Bachelor’s degree holders under 25 that are under/unemployed
- **$1 T** Total U.S. student loan debt

### The Disheartened Honors Student

“I powered through my four years of college with the assumption that doing well and getting my bachelor’s degree would be the key to having a future. I graduated with a 3.76 G.P.A. and was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa. I joined the student council. I spent four summers interning for the Fresh Air Fund and volunteered for the Alzheimer’s Association. I have nothing to show for my hard work but $24,000 in student loans.”

“Hello, Cruel World”
*The New York Times*

Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
As the cost of a college degree continues to escalate and students take on increasing levels of debt, the critics questioning the value of higher education have only grown louder and more numerous.

“What Is the Return on Investment?”

Higher Education Costs Draw Scrutiny and Pointed Criticism

For example, Peter Thiel, cofounder of PayPal, is continuing to offer $100,000 fellowships to students who opt to drop out of or delay college for two years to pursue their own ventures in Silicon Valley. And New York Times columnist Frank Bruni has written editorial pieces on the “imperiled” promise of a college degree.
In response to these critics, some institutions are tackling questions about the value of college head-on, and their messages often highlight the career outcomes of recent graduates. As an example, in the spring of 2012 the president of Macalester College, Brian Rosenberg, created a video message for accepted students arguing that the lifetime value of the college’s career and personal benefits outweighed the institution’s high tuition cost.

**Career Development Essential to Value Proposition**  
*Schools Justify High Tuition by Stressing Outcomes and Lifelong Benefits*

**Video Message from President to Admitted Students Emphasizes ROI**

*Macalester College*

- 2 of 3 students complete an internship
- 60% of graduates pursue advanced degree within 5 years
- 84% graduate in 4 years

**“Why Macalester” Website Highlights Career Development**

As questions on the return on investment of a college degree persist, the Student Affairs Forum believes that the career services offered by institutions, and the career-related outcomes of recent graduates, will see even more scrutiny. As such, the Macalester video is likely to be the first of many responses from higher education institutions.
Increasing the Opportunities Available to Students

**2011 Research Focused on Alumni and Employer Relations**

Our 2011 publication *Developing Next Generation Career Services* focused on the career office, exploring ways institutions could increase opportunities for alumni and employer engagement. During the course of that work, we spoke with many leaders and practitioners who expressed concerns that students weren’t accessing career development resources early enough.

### Developing Next Generation Career Services (2011-12)

#### I. Alumni

*Expanding the Alumni Mentor Network and Brokering Smarter Matches*
- Involvement Calibration Matrix
- Terrain-Focused Networking Communities

#### II. Employers

*Improving Employer Development Yield and Customizing Recruiting Activities*
- Recruiting Gap Analysis
- Early Talent Identification Programs

### Questions Surfaced at Member Roundtables

- How do we get students to Career Services before senior year?
- What data should we be collecting and how can we use it?
- How can we integrate Career Services with major selection?
- How do we help students get more internships?
- Should career preparation be mandatory?

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
And it’s not just administrators and career services professionals who feel that students are missing out on valuable opportunities. According to a recent study from the Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University, many recent graduates wish they had taken more courses related to career planning and gained additional career-related experience before graduating.

“If I Could Redo My College Experience…”

College Graduates Would Have Prioritized Career Planning Sooner

Most Students Want a Do-Over

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Would do something differently</th>
<th>Would not do anything differently</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What Recent Graduates Would Have Done Differently To Succeed in Today’s Labor Market

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Graduates Would Have Done Differently</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taken more classes to prepare for career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Started looking for work sooner while in still in college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Done more internships or worked part time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Horn, C.V., Stone, C., and Zukin, C., “Chasing the American Dream: Recent College Graduates and the Great Recession,” John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, Rutgers University (2012); Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
We believe that institutions must do more to engage students earlier with career development activities. Rather than encouraging students to explore a single career path from their first day of college, our definition of early engagement involves pulling forward opportunities for students to explore their interests, strengths, and values.

**Exploring Options, Solidifying Plans, Gaining Experience**

*Early Career Engagement Essential to Making Most of College Opportunities*

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**Encouraging Early Career Exploration**

“What students are lacking is opportunities for exploration. They need more information. They need to kick as many tires as possible.”

*Career Services Director*

*Private Liberal Arts College*

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**Improving Students’ Academic Decisions**

“We can no longer rely on the parchment paper of a degree to prove that students are career-ready. They need work experiences before they graduate.”

*Career Services Director*

*Private Research University*

---

**Adding to the Value of a Degree**

“By reaching underclassmen through Career Services we can help students align academic interests with career goals, help students stick with a major, and help students graduate on time.”

*Vice President of Student Affairs*

*Public Research University*

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Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
As a supplement to this publication, the Student Affairs Forum has created a poster organizing the over 200 ideas for engaging students in career development that we identified during the course of research. The document organizes ideas across the student lifecycle, featuring ideas for engaging prospective students all the way through to alumni. Also available on the eab.com website is a searchable, sortable matrix that explains each idea in more detail.

A Road Map for Driving Early Career Engagement

*EAB Poster Contains 200+ Strategies*

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Prospective Students
Branding Career Services in Recruiting
# Diagnostic Questions

## Prospective Students: Branding Career Services in Recruiting

The questions below are designed to help evaluate how effectively career development resources at your institution have been branded during the student recruitment process. Answering “No” to several questions below suggests that there may be ideas in this section that represent opportunities for investment or action.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Does the admissions office at your institution proactively share data on alumni career outcomes with prospective students and families?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Has your institution strategically enhanced the focus on career development during the recruitment process, positioning career services, resources, and opportunities as a unique element of your institution’s value proposition?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Is your career services office involved during first-year student orientation through events such as open houses?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Are students at your institution presented with four-year career maps to encourage students to consider various career paths early and also to build skills valued by employers?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Does your career services office proactively communicate with the parents and families of prospective students?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Does your career services office offer a summer program for incoming students and their families focused on student self-assessment and career resources?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
This publication includes a subset of ideas from the poster, highlighting some of the most interesting strategies that we identified during our research. In particular, our research found that institutions are missing opportunities to engage students in personal and career development during recruitment, the first-year experience, and sophomore major selection.

### Hardwiring Student Engagement with Career Development

* A Road Map from Admissions to Graduation and Beyond*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I. Prospective Students</th>
<th>II. First-Year Students</th>
<th>III. Sophomores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Branding Career Services in Recruiting</td>
<td>Embedding Career Advising in the FYE</td>
<td>Integrating Career Considerations with Major Selection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IV. Juniors</th>
<th>V. Seniors</th>
<th>VI. Alumni</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building a Compelling Resumé</td>
<td>Developing the Systematic Job Search Toolkit</td>
<td>Aligning Career and Alumni Services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

The second part of this publication will focus on upperclass students, emphasizing the skills and experiences that juniors and seniors need to be competitive job candidates. The final section examines alumni career services and engagement opportunities.
Whereas in the past admissions officers and tour guides used to field questions predominately about academics, student-to-faculty ratios, and campus amenities, today’s prospective students and families are asking harder and more explicit questions about outcomes and return on investment. Increasingly, provosts and presidents are finding themselves pressed to talk specifically about how their institution supports students’ post-graduation success.

The Shifting Landscape in Admissions
*Prospective Students and Parents Increasingly Focused on Career Outcomes*

Questions for Admissions
(2002)

- What is Greek life like on campus?
- Do many upperclassmen move off campus?
- How frequently do students work one-on-one with professors?
- What is the average class size?

Questions for Admissions
(2012)

- When should I start doing internships?
- Can I major in history and still get a job?
- How frequently do students work with career counselors?
- How many students have jobs at graduation?

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
To respond to this shifting landscape, admissions offices are proactively sharing more data on career outcomes and alumni success stories to prospective students and families. While the primary goal of these efforts is to address questions around the return on investment for college, they also serve as a way to get students thinking about their postgraduate plans even before arriving on campus.

### Setting Career Planning Expectations

*Collaborating with Admissions to Drive Early Engagement*

#### Career Information Disseminated by Admissions

- **Data on job and graduate school placement**
- **Profiles of student internships**
- **Alumni reflections and success stories**

#### Message to Students

- **Attending our institution will prepare you for career success.**
- **We expect our students to gain meaningful work experience before graduation.**
- **By taking certain steps in college, you can prepare for a variety of paths as an alumnus.**

*Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.*
While many schools are expanding the career information they provide during the recruitment process, a handful of market leaders are going even further. These institutions are strategically enhancing their focus on career development, positioning the services, resources, and opportunities they offer to students as a unique element of their value proposition.

A Competitive Advantage in Recruiting

_Elevating Career Services in Admissions Marketing_

“The Albion Advantage”

A College-Wide Strategic Initiative
- Investing in career readiness resources
- Integrating career preparation and experiential learning across the curriculum
- Emphasizing the practical benefits of a liberal arts education
- Pledging to provide life-long Career Services

The Albion Advantage Pledge:
“Albion will help you realize your professional goals, offering thoughtful guidance and support from the moment you arrive on campus until you begin your life’s work.”

The Albion Advantage is a prominent theme throughout the Admissions website and marketing materials.


At Albion College, for example, the admissions office heavily promotes the “Albion Advantage.” A key element of this branding campaign is a pledge that Albion will provide career services to students and alumni until they have secured postgraduation employment. While many institutions currently make this same promise to students, Albion stands out because the institution is aggressively marketing the pledge as part of overall return on investment.
On a similar note, the University of Chicago, Wake Forest University, and Wesleyan University have all made considerable investments in the career services they offer to students in the last five years. All three institutions are also marketing their career office as a competitive advantage during the recruiting process, a unique element that distinguishes them from peer institutions.

**Standing Out From the Crowd**

*Using Major Career Services Investments as Differentiating Factor*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University of Chicago</th>
<th>Wake Forest University</th>
<th>Wesleyan University</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>An Extensive Staff with Professional Experience</strong></td>
<td><strong>A Focus on Mentoring and Personal Development</strong></td>
<td><strong>New Facilities to Promote Global Connections</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 38 career advising staff members, many with industry experience</td>
<td>• Mentoring Resource Center within Office of Personal and Career Development helps connect students with potential mentors</td>
<td>• New Career Center opened in Winter 2012; 4,000 square foot space in historic, centrally-located building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 8 distinct career advising teams organized according to industry and discipline</td>
<td>• Office of Personal and Career Development is elevated to divisional level</td>
<td>• Building features interview suites with videoconferencing capabilities and interactive presentation space to help students connect with alumni and employers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 750 college-sponsored summer opportunities, such as internships and research positions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Given the growing prominence that the career services office is playing during the admissions process, it is important that career services remains visible once a student commits to attending the institution. Our research uncovered a variety of ways for career services to be involved during orientation, ranging from low-resource options, such as open houses, to more intensive programs, such as dedicated sessions on self-assessment.

