



WEBER STATE UNIVERSITY

Worthy of Your Dreams

Career Services External Program Review

Prepared for:

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Weber State University

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Introduction & General Observations

On September 30, 2015 and October 1, 2015, at the invitation of Weber State Division of Student Affairs leadership, an external program review of the Career Services Center at Weber State was conducted by Jeremy Podany, Director of Career Services, at the Colorado State University. The (external) Reviewer Bio is **Appendix A**. The Reviewer worked with a fantastic team of internal reviewers: Dr. Clinton Amos, Marketing Faculty; Dr. Scott Rogers, English Faculty; and Dr. Craig Oreshnick, Counseling Psychologist. The collective insights of all four review team members are incorporated in the report, written by Jeremy Podany, and edited by the internal reviewers.

The (external) Reviewer would like to thank Weber State for the opportunity to conduct this external program review of Career Services. The reviewer was impressed with the many aspects of the Career Services Office and the hard work being done by the staff of Career Services – they are truly passionate about helping students and have a great work culture, which yields many positive partnerships. Under the seasoned and high-capacity leadership of Dr. Winn Stanger, Career Services collaborates with almost every university stakeholder (all students, staff, faculty, employers, donors, alumni, and upper administrators) – a truly difficult task, and something to keep in mind as action-steps are considered carefully. Also, the Reviewer notes that the level of interest and engagement shown by the campus administrators, faculty, staff, and those units within student affairs indicates a strong level of commitment and collaboration toward the broader mission of student career readiness at Weber State. The Reviewer also wishes to compliment the Career Services staff on its outstanding job in conducting the Self-Study Narrative prior to the external review.

The Overall Charge to the Reviewer

- Facilitate a series of conversations with key stakeholders including: Weber State Career Services leadership, each career services staff team, leadership from various staff departments, College Deans and Department Chairs, employers, and students on their experiences with and expectations for Career Services.
- Review the department's programs and services to assess strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement.
- Provide a narrative of review findings concerning the Weber State Career Services Center, noting opportunities, key concerns, and making recommendations for improvement.
- Work with an internal review team to collaborate on the findings and recommendations.

Process and Stakeholders Involved

Prior to the campus site visit, the Reviewer was provided with relevant background documents, including: Career Services Self-Study, organizational charts; and the previous external review from 2010. Over the course of the 1.5 day review, the Review Team facilitated conversations with numerous constituent groups including: Student Affairs leadership, Career Services Director and staff, administrators, faculty, staff, students, and employers. A detailed agenda and participant description is attached in **Appendix B**.

Executive Summary

The Review Team noted they have ***a great opportunity to cast a vision to reach all students*** with high quality, holistic career education and robust employer connections. With that broader vision in mind, the following is a simple executive summary of the teams findings regarding the strengths of Career Services and opportunities to grow their footprint while optimizing resources.

1. The Weber State Career Center is a great place to work and has a stellar reputation with employers and students that use their services and with the offices in which they partner. The leadership and staff in their office are clearly a large reason for this reputation, and something that should be capitalized on as they grow their vision in the coming years.
2. Compared to other universities between 18,000 and 30,000 students, the staff is noticeably under-resourced in amount of full-time staff, the lower pay of full-time staff, the lack of student peer educators, and a small technology budget. All could be slightly increased in the coming years to make a broader impact.
3. Career Services seems to have quite a large volume of data. The fact that they capture it, puts them ahead of many career centers nationally. There is however an expressed need by staff, faculty and other campus partners to regularly understand qualitative student success data on internships, working during school, first destinations, volume of companies that recruit, career center engagement numbers, and more. There is also a great opportunity to become more integrated into the broader university marketing efforts on student success. Career services could bring together multiple parties in student affairs and the colleges to help analyze the data and tell the story of success in a broader context.
4. Career Services is known for their high quality 1:1 appointments and events like Career Café and career fairs. The more strategic, intentional and communicative they can be over the next year or two regarding their plans, events and services, the better they will be able to rally the campus around the mission of career.
5. The career counseling staff has a deep background in career exploration, and it is a strength of the Center. They provide holistic career education from basic career exploration to job and internship search strategy. How they use those talents is of crucial importance with regard to campus partnerships and increased reach. They have the opportunity to look at themselves more as trainers of others and strategic career educators for the colleges rather than just counselors. Their role is developing toward that end.
6. Technology is on the radar of the career services staff, and they are poised to use it to increase their reach be more in touch with the ways in which students like to engage. Technology can play a crucial role in providing anytime access to career resources, career training, and more.
7. Career Services has goals, but very few are quantifiable. Creating goals around increasing corporate partners, new employers in various industries, presentation goals, faculty relations goals, and various other education and connection goals would be very helpful for staff, college awareness of career goals, and future student success.
8. On many campuses, on-campus interviews are one of the largest sources of internship and full-time job success among students. The on-campus interview culture is just now evolving at Weber State, and thus the volume is quite low. An increase of this service could yield greater impact on internship and job success.

