



Student Affairs
External Program Review:
Career Services
Spring 2022

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Introduction

In March 2022, an external review committee reviewed the Career Services department at Salt Lake Community College (SLCC) in Salt Lake City, Utah. The external review committee team members consisted of the following individuals:

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The external review team met virtually via Zoom for a two-day campus visit from March 21-22, 2022, with the Salt Lake Community College (SLCC) Career Services staff, faculty, administration, and key stakeholders. The external team found a passionate and engaged campus community centered on empowering students through career readiness behavior and elevating opportunities to enhance students' skills, interests, and values.

The goal, the purpose of review, and the framework

The role of the reviewing team was to assess the provided Career Services self-study report and conduct interviews with various community stakeholders to evaluate the status, effectiveness, and progress of career services at Salt Lake City Community College (SLCC). Additionally, the purpose of the review was to highlight the future direction, needs, and priorities of career services.

Over two days, March 21-22, 2022, external reviewers met with constituents from various departments across the College. The review team conducted the interview meetings with all external reviewers in attendance. Due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, all meetings were conducted via Zoom. Professional and Academic representatives were included:

- Academic Partners: Career & Technical Education, Communication and Performing Arts, School of Business, School of Health Sciences
- Career Services
- Campus Internship Program (CIP) Internship Students
- Employer Partners
- Student Affairs Administration
- Internal Partners: inclusive of such areas as Academic Advising, Career & Technical Education, Dream Center, Disability Resource Center, Diversity & Multicultural Affairs, Employee Relations & Support, Engineering Technology, Financial Aid, First Year Experience Office, Gender and Sexuality Student Resource Center, Orientation & Student Success, Recruitment & Experience, STEM Learning, Student Life, Leadership, and Community Engagement, TRIO Programs, Undocumented Student Resources, the University Transfer Center, and Veterans Services.

The external review committee members developed a list of questions from the framework documented by the SLCC Office of Strategic Analysis & Accreditation, including two documents, one titled “Inclusive Program Review, A Justice & Equity Framework” and the other “Review of Non-Academic Programs & Services.” Before meeting with internal and external stakeholders, the review team analyzed the Career Services self-study report prepared by the Career Services team and the provided supplementary documents. A qualitative survey was sent out following program review meetings to all participants seeking additional confidential feedback and input, in which we received 21 responses.

Self-Study Inclusion: Summary of Self-Study

The Career Services team is composed of trained Career Coaches and Employer Engagement Specialists who support students by helping them create individualized career development and exploration plans and connecting them with employers. Its mission is to help students better understand who they are, what they want to do academically and professionally, and what steps they need to take to get there.

The Career Services department is guided by four goals focused on stakeholder awareness, engagement, participation, and application themes. These goals are focused on developmental opportunities for students, in particular, to enrich, elevate, and co-create opportunities for career readiness to thrive and develop on and off-campus.

The four department goals are listed below:

1. Expand awareness of Career Services resources and increase engagement, participation, and outreach for the following populations: international students, Dreamers, LGBTQIA students, first-generation students, Veterans, and Students of Color.
2. Create a campus where all students see a tangible future and cultivate a culture where all students understand and engage in the career planning process – early and often.
3. Develop a premier collegiate recruiting destination for employers in the community who offer quality and equitable job and internship opportunities for all students.
4. Design a career culture at Salt Lake Community College where every faculty and staff member engages in career development.

The areas of strengths and opportunities for improvement are detailed in the self-study, many sentiments the external review team also shared in their findings. The external review team will go into further detail below. The Career Services team described their strengths around prioritizing on- and off-campus partnerships in developing career readiness behaviors, learning and development, and opportunities to apply knowledge. Additionally, they created a model of embedded learning through the creation of the Campus Internship Program (CIP) and Cooperative Education. They introduced technology to advance the student-to-job opportunity connections, such as through Handshake, a career management tool. The Career Services department also brought forward industry-specific job fairs, employer check-ins, and academic primary career programming. They have done so both in-person and virtually to best serve students, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Career Services team also outlined opportunities for improvement in the self-study, and better integration with Academic Affairs was highlighted as a primary need. While a strong partnership exists between Career Services and Academic Affairs, there are some areas of

disconnect between the two areas, with Career Services appearing to be a referred support service that would best serve by being embedded into the academic curriculum. Career Services is uniquely positioned to identify, build, and develop innovative solutions in partnership with academic colleagues if placed within the classroom experience rather than as a single invitation to present in a class, which often is the case. College-wide career readiness momentum and progress seem to additionally be derailed by Career Services personnel transitions or a lack of enough personnel to support each of the colleges' varying career needs.

