Purposeful Partnerships for Student Career Success:

Student Affairs and Academic Affairs Collaboration

CSU Career Directors
January 2011

This whitepaper presents case studies of ten distinctive partnerships across the California State University System, highlighting collaboration between Career Centers and Academic Programs that support student success. Partnerships include those focused on particular industries (e.g. entertainment, hospitality); particular disciplines such as Business, Communications, and STEM; integrating advising, community engagement, and career exploration; and program and student learning outcomes assessment. A proposed Working Session Agenda for this topic is also included.
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http://campusapps2.fullerton.edu/career/employers/crew/valueCareerServices.aspx
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On each of the 23 campuses of the California State University system you will find a career center, helping students develop and implement career plans, assisting faculty and academic departments to connect their curriculum to the professional employment market, and introducing employers, internship sponsors, and community-based organizations to the distinctive students in our fine academic programs.

The directors of CSU career centers meet twice each year to share best practices, examine trends and issues in the labor market, and take full advantage of being part of the largest, most comprehensive, and most diverse higher education system in the United States. For example, in Fall 2009 the group conducted a statewide survey of key employers across all 23 campuses. The employers identified four areas where CSU graduates they had hired were rated significantly above the pool of all college graduates they had hired. CSU students are:

- More flexible in adapting to the changing work demands of an organization
- More effective team members
- Have a higher potential to contribute to the long term success of an organization
- Better representing the growing diversity of the workplace

The survey also documented the importance of centralized employer services on each campus, and the negative impact – for students as well as for our academic programs - should our current statewide budget challenges lead to a significant reduction in career center services for employers. ¹

While the precise services offered by career centers vary, they all share a common commitment to partnering with academic affairs on their campus to complement the work of the faculty. This white paper provides a series of case studies across the CSU system illustrating the range of purposeful partnerships which have developed between career centers and academic affairs to help our graduates put their education to work. It also illustrates the value, creativity, and collaborative energy embedded in the student affairs work on each of our campuses.

**We invite each campus and Senior Student Affairs Officer to create a mechanism to examine these case studies; explore ways of developing additional partnerships between student affairs and academic affairs; and create additional local mechanisms to support student success. A half day working session devoted to this topic is recommended, and a possible agenda for such an event can be found on the last page of this report.**

CSU Career Directors, January 2011

Partnership with Collins School of Hospitality Management

The Career Center at CalPoly Pomona offers quality programs and services that empower students and alumni to make informed career and educational decisions based on a comprehensive model to provide career resources for all students/all majors and alumni. As a result, the Career Center is an integral part of the academic experience. Partnerships with faculty, our academic colleges, students, employers and alumni are a central aspect of all of our services.

One particularly powerful partnership has been forged with the Collins College of Hospitality Management, which has consistently been identified as a national leader in its discipline. The partnership includes a joint Career Services Coordinator (Career Counselor) position, which is equally funded by the Career Center and the College.

Collins students are engaged in a learn-by-doing environment so they are prepared to be leaders in this dynamic field. Serving approximately 1,000 ethnically diverse students in the heart of Southern California, the Collins College offers a rigorous education firmly rooted in hospitality management theories and real-world applications. A customized curriculum prepares students for careers in restaurant management, hotel/resort management, club management, culinary product development, tourism management, and special events/meeting planning.

The joint position of Career Services Coordinator serves as liaison to the Collins College of Hospitality Management developing career education programs and employment networking opportunities. The position provides career counseling and education for undergraduate students, graduate students and alumni, and works with other career counselors, and Collins College faculty and staff to deliver developmentally-appropriate career counseling and guidance, and access to job search and career development resources. The Career Services Coordinator utilizes various assessment tools to assist students and alumni to clarify values, interests, skills, personalities, and work styles. The Career Services Coordinator instructs the Career Center CPU 100 course for Collins College students, which is a Career and Personal Exploration course.

Career and Personal Exploration is a two-unit class designed to teach students effective tools and strategies to use in exploring career options and making decisions about their educational and career development. The Career Services Coordinator networks with employers to determine hiring needs, key skills in demand and to gather information about the needs of hiring organizations.

The Career Center plans to partner with all eight academic colleges including Alumni Relations to have joint liaison funded positions.
For over a decade, Career Services has collaborated with the academic colleges in assessing the quality of Cal Poly graduates and student learning outcomes from an industry perspective. Because of Career Services’ long-term partnerships with industry and its college based career counseling model, the center saw this as an opportunity to partner with Academic Affairs in securing employer feedback on the quality of the academic programs. The result of assessing employers has provided feedback on student learning and information useful for curriculum review, program evaluation and WASC accreditation.