**Building a Career Services Presence from Day One**

*Involvement in Orientation Increases Student Comfort with Career Services*

A Range of Opportunities for Embedding Career Services in Orientation

- **Self-assessment workshops**
- **Upperclassmen panel on career planning**
- **Dedicated Career Services session**
- **Career office representative in student services session**
- **Career Services open house**

**Level of Direct Student Engagement**

**Career Services Resources Required**

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Orientation is also an opportune time to introduce students to four-year career maps. Of course, though there are a wealth of activities and experiences that students can take part in across their first and second years that will give them an advantage when they're searching for internships and full-time jobs later on, often students don’t hear that message until it is too late and windows of opportunity have closed.

Using Orientation to Spotlight Four-Year Career Maps

Encouraging Students to View Career Preparation as a Long-Term Process

Students Face a Barrage of Immediate Concerns at Orientation

Career Maps Break Through the Noise

Courses
Roommates
Socializing
Navigating Campus
Clubs
Homesickness

A Clear Message: Taking key steps early in the college career leads to success after graduation

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Presenting students with career maps during orientation encourages them to think about their career and potential postgraduation paths as they are choosing courses and exploring cocurricular activities.
Below are some of the items commonly found on four-year career maps. Far from setting a prescribed, one-size-fits-all path for students, these maps encourage students to explore different career paths early, while also gaining skills that will help them succeed in whatever field they decide to pursue.

### Providing a Four-Year Plan

*Career Maps Balance Exploring Options with Planning Ahead*

#### Typical Stages in a Four-Year Career Map

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Year: Self-Assessment and Exploration</th>
<th>Second Year: Career and Major Path-setting</th>
<th>Third Year: Gain Experience and Develop Skills</th>
<th>Fourth Year: Prepare for the Post-Graduation Transition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Become familiar with Career Services website and resources</td>
<td>• Choose a major</td>
<td>• Use Career Services resources to prepare for finding a career-related summer internship</td>
<td>• Register for on-campus recruiting and campus jobs database</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Take MBTI and other self-assessments</td>
<td>• Meet with career counselors and access Career Services resources to explore internships</td>
<td>• Attend career and internship fairs</td>
<td>• Use Career Services resources to strengthen job search skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Explore cocurricular and service activities</td>
<td>• Begin pursuing leadership positions in cocurricular and service activities</td>
<td>• Pursue leadership roles in campus activities</td>
<td>• Continue building a network through connections with faculty, friends, alumni, and employers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Consider academic interests and potential majors</td>
<td>• Contact family, friends, and others to build network</td>
<td>• Attend networking events with alumni and employers</td>
<td>• Join the alumni career network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reach out to professors, family, friends, and alumni to discuss career paths</td>
<td></td>
<td>• If considering graduate school, begin preparing for entrance exams and applications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
One institution that stands out in integrating career development into orientation is Saint Xavier University. Saint Xavier offers a summer program for incoming students that focuses on self-assessments. Using a combination of online self-assessments (such as those found at isseek.org) and iPad apps, students and their families work in groups to identify interests and related career paths.

**Early Opportunities for Exploration**

*Summer Self Assessments for Incoming Students*

**Saint Xavier University’s Career Connections Program for Students and Parents**

- Students work in groups to identify skills and values
- Groups use iPad program to match skills and interests to potential career paths
- Faculty and staff lead discussions on the connections between interests, values, career paths, and majors

**Key Program Components**

- Program is held in summer before students arrive on campus; gives students an opportunity to focus on career planning with fewer distractions
- Career Services and faculty from the English and Communications departments collaborate with Enrollment Management to market and host the program
- Sessions led by Career Services counselors, faculty members, and Admissions staff

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Once they have completed the exercises, both students and their families meet with career office staff to discuss the results of the assessments and to learn more about available resources.
While the initial group of students and families who participated in Saint Xavier’s self-assessment program was fairly small, the results of the pilot effort are quite promising. Ninety-two percent of students who participated in the program subsequently enrolled in the fall, suggesting that the initiative helped to combat the perennial problem of summer enrollment melt.

**Positive Impacts on Retention and Engagement at Saint Xavier**

*Career Development Helps Retain Less Academically-Prepared Students*

**Impacts on Career Development and College Readiness**

- 92% of participants matriculated at the end of the summer
- Students got “a taste” of the classroom experience and to use tablet technology
- Parents enjoyed having an opportunity to reflect on their own careers

**First Year Retention Rates for Lower “Quality Band” Students**

- General Population: 64.8%
- Program Participants: 83.3%

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

The self-assessment program also had a positive impact on the first-year retention rate of students in the lower admissions quality bands. Another side benefit of the program was that many family participants reported that they really enjoyed having an opportunity to interact with the career services office and reflect on their own career paths.
Saint Xavier’s program highlights another career services trend: many offices are proactively communicating with the parents and families of both prospective and current students. Because parents are often far more concerned about career services and job outcomes than their child may be, they can be a powerful ally in encouraging students to access services early.

### Establishing A Partnership with Families

**An Additional Channel for Communicating with Students**

#### Multiple Strategies for Reaching Families

- Collaborations with Admissions and Alumni Affairs to host local receptions
- Greetings from Career Services!
- Postcards to student homes over the summer
- Tailored web content featured on the Parents Office page
- Tours of the Career Center for parents on move-in day

#### Online Career Checklists for Parents

**Utah State University**

- Don’t Let Your Graduate Leave Without:
  - Internship experience (one or more)
  - Extra-curricular activities
  - Leadership skills
  - Service/volunteer experience
  - A respectable GPA
  - Faculty mentors
  - A sense of specific employers he/she wants to work with after graduation and why
  - Networking with employers—start as soon as possible
  - International/global exposure

Source: Utah State University Four-Year Plan: [http://www.usu.edu/career/htm/parents/four-year-plan](http://www.usu.edu/career/htm/parents/four-year-plan); Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

There are a range of initiatives that career services can develop to partner with parents, from adding information to the Parents Office website to partnering with alumni clubs to host family events.
To conclude this section focused on prospective students, some key takeaways are listed below. On the left are “quick wins” that career offices can undertake without investing a lot of resources, such as including career staff on orientation panels. Institutions looking to invest in longer-term strategies to brand career services during the recruiting process will want to focus on strategies in the right column, such as offering dedicated programming for families.

### Branding Career Services in Recruiting
**Key Takeaways**

#### Quick Wins for Career Services

*Collaborations with offices across campus help to advertise services without a large resource demand*

- Share career outcomes data with Admissions for inclusion in recruiting materials
- Work with orientation office to include Career Services staff in panels and programming
- Partner with the Parents Office to raise family awareness of career resources available to students
- Create a four-year map and promote it during admissions and orientation events

#### Long-Term Strategies

*Dedicating additional resources to outreach creates deeper engagement*

- Create external-facing website that highlights positive alumni career outcomes
- Establish a dedicated self-assessment workshop for first year students during orientation
- Offer dedicated programming for families on career planning

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
## Diagnostic Questions

### First-Year Students: Embedding Career Advising in the FYE

The questions below are designed to help evaluate how effectively career advising has been embedded in the first-year experience at your institution. Answering “No” to several questions below suggests that there may be ideas in this section that represent opportunities for investment or action.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Does your career services office insert its offerings into daily student life by offering drop-in counseling in high-traffic locations or providing substitute lecturers in first-year courses?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Does your institution assign all incoming first-year students a career counselor before they arrive on campus, providing students with a dedicated point of contact for all their career-related questions?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Do first-year students at your institution receive personalized invitations to the career fair?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Do peer ambassadors hold workshops prior to the career fair to help first-year students get the most out of the experience?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Does your career services office designate specific employers at the career fair as “freshman-friendly,” signaling to students that the employer has opportunities for first-year students?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Has your institution created an independent career development course that is required for some or all first-year students?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After students are recruited, admitted, and go through orientation, the next key engagement point for career services is during the first year, a time when many students are exploring next interests and areas of study.

**Hardwiring Student Engagement with Career Development**

*A Road Map from Admissions to Graduation and Beyond*

I. **Prospective Students**
   Branding Career Services in Recruiting

II. **First-Year Students**
    Embedding Career Advising in the FYE

III. **Sophomores**
    Integrating Career Considerations with Major Selection

IV. **Juniors**
    Building a Compelling Resumé

V. **Seniors**
    Developing the Systematic Job Search Toolkit

VI. **Alumni**
    Aligning Career and Alumni Services

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
There are multiple reasons that first-year students fail to take advantage of the career resources available to them. Some first-year students are too overwhelmed with adjusting to college life to carve out time for career development. Other students assume that the career office doesn’t provide services that would be helpful or relevant to first-year students.

“Intimidating, Time-Consuming, or Irrelevant”
Combating First-Year Misperceptions of Career Services

Why Don’t First-Year Students Access Career Services?

- **Intimidated**
  - “I keep seeing upperclassmen in suits at the career center. I don’t even own a suit.”

- **Overwhelmed**
  - “Classes and clubs are already too much! I just don’t have time to go to Career Services.”

- **Unaware**
  - “What would Career Services have to offer me? I don’t need a job right now.”

Fearing the Unfamiliar

“We hear from seniors when they look back on their first year that they were afraid to come to Career Services. We needed programming to give students more exposure to our staff and make them comfortable reaching out to us.”

*Sandra Tracy
Rhodes College*

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Our research shows that to engage students earlier with career development, career services needs to combat misperceptions among first-year students. One key strategy for signaling to first-year students that they should be thinking about career-related topics and making use of campus resources is to insert offerings into daily student life, bringing career services to where students are already.

Reducing Barriers to Engagement  
*Expanding the Career Services Footprint*

**Bringing Career Services to Busy Students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lisa’s Schedule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00-11:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00-12:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00-1:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00-2:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:30-3:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00-5:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:30-6:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:00-7:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00-9:00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Offer drop-in counseling in the student union
- Partner with campus organization for “Careers in Service” workshop
- Provide substitute for absent lecturer
- Peer ambassadors host evening study break in residence hall common room

**Convenience is Key**

“Career services shouldn’t be a destination. We should go where the students are.”

*Steve Langerud*  
*DePauw University*

For example, the career office can provide substitute lecturers, offer drop-in counseling in high-traffic locations, and partner with student organizations to raise the profile of services for first-year students. The career center’s student ambassadors can also be a valuable resource, as some students feel more comfortable reaching out to a peer than to a staff member.
The University of Pittsburgh has deliberately focused on first-year engagement with career services. Each year, every incoming student at Pitt is assigned a career counselor before arriving on campus, which provides students with a dedicated point of contact for all of their career questions and helps to reduce intimidation by putting a face on career services. Appointing first-year students with a dedicated career advisor also sets the expectation that they should be thinking about postgraduation plans.

### Increasing Career Services Accessibility and Visibility

**A Multi-Pronged Effort at the University of Pittsburgh**

#### Status Quo

*Overwhelming Options for a New Student*

- Circular view of student resources:
  - Recruiting!
  - Employer spotlight
  - Resume resources
  - Cover letters
  - Job search websites
  - Schedule counseling appointment

- Unclear what resources a student should use for education and exploration
- Most resources targeted toward seniors
- First-year students believe Career Services can’t serve them

#### University of Pittsburgh

*A Dedicated Point of Contact*

- Your First-Year Career Counselor:
  - Julia Smith
  - 412-555-5555
  - Residence Hall Office Hours: Tuesdays, 7-9pm
  - Feel free to reach out to me about picking a major, job shadows, internships, or anything else!

