

## **UTC Career Services Proposal UPRTAC Meeting 12-14-15**

The Career and Student Employment Center has utilized a decentralized model for providing career services to students, alumni and employers during the duration of its existence at UTC. The existing center had two main goals: To provide students with free resources to assist in finding employment opportunities in line with qualifications and to assist employers with identifying UTC students and alumni to meet employment needs. A career services review committee was formed to conduct a review of best practices, a review of literature, and a SWOT analysis of current status. The work done by the committee shows a need for the current structure to become less centralized and to develop a seamless connection of career service professionals located in college based and centralized career centers across campus.

In the article, 10 Future Trends in College Career Services, Farouk Dey, and Christine Y. Cruzvergara state that the mission of the career center of the future will be to build meaningful connections through partnerships and to develop career communities of learners and networkers that engage students and alumni for a lifetime. This shift in college career services is because of socio-economic changes, technological advances, and generational trends. The future in Career Services is to create a model of customized connections and communities that fully engage the entire university network of students, alumni, faculty, employers, families, and surrounding communities. This career network will serve students from the continuum of prospective services to graduation and beyond.

To create a career network model of customized connections and communities four strategic initiatives and goals within each step have been identified. The four strategic initiatives to create a comprehensive career network are:

1. Integrate Career Development with Academics
2. Increase Experiential Career Opportunities.
3. Expand Services for Specific Populations
4. Improve and Expand Career Services Infrastructure

### ***1. Integrate Career Development with Academics***

Our SWOT analysis showed that the existing Career and Student Employment Center provides a wide spectrum of services to students. However, there exists a disconnect between career development and academic pursuits. Better integration with Academic Affairs and career development was identified as a primary need. The existence of decentralized career services in the College of Business, College of Engineering and CHEPs is a strength for this campus and an integral part of a career network model.

Goals:

- Hire a full-time professional in the College of Arts and Science to partner with Career Services.
- Create a Career Services Council for coordination of programs and services and for cross campus information sharing.
- Integrate career development into the curriculum.
- Explore career related special interest housing.

## ***2. Increase Experiential Career Opportunities***

In a career network model that fully engages students in a career process, experiential career opportunities are a must. As job markets remain competitive it is increasingly important for students to gain experiences in their chosen field. The soft skills that employers are searching for are often gained through real world experiences.

Goals:

- Coordinate with the Director of Community Partnerships to identify current intern experiences.
- Expand upon existing intern experiences.
- Coordinate with Executive Director of International Services to identify opportunities for partnerships.
- Design and implement programs to provide comprehensive and coordinated services for students interested in international experiences.
- Expand on existing mentor opportunities with alumni.
- Hire an Assistant Director of External Relations

## ***3. Expand Services for Specific Populations***

A one-size-fits-all model is outdated and can no longer be sustained. Clearly communicated pathways for career engagement do not exist for all populations and needs of students. The current focus in Career and Student Employment is to provide services to students at the end of their academic career as they begin to think of life beyond the classroom. The Education Advisory Board's Student Affairs Leadership Council research on career services shows that creating a process that combines classroom, co-curricular and experiential learning to promote systematic exploration of career options and inform choices across the student life cycle will maximize post graduation success for students.

Goals:

- Provide focused services for College of Arts and Science.
- Enhance and expand services specific to graduate students.
- Enhance and expand services specific to international students.
- Develop a continuum of services model that spans from prospective student to graduate student to alumni.
- Hire an Associate Director focusing on specialty groups.

#### **4. Improve and Expand Career Services Infrastructure**

The most critical part of any career services operation is the quality of staff involved and the ability to work with students in a timely manner. With a relatively small staff, Career and Student Employment has been able to provide limited quality services to students and employers. In order to build upon this success and to create a model of customized connections and communities that fully engage the entire university network expansion is needed in staffing, facilities, and technology.

Goals:

- Hire full-time staff (listed in order of importance) in order to carry out the strategic initiatives.
  - Fill existing Director of Career and Student Employment Position
  - Hire Career Manager for Arts and Sciences to be managed by Arts and Sciences
  - Hire Assistant Director of External Relations
  - Hire Assistant Director of Career Services focused on Specialized Programming
- Review current technology and research technology opportunities to allow for a more seamless process for students.
- Identify an alternate physical location for the center to allow for growth, more visibility, and easier access.
- Develop a Career Center Employer Advisory Board and a Career Center Student Advisory Board
- Rebrand the Career and Student Employment Center researching a potential name change. Example: Michigan State's Career Services Network or Purdue's Center for Career Opportunities.

#### **Conclusion**

The above proposal represents a fundamental shift in the philosophy of career services here at UTC. No longer can career services be a center or a place where students go. "Today, career services must become a *presence* that permeates the institutional culture and experience." (Dey and Cruzvergara, 2014). In order for this change to occur, the Career and Student Employment Center must become a community of career professionals working in a combined centralized and decentralized model of career services that enhances services, opens lines of communication, and creates an environment that leads to student opportunity and success.

This shift in philosophy requires that we focus on campus connections and communities. The Career and Employment Center staff must create a brand for their department and must become content experts who can become leaders on campus for career development. This is an exciting time on college campuses for career development. Leading the way in this critical time requires new and creative innovations in how we provide services and how we connect across campus with

students, departments, colleagues, and alumni, and through off campus partnerships with companies, employers, and agencies.