Top Recommendations for 2016-17

The Review Team would like to highlight three steps for Career Services to consider preparing now to pursue in the 2016-17 school year. All three would immediately improve the career education for students, the footprint of Career Services, and their collaborations on campus.

- 1. Strategic Discussions and Plans for each College** – The relationship Career Services has with each college is blossoming, and can be reinforced and grown by over-communicating about plans and strategies. The Review Team suggests that Career Services outline a plan for staff/faculty connections, presentations in classes, specific events, employer relations goals, and career education goals related each college. We suggest using specific numbers as a baseline for the first two years, and assessing what should be grown and why (e.g., present in seven junior year classes about internships, host three brown bag lunches for faculty and staff about career services, create marketing posters that include four key events happening this year in that college). After a draft plan is created by Career Services staff, we suggest meeting with various stakeholders in each college to share the plan and get their feedback and insight. It is suggested that the employer relations/internship goals be bucketed by industry (not college) and have specific goals that Larry, Barry, and others are seeking to achieve for the year. Example: Bring in 7 new employers in the Communications Industry, and so on for about 15 industries. The plan for all industries should be shown to every college during the planning meeting, reinforcing the diversity of industry and employers that help students from every college and within specific departments.
- 2. Peer Advisor/Mentor staff additions** – The Career Counselors that work fully for the Career Services Center have a large role to collaborate with each college and provide the whole span for career education to all students. In their current model, minus an occasional practicum student, they are the only workforce that does all levels of career education. It is recommended that students be hired and trained specifically to help with the entry/triage needs of resume critiques and mock interviews – some of the highest volume and most basic career services. It should be noted, that it is not recommended that peer advisors do everything a career counselor does. Colorado State University has a model with 6 resume specialists that cover 25-30 hours per week of drop-in advising for resume critiques, and 4 mock interview specialists that cover mock interviews as needed. The total annual spend for these students is approximately \$12,000, but they make a large dent on triage services, allowing the career experts to handle more complex or involved career counseling situations. The student staff could only work in the fall and spring semesters, not the summer. They can also be trained to do the presentation requests for general career services overviews - this could relieve approximately 50 general presentations per year from the Weber State Counseling team, allowing them to focus on training.
- 3. Technology purchases and implementation:** Specifically Career Services should demo Career Tools, TuaPath, and Going Global – Outlined in the Technology implementation section, these 3 tools have the ability to drastically increase the reach and impact of career education for Weber State students. We encourage Career Services to purchase one technology to implement this year and 1-2 for the following year. This will put them in line with most career centers their size which purchase 4-5 technology systems per year to supplement staff and services at a low cost. All 3 systems are relatively inexpensive, costing approximately \$2,000 to \$4,000 annually per system.

Prominent Observations and Opportunities

The following are specifics related to the narrative themes that emerged throughout the review process.