- Students have a single point of contact for career-related questions
- Reduces intimidation factor
- Sets expectation that students will begin using Career Services in first year

Dedicated career advisors are typically assigned by residence hall, and Pitt tries to keep the advisee load relatively even among the career office staff, assigning about 400 students to every advisor. Thus, a large residence hall might have two career advisors assigned to it while a smaller residence hall would have just a single advisor. Career advisors host evening workshops and residence hall office hours, making it easy for students to happen upon career events.

On average, advisors visit their designated residence halls eight times per semester for a combination of walk-in appointments, informal student visits, and floor programs.
Beyond creating dedicated points of contact, the University of Pittsburgh is also working to demystify the later steps of the career search process for students by modeling ideal behaviors. For example, Pitt offers targeted programming at career fairs for first-year students. To signal that the career fair isn’t an activity that’s reserved solely for junior and senior students, all first-year students at Pitt receive personalized invitations to the career fair.

Demystifying Career Process Steps
Making the Career Fair “Freshman Friendly” at the University of Pittsburgh

A Win-Win Situation for First-Year Students and Employers

Targeted Outreach and Preparation for First-Year Students

- Tailored invitations to first-year students
- Peer ambassadors give advice on researching and approaching employers
- Guided tours of the fair before it begins

Special Designation for “Freshman-Friendly” Employers

- Employers with underclassmen externship and internship opportunities are highlighted
- Other employers can focus on full-time recruiting
- Opportunity to build brand with younger students

Results
- Higher first-year student attendance
- Opportunity for recruiting pipeline development
- Better matches between students and employers

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Additionally, peer ambassadors hold workshops prior to the career fair to prepare students for the fair and to help them get the most out of it, giving students a tour of the career fair before it starts so they have a better idea of where certain employers are located. At the career fair, specific employers are designated as “freshman-friendly,” meaning that they provide opportunities for underclassmen, such as internships and externships.

Overall, Pitt’s first-year career fair initiative is a win-win for students and employers: students are able to practice their networking skills while learning about potential roles and career paths, and employers have an opportunity to establish their brand and build a recruiting pipeline among younger students.
In addition to raising their profile around campus, many career centers are looking for ways to become more involved in the classroom as part of University 101 classes or First-Year Experience seminars. For instance, the career office can lead a themed session in an FYE seminar or University 101 course. Activities in this session can range from providing an overview of services to helping students to write a resumé to self-assessment exercises.

### Introducing Career Services in the FYE

*Leveraging an Existing Platform to Reach a Captive Audience*

#### Potential Activities for a FYE Session

- Interests and strengths assessments
- Resume-writing exercises and critiques
- Career database walk-throughs
- Alumni career path discussions

#### First-Year Seminar Learning Outcomes for Career Services

*Southern Illinois University, Carbondale*

- a) Explore potential major and career paths, including job opportunities in those fields of study;
- b) Demonstrate familiarity with professional organizations within their anticipated discipline;
- c) Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethics and responsibility for one or more potential career paths;
- d) Understand the importance of professional etiquette and civility within our community;
- e) Develop a professional resume;
- f) Understand the benefits of student internships and cooperative education opportunities.

Source: The Saluki First Year, Core 7; [http://www.firstyear.siu.edu/web/index.php/fdr/core7](http://www.firstyear.siu.edu/web/index.php/fdr/core7); Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Southern Illinois University Carbondale has even identified career services learning outcomes for the institution’s first-year seminar; these outcomes are listed above.
Several other institutions, including Arizona State University and Wake Forest University, are going a step further and creating independent career development courses for first-year students. These courses vary a great deal across institutions with regard to the length, topics covered, and instructors, but they typically include some of the components outlined below.

**Establishing Career-Focused First-Year Courses**

*Presenting a Holistic Approach to Career Planning in the First Year*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Course Components</th>
<th>Sample Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Reflection</strong></td>
<td>• Career journaling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• MBTI/strengths assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Group counseling sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Career Path Exploration</strong></td>
<td>• Alumni panel discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Family member interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Job opening growth analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job Search Skills</strong></td>
<td>• Resume writing 101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Mock interview workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Job database walk-through</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These career courses are not just teaching students how to write a resumé and use the jobs database. A major component involves encouraging students to explore their strengths, values, and interests, providing them with a better idea of what they might like or dislike before they start applying to jobs, internships, or graduate school.
We encountered several institutions that were exploring the possibility of mandatory career courses. This option may not be feasible for many institutions due to faculty pushback, resource constraints, or a general reluctance to mandate that students must engage in career development activities.

### Mandatory Career Courses: The New Frontier?

*A Growing but Controversial Trend*

#### Key Questions Before Creating a Requirement

1. Do you have faculty support?
2. How long will the class be and what credit will be awarded?
3. How will you secure the necessary staff and resources?
4. How will the course serve students at the extreme ends of the career planning spectrum?

#### A Potential Compromise: Mandates for Undecided Students

At **Arizona State University**, undecided students in the university college are required to take a career and major exploration course.

- The course is five weeks for one credit. Sections are limited to 19 students.
- Coursework includes self-assessment activities and research projects on career paths and majors.
- Career exploration courses are also open to students who have declared a major.

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

However, several experts argued that creating a mandate is really the only way to ensure that every student receives career counseling and preparation, and that without a career development requirement, institutions will see the same story with career services as with other on-campus resources: the students who seek resources out and make use of them are those who are more organized and ambitious—those who actually need to access career resources the least.
During a student’s first year on campus there are a variety of opportunities for early engagement, such as collaborating with University 101 or FYE organizers, hosting events in high-traffic locations, and tailoring existing programs to include “freshman friendly” elements. Institutions interested in making longer-term investments might explore the feasibility of mandating career development coursework for undecided, or even all, students.

### Embedding Career Advising in the FYE

**Key Takeaways**

#### Quick Wins for Career Services

- Tailoring existing programming to reach more first-year students
- Meet with FYE program leaders to establish a Career Services session
- Offer services, workshops, and drop-in appointments in residence halls and other high-traffic locations
- Tailor the career fair and other traditional programs to include “freshman-friendly” elements

#### Long-Term Strategies

- Working with institutional stakeholders to integrate career development in the FYE
- Establish a first-year career development course
- Assign all first-year students a career advisor who will regularly hold office hours in residence halls
- Work with institutional leaders to establish a first-year career development mandate

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Sophomores

Integrating Career Considerations with Major Selection
## Diagnostic Questions

### Sophomores: Integrating Career Considerations with Major Selection

The questions below are designed to help evaluate how effectively career considerations have been integrated into students’ major selection process at your institution. Answering “No” to several questions below suggests that there may be ideas in this section that represent opportunities for investment or action.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Do your students have access to an online major comparison tool that provides detailed information on individual majors, integrating information on course requirements with statistics on projected job growth and median salary data for related careers?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Does your institution make the anonymous results of the first-destination survey available to current students so they can see the specific positions that graduates in various majors have assumed upon graduating?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Does your institution provide targeted workshops for academic advisors to give them information on career resources that are useful to students during the major selection process?</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Does your institution offer an intensive peer mentoring program for students who are undecided about their major?</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Does your institution create forums for interaction between alumni and current students where alumni provide students with additional perspectives to weigh as they select a major?</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Does your institution offer a mentoring program that pairs selected students with alumni for a structured, year-long mentoring partnership?</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sophomore year is the time when students usually select their major, one of the biggest decisions that underclassmen make, and one that is often fraught with anxiety. Our research showed that institutions need to do a better job of helping students make an informed choice when selecting a major. In particular, we found a need for enhanced collaboration between the career services and academic advising functions in support of helping students select a major.

### Hardwiring Student Engagement with Career Development

*Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I.</th>
<th>Prospective Students</th>
<th>II.</th>
<th>First-Year Students</th>
<th>III.</th>
<th>Sophomores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Branding Career</td>
<td></td>
<td>Embedding Career</td>
<td></td>
<td>Integrating Career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Services in Recruiting</td>
<td></td>
<td>Advising in the FYE</td>
<td></td>
<td>Considerations with</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Major Selection</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IV.</th>
<th>Juniors</th>
<th>V.</th>
<th>Seniors</th>
<th>VI.</th>
<th>Alumni</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Building a Compelling Resumé</td>
<td></td>
<td>Developing the Systematic Job Search Toolkit</td>
<td></td>
<td>Aligning Career and Alumni Services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
A 2012 survey by Rutgers University of recent college graduates indicates that many college graduates regret their major decision and wish they had more information about career outcomes when making this decision. Over a third of students surveyed for the national study responded that, in retrospect, they had regrets about the major they chose or the way they selected it.

“I Didn’t Know What I Didn’t Know”
Major Selection Process Often Suboptimal

Students Often Choose Majors Randomly

I didn’t understand what I could and couldn’t do with an Economics major.

I didn’t even know that a “Nutrition Science” major existed.

I felt pressured by my family to study medicine.

I was wrong about my academic interests.

My coursework is unrelated to my goal of running my own business.

“What Would You have Done Differently about Your College Experience to be Successful Today?”

37%
More carefully selected my major or chosen a different major

Unexplored Terrain

“Only 8% of new students feel they know a great deal about their intended major.”

B.L. Erickson and D.W. Strommer,
Teaching College Freshmen

Source: Carl Van Horn, Charley Stone, and Cliff Zukin, “Chasing the American Dream: Recent College Graduates and the Great Recession,” John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development (2012); Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
While career prospects should certainly not be the sole factor that students consider when they select their academic concentration, our research shows that students can benefit from having more access to outcomes data, unemployment rates, and salary information when making their major decision. Currently, few institutions have gone beyond “What can I do with this major?” marketing campaigns: handouts or webpages containing surface-level information such as the job titles that students who majored in that area later assumed.

Bringing Major Choice and Career Plans Together  
*Centralizing Academic and Career Advising Online*

**Arizona State University’s Major and Career Outlook Comparison Tool**

- Information from academic departments and the course catalog
- Median salary and career growth data from Occupational Information Network
- Logistical details such as online course options, fees, and transfer agreements

- One-stop website for comparing majors and career outlooks
- Eliminates flipping through books or websites to compare data
- Encourages students to think about majors and careers together
- Information not relegated to Career Services page

Source: Arizona State University, Undergraduate Degree Search: https://webapp4.asu.edu/programs/t5/undergrad?init=false&nopassive=true; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Arizona State University, however, has launched a comparison tool for majors to provide students with more integrated and detailed information. The tool provides students with information on course requirements, online course options, and fees for individual majors, along with information from the Occupational Information Network on projected job growth and median salaries for related career fields.
Arizona State students can then use the tool to review majors side by side—comparing, for example, information for anthropology degrees next to archaeology degrees. ASU’s tool, a screenshot of which is below, also allows students to review details on major and course requirements, bringing together a variety of information for students to consider when considering various majors.