Career Services has partnered with the following academic colleges in surveying employers:

- College of Engineering
- College of Business
- College of Architecture & Environmental Design
- College of Education

The assessment surveys were developed based on specific learning outcomes established by each college and its specialized accreditation body. Employers who had supervised or managed Cal Poly graduates were asked to rate the overall quality of the graduates and competencies achieved in the learning outcome areas. The learning areas centered on knowledge, technical practice, problem solving, critical thinking, teamwork, ethics, communication (oral and written), tools, global development and life-long learning. Longitudinal data is now being evaluated. The results have been shared with the President’s Executive Committee, Industrial Advisory Boards, Dean Councils, academic community and students.

Supporting Academic Affairs through this purposeful partnership has provided a productive way to support both academic and student success.
Strengthening Community Engagement is an important function of many Career Centers across the CSU, and CSU Bakersfield’s career center has recently merged with our service learning operation to reinforce this goal, central to the core identity and future of the university. The effort is based on an understanding of the close link between career education and community engagement, including the synergy of forming strong partnerships with community organizations, employers, and CSUB students, faculty, and staff to support community service, discipline based learning, and career preparation.

The Center for Community Engagement and Career Education (CECE) was officially launched in September 2009. The Center creates opportunities for CSUB to partner with community entities to improve the quality of community life through internships, service learning and volunteer programs, while preparing students to enter the workforce through a comprehensive and integrated approach to career development. The program was recently selected for a NASPA Excellence Gold Award.

The Center serves as the central repository for all CSUB community engagement activities. Academic internships, volunteer opportunities, service learning, and community focused activities will be expanded using new career services management system technologies, increased outreach on campus and within the community, and the development of new community-based partnerships to further strengthen the relationship between the university and the community.

The Center is led by a director focused on service learning and career education, and a coordinator from the faculty ranks focused on community engagement. It provides opportunities that promote student development, enhance the quality of campus life, and improve recruitment, retention, and graduation rates. An active partnership with Academic Affairs and evidence-based learning outcomes assessment are critical aspects of its effectiveness. For example, the Center builds learning outcomes for service learning courses using rubrics based on university-wide criteria including critical reasoning and problem solving, discipline and career-based learning, numerical literacy, engagement and personal/interpersonal development, and ethical competencies. Rubrics are being developed with academic departments and are shared with the University Assessment Fellows, the Committee for Requirements and Standards, and the Academic Senate.

Activities include teaching Community Service Learning and applied experience courses, a new service learning academic internship contract, a new career services management system, and new on-line career education tools to support the professional growth of students, complementing traditional services including online job and internship postings, recruiting events, interview schedules, internship development, and career peer services. CECE also offers quarterly information sessions on community engagement opportunities and collaborates with Deans, the Department Chairs Leadership Council, the Academic Senate, and the Committee for Academic Requirements and Standards to facilitate participation in community engagement.

This creative combination of community engagement and career education enable CSU Bakersfield to engage students simultaneously in serving the community while building the skills, knowledge and experience needed to compete successfully in the professional marketplace, building a bridge between educating young professionals today and preparing civic and business leaders for tomorrow.
The Cal State Dominguez Hills Career Center is working with campus partners in Academic Affairs and Administration & Finance to enhance student success rates in the job interview, while improving overall oral communication abilities.

Employer surveys (1) regarding desired attributes in college graduates consistently cite strong oral and written communication skills among the top 5 most desired skills of a new hire. In the CSUDH College of Business Administration and Public Policy all business administration majors are required to take a Business Communications course that addresses written and oral skills. Knowing that prospective job candidates have their first opportunity to demonstrate adequacy of skills during the job interview, the Career Center approached the College of Business regarding a means of improving interview readiness via a course in the College. Beginning in summer, 2009, the Career Center collaborated with the College to implement practice interview exercises as part of the curriculum of the course. The practice interview sessions are provided via web-based software (Optimal Interview), where a student records answers to simulated interview questions via a webcam. There are three assignments that utilize the software: a two minute introduction of a classmate for peer review, a recorded practice interview for peer review, and a final recorded interview that is graded by the instructor. Each recording is saved to a website link and inserted in a threaded discussion group on Blackboard.

Initial training for faculty instructors in CBAPP was provided by the Career Center and the software vendor; the Instructional Technology Dept./Division of Administration and Finance, partnered to provide classroom technical support, private interview “labs”, and an instructional webinar for students hosted on the web. The Career Center procured a technology grant to fully fund the software as well as eight laptop computers equipped with webcams that are deployed in private interview rooms in the Career Center. Over a sixteen month period, 1,700 students have utilized the software. Faculty report five-fold results for students: they learn to interpret the intent behind the interview question from the virtual coaches in the software program, they learn best practices for interview techniques and responses from both their peers and their professor, they gain confidence in their ability to communicate effectively in a high stress situation, and they have an opportunity for continued learning and skill development via the software program long after the class has concluded.