A Great Place to Work and Great Team

Everybody loves Winn. Employers adore Larry and Barry (they could be a fantastic national benchmark, by the way). The new staff are thrilled at the opportunity to be a part of the team. The students cherish the counselors. Everybody misses JT. The Career staff are clearly the biggest and smartest investment of the office, and it is quite helpful to have a great culture. This can't be emphasized enough, and 'fit' with this culture should continue to be a clear criteria when new positions arise. Additionally, Career Fairs and Career Café are high quality events. The staff is also under-resourced. FT staff salaries are lower than the national averages (noted in **Appendix C**), the volume of staff is small for a university this size, and the tech resources that can help the staff are few. To stay so positive in the midst of doing more with less is a great accomplishment. The one growth question that came up for this most capable staff was: "are they using their great talents in a modern and most operationally effective manner?" The most strategic and cutting edge staff across the nation realize they along can't reach all students, but have a responsibility to try to do so, and therefore consider themselves Strategic Planners, Trainers of Others, and Holistic Career Education Experts. This staff could quickly revert to a 1980's model of 1:1 career counseling being their primary task if not careful. It might be effective to hone the expected competencies of the team in order to ensure alignment over time with their partnership and strategic goals. Finally, as mentioned in the top 3 recommendations, there is an opportunity to add student staff to this great team.

Strategy and Quantitative Goals

In talking with Winn Stanger, Director, it is clear that he has a strategic mind. His recent efforts to personally serve underrepresented students, his vision to hire Larry and Barry, his ability to see the campus desire to go after more internships, and many more things point to his solid leadership in this arena. His comments about growing certain areas over the next few years are "spot on". As alluded to prior, there is a lot of baseline data that Career Services has, and that data can be discussed and shared on a more regular basis in order to collaboratively form goals and bolster partnerships. In particular, here are some areas we encourage be discussed internally and with college partners regularly. It is definitely understood that the following takes time to both create and routinely implement.

1. First and foremost, a strategic plan would be very helpful not only for the Career Center, but for many campus partners.
2. Define the top 10 to 15 industry-areas where Weber students go to work. Assess the number of engaged and somewhat engaged employers in those areas. Set annual goals to increase engagement with each industry. Industries cross academic colleges, but listen to faculty about suggestions for industry-related growth.
3. Set specific goals for corporate partners this year. Comments nationally from Dr. Phil Gardner (leading recruiting trends expert) point to the next 18 months as one of the 3 hottest college recruiting periods (including employer spending) on college campuses since 1980. We believe this is a big year to go after increased partners. We recommend making multiple "asks" and striving for 10 new partners.
4. On-campus interviews are a weakness of Career Services in terms of volume. There were 27 companies that hosted 38 interview schedules in the last year. Colorado State is well under the national average, and we had 168 companies host 255 interview schedules last year. Interviews are a free service, Ashley has fantastic capacity and skill to administer them, and they are often the biggest way students receive jobs. The reviewer would put this as a top 3 employer relations "increase-goal" for the coming 5 years.
5. Assess engagement data related to 1:1 appointments and drop-ins, events, and on-campus presentations to get a baseline of the Career Services' footprint on campus. Use this start (i.e., data) to form growth goals.
6. Create a report for each college about engagement in Career Services and request their assistance in growing the engagements (attendance).

Strategic Coordination with Key Stakeholders

As mentioned in the opening of the report, Career Services is unique in the Division of Student Affairs in that it is among few offices charged with connecting with all students and every university stakeholder. That is a large task. The colleges are a very important stakeholder and are at the crux of the model of career services on campus. Collectively, they encompass every student. The Career Services Center also has to think broader than the colleges when it comes to employer outreach and niche students. Industry clusters of employers can go a long way to from a strategic perspective, and Winn is doing an admirable job serving athletes, veterans, students of color, students with disabilities, and other key diverse populations.

One important stakeholder, the Academic Colleges was mentioned in the top three recommendations section of this report. The Review Team believes an annual meeting to share strategy for the year could be extremely beneficial for the Colleges. It is also noted that key college career staff will retire in the next few years. As this happens partnerships will be reconsidered, but it should be noted that this “hybrid model” of career staff having one foot in the university career office and one foot in the college is admired nationally and shown to be effective. Decentralization can hurt students, especially those that are underrepresented or who do not have a direct-relationship major like accounting or mechanical engineering, but rather English or health. Centralization-only models can hurt the niche needs of students and employer connection. This Coordinated Network of Career Services is crucial. You might consider calling it a Career Services Network – working together for student success. That seems to be what everyone wants and is willing to put money toward. As that emerges as a model, effective utilization of data, strategy, and staff competencies are crucial and must be routinely discussed/clarified. More than others, Weber State has the collaborative culture, and the existing coordinated career staff positions to be a leader in how to work together to best serve students.