Streamlining Major and Career Comparison Process
Arizona State University’s Online Major Selection Tool

Side-by-side comparison of up to 3 majors

Data from the US Department of Labor on salaries and growth potential in select fields

Qualitative description of potential career paths, transferable skills

Source: Undergraduate Degree Search, Arizona State University;
https://webapp4.asu.edu/programs/t5/undergrad; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Wake Forest University has taken a different approach to making data and outcomes available to students as they consider different majors. Rather than using national labor statistics, Wake Forest makes anonymous first-destination survey results from recent graduates available to current students, allowing them to see specifically some of the career paths of graduates in majors they are considering.

Helping Students Envision Their Future

*Wake Forest Provides Institution-Specific Outcomes Data for Majors*

**Guiding Students Toward Answers to Crucial Questions**

- Do students with this major find jobs related to their field of study?
- Do most graduates of this major go to graduate school afterwards?
- Would I be happy if I had the same career path as this alumnus?

**Sample Outcomes for English Majors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employer</th>
<th>Job Title</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Industry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AmeriCorps</td>
<td>Scheduler; Physicians</td>
<td>Charlotte, NC</td>
<td>Community Service/Social Work</td>
<td>Non-profit/Philanthropy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reach Out</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Foundations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBDO</td>
<td>Assistant Account Executive</td>
<td>New York, NY</td>
<td>Account Management</td>
<td>Advertising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bearfield &amp; Blackburn Law Firm</td>
<td>Legal Assistant</td>
<td>Johnson City, TN</td>
<td>Law</td>
<td>Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deloitte Consulting LLP</td>
<td>Federal Analyst</td>
<td>Washington, DC</td>
<td>Analyst</td>
<td>Consulting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Carolina University</td>
<td>Medical Student</td>
<td>Greenville, NC</td>
<td>Graduate School; Medicine/Health</td>
<td>Graduate School; Medicine/Health</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Office of Personal and Career Development “Explore Majors,” Wake Forest University, [http://career.opcd.wfu.edu/find-your-major-or-career/](http://career.opcd.wfu.edu/find-your-major-or-career/), Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

For instance, some of the first-destination results for English majors show a range of paths, from advertising to consulting to law to medical school. At the same time, other recent graduates had less-encouraging first destinations, such as sales associate or barista positions that do not require a college degree. In our view, even though underemployment is a tough topic, showing students the full first-destination results gives them a valuable opportunity to reflect on their prospects with certain majors and ask themselves important questions about the types of career paths they would be most happy in.
While the last few ideas focused on providing students with useful information as they select a major, the career office at the University of Washington has developed targeted workshops that provide academic advisors with information on career resources that are useful to students during the major selection process. During the workshops, career office staff members provide advisors with overviews of diagnostic tools such as the Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator and discuss personal reflection exercises like developing an elevator pitch.

**Proactive Outreach to Academic Advising Staff**

*Career Workshops for Academic Advisors at the University of Washington*

**Sessions Enhance the Academic Advisor’s Toolkit**

- Using Myers Briggs and other assessments to guide students
- Understanding how family and culture can influence a student’s major and career decisions
- Recognizing the importance of the elevator pitch and how students can create one

**Benefits for Students and Staff**

**Students**
- Coordination between academic and career advising increases access and convenience
- Reduces mixed messages from academic and career counselors

**Academic and Career Advisors**
- Facilitates communication and sharing of best practices
- Leads to more frequent collaborations in other programming, such as career courses

The goal of this cross-training initiative is to ensure that, even if students do not access the career center before choosing their major, they still are exposed to some career development information through their academic advisor.

The University of Washington reports that the workshop series has been very popular with academic advising staff. The workshop had 200 participants the last time it was offered, and the program has also increased referrals between the career services and academic advising offices.
So far the ideas discussed in this section are applicable to a majority of students—those who are considering between one to three different majors. However, there is always going to be a segment of our student population who needs more focused resources and assistance to make a satisfying major choice. To help these undecided students, Sacred Heart University created an intensive mentoring program, which they call the “Major in Success.”

Intensive Mentoring Interventions for Undecided Students

Sacred Heart University’s “Major in Success” Program

Introductory session with upperclassmen mentors

Participate in 3-4 individual counseling sessions

Chooses major

Structured Guidance Throughout the Major Selection Process

Complete self-assessments and reflection exercises

Conduct independent major/career exploration

Addressing Student Dissatisfaction with Major Choice

“We started this program because we would come across junior, seniors, and even alumni saying they regretted their choice of major.”

Patricia Klauser
Sacred Heart University

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Students begin the program by attending a group session led by upperclass mentors. This session outlines the program and sets expectations. In particular, students are expected to complete assignments outside of sessions. This independent work enables students to make the most of their one-on-one time with counselors and ultimately helps students to be more prepared to select a major.
Students are also expected to attend three to four individual counseling appointments, allowing the Major in Success program to be tailored to students’ specific needs. For example, completely undecided students may use their counseling sessions to discuss interests and learn strategies for researching potential career paths, whereas students leaning strongly toward specific majors can use their individual appointments to discuss finding an internship or pursuing cocurricular activities that will strengthen their resumés.

**Tailored Counseling for Students at Different Stages**

*Not a One-Size-Fits-All Experience*

“Major in Success” Program Provides Individualized Guidance

**Completely Undecided**

- Values exercises
- Informational interviews with alumni
- Meetings with upperclassmen

**Leaning Toward the Humanities**

- Conversations with professors
- Join creative writing club
- Research career paths for humanities students

**Decided on a Business Path**

- Interviews with alumni in finance
- Job shadowing
- Join student finance and investing club

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
The Major in Success program generally draws 200 to 250 participants per year. Very exciting to Sacred Heart was the fact that over 90% of program participants were retained after their first year, while the average first-year retention rate at Sacred Heart is usually around 70%.

**“Major in Success” Program Has a Significant Impact**

*Notable Impact on Retention and Graduation Rates*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impressive Results, 2005-2009</th>
<th>Keys to Program Success</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90%+ Fall-to-fall retention rate of participants</td>
<td><strong>Clear Expectations:</strong> Participants join knowing they will have to complete assignments independently and attend several counseling sessions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81% Graduation rate of participants</td>
<td><strong>Customization:</strong> Whether a student is struggling to find a major or has decided on a career path, counselors customize advice to individuals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200 Average number of participants per year</td>
<td><strong>Sustained Relationships:</strong> Individual meetings with counselors and mentors keep participants accountable and ensure tailored guidance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Of course, a program like Sacred Heart’s is quite resource-intensive and can be difficult to scale. However, alumni are a resource that all institutions have, and they can provide some of the same mentoring benefits to students as the Major in Success program. For instance, alumni can provide current students with insights on how majors relate to different career paths and information on how to leverage cocurricular activities to develop skills, such as teamwork or project management.

**Alumni Testimonials Help Students Find Their Paths**

*Providing Real World Insight and Guidance*

**One Alumnus Can Answer a Range of Questions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alumni Record</th>
<th>Potential Student Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marvin Monroe</td>
<td>How do you break into the business world with a humanities degree?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class of 1995</td>
<td>What is it like moving from our East Coast school to the West Coast?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Undergraduate Major**

- Philosophy

**Current City**

- San Francisco, CA

**Employer**

- Bay Area Innovation Fund

**Role**

- New Venture Analyst

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
By creating forums for interaction with alumni, institutions can provide current students with additional perspectives to weigh as they select a major. Connections with alumni can range from alumni bloggers to executive-in-residence programs. Career offices can prioritize their strategies for connecting alumni and current students based on their student population, the strength of the local alumni base, and the office’s relationship with the alumni affairs and advancement units.

Capturing Alumni Life Lessons
Connecting Students with Role Models at a Critical Decision Points

Options Span High-Tech, High-Touch Spectrum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Long-Term Investments</th>
<th>Quick to Implement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Executive in Residence</td>
<td>• Alumni Bloggers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Alumni Job Shadows</td>
<td>• Retweet Campaigns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Facilitated Yearlong Mentorships</td>
<td>• Careers-by-Major Pinterest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Not only are progressive career offices looking to increase interactions with alumni, but they are also spending more time thinking about ways to develop and nurture mentoring relationships. For example, Barnard College has launched a selective mentoring program called Matching Alumnae to Partner with Students, or MAPS.

**Clear Expectations and Structure Produce Better Outcomes**

*Barnard College’s “Matching Alumnae to Partner with Students” (MAPS) Program*

- **Carefully-Vetted Students**
  - Required application essay
  - On-campus workshop on making the most of the relationship
  - Mentorship cohort limited to 80 students
- **Targeted Events and Outreach from Career Services**
  - Introductory Sunday brunch
  - “Fireside chats” on campus
  - Email reminders to mentors to reach out
  - Alumnae-student discussion blog
  - End-of-year celebration
- **Well-Prepared Mentors**
  - Mentors carefully matched to mentees to ensure commonalities
  - Webinar training on being an effective mentor
  - Alumnae advisory board identifies programming opportunities

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Through a competitive process, each year 80 students are selected to participate in the program and paired with alumni mentors. To set expectations, all participants (students and alumni) attend in-person or online workshops on how to make the most of the mentoring relationship. For instance, sessions discuss frequency of communication and the types of questions that are appropriate to ask a mentor.

In addition to these workshops, Barnard’s career office hosts events throughout the year that aim to bring program participants together, encouraging students and mentors to keep in touch with each other even when exams or career pressures come up. Career office staff also regularly contact participants to ensure they are communicating appropriately and having a rewarding experience.

Although the program requires significant time and effort from career office staff, Barnard views the close connections that the institution is brokering between students and alumni as something that sets the institution apart.
To summarize, this section has featured a variety of ways for the career office to become more involved in students’ major selection process via strategies that range web resources with outcomes data from recent graduates to robust alumni mentoring programs.

Integrating Career Considerations with Major Selection

Key Takeaways

**Quick Wins for Career Services**

*Providing students with tools to make career-minded academic choices*

- Develop web resources to help students map major selection to career plans
- Collaborate with academic departments to co-host “Why Major in X” nights
- Increase programming that connects students with alumni to explore career paths before major selection

**Long-Term Strategies**

*Creating institution-wide efforts to tie academic advising and major choice to long-term career planning*

- Design an intensive intervention program for undecided students
- Create structured mentorships to help students envision career paths while choosing a major
- Work with senior leaders to institute career counseling requirement for undecided sophomores

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Juniors
Building a Compelling Resumé
## Diagnostic Questions

### Juniors: Building a Compelling Resumé

The questions below are designed to help evaluate how effectively your institution supports students in building their resumes with meaningful internship and work experiences. Answering “No” to two or three questions below suggests that there may be ideas in this section that represent opportunities for investment or action.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Has your career services office created a targeted program to develop on-campus internships that appeal to a range of student interests?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Does your institution offer specialized skill-building experiences to students, such as grad school boot camp, workplace simulators, or programming to help liberal arts majors develop professional skills?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Does your institution offer students opportunities to acquire work experience during the term, such as short-term consulting experiences with local employers?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As students approach graduation it becomes essential for them to start honing the skills and experiences that will make them competitive job candidates. While we believe students should pursue internships and work experience throughout their college career, employers particularly want to see students gaining substantive experiences in their junior year.