One of the most significant needs for improvement, which is also very much a threat to the foundation and functionality of Career Services, is personnel. The Career Services team is grossly understaffed in comparison to the needs of the College around career readiness, career and technical education, and especially in advancing and supporting equity-based initiatives around career readiness. Currently, the team has 11 staff members, in which Career Coaches (n = 6) have a standard caseload of 3,000 students depending on the program size. Coaches are responsible for being in the classrooms, visiting employers on-site, attending program advisory committee meetings, creating programming & events for students alongside Student Affairs colleagues, creating marketing materials, and attending professional development opportunities to serve students and employers best. Burnout is becoming a significant threat to this team, especially with being stretched across many functions, responsibilities, and campuses.

New Developments & Significant Changes

The Career Services profile on national college and university campuses is increasingly becoming more important as a point of focus, as students cite their number one reason for college attendance as job and career outcomes (NACE, 2019-20 Career Services Benchmark Report). The National Association of Colleges & Employers (NACE) has stated that institutional accountability is critical for advancing career readiness initiatives. The Career Services department must be appropriately centered, financed, and staffed to meet those needs and objectives (NACE, 2021).

While significant changes have occurred in the Career Services department to elevate, enrich, and grow the department since its last review in 2015, there is still a need and demand for institutional accountability to support the continued growth and development. The profile of Career Services needs to significantly increase campus-wide and begin to be embedded more in academic and advising behaviors. However, this significant shift would require additional personnel, a macro and micro level of training and development for various stakeholders, and senior leadership discussions to help elevate and activate this shift in thought and processes. For example, the use of career services technology seems to be an area in which the broader SLCC community can partner with the Career Services department, as there still seems to be a lack of buy-in for scaling in technology consistent with the 2015 program review report.

The Career Services field from ten, five, or even two and a half years ago has changed, and the SLCC Career Services department needs to catch up. While the department has expanded exponentially in the last four years, and its priorities have shifted to meet the trends centered on career coaching versus career counseling, hosting employer and industry targeted events, on-campus internship programs to aid in retention and development, and workshops with embedded learning around skill development, the department is running behind schedule.

As we think about the shift in career readiness, we must think about it in tandem with the future state of the field. The COVID-19 pandemic has shifted students' priorities like most of the country. So, students are now placing value and importance on job attainment in conjunction with degree attainment; how can they get a job? get paid well? and find a job that demonstrates their values? Helbig and Matkin (2021) highlighted the importance of recognizing career services as a 60-year curriculum. Our work in career services does not just support undergraduate students but extends well beyond alumni (NACE, 2021). As a result, there is a shift where Career Services jobs supporting undergraduate students are changing, but so are their services to alumni. Finally, the economic impact will be an essential consideration for Career Services long-term because workforce needs have shifted dramatically, calling for career readiness to be more deeply embedded in the academic curriculum. Thus, a need for a career curriculum specialist, a joint hire between Academic Affairs & Career Services, might be an innovative opportunity to get ahead of this current trend and bridge the gap between both critical areas.

Finally, as we mentioned staffing needs above, this need is being exacerbated by the great resignation of higher education personnel in Student Affairs across the country. SLCC staff turnover in Career Services seems to need close attention, especially regarding equitable pay, well-being, and the weight of roles and responsibilities. Since the team is understaffed, they are being thinly spread across many roles and responsibilities in the College across the many campuses they support. Many Career Services staff mentioned in our interview that they are burnt out, considering other opportunities, and need senior leadership to hire more personnel to help the growing needs and demands placed on career initiatives.