This example demonstrates the Career Center’s commitment to facilitating improved communication skills for graduates, and increased success in the interview process.

*Job Outlook 2009 Survey*, National Association of Colleges and Employers
*Raising the Bar: Employers’ Views on College Learning in the Wake of the Economic Downturn*, 2009 National Poll by Peter D. Hart Research Associates
*Closing the Gap: Helping Students Identify the Skills Employers Want*, Fall 2004 NACE Journal
The Career Center at Cal State Fullerton, the CSUF College of Communications, and the animation program in the College of the Arts have developed particularly effective partnerships which serve over 1400 students and the faculty, departments, and distinctive programs in which they are enrolled. The partnerships complement and contribute to the focus on learning outcomes, retention and graduation, community and employer engagement, and efficiency that are demanded in a rigorous professional program. These goals are explicit in the College of Communications Overview: “The Academic programs in the College of Communications prepare students to function as professionals in the fields of business, education, government, entertainment, and in media and health related careers.”

For example, approximately 85% of the students enrolled in the College of Communications are required to complete at least one academic internship to graduate. Students majoring in areas such as journalism, broadcasting, public relations, and advertising are required to utilize the Career Center and have their resumes approved by a career counselor to participate in the internship selection process. This requires registration in the Career Center’s online system, the Titan Connection, where students have access to college approved internship listings. Additional student preparation sessions are also offered by Career Center staff.

The Arts, Entertainment and Communications Specialist in the Career Center partners with the College of Communications to create high profile events such as the May 2010 Comm Week Internship Fair which engaged 24 employers and several hundred students in exploring possible internship placements. Eighty-three percent (83%) of the students who responded to an evaluation of this event strongly or moderately agreed that they “developed confidence in interacting with potential employers” as a result of their participation, and a large number reported they were offered an internship for Summer 2010.

In the Animation Program in the College of the Arts, Dana Lamb, the faculty coordinator of the Visual Arts Internship program and Chair of the Visual Arts Department comments that this Career Center Specialist has invested “an enormous amount of time assisting me in research and development of industry contacts from live action to animation corporations that have led to hundreds of alumni finding their first “break-in” job or internship and launching great careers.”

The focused efforts of the Career Center helps these students, and their distinctive academic programs, generate a return on the investment in higher education made by California taxpayers and the faculty and staff of the CSU, while contributing to the future vitality of the creative industries that California is known for around the world.
As first year students begin their education at CSULB, they are often unsure of what major they will pursue and ultimately what career path they will follow after graduation. The Career Development Center’s mission is to provide innovative career decision-making and job search services that enhance student development. In line with the mission and in collaboration with Student Services and Academic Affairs, the Career Development Center piloted a Career Exploration Program (CEP) for freshman students. The CEP was designed to connect first-year students to majors and careers, while at the same time increasing their engagement with the University.

The CEP provided a series of interventions in direct support of the CSU Chancellor’s initiatives and CSULB’s Plan for Facilitating Graduation:

- Strengthen support for both general education and life / career goal clarification for lower-division students,
- Prominent association of career outcomes with degree majors in catalogs and other student information sources, and
- Choice of major at a reasonable, early juncture.

The CEP had two major goals: helping students explore majors and careers, and increasing student engagement in campus life.

As a result of participation in CEP, students:

- Developed a short list of majors that could be a good fit for them
- Identified one or more student organizations that they would like to join
- Developed a master plan for their college years that incorporated learning beyond the classroom such as internships, study abroad, and volunteerism

The CEP was facilitated through four informal workshops that included lunch. Participants completed interest, personality, and values assessments and learned how to use a variety of print and online resources to explore careers and majors. Students also heard from guest speakers including a representative from the Center for International education and seniors who’d shared their experiences of deciding on a major, study abroad, interning, and preparing for graduation.

In the first year, 51 freshmen participated, of whom 58% were first generation college students; in the second year, 23 freshmen completed the program, of whom 71% were first generation.

We invited the graduates of the first CEP back to continue exploring careers related to their majors. This program was essentially self-paced but did involve some group activities such as visits to employers and business etiquette training and practice.