**Hardwiring Student Engagement with Career Development**
*A Road Map from Admissions to Graduation and Beyond*

I. **Prospective Students**
   Branding Career Services in Recruiting

II. **First-Year Students**
    Embedding Career Advising in the FYE

III. **Sophomores**
     Integrating Career Considerations with Major Selection

IV. **Juniors**
    Building a Compelling Resumé

V. **Seniors**
    Developing the Systematic Job Search Toolkit

VI. **Alumni**
    Aligning Career and Alumni Services

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Employers now expect that students will have one to two internships before they graduate from college. Despite concerns about low-paying (or even unpaid) internships comprised of non-educational, menial work, many students still believe that a bad internship is still better than no internship.

“Internships are the Coin of the Realm”
Yet Broader Ethical and Legal Questions Persist

Employers Expect Internships...


As it appears unlikely that internships are going to decline in importance any time soon, the question for institutions becomes how to increase the number of high-quality experiences available to students.
To expand students’ internship options at SUNY Purchase, the career development office launched a targeted program to develop on-campus internships that appeal to a range of student interests, from arts management to health careers to public relations. While students benefit from these structured on-campus experiences, various offices get access to a pool of talented worked who understand Purchase’s unique culture and needs.

An Opportunity to Grow Skills and Make an Impact

On-Campus Internships Help Students Pursue Interests, Gain Experience

[Diagram showing Student Talents and Interests and Institutional Needs]

- Arts management
- Sustainability
- Health and wellness
- Event planning
- Public relations

- Help managing social media and website
- Ideas for sustainability initiative events
- Ways to improve attendance to campus events

Campus Internship Outcomes
- Gain valuable work experience
- Create opportunity to work closely with faculty mentor
- Develop highly transferable and marketable skills
- Receive academic credit

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
SUNY Purchase’s on-campus internship program has received broad support from institutional leaders and faculty members. Research contacts noted that the program ties into key elements of the institution’s strategic plan, such as developing learning activities outside the classroom and increasing collaboration between the Student Affairs and Academic Affairs divisions.

Fostering Collaboration Across the Institution
On-Campus Internships Meet Strategic Goal at Purchase College (SUNY)

Bridging the Gap Between Academic and Student Affairs

Purchase College (SUNY) Strategic Plan 2010-2015

Priority:
Support student learning and success by strengthening the connections between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs in order to provide high-impact learning activities, a culture of wellness, and innovative initiatives inside the classroom and beyond.

Making Internship Experiences More Accessible

• Allows students to complete internships during the term while living on campus
• Safeguards against internships that solely consist of menial tasks
• Prepares students for off-campus internships that require experience
• Gives students an opportunity to earn credit and complete a faculty-guided research project related to their internship

Another important component of Purchase’s program is that internships are offered for credit, helping to ensure that the experiences involve substantive work, as well as opportunities for research and reflection.
Detailed below is how SUNY Purchase’s program works, from preparation through to assessment. Students apply for on-campus internships through the NACElink system. Once students receive an internship offer, they complete and file a learning contract with the registrar. Students then attend an introductory workshop, hosted by career services, that discusses professionalism and how students can get the most out of their internship.

**Providing Integrated Academic and Work Experiences**

*Substantive Projects and Frequent Assessments Enhance Campus Internships*

**Internship Process at Purchase College (SUNY)**

- Student applies to campus internships via NACElink
- Introductory workshop about professionalism and making the most of an internship
- Student completes reflection exercises and research project related to internship
- Completes learning contract and files it with Registrar
- Mid-semester meeting with career counselor to discuss strategies for excelling in internship

Source: Career Development Center Internship Resources and Guidelines, Purchase College (SUNY): [https://www.purchase.edu/Departments/CareerDevelopment/studentservices/internshipresources.aspx](https://www.purchase.edu/Departments/CareerDevelopment/studentservices/internshipresources.aspx); Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Midway through the program, students meet with a career counselor to receive feedback on their performance. Finally, the internship culminates with a student research project on a topic related to their work. This project is assessed by a faculty member and is used, along with reflection exercises, to award course credit for the internship.
A job description for the position of General Management Intern, Campus Performing Arts Center, is pictured below. Because many students at SUNY Purchase are active in the arts, this internship provides an opportunity for them to explore arts careers beyond being a performer. As part of the internship, students gain concrete skills, such as project management and budgeting, while also getting the opportunity to network and meet potential mentors.

**Exploring Diverse Career Options**

*Internships Give Students Tangible Resumé Experiences*

**Internship Opportunities at the Performing Arts Center**

**General Management Intern**

This relatively new position oversees the administration of The Center’s internal operations including budget and finance, facility operation, contracts, production, rental activity, house management, administrative offices, personnel, and information technology. The intern will work with the GM on various activities pertaining to the operation of this busy performing arts complex. The GM will be willing to work with the candidate to address a particular interest, but will touch on all aspects of this position as needed. All applicants should not be afraid of budgets and have working knowledge of Excel spreadsheets. If not, some training can be supplied.

- Students can explore alternative careers in performing arts
- Opportunity to gain experience in difficult-to-enter field
- Interns acquire concrete skills (e.g., budgeting, Excel)
- Interns can work closely with senior management, gaining networking connections and potential mentors

Source: On-Campus Internships, Purchase College: https://www.purchase.edu/Departments/CareerDevelopment/studentservices/campusinternships.aspx; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
To ensure these positions are valuable learning experiences, the career services office at SUNY Purchase works closely with internship sponsors and faculty to help them structure appropriate projects and develop learning outcomes. Also, the learning contracts have been particularly effective in establishing clear goals for students and focusing the internship experience on developing transferable skills, such as communication, teamwork, and solving problems.

### Creating Valuable Learning Experiences

*Ensuring Internships Are Beneficial for Offices and Students*

#### Ample Support for Campus Internship Sponsors

- Proactive outreach from Career Services staff to encourage internship creation
- Assistance developing internship learning outcomes
- Training sessions on supervising a student
- Guidance developing projects for interns

#### Learning Contracts Provide an Internship Design Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Elements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Detailed internship description from sponsoring organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Description of faculty-assigned project and learning outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Competencies expected to be gained through internship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <em>Sample competencies</em>: communication, leadership, teamwork ability, adaptability, creativity, decision making, problem solving, cultural awareness, organization/operations, knowledge of the career/field</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Purchase College (SUNY), Internship Learning Contract: https://www.purchase.edu/sharedmedia/careerdevelopment/internship%20contract.pdf; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Across the past nine years the on-campus internship program has grown substantially, with 140 students participating each semester, and SUNY Purchase views the program as a win-win for students and for the institution: students get tangible skills and work experiences while campus offices get access to a rich talent pool. The career services office also reports that word about the program is out and the office is now often approached proactively by faculty from across campus to create an internship.

**Impressive Results for Students and the Institution**

*Program Has Grown Substantially in Nine Years*

**More High-Quality Internship Opportunities for Students**
- Currently 140 students participate per semester
- Opportunities to explore a range of fields and functional roles

**Increasing Interest from Offices Across Campus**
- Many offices actively approach Career Services to establish internships
- Positive reviews from offices encourage growth of program

**Expanding Inventory of Opportunities as Needed**

“It’s most helpful if students come to the Career Center early in their college years to explore their on-campus internship options. If we find there is an increase of students seeking internships in a particular area, we will work with the campus office to help them create more educational learning opportunities.”

*Wendy Morosoff*

*Purchase College (SUNY)*

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Even without the broad institution-wide buy-in seen at SUNY Purchase, a wealth of internship possibilities exists in the Student Affairs divisions alone. Below are some of the host offices, internship opportunities, and skills that students might develop through participating in an on-campus internship within the Student Affairs division.

## Rich Development Opportunities Across Student Affairs

### Varied Internship Possibilities Help Students Develop a Range of Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recreation Center</th>
<th>Women’s Center</th>
<th>Health and Wellness</th>
<th>International Office</th>
<th>Student Union</th>
<th>Career Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internship Opportunity:</strong> Student referees for intramural sports</td>
<td><strong>Internship Opportunity:</strong> Organizers for leadership workshop series</td>
<td><strong>Internship Opportunity:</strong> Peer mental health counselor</td>
<td><strong>Internship Opportunity:</strong> International student orientation leaders</td>
<td><strong>Internship Opportunity:</strong> Student member of strategic planning team</td>
<td><strong>Internship Opportunity:</strong> Social media marketing campaign intern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skills Developed:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Skills Developed:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Skills Developed:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Skills Developed:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Skills Developed:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Skills Developed:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Communication</td>
<td>• Teamwork</td>
<td>• Communication</td>
<td>• Communication</td>
<td>• Critical thinking</td>
<td>• Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Leadership</td>
<td>• Budget management</td>
<td>• Managing ambiguity</td>
<td>• Time management</td>
<td>• Persuasion</td>
<td>• Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Managing ambiguity</td>
<td>• Critical thinking</td>
<td>• Professionalism</td>
<td>• Global awareness</td>
<td>• Professionalism</td>
<td>• Project management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

At institutions where career services doesn’t fall within the Student Affairs portfolio, on-campus internships can provide a way for the division to collaborate with the career services office.
Beyond the importance employers are placing on internships, two other trends are making it more essential than ever for students to gain specific professional skills before they graduate. First, many employers are reducing or eliminating their internal training programs, instead focusing on hiring employees who can make an impact from their first day on the job.

Professional Development Shifting from Companies to Colleges

*Employers Increasingly Seek Graduates who Possess Job-Ready Skills*

**Employers Offering Less On-the-Job Training**

“Training has always been a complicated issue because employers are reluctant to spend a lot on training somebody who then can go work somewhere else. And with less loyalty among employees, with less loyalty among employers, there's probably more reluctance to that. That's why employers are so interested in getting the school systems to better prepare workers. In general, jobs require more training, more computer know-how, but companies don’t train as much as they did. They prefer to hire workers who already know how to do the exact job.

*David Wessel*

*NPR Interview (June 2012)*

**High Unemployment Has Led to Pickier Employers**

- Commonly-used HR software screens out applicants who lack specific keywords in their resumes
- Employers feel able to search for someone with an exact set of skills and experiences

Fewer firms are willing to take a chance on the Classics major who needs Excel training

Second, employers are increasingly using computer programs to screen applicants, meaning that students who lack certain key words on their resumé won’t get asked to interview. As a result, many talented and capable students may never get the chance to get in front of a recruiter. Because it doesn’t look like employers are going to change these practices in the near future, institutions will need to help students acquire key skills and experiences during their college years.

One way institutions are helping students to develop these key skills is through mini-MBA programs. At some institutions, these programs take the form of recommended courses in statistics, economics, and leadership. As an alternative, Wofford College is offering a short, targeted summer program that helps students gain high-demand skills.