SLCC Career Services Review & Alignment:

Mission, Vision, Goals, Outcomes

The mission and vision of SLCC is centered around and realized through students' success, primarily defined by meaningful employment. In addition, SLCC is guided by the following values: collaboration, community, inclusivity, learning, innovation, integrity, and trust. In striving for alignment with the mission, vision, and values of the college, Career Services has outlined the following goals:

- Provide and enhance student career exploration and career development
- Facilitate opportunities for meaningful career-related learning experiences through work-based learning for credit
- Teach job search and career development skills that make students competitive and marketable to employers
- Assist students with immediate employment needs while attending school
- Serve employers in the recruitment of employees to meet industry needs

These goals address many steps a student should take to prepare for employment. Still, there are no specific goals/targets related to student employment beyond the institution (i.e., goals specific to placement rates). Career Services team members expressed excitement for the team's potential to provide high-quality service to students. Still, they lack the people power to scale services to reach a significant number of students. The Career Services staff additionally lacks the shared

vision to clearly understand where the team is going and how to prioritize the overwhelming amount of work.

Other goals articulated by department and division heads that are not stated in the existing Career Services goals include:

- Expanding the work-study program
- Incorporating best practices in preparing to be a Hispanic Serving Institution
- Innovating and encouraging a broader understanding of Career Services' role in student success beyond resume writing and interview skills
- Developing a campus-wide initiative for sharing the responsibility for student success (career readiness)

Feedback from stakeholders included statements around mission, vision, values, staffing, and collaboration. First, stakeholders shared that the mission, vision, and values lacked direction and focus and were not clearly articulated. Hence, there was not always ample buy-in on moving forward together as a community. Additionally, stakeholders shared that the Career Services team is a small team for all the work they produce across the college. A clear review of staffing mapped to strategic objectives needs to occur for the mission and vision to be reached. Finally, there were shared sentiments among stakeholders that while the Career Services team collaborates well, they are constantly being pulled in several directions, so their time and energy are thinly spread across many responsibilities, which can be frustrating for some internal partners.

Core Programs and Services

The Career Services department offers several services within the full career development spectrum, such as support with career decision-making, career planning, exploration, employer engagement, skill/interest assessments, job fairs, and targeted industry connection events.

Essential services include supporting units and divisions to provide diverse student programming, expansion of the Campus Internship Program (CIP) implementation of Handshake, virtual and in-person professional development access to all students, and customized employer engagement efforts.

The review team met with several constituents representing students, faculty, staff, and administration who demonstrated their appreciation for the Career Services team's ability to advance the office to where it is today. In addition, the review team had the opportunity to engage with the Career Services staff, a team of newly hired Career Services professionals. Several Career Services staff members shared similar sentiments that they do this work because of their dedication to student success and seeing students thrive. Many also expressed they feel supported by their departmental leadership and team members.

Employer Engagement & Job Fairs

The Career Services team currently has a newly appointed Assistant Director of Employer Relations and an Employer Engagement Specialist to support maintaining employer relations and expanding future partnerships.

The SLCC Career Services department is seeing an uptick in employers seeking to engage students. Additionally, institutions across the country are seeing more employers desire to recruit on campus, especially for students within their diversity recruitment plan. NACE (National Association of Colleges and Employers) reported that 88.4% of employers have some formal diversity recruiting efforts in place. SLCC will need to customize employer engagement around its status as a Hispanic-Serving Institution to customize employer engagements to align with this current need in the workforce.

In July of 2021, SLCC incorporated the use of Handshake, an online recruitment platform utilized nationwide to manage events, job postings, and provide a database for employer engagement. The review team had an opportunity to meet with employer partners external to the institution and one internal employer familiar with the CIP (Campus Internship Program). During the conversation, the review team learned of the persistent challenge of addressing marketing needs and effective communication of events to students, departments, and employers. For example, referring to the most recent job fair at SLCC, one employer stated, " I wish there had been more students; I mean, I think that's the number one piece of feedback...is more marketing to students." Besides the desire for more students, there seemed to be a consensus of not understanding the purpose of Handshake and how to utilize it to assist them as employers to locate talent, post jobs, and facilitate interviews.