Technology Implementation

As mentioned in the top 3 recommendations, Career Services can grow their technology use for strategic reasons. It is highly recommended that their next 1-3 technology purchases are not one content specific item, but platforms that can help with multiple content needs. To this end, the following technologies are recommended.

1. TuaPath – www.tuapath.com provides a platform that enables career services to build online career training modules that can be accessed anytime by students. This supplements career learning in a big way and grows the office footprint.
2. Career Tools – www.campuscareerinnovations.com or example at: <https://ramcareertools.colostate.edu> is a personalized career resource search-and-sort tool for students that works on any device. It allows career services to add in hundreds of online career resources and then allows students to search and sort based on relevancy. (*Transparency Note: Jeremy Podany, The Reviewer, invented this system and has a financial interest. Please discern need apart from his recommendation.*)
3. Interview Stream - <https://interviewstream.com/> is online practice interviewing. This could save the staff bandwidth. (*Note: this system is often not used by students unless required for a class, so that should be analyzed in demos.*)
4. Going Global – the premier resources for students searching for jobs internationally, plus it includes H1B plus, a database of all the H1B opportunities from past years for international students seeking full-time employment in the US.
5. Employer CRM – Handshake, a new employer job-posting site that could replace the existing CSO instance used for Career Connect, has an employer relations team CRM to help career services to better manage contacts. Salesforce, Pipedrive and others are also CRM recommended options.
6. Mounza – a free career event app that manages all the career events and provides a social opportunity for students.

Messaging/Marketing, Next Destination Data, and the Broader University Narrative

The story of career on campus is vitally important. The Reviewer was impressed with the modes of marketing that are employed across campus. The inserted image below, one of two career banners on main walking points of campus, is one testament to this fact.



The Career Services website also has the right ingredients, but could use an update to meet modern user-experience desires.

More than traditional marketing (which the career services team seems to do quite well in engaging students--bravo) the career services team should consider how the message of career shows up in a broader university context. More specifically, this pertains to university publications and campus-wide presentations of “next destination data” about where Weber State graduates go and what they do. A joint collaboration between the career services team, the division assessment team, and the colleges could yield increased data captured/reported, and lay the groundwork for a more impactful presentation to the campus. Please view <http://csueffect.colostate.edu/> for a comparison of how data can be used in the context of the broader university messaging efforts. Weber State data that should be known and inserted into campus reports is as follows:

1. Number of employers that hire annually; number that come to campus.
2. Number of graduate schools that accept Weber State students (synthesized data from the National Clearinghouse – institutional research should have access to this data, which provides actual data on all undergrads that matriculate to grad school).
3. % of students who secured their plans by 6 months after graduation (presented by college and department, if samples are high enough).
4. Average salaries for those securing FT employment.
5. % of graduates employed in fields related to their major.
6. Personal success stories of students from various backgrounds and majors. For example, please consider the CSU ‘Hired’ campaign: https://career.colostate.edu/hired_profiles/nicolette-r .

Note: the National Association of College and Employers has national recommendations ‘NACE Standards’ for 1st destination surveys. It is recommended that Weber State use ‘Next Destination Report’ given the high volumes of non-traditional and employed students.

Supplemental Recommendations: Ongoing Exploration?

To encourage deeper solidification of the primary actions steps contained in this report, we recommend the following supplemental steps:

1. We encourage Winn, and perhaps some of his team, to travel to another career center for a day of benchmarking. University of Oregon, UCLA, the major Colorado Universities, and University of Arizona are suggested options.
2. We encourage an assessment of the FT staff professional salaries, if retention is a top priority.

3. We believe a review of key Weber State publications and websites (e.g., fact books, admissions brochures, president's reports) could be used to discern the footprint of career data in those publications, which may serve as an avenue for growing the footprint, as needed.