**A Mini-MBA for Liberal Arts Majors**

*Wofford College’s Summer Institute for Professional Development*

### Program Details
- Occurs on campus over 5 weeks during the second half of the summer school semester
- Program is not-for-credit
- Enrollment currently capped at 26 students; applications accepted on first-come, first-serve basis
- Program costs $3,900 to attend, but need-based scholarships are provided through a corporate grant

### Classroom Activities
- Understanding different leadership styles
- Writing for business
- Developing an impactful résumé

### Practical Experiences
- Consulting projects for outside companies
- Public speaking assessments
- Using Excel, Access, and other tools

### Networking Opportunities
- Frequent executive guest speakers
- Networking events with alumni
- Program creates cohort of students with diverse majors and backgrounds

The students participating in Wofford’s Institute for Professional Development live on campus during the second half of the summer semester, attending classes and workshops on a range of practical topics such as global business issues, executive writing, and program management. Students also complete short-term consulting projects for partner companies and meet with visiting executives and alumni.
Wofford’s Institute for Professional Development program produced promising results in its pilot year. All 26 participants received job or internship offers, and the program has also drawn interest and support from some major companies, enabling Wofford to give grants to participants with financial need.

Helping Liberal Arts Students Achieve Success
Noteworthy Outcomes for Professional Development Institute Participants

A Shot in the Arm for Students

“Everybody that’s gone through this program has been incredibly successful after college, and not all of them come into the program really successful. As far as confidence, they’re not people you’d pick out and say, ‘This person is going to have 3 job offers; this person is going to be able to do whatever they want,’ but that’s what happens.”

Scott Cochran
Wofford College

Results Suggest Program’s High Potential

Strong Student Outcomes
All participants have successfully obtained full-time jobs or internships (for underclassmen)

High Student Demand
Program quickly reaches capacity with word-of-mouth marketing

Growing Corporate Interest
Major corporations have provided sponsorships and become involved in programming

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
While Wofford’s program focuses on building students’ broad professional competencies, some institutions are offering more programming focused on specific skill sets. For instance, a variety of entrepreneurship programs connect students with alumni and area business experts to help them launch new ventures. Other programs assist students in developing the skills and experiences needed for public service internships.

**Diverse Options for Targeted Skill Building**

*Tailoring Programming to Student Interests and Needs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Entrepreneurship Programming</strong></th>
<th><strong>Workplace Simulators</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Several institutions offered structured workshop series and competitions for students hoping to launch their own business.</td>
<td>Institutions with business programs frequently offer trading floor simulations to help students become acclimated to the demands of finance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Graduate School Application Bootcamps</strong></th>
<th><strong>Public Service Internship Coaching</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Many career centers collaborate with academic advising to provide walk-throughs of the graduate school application process.</td>
<td>Career Services provides targeted application and networking coaching to help students secure public service internships or jobs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Depending on the needs and interests of an institution’s student population, a range of specialized skill-building experiences—from grad school boot camps to workplace simulators—may be appropriate.
While targeted skill development programs are on the rise, cocurricular activities continue to be a great way for students to build competencies that employers value while gaining tangible work experience. For students who want to acquire work experience during the term, Wofford College has created the Boston Terrier Consulting Group.

**Strengthening Critical Thinking and Analysis Skills**

*Wofford College’s “Boston Terrier Consulting Group” (BTCG)*

**Consulting Project Process**

BTCG advisor assists students with client project intake conversation

Student team prepares client deliverable

BTCG advisor provides technical skills training as necessary

Students provide periodic status updates to client

Students present final recommendations to senior management

**Key Program Components**

- Students apply to participate. All majors are welcome.
- Projects are completed in teams.
- Projects typically last 4-6 week and require 5-15 hours of work per consultant per week.
- Teams receive payments from clients, which are split among team members.


Students from all majors and class years are welcome to apply to this program. Once accepted, students are assigned to project teams for client engagements such as market analyses and feasibility studies. After project completion, project teams meet with clients to formally present their results.

Over the past three years, 150 students have participated in the Boston Terrier Consulting Group program. Engagements typically last between four to six weeks, depending on project scope, with students working between 8 and 16 hours per week on an engagement. Employer partners pay client fees that range from $2,500 to $7,500, and these funds are split among student team members.
As the sample projects highlighted below illustrate, students in the Boston Terrier Consulting Group have opportunities to explore a range of industries and job functions. In addition to building technical skills, students also have an opportunity to hone the soft skills so important in the workplace.

### Gaining Real-World Professional Experience

*Wofford Connects Students with Diverse and Concrete Projects*

#### Sample Projects

- **Hospitality/Marketing**
  Students created an analysis tool to help a major hotel chain assess existing and potential markets.

- **Healthcare/Operations**
  Student team developed a marketing and distribution plan for an international orthotics company.

- **Real Estate/Land Use Planning**
  Students developed land use recommendations for a nearby airport constructing a new terminal.

#### Valuable Lessons, Even When Things Go Wrong

“I think it’s almost more valuable when things don’t go correctly for the student because the goal of this is to send them into a professional environment so they can say, ‘I don’t just know about things I’ve learned in the classroom; I’ve done things. This is what I’ve experienced and here’s how I know how to creatively solve problems.’”

*Courtney Shelton*

*Wofford College*

For instance, during a consulting engagement one team had a student who wasn’t completing the assigned tasks—a common workplace situation. The other students on the team then had to make the real-world decision about whether to give their colleague another chance or let him go from the team. These are the experiences that can help students to differentiate themselves from other job candidates during an interview.
Our research shows that institutions need to take an active role in creating high-quality internships and work experiences for students on campus. Progressive career offices are doing more than just pointing students to the internships database; they are creating on-campus opportunities for students to develop the skills that employers are looking for.

### Building a Compelling Resumé

**Key Takeaways**

#### Quick Wins for Career Services

- Injecting career development opportunities into existing campus programming

- Assist campus sponsors in offering career development to student employees

- Guide Student Affairs offices in the creation of formal internships

- Create a list of recommended courses for students hoping to enhance liberal arts backgrounds

#### Long-Term Strategies

- Building real world career development experiences and training programs

- Work with Academic Affairs to launch for-credit on-campus internships

- Establish a student consulting group or other employer-facing campus club

- Develop mini-MBA courses on leadership and practical business skills for students

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Seniors

Developing the Systematic Job Search Toolkit
Diagnostic Questions

Seniors: Developing the Systematic Job Search Toolkit

The questions below are designed to help evaluate the career resources for senior students at your institution. Answering “No” to two or more questions below suggests that there may be ideas in this section that represent opportunities for investment or action.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Does your career services office offer a dedicated career initiative targeted at senior students who are most in need of career support?</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Does your career services office offer personal narrative coaching workshops for students who are liberal arts majors or returning from study abroad to help them translate their skills and experiences into terms that will appeal to employers?</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Does your career services office provide students with guidance around developing appropriate online profiles and the use of social media in the job search?</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Does your institution offer students an intensive walk-through of the networking process, including opportunities for students to practice networking skills?</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Senior year is ideally where all of students’ career exploration, internships, and skill-building work will pay off as they finalize their postgraduation plans. Currently, most career centers offer a range of services to seniors focused on job search mechanics, including résumé reviews and interview workshops.

Innovative career offices, however, are going further: constantly refreshing and updating their initiatives, and focusing more attention on areas essential to today’s job market, such as social media profiles and networking skills.
Depicted below is an ideal career development timeline, which culminates with a senior who has spent time assessing his or her values, exploring opportunities, gaining experience, and building a support network.

### Building on a Solid Foundation

*Preparation Before Senior Year Leads to Post-Graduation Success*

The Ideal Timeline for Career Planning

- **Pre-Enrollment**
  - Assessing Values, Interests, and Skills

- **First Year**
  - Exploring Jobs and Career Paths

- **Sophomore**
  - Taking Courses That Relate to Career Goals

- **Junior**
  - Gaining Work Experience Related to Goals

- **Senior**
  - Building a Network
  - Finalizing Plans

*Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.*
However, far from the ideal, the senior represented below is all-too-common on many campuses. This is the student who never did an internship, or is having regrets about his or her major choice, or is considering graduate school just to avoid applying for jobs.

The Lost Senior  
*Cast Adrift in a Sea of Anxiety*

“I wish I had majored in something else.”

“I never did an internship.”

“I haven’t made a resume yet.”

“Why should I join LinkedIn if I’m already on Facebook?”

“Maybe I should take the LSAT and just go to law school.”

“I have no idea what types of jobs to apply for.”

“Why can’t Career Services just get me a job?”

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

This student is probably going to the career center for the first time in the fall or even the spring of senior year and may be under the mistaken impression that he or she can just walk in and leave with a job.
To target seniors who need extra help and deliver intensive career search preparation, the career services office at Barnard College recently launched a dedicated senior initiative. To identify the seniors who are most in need of career support, at the beginning of the fall semester the career office emails a survey to all seniors to assess where they are in the career planning process.

**Identifying Seniors Who Need Intensive Career Preparation**

*Barnard College’s Senior Status Survey*

**Step 1: Assesses Post-Graduation Plans**

- What are your plans for after graduation?
  - a) Job/internship
  - b) Graduate school
  - c) Travel abroad
  - d) Volunteering

Identifies students who hope to enter the workforce but lack concrete plans

**Step 2: Determines Readiness Levels**

- What industry do you hope to participate in?
- How many internships have you held?

Enables program marketing to be tailored based on students’ career progress

**Step 3: Raises Awareness of Programming**

- Senior job search workshops
- Career fairs
- Assessments
- Job shadowing

Develops awareness of different career programs and resources

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

If a student indicates that he or she is planning to enter the workforce but lacks solid plans, the career services office will then proactively market the intensive senior program to that student.
The program consists of a series of five workshops designed to help students quickly ramp up their career skills. For instance, the resumé and cover letter workshop focuses on helping students frame their skills well for potential employers, rather than just following a form or template. In addition to the workshops, participants are required to attend the career fair, shadow an alumnus, and attend individual counseling sessions.

## Delivering Just-in-Time Interventions

### Barnard Targets Lost Seniors

### Senior Initiative Group Workshops

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Senior Initiative Workshop Series</th>
<th>Additional Program Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Session 1</strong> Advanced Resume and Cover Letter Clinic</td>
<td>Career fair attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Session 2</strong> Marketing Yourself 2.0</td>
<td>Alumni job shadowing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Session 3</strong> Conducting a Comprehensive Job Search in a Tough Market</td>
<td>Individual counseling and assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Session 4</strong> Interviewing 201</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Session 5</strong> Social Media: a Pivotal Part of Your Career Planning and Job Search</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 2011-12 Results

- 125 students participated
- Students report feeling more prepared for life after graduation

Source: Senior Initiative, Barnard College: [http://barnard.edu/cd/students/senior-initiative](http://barnard.edu/cd/students/senior-initiative); Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Last year 125 students participated in Barnard’s dedicated senior initiative and their feedback was incredibly positive.
One area that the Barnard program focuses closely on is helping students frame and translate their undergraduate experiences to make them more compelling to employers. While intensive academic programs, cocurricular leadership positions, and study abroad experience help students develop the teamwork, leadership, and communication skills sought by employers, they don’t necessary trigger a hit from resumé screening software or catch a recruiter’s eye.