Due to the turnover in Career Services staff, there is a gap of knowledge internally regarding employer engagement. In addition, differing departments and units facilitate employers independent of Career Services, creating duplicate efforts and a breakdown in the ability of Career Services to support the institution's mission and goals appropriately. The opportunity to increase employer engagement will come through employer education of the new Handshake system to increase brand awareness and partnership through self-promotion on the platform to SLCC students.

Cross-Campus Collaboration

SLCC has enriched student services and academic services units. The campus unit leaders appeared pleased with their working relationship with the current Director. However, they also understand how teams at SLCC are stretched thin and share this sentiment with Career Services.

The current priority for partnership with Career Services lies within CIP, where most units have expressed the value of Career Services. An opportunity for further collaboration is streamlining communication so there isn't duplication of events held simultaneously. In addition, there are specific pathways that desire increased support from Career Services. For example, the Financial Aid Office seeks help with the Federal Work-Study Program, and the STEM unit seeks support in exposing students to more career opportunities in STEM fields. Finally, the Career Services program many campus partners know of and utilize is CIP. This program could serve as a model for establishing institutional partnerships that are scalable and sustainable.

Campus Internship Program (CIP)

When asked about Career Services, the CIP was undoubtedly a highly regarded program across the institution. It has been a beneficial and supportive program for several units and students

seeking financial support. This program offers students an opportunity to build their resumes with competencies needed for the workforce. Overall, the program provides students a chance to upskill and develop professionally. NACE (National Association of Colleges and Employers) has demonstrated that over 80% of students who participate in an internship significantly increase their chance of employment after graduation.

The Career Services department manages the program coordination. It is not officially designated for any one person in this office to hold responsibility for managing this program. The Career Services staff articulated that this program is enormous and will require the complete dedication of a full-time coordinator to ensure its continued success and scalability. Due to not having a direct point person within Career Services, the application process is unclear for students interested in participating. Many students expressed confusion and frustration with the Handshake system, which is often their first interaction with Career Services. Students have indicated that the process is burdensome and complicated, and they believe their applications are delayed consequently. They are often unsure of their next steps in the application process and confused by the additional layer of the Handshake process.

Career Development Workshops

Classroom engagements have slowed significantly due to the pandemic, and the Career Services team has not returned to the classroom since returning in person. The career services team has found it very hard to elicit the assistance of faculty classrooms to partner in providing these services, and they are not currently as active. With moving priorities, the career services team frequently feels stretched and cannot be as intentional when offering programming due to shifting objectives. The Career Services team eagerly wants to build more in-depth and guided partnerships with the colleges, but is consistently met with competing career priorities from the college.

Marketing, Assessment, and Technology

The review team met with several internal and external Career Services partners. Their working relationship with the office is highly respected and enjoyable. There is a widely held understanding on-campus that amongst all of the priorities at the College, programs like the CIP are a high priority, as well as helping students find jobs off-campus. When asked how the marketing communication and outreach have been for this office, there were mixed feelings from faculty, staff, and students.

Students are moderately aware of the resources available to them through Career Services, but that is typically because students stumble across the office or learn about it after applying for an internship on campus. Students feel they often have to reach out to the office, because there isn't any initiation from the career services office, where the Career Services professional staff mentioned they are consistently outreaching out to students. Hence, there is undoubtedly a disconnect here. In addition, students found the communication platform (Handshake) utilized to be confusing and unsure how to navigate. They expressed feelings of unclear lines of communication and were uncertain of the priority of promptness due to a lack of response.

Career Services does not do much assessment currently for their various stakeholders. So it is recommended for a task force to be developed to generate ideas and reconceptualize the

assessment and marketing structure in Career Services for all stakeholders. In addition to assessment, the Career Services team uses outdated technology that is not fully functional or runs at very low speeds. A review of technology in the department, from staff laptops to online platforms such as Handshake, is highly recommended. Any review of technology should be tied to the vision of the department.