As a result of these pilot programs, the Career Development Center has implemented an on-going Career Exploration Workshop Series intended to support career exploration and decision-making. These workshops are open to all students and include: Discovering your career interests; Personality type and careers; Finding your career values; and Exploring careers.
California State University, San Bernardino: CoyoteCareers Program

The CoyoteCareers program was developed in response to students’ needs for career soft skills, on-the-job experience in their fields, and access to professional networking. CoyoteCareers, is funded by a Title V HSI development grant and it represents a unique collaboration that integrates Service Learning (Academic Affairs), the Career Development Center (Student Affairs), and Alumni Affairs (University Advancement) into a strategic partnership to advance the sophistication, preparation, and employment competitiveness of Hispanic and low income students in STEM. CoyoteCareers delivers a career education program facilitated by successful alumni professionals and service-learning internships in STEM fields. This program ensures that students are prepared with career-building skills and relevant work experience to obtain and succeed in professional positions.

More specifically, CoyoteCareers provides the following:
1. Free tutoring in hard-to-pass gatekeeper courses, addressing academic barriers to STEM success;
2. Academic-Career Education (ACE) training modules that include in-person and web-based instruction;
3. Service-learning experiences and stipends to ensure that students are able to meet their financial obligations while engaging in experiences appropriate to their field of study and career aspirations; and
4. Alumni mentorship through ACE module instruction and networking opportunities.

According to Career Development Center surveys, negative feedback from businesses and organizations employing CSUSB students is related to the students’ lack of professionalism and/or knowledge of workplace etiquette, punctuality, and common sense with regard to appropriate business behaviors. Service-Learning site supervisors also observed that while students had good academic knowledge, they lacked the soft skills necessary to move them ahead after engaging in a field experience. Also, many first-generation and low income students work while attending college, but their employment is often not relevant to their career aspirations and they have no avenues to meet professionals in their career field. CoyoteCareers was developed to address these essential STEM student needs.

This year, the CSU system will launch a system-wide initiative on service learning in STEM disciplines funded by Learn and Serve America. A key component of the program, will be based on the successful CoyoteCareers model, which is called STEMC3. This stands for Careers, Community and Connections in the STEM disciplines. STEMC3 will allow the CSU San Bernardino CoyoteCareers team to share their knowledge, insights and expertise with other campuses that are interested in developing a similar program.
California State University, Stanislaus: Academic Wellness Program

In response to the Chancellor's Initiative on Graduation, California State University, Stanislaus has developed an undergraduate advising program designed to engage and track students from admission to the University through graduation and exploration of graduate options. The Academic Wellness program emphasizes collaboration across all campus departments as a vital element to success and retention. Career Services is identified as a necessary element within the process, since a clear career plan is closely related to academic persistence and timely graduation.

The Academic Wellness program features a five-stage system of advising check points. Each stage engages the student with an advisor to monitor, encourage, inform and assist the student in making meaningful, productive academic choices.

The stages are **Check-In, Check-Up, Check-Out, Get-Out, and Welcome Back**.

- **Check-In** begins at the time of admission and New Student Orientation, and identifies program options for both declared and undeclared students. Check-In also identifies a time line for selecting a major and encourages the student to work with Career Services to explore career options.

- **Check-Up (at 70 units) and Check-Out (at 89 units)** continue to monitor progress toward the degree objective at key unit points. Students continue to work with an advisor and Career Services in order to take advantage of opportunities such as internships and other career related work experience.

- **Get-Out (120 units)** focuses on making sure the student has completed all degree requirements and applies to graduate in a timely manner.

- The final stage in the Academic Wellness cycle is **Welcome-Back**. The focus of Welcome-Back is to explore graduate school opportunities at California State University, Stanislaus and assist the student in making advanced degree choices.
San Diego State University: Improve Campus Career Outcomes

San Diego State University Career Services is working with campus partners in Student Affairs and Academic Affairs to strengthen student progress toward graduation. Specifically, SDSU Career Services provides high-impact educational practices that improve career goal clarification and career outcomes as they relate to academic majors. Two examples demonstrate Career Services’ commitment to facilitating graduation via campus-related initiatives: the formation of a campus Internship Center and a first-ever, campus-wide STEM Careers Month in October 2010.

Internship Center
SDSU Career Services serves as the clearing house for internships, and as a partner in referring internship opportunities to the nearly 45 academic internship programs on campus. The SDSU Internship Center will formalize the following elements into a centralized resource to support students in clarifying career outcomes and career goals:

- Provide in-person assistance to students with the purpose of clarifying internship options and available resources for credit-based internships on campus.
- Continue to provide online resources to students for credit-based internships on campus.
- Continue to educate and train faculty via the annual Internship Summit, which establishes best practices for managing academic internship programs.
- Continue to serve as the central point of contact for employers, and as a referral source for credit-based internship programs on campus.
- Allow for student enrollment in a credit-based internship course via collaborations with areas such as the College of Business Administration and Undergraduate Studies.