Translating Experiences for Employers

Employers May Not Immediately See Value in Some Student Experiences

Importance of College Activities to Recruiting

Collegiate Employment Research Institute, 2011-2012 Recruiting Trends Survey

n=3,700 employers

In fact, a survey of employers by the Collegiate Employment Research Institute (CERI) at Michigan State University shows that many cocurricular experiences are viewed by recruiters as having limited importance.

Certainly, students should not be discouraged from studying abroad or leading a campus service organization. However, the CERI survey results indicate that students need help deliberately reflecting on these experiences, articulating their takeaways and integrating these insights into resumés and interviews, thereby helping them to be more competitive candidates.

Study abroad is an area that frequently comes up as a place where students need support in translating their experience into language that will resonate with potential employers. While students can learn a tremendous amount during study abroad and often have life-changing experiences, they often lack the words to concretely describe how they have changed and what skills they have developed.

**Personal Narrative Coaching**
*Butler University’s Study Abroad Debriefing Sessions*

A Collaborative Effort to Help Students Unpack Their Experience

- **International Office**
  Helps students to reflect on their experience

- **Employers**
  Describes how they view applicants’ study abroad experiences

- **Career Services**
  Provides examples of ways to describe experience in resume and cover letters

- Student is able to articulate traits and skills gained while abroad
- Can go beyond the “life-changing experience” description

To help address this gap, Butler University offers a workshop for students who are returning from study abroad to help them to translate their experiences into terms that will appeal to employers. The workshop, which is cohosted by the international office and the career services office, features an employer panel where recruiters discuss how they view study abroad experiences and the skills they hope students will have gained from it.

As a takeaway resource from the session, Butler’s career staff provided students with a handout with concrete examples and terms they can use in resumés and cover letters, as well as when interviewing.
Another variation on the translation workshop concept comes from Lakehead University in Ontario, Canada. Lakehead’s Student Success Centre offers workshops to help students in traditional liberal arts majors better articulate their skills on a resume or in an interview. Staff discuss a variety of skills with students, providing them with words to describe what they often implicitly know they can do.

Helping Students to Articulate Their Skills
**Lakehead University’s “Marketing Your Major” Workshops**

**Helping Students Identify Skills...**
- Independent learning skills
- Research skills
- Writing skills
- Reading skills
- Speaking skills
- Critical thinking skills
- Problem-solving skills
- Interdisciplinary skills
- Global understanding and cultural sensitivity
- Self-awareness
- Initiative

**...and Communicate Them to Employers**

- Willingness to learn
- Action planning
- Interpersonal skills
- Teamwork
- Leadership
- Networking
- Flexibility
- Commitment/motivation
- IT/computer literacy
- Historical understanding
- Time and resource management skills

Students write and peer-edit resumes and cover letters

Workshop highlights how to tailor the resume format to emphasize skills

Students complete a skills audit and create an action plan for filling skill gaps

The workshop also encourages students to look for areas where they have gaps in order to then consider courses, cocurricular experiences, and internships that will help them fill in some of the missing pieces.
Companies Using Social Media for Recruiting

92% of companies plan to use social media networks for recruiting new employees

Activity Breakdown by Platform

- **80%**: Use LinkedIn to find candidates
- **50%**: Leverage Facebook to find new employees
- **45%**: Utilize Twitter to locate new talent

To optimize students’ use of social media in the job search, McMaster University in Canada recently held a two-day conference on the subject. The conference agenda included presentations from social media experts, as well as panel discussions featuring employers. In addition to organized sessions, students also had access to a computer lab throughout the day so they could drop in and update their social media profiles, applying the tips and information they were gathering at the conference.

Crafting Professional Social Media Presences

McMaster University’s “Social Media + Job Search Conference”

2011 Agenda (excerpted)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day 1 Morning Keynote</th>
<th>Building Social Media Relationships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Get LinkedIn” Breakout Sessions</td>
<td>Session 1: Create a LinkedIn Profile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Session 2: Enhance Your LinkedIn Experience</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Session 3: Maximize Your Professional Connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afternoon Panel Discussion</td>
<td>Social Media: All Hype or All That?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 2 Morning Keynote</td>
<td>Building Your Own Buzz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“You Are What You Share” Breakout Sessions</td>
<td>Session 1: Facebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Session 2: Twitter</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Session 3: LinkedIn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afternoon Panel Discussion</td>
<td>Social Recruiting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
The career office staff at McMaster suggested that one reason the conference was so popular with students was because they had the opportunity to learn from and engage with employers, faculty members, and social media experts. For example, presenters from LinkedIn gave students in-depth advice on key platform features, while faculty from the business school and the communications program provided insights around self-presentation.

### Practical Advice from Credible Sources

**Social Media Experts, Faculty, and Employers Heighten Conference’s Impact**

*Students More Likely to Internalize Advice from Certain Sources*

- Discuss use of social media to surface candidates
- Advice on “do's and don’ts”
- In-depth knowledge of social media tools’ full set of features
- Insights on the future of social media
- Insights on hiring practices
- Expertise on self-presentation and persuasion

While the presenters had similar messages to those that were already being communicated to students by the career office, because the messages came from employers, the messages reached a broader audience of students who then applied what they learned when crafting their online profiles.
Overall, 135 students participated in McMaster University’s conference on social media, and students’ feedback on assessments was overwhelmingly positive. In addition to learning about appropriate online profiles, students also reported feeling more confident about how to integrate tools such as LinkedIn or Twitter into their job search.

McMaster’s Social Media Conference is a Success
*Increases Understanding of Social Media in the Job Search*

**Meeting Student Demand for Social Media Guidance**
- Student Life Enhancement Fund sponsored social media conference
- 135 students participated
- Many students used conference venue computer lab to create and improve LinkedIn accounts

**Key Student Take-Aways**
- Employers proactively search social media to find hires
- The importance of developing a personal brand
- How to use Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn for different but complementary purposes

*Student Feedback:*
“‘I learned how to connect with people that I thought were unreachable.’”

One notable aspect of the conference that reinforces the level of student interest and investment it garnered is that the events fund at McMaster University—which is student-run and also student-funded—contributed $20,000 toward the conference. These funds were used to secure facilities and bring in high-profile speakers.
Another factor driving student interest in social media is the ever-increasing importance of networking—an activity that career experts constantly stress as a key aspect in the job search. Many college seniors, however, lack professional networking skills and are unaware of etiquette basics, such as the importance of sending thank-you notes.

Cultivating a Personal Network
*A Job Search Essential*

---

**No Shortage of Information on How Networking Matters…**

- **40%** Percent of new hires found through employee referral
- **64%** Percent of US employers that have hired through social networks

**...But Students Lack Practical Guidance**

- Intimidated by starting conversations at group networking events
- Unaware of follow-up email and thank-you note protocols
- Unfamiliar with navigating LinkedIn and alumni databases

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Students often graduate with little knowledge about networking, finding the concept quite intimidating. The career services office can help in this key area by developing low-risk forums where students can practice their networking skills and build their confidence.
Brown University recently launched a new program for seniors called January Career Laboratory that provides students with an intensive walk-through of the networking process. Over a long weekend in January, students attend sessions that provide an overview of the networking process and lessons about self-presentation.

**Step-by-Step Guidance Through the Networking Process**

*Brown University’s January Career Laboratory*

**Step 1:** Overview of the networking process and sessions on persuasion and self-presentation

**Step 2:** Alumni panels on career paths and industries to help guide students’ networking conversations

**Step 3:** Networking activities in a variety of formats, including speed networking and phone interviews

**Step 4:** Debriefing sessions with Career Services staff to ensure students conduct follow-up and identify improvement areas

After these introductory workshops, students attend alumni panels on a range of career areas, giving them an opportunity to learn about various industries and to begin thinking about some of the questions they might like to ask alumni. Next, students put what they’ve learned into action through hands-on activities, including a networking lunch, a speed-networking session, and informational phone interviews—all of which give students a chance to try networking in a safe and low-risk environment. Finally, the program concludes with a debriefing session where students receive feedback, reflect on what they did well, and pinpoint ways they might improve their networking skills in the future.
Brown worked hard to ensure that there was something during the January Career Laboratory for every student—those who already had a job offer, those who were still exploring potential career fields, or those who were planning to attend graduate school. Alumni representing a range of industries and career stages attended the event, providing students with a structured way to take advantage of the Brown alumni network.

**Exposing Students to a Range of Career Paths and Contacts**

*January Career Laboratory Connects Students with Diverse Group of Potential Mentors*

### Sample Session Titles
- Activism
- Consulting and Beyond
- Media and Entertainment
- Trends in Banking and Finance
- Education: Practice, Reform, and Leadership
- Public Relations, Advertising, and Marketing
- Bioscience and Public Health
- Careers in the Arts
- Government, Law, and Policy

### Impressive Results Lead to Plans for Program Expansion

- 140 student and 100 alumni participants
- Alumni participants ranged from recent graduates to senior Corporation members
- Students reported improved networking skills and increased confidence


Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Overall, 140 students and more than 100 alumni participated in the program’s pilot year, and Brown hopes to increase these numbers during the next academic year.
Developing the Systematic Job Search Toolkit

Key Takeaways

Where most career offices provide an array of services for seniors, there are a few key places where career centers can strengthen and expand their offerings. In particular, the career services office can provide resources and guidance around developing appropriate online profiles. Institutions looking to invest more in resources for seniors can develop career “boot camps” for unprepared students and create low-risk forums where students can practice networking.

Quick Wins for Career Services

- Directing students to appropriate resources and helping them translate their experiences
  
- Administer a senior status survey and use results to tailor marketing efforts
  
- Provide in-person and online resources to help students translate key college experiences
  
- Raise student awareness of in-person and online networking opportunities

Long-Term Strategies

- Establishing intensive programming to help students fill gaps in their job search toolkits
  
- Create intensive workshop series or bootcamps to equip students for the job search
  
- Develop programming that explains networking to students, coupled with networking events
  
- Targeted interventions for unprepared/lost seniors

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Alumni
Aligning Career and Alumni Services
## Diagnostic Questions

### Alumni: Aligning Career and Alumni Services

The questions below are designed to help evaluate the alignment between career and alumni services at your institution. Answering "No" to two or more questions below suggests that there may be ideas in this section that represent opportunities for investment or action.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Does your career services office offer programming to ease students’ transition into post-college life, such as transition courses or alumni affairs collaborations that help recent graduates establish city-based networks?</td>
<td></td>
<td>![ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Has your institution created an intensive transition program for students moving to selected cities who are interested in careers that lack a traditional recruiting pathway?</td>
<td></td>
<td>![ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Does your institution offer career services for alumni at various stages in their career lifecycle, such as resources for graduate school applicants or industry-focused networking events?</td>
<td></td>
<td>![ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Does your career services office leverage data from alumni surveys to help build relationships with academic offices and educate faculty and staff about students’ career outcomes?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
A decade ago, the career center’s work was primarily finished once a student received his or her first job offer and graduated from the institution. Today, however, the work for many career offices doesn’t end at the graduation ceremony. Increasingly, institutions are ramping up services for alumni as both a response to increasing demand from alumni and as part of broader institutional engagement initiatives.