## **SWOT Analysis Completed by Committee**

### **Career Services**

#### *Strengths:*

- The existing Career and Employment Center provides a wide spectrum of services to students including career fairs, interview workshops, resume building, etc.
- Strong Career Services Outreach exists in the College of Business.
- Engineering and CHEPs provide services to students.
- The existence of a Central Office which manages a website and resources.
- Some curriculum infusion throughout campus. Example EDU 4999.

#### *Weaknesses:*

- Services are fragmented leading to lack of communication across colleges and Student Development.
- Insufficient physical space for central career services.
- Insufficient staffing levels.
- Because of the fragmentation and communication issues, it is confusing for employers and students.
- Not all majors are served by CHEPS services (Integrated Studies, HHP)
- Services focused on Juniors and Seniors with little focus on other specialized groups.

#### *Opportunities:*

- Develop a stronger connection between Colleges and Central Career Services Office.
- Create a Career Services Council for cross campus information sharing and coordination of programs/services.
- Expand community and business/employer partnerships.
- Develop stronger connection with Alumni Services.
- Create clear pathway for employers and students using existing database/search tools
- Use social media (twitter, fbook, etc.)
- Develop services from prospective student—to post graduation
- Inventory current services provided across colleges

#### *Threats:*

- Lack of clear communication between the colleges and Career and Employment Center.
- Student Sense of Urgency

## **Arts and Sciences**

### *Strengths:*

- Value of a liberal arts education/quality education.
- Large number of students and alumni.
- Required and optional internship opportunities being offered in many of the majors.
- Jobs posted on the UTC Learn major group page for some majors.
- Some infusion in the curriculum – capstone class.
- Degrees translate across many employment opportunities.

### *Weaknesses:*

- Diversity of majors creates a fragmentation in the college.
- Students don't understand what career possibilities exist within their major.
- No dedicated person focusing on career development in Arts and Sciences.
- Size of college makes it difficult to serve all the majors.
- Individual department faculty tasked with internship coordination.

### *Opportunities:*

- Lots of opportunities with external sources such as employers and alumni.
- Utilizing experiences of adjunct and full-time faculty.
- Publicize current efforts-Develop materials for admissions

### *Threats:*

- Lack of knowledge of employment opportunities.
- So general it is hard to focus on careers in Arts and Sciences.
- Less fragmented services at other universities.

## Seniors

### *Strengths:*

- Career Services provides a lot of basic skills and career preparation programs and services to Seniors.
- College of Business has a strong program and services for Seniors.
- Students are academically prepared and ready to make the transition to the world of work.

### *Weaknesses:*

- Services and programs offered are fragmented and there is a lack of coordination between the different colleges and Career Services.
- Students are unprepared for the job search and how their major translates into a job.
- The senior year is too late to start the career search process.
- Lack of faculty buy in for the process.

### *Opportunities:*

- Mentoring programming with alumni.
- Job growth in Hamilton County is a plus.
- Potential ideas and methods to track placement of students.
- Employer networking.
- Arrange faculty workload to allow for time to work with students in career searches.

### *Threats:*

- Relationship with employers and our ability to sell the value of a UTC degree.
- Other universities marketing to employers in area.
- Not planning early enough in the process.

## **Roadmap of Services from Admissions to Graduation and Beyond**

Adapted from the Hardwiring Student Engagement with  
Career Development EAB Model

### Prospective Students: Branding Career Services in Recruiting

- Career-focused Institutional Branding
- High Profile Admissions and Orientation Events
- Partnering with Parents

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

- Next Generation Strengths and Interest Diagnostics
- Proactive Outreach and Incentives

### Sophomores: Integrating Career Considerations with Major Selection

- Concurrent Career-Academic Advising
- Experiential Career Exploration
- Undecided Student Interventions

### Juniors: Building A Compelling Resume

- Expanding “Real World Experience” Offerings
- Internships, Cooperative Education
- Targeted Skill Building

### Seniors: Developing the Systematic Job Search Toolkit

- Career Readiness Interventions
- Self-service Skill Building
- Personal Narrative Coaching
- Tech Tools Primers
- Professional Network Building

### Alumni/Graduate Students: Aligning Career and Alumni Services

- Life After College Skills
- Career Changer Services
- Alumni Mentorship Opportunities
- Graduate School Application Checklist

## Resources

Contomanolis, E., Steinfield, T., (Eds., 2013) Leadership in Career Services: Voices From the Field. National Association of Colleges and Employers

Education Advisory Board. Hardwiring Student Engagement with Career Development.

<http://naceweb.org/s12092015/career-readiness-incorporated-into-college-curricula.aspx>

<http://naceweb.org/Default.aspx>

<http://www.sa.miami.edu/toppel/mainsite/Students.aspx>

<http://careernetwork.msu.edu/>

<https://www.cco.purdue.edu/>

[https://www.sa.miami.edu/toppel/mainsite/portals/0/assets/pdfs/ToppelStrategicPlan2011\\_16\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.sa.miami.edu/toppel/mainsite/portals/0/assets/pdfs/ToppelStrategicPlan2011_16_FINAL.pdf)

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/20140715120812-11822737-10-future-trends-in-college-career-services>