Appendix

Appendix A

Jeremy Podany

Director, The Career Center

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Jeremy serves as the Director of The Career Center at Colorado State, providing strategic direction to all facets of student career training, employer engagement, and career events. In this role he leads a network of staff teams that collaborate with every academic college and cultural center on campus to ensure students, alumni, and employers are receiving holistic services that promote future success.

Prior to coming to Colorado State in 2012, Jeremy spent 11 years in Career Services at Indiana University where he was The Director of Career Services at the School of Informatics and Computing for 6 of those years. Jeremy has visited with over 500 companies, has trained thousands of students for job search success, and is passionate about building partnerships with industry and alumni.

Jeremy received his bachelor's in English Education from Western Michigan University, and his master's in Higher Education Administration from Indiana University. Outside of work, he enjoys walking and laughing with his wife and four children, is an avid college basketball fan, and loves trying new restaurants.

Appendix B

Weber State Career Services Program Review Schedule

Day 1, September 30, 2015

- 11:30-1:00 p.m. Lunch and Program Review Planning Time
SC 152
- 1:30-2:20 p.m. Meet with Meet with Jan Winniford and Brett Perozzi
Vice President for Student Affairs and the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs
SC 152
- 2:30-3:20 p.m. Meet with Winn Stanger
Director for Career Services
Winn's Office
- 3:30-4:30 p.m. Meet with Deans/Reps from other colleges
SC 233
- 5:15-6:30 p.m. Dinner
Jan, Brett, Winn, Jessica, and Site Review Team

Day 2, October 1, 2015

- 8:00-8:30 a.m. Continental Breakfast
Career Services Classroom
- 8:30-9:00 a.m. Meet with Recruiting Secretaries
SC 233
- 9:00-9:50 a.m. Employer Interview
SC 233
- 10:00-10:50 a.m. Meet with Career Counselors/Employment Advisors
SC 233
- 11:00-11:50 a.m. Meet with Internship & Employer Outreach Coordinators
SC 233
- 12:00-12:50 p.m. Lunch with Campus Stakeholders
Student Senate Room
- 1:00-1:50 p.m. Meet with Students
SC 233
- 2:00-4:00 p.m. Site Review Team Discussion
SC 167
- 3:00-4:00 p.m. Present Preliminary Findings to Jan & Brett
SC 167

Figure 34: Experience and Salary—Associate Director

		Experience		Salary			
		Mean	Median	Percentile 25	Mean	Median	Percentile 75
Overall		12	11	\$52,000	\$60,664	\$60,000	\$70,000
Doctorate-granting institutions	RU/H	13	14	\$53,000	\$59,578	\$56,850	\$65,000
	RU/VH	13	13	\$57,500	\$66,145	\$65,000	\$75,000
	DRU	11	11	\$53,000	\$60,598	\$59,000	\$69,000
Master's-degree institutions	ML	14	13	\$50,000	\$61,035	\$57,735	\$72,000
	MM	13	10	\$39,000	\$54,357	\$55,000	\$74,364
Baccalaureate-degree institutions	A&S	14	7	\$40,000	\$48,600	\$45,800	\$60,000
	Diverse	10	8	\$47,000	\$55,698	\$58,465	\$63,000
Total respondents		218			196		

Figure 35: Experience and Salary—Assistant Director

		Experience		Salary			
		Mean	Median	Percentile 25	Mean	Median	Percentile 75
Overall		8	7	\$42,000	\$49,062	\$48,000	\$54,000
Doctorate-granting institutions	RU/H	8	7	\$44,000	\$48,881	\$48,500	\$53,500
	RU/VH	9	8	\$50,000	\$55,370	\$53,562	\$60,000
	DRU	9	6	\$42,000	\$48,462	\$46,000	\$52,164
Master's-degree institutions	ML	8	7	\$40,000	\$46,822	\$47,000	\$51,000
	MM	10	8	\$41,000	\$48,478	\$48,000	\$53,880
	MS	5	4	\$45,000	\$48,900	\$47,000	\$48,000
Baccalaureate-degree institutions	A&S	7	6	\$20,000	\$44,610	\$44,141	\$48,000
	Diverse	7	6	\$36,000	\$41,202	\$40,000	\$46,000
Total respondents		286			251		