## Hardwiring Student Engagement with Career Development

*An A Road Map from Admissions to Graduation and Beyond*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I. Prospective Students</th>
<th>II. First-Year Students</th>
<th>III. Sophomores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Branding Career Services in Recruiting</td>
<td>Embedding Career Advising in the FYE</td>
<td>Integrating Career Considerations with Major Selection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IV. Juniors</th>
<th>V. Seniors</th>
<th>VI. Alumni</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building a Compelling Resumé</td>
<td>Developing the Systematic Job Search Toolkit</td>
<td>Aligning Career and Alumni Services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

And, in addition to dedicated services for alumni, some career centers are also offering new programs to ease students’ transition into post-college life.
During the course of our research, many contacts voiced the opinion that today’s seniors are less prepared than ever to leave campus and need assistance from the institution with many aspects of the transition to life after graduation.

Facilitating Senior Transitions

*Career Services Offerings Go Beyond Job Search Essentials*

**Ready for the Real World?**

- Portrait of a Graduating Senior
  - Lived in university housing for four years
  - Parents paid credit card bill
  - Made friends through cocurricular activities and hallway conversations in residence hall

**Senior Transition Courses**

- Taught by faculty or staff
- Focus on practical life skills
- Popular topics include personal finance, finding an apartment, and applying to graduate school

**Post-College Network Building**

- Social media groups based on city or career path
- Roommate locator tools
- City-based networking nights

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

A number of interviewees argued convincingly that today’s over-parented generation doesn’t necessarily know how to manage personal finances or find an apartment, while other recent graduates simply have trouble making friends once separated from campus life and a constant stream of activities.

On a handful of campuses, the career services office is stepping in to fill this void, doing more to help prepare students for their transition into the real world. These efforts can range from transition courses on topics such as personal finance to collaborations between the career center and the alumni affairs office to establish robust city-based networks for transitioning students. In many cases, Facebook and LinkedIn can help facilitate these online networking efforts.
Elon University has taken a step further, creating an intensive transition program for students moving to New York City or Los Angeles. Graduating students apply to be one of eight members of each city’s cohort. In most cases, applicants are interested in careers that lack a traditional recruiting pathway, such as the arts.

Ensuring a Smooth Transition

*Elon University’s Bridges Program Helps Students Ease Into New Cities*

**Career Services Support**
- Seminar on job search strategies and personal finance
- Weekly individual career advising appointments
- Course credit gives students eligibility for unpaid internships
- Regular employer site visits

**Personal Support**
- Elon provides housing in New York City and Los Angeles
- Rental car discounts (in Los Angeles)
- Cohort of 10 recent graduates
- Networking with Elon alumni and parents
- Guidance on networking etiquette and professionalism

**Who Participates**
- Interested in working in New York City or Los Angeles
- Interested in the arts or other industries that do not have traditional recruiting cycles

Elon provides housing for students in Los Angeles and New York for nine weeks, as well as individual career counseling and networking events with Elon alumni and parents. Overall, the program provides a structured way for students to become established in those cities, helping them lay the groundwork for careers in the art or entertainment fields.
Beyond assisting with senior transitions, career offices are also providing more direct services and resources to alumni. This trend stems from increased demand for alumni career services related to continuing economic difficulties in the United States and Canada; the higher rate of career changers in today’s workforce also contributes. Regardless of the factors driving demand, alumni career services will clearly be an integral part of next-generation career services.

### The Rise of Lifetime Career Services

**A New Role for Institutions**

**Factors Driving Increased Alumni Demand for Services**

- Increasing costs of higher education builds expectation of lifelong benefits
- Fewer employees staying at firms for an entire career
- Young alumni who took internships or time off after graduation seeking services 2-5 years later

**A Strategic Imperative**

“Alumni have lifetime access to our services at Carnegie Mellon University for free, and that’s something that we have committed to recently because we believe that alumni services will be an important dimension in the future of university careers services. The integration of alumni relations, advancement, and university career services continues to be a trend in our profession. Alumni play a critical role in our employer relations program, they contribute to the education and mentoring of our students’ education, and their support will ensure the continued advancement of our services in the future. If we want their loyalty and support, we must extend ours to them first.”

---

Farouk Dey
Carnegie Mellon

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Until recently, career center services for alumni mainly consisted of lifetime access to the alumni database. Today, institutions are beginning to offer a range of services to alumni at all stages in their career process. These services range from resources for graduate school applications to industry-focused networking events to forums for career-changers.

**From Graduate School Resources to Career Changer Guidance**

*Alumni Service Needs Vary Greatly*

A Competitive Advantage

“At Wesleyan, career services are fee-free for life. We highlight this as a key resource to potential students that differentiates Wesleyan University --that they have the full support of the institution for the rest of their lives in tangible and intangible ways.”

Michael Sciola
Wesleyan University

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
By providing alumni career services, institutions are looking to reinforce the return on investment that graduates receive from their institution, signaling that their degree is a lifelong investment that will pay dividends across the years.

Ripple Effects for Institutional Advancement

Career Services and Alumni Engagement

“Lost Generation” of Alumni

“Our students are leaving with a lot of debt and many can’t find the job they want. In a decade, I really worry about their ability and willingness to give. They’re starting to tell us, ‘We gave already, when we wrote the tuition check’, and you know what—they’re right.”

Chief Development Officer
Flagship Public University

An Opportunity to Build New Connections

“One of the items that almost always rises to the top of what alumni want from their alma mater is support in job and/or career related-activities. Alumni say they wish they had gotten more skills training for their career and want to know what the university is doing to create better career-related skills development for current students.”

“Career Guidance—Helping Future Alumni Know Where They Will Best Fit into the Job Market”
The Alumni Attitude Study Blog

Such messaging around a lifelong connection to the institution is becoming especially important to the alumni affairs office, the development office, and the university foundation. Chief advancement officers have voiced growing concerns about whether historic levels of student debt and high unemployment rates for recent graduates will undermine the success of future fundraising efforts.

Research conversations with contacts in university fundraising and development suggest that alumni are increasingly tying their willingness to give to their career success, implying that if their college fails to help them develop their career, they will then be less likely to give back to their alma mater. As a result, we believe that career services for alumni are likely to be a key component of alumni engagement efforts moving forward.
By providing career services to alumni, an institution can also supplement ongoing assessment efforts, as currently many colleges and universities fail to systematically collect alumni metrics. According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers, less than 50% of institutions administer an alumni placement survey, and such initiatives are primarily focused on first-year outcomes; few institutions administer surveys that solicit data from older alumni.

### Leveraging Alumni Relationships to Collect Data

*Significant Room for Improvement Across Institutions*

#### Percentage of Institutions Conducting Alumni Placement Survey by Enrollment Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrollment Size</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>48.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;1,700</td>
<td>58.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,701 - 3,000</td>
<td>64.4%</td>
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<td>5,001 - 8,000</td>
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<td>8,001 - 14,000</td>
<td>44.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14,001 - 27,000</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;27,000</td>
<td>37.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NACE 2010-2011 Career Services Benchmark Survey; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Outlined below are some of the key data points that a career office should collect from alumni. The best assessment efforts will go beyond these basics, collecting data that will help the career center better understand what programs and interventions contribute the most to successful student career outcomes.

**From Basic Snapshot to Actionable Data**

*Best-in-Class Surveys Connect the Dots from College to Workforce Success*

---

**Essential Post-Graduation Data**
- Current employment status
- Job title/function/role
- Current organization/industry
- Graduate school status
- Salary
- Location
- Timing of job search
- Undergraduate major

**Next Generation Data**

**Employment Quality**
- Does your job require a college degree, and is it related to your major?
- What skills are most important for your job?

**Career Services Performance**
- What Career Services resources did you use?
- How did you find your current job?
- What learning outcomes did you achieve from Career Services programming?

**Satisfaction with the Institution**
- What factors prepared you the most for your current job (academics, internships, or cocurricular activities?)
- Would you choose the same major/institution again?
- Do you currently donate to the institution?

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Elon University stands out as an institution that has done more than most universities to collect, analyze, and utilize outcomes data in the career services office. Elon’s career services office has formed its own assessment team, which includes the career center director, a staff member from the IR office, a staff member from the admissions office, and a math professor.

**Using Alumni Data to Win Institutional Support**

*Elon University Focuses on Packaging Data for Faculty*

**Elon’s Career Services Assessment Team**

*Members from Across the Institution*
- Director of Career Services
- Institutional Research Staff Member
- Admissions Representative
- Professor of Math and Statistics

*Activities*
- Analyze data from graduation, 3-, and 9-month alumni surveys
- Explore ways to share data with faculty
- Discuss ideas for featuring data in Admissions recruiting materials

**Changing Faculty Perceptions with Data**

“We produce a very detailed report and the faculty and chairs love it. That’s the best way to build support, when you can show the history department that of their 20 majors, only three are going to grad school, but seven are working on Wall Street, two are working for IBM, and three are looking for a job. That’s where you can really change their perceptions of career services.”

*Tom Vecchione*

*Elon University*

This assessment team creates a detailed report every year based on first-destination survey data results, and the report has become a “must-read” across the institution.
Tom Vecchione, the executive director of Elon’s career center, emphasized that collecting and sharing this data has helped his office build relationships with other academic offices, particularly those that might be skeptical about the role of career services within the institution. The detailed report has also been useful in changing faculty and staff misperceptions about students’ long-term career outcomes.

**Inspiring Students and Engaging Stakeholders**

*Using Data to Spur Student Plans and Demonstrate Value*

Elon University’s Outcomes Map

St. Olaf College’s ROI Website

For example, Elon’s interactive career outcomes map allows various constituents to see, at a glance, where alumni are located and what they are doing. And at St. Olaf College, the institution has just started featuring results from the first-destination survey on a webpage that conveys St. Olaf’s return on investment for students. The website also features information on student engagement and learning, such as results from the National Survey of Student Engagement and the Collegiate Learning Assessment.

We anticipate that, across the next three to five years, the collection and use of career outcomes data will increasingly be a high priority for colleges and universities. Currently there are quite a few institutions that are at Stage I of the graphic below, leveraging career outcomes data during the recruiting process to make the case that attending their institution is a wise, lifelong investment.

A handful of institutions are beginning to move to Stage II, using career services data to help guide students’ advising and major selection process. While some stakeholders will instinctively resist Stage III, there are clear signs that some institutional leaders are interested in incorporating alumni and employer feedback into curriculum reviews.
Our research shows that a broader role for career services is undoubtedly developing at institutions across the United States and Canada. This role involves assisting students with their postgraduation transition as well as continuing to offer services to alumni throughout their careers.

## Aligning Career and Alumni Services

### Key Takeaways

### Quick Wins for Career Services

- Leveraging technology and collaborations to increase level and quality of service

- Provide online and in-person programming to prepare students for post-college life

- Make existing online resources widely available to alumni and add alumni-specific online tools

- Regularly collect alumni career data and report it across the institution

### Long-Term Strategies

- Providing life-long Career Services and gathering actionable data for program improvements

- Launch intensive transition programs in cities that draw many young alumni

- Offer local programming targeted toward mid- and late-career alumni

- Focus data-gathering on assessing how the entire institution can better prepare students for careers

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.