STEM Careers Month
STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Math) educational initiatives have a strong history of focusing on middle school and high school initiatives. These programs tend to drop off for university students, especially in any centralized manner that serves all students. In response to the need for a centralized approach to STEM, SDSU Career Services launched its first-ever STEM Careers Month. The purpose of the programming for this month was to provide support to first-year students (in University Seminars and Learning Communities) who may/may not have had STEM initiatives, and to let them know of resources on campus and in the community that they could access to assist with career goal clarification as they move through the university. Other programming focused on third through fifth year students, where the emphasis was on developing networking skills and learning from employers about internships, part-time jobs and full-time jobs. Additionally, students were offered access to graduate and professional school representatives to address advance education in STEM fields. This programming addressed the much needed career outcomes as they relate to academic majors.

1 Based on Coded Memo AA-2005-21; II Supporting Students in Choosing an Efficient pathway to the Baccalaureate (Items 4 and 5).
San Jose State University: Exploring Majors and Careers On-Line Tutorial

In support of CSU retention and graduation initiatives and the San Jose State University (SJSU) campus goals which embrace these agendas, the SJSU Career Center has partnered with a variety of campus entities in numerous ways over the past decade to strengthen resources and services targeted to our diverse student population to support student success and increase retention and graduation rates. Our team has initiated a range of projects, a few examples of which include:

- Creation of the Internship Journey Video Series available on the Center's website, featuring 5 stand alone modules with work sheets applicable for faculty, in-class or independent utilization.
- Integration of programmatic collaborations with newly-launched Student Success Centers within the Colleges of Science and Engineering. And,
- Development of a collection of Major Sheets with our academic partners, showcasing career information tailored to specific majors unique to SJSU.

The Career Center team’s most significant collaborative project in recent history won the prestigious national 2010 Chevron Award for Innovation for the team’s creation of an Exploring Majors and Careers On-Line Tutorial. Designed to provide students with a comprehensive yet simple, interactive self-help guide to aid them in navigating the process of choosing a major and/or exploring careers, the project has been widely embraced by the campus and student population. Our design team partnered with the STEM Program, First Year Experience Programs, Undergraduate Studies, and College of Science to create this tool to augment the work of faculty, paraprofessionals, advisors across campus, and other practitioners as well as students to support their development. Divided into Start, Exploring Majors, Exploring Careers, Deciding and Launching segments and incorporating learning outcomes, the resource includes activity sheets and exercises for classroom assignments, advising session preparation, or individual career planning.

Evaluative feedback has been positive. Prior to its use in an entry-level STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) course, only 41% of the class members were aware of how to determine if a major/career field was a good fit for them prior to exposure to the tutorial compared to 61% thereafter. Overall, 94% of the students providing feedback have rated it helpful. After incorporation into the College of Science’s Advising Center service delivery, peer advisors have reported that referring their probationary students to the tool has produced positive outcomes. Student use of the tutorial has steadily increased. During the last quarter (10/1-12/14/2010), the tutorial received 1,961,860 hits.

Additionally, this on-line resource has gained wide-spread usage by faculty, counselors and advisors. These users share that it is especially useful as an independent tool when student appointments are not readily available. The tool has been incorporated into academic courses, expanded into existing career planning courses, added to STEM program entry-level sections and other frosh/transfer orientation programs, encouraged as enrichment, and used in individual/group counseling sessions by numerous units. The tutorial has been an asset this year in serving the large number of undeclared students who were unable to declare a major as a result of the campus’ impaction status. One faculty sums up his experience with the tool well: “After using the resource extensively, the majority of students I have seen express a greater excitement for the possibilities available to them after graduation and show increased enthusiasm for their major program.”
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Proposed Working Session Agenda

1. Welcome and Introduction: Collaborating For Student Success (15 minutes)
   Chief Student Affairs Officer & Chief Academic Affairs Officer

2. What Needs Doing: Assessing the Need from a Academic and Student Services Perspective (60 minutes)
   (Large or small discussion groups examining the needs on our campus to support student career success)

3. Reviewing the Case Studies for Relevance to Our Campus (60 minutes)
   (Large or small discussion groups, focused on one or more of the following):

   **Integrating Academic and Career Advising to Increase Student Retention**

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   **Supporting Professional Preparation and Postgraduate Success**

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4. Action Planning: Next Steps (45 minutes)
   (What might be the next steps to explore adapting any of these programs to our campus?)