Academic Partnerships

Career Coaches collaborate closely with academic departments and faculty each semester (i.e., the School of Business). They make themselves available to students, stay abreast of market trends/demands, and present on general and industry-specific employment preparedness and opportunities. Career Coaches desire the proper amount of time and latitude to collaborate with specific schools or faculty members to create career exploration opportunities and assignments.

One academic administrator was acutely aware of the programs and services offered by Career Services. He is proactive in staying abreast of such resources for students and finds having a “go-to” Career Services coach very beneficial. Other faculty and administrators were unaware of many Career Services resources, including arguably the most popular Career Services program, the Campus Internship Program (CIP). They acknowledged they could do more to learn about Career Services resources and collaborate with career coaches. Still, they would like Career Services to send correspondence regularly, even if it’s just marketing materials about resources or upcoming events such as job fairs.

Some departments are coordinating their job fairs completely independent of Career Services to ensure content and employers are relevant to students in their programs. Academic departments would prefer this effort to be made by Career Services but recognize they do not have adequate staffing resources. Still, for some areas, the employment opportunities at job fairs curated by Career Services in the past have not been relevant to students in their area, so many departments have taken on this effort internally. Consequently, some industry partners/employers no longer contact Career Services to collaborate or share employment opportunities and instead go directly to contacts in academic departments.

Feedback from academic partners included frustration around the high turnover rate in Career Services, the department is currently understaffed, the lack of shared job outcomes data, and the lack of connections with academic departments. Overall, academic partners know the importance of Career Services. Still, because the existing Career Services team is so overwhelmed with requests and other responsibilities, they feel they need to take it upon themselves to establish career connections with employers for students in their area.

Leadership and Staffing

SLCC serves 60,000 students on ten campuses. Charged with supporting these students in career exploration and readiness, student employment and internships, stewarding the Campus Internship Program and others, and facilitating the successful transition into a career is the Career Services staff of 11 employees comprised of the following:

- 1 Director to manage the team, resources, and programmatic efforts
- 1 Assistant Director for Employer Engagement and Internships
- 1 Administrative Assistant

- 1 Campus Internship Program Coordinator (across eight campuses); they hold additional responsibilities in addition to CIP
- 1 Employer Engagement Specialist
- 6 Career Coaches (across six schools on eight campuses)

A culture of overwork is readily apparent in Career Services (and across the college), leading to burnout rather than productivity. Because this team has so few people with such a tall order, there were many reports of scope creep in job responsibilities, making their time with students less frequent and their support shallower. A Career Coach reportedly spends much less time connecting with multiple students in meaningful ways because they are also responsible for designing and disseminating marketing materials, presentations, programming, and workshops. In addition, they are often asked to help with more extensive programs like CIP, Co-Op, and others. Career Coaches expressed a desire to expand the team significantly so they can have a strong presence on each campus, support a smaller group of students in more significant ways throughout their time at the college, and give them time to innovate, search for employers/employment opportunities, and stay on top of industry trends/demands.

Regarding Career Services leadership, there is an expressed concern that they too are overworked and under-supported, causing them to scramble somewhat, make unilateral decisions about programming and policy that some team members believe would be better if created by the group, provide little training due to time, and fail to develop and communicate a clear vision and direction for the team. This group is passionate about their work and the myriad ways they support students in preparing for and securing gainful employment. Still, they would greatly benefit from a shared mission and vision. This group is looking to leadership for a clear understanding of prioritizing their workload, consistent and well-defined policies and procedures, and more extensive training specific to each particular role.

Feedback from stakeholders was around workload, better communication, and clarity around roles and responsibilities. Team members and other stakeholders outside of Career Services expressed that the Career Services team has a tremendous workload, including the workload placed on the Career Services Director. As a result, they do not have time or dedication to support specific project needs, such as the Campus Internship Program (CIP). There also needs better internal communication in Career Services around roles and responsibilities and top priorities, tied with vision and why and where the career services field is headed.

Diversity Equity & Inclusion/Social Justice

The community college system serves and educates a diverse population of students, and SLCC is one of the institutions that identify as a majority Hispanic-serving institution. Working with such a large population, it is challenging for most student services units to provide appropriate and effective services to a large, diverse student body. In addition, the community college serves many non-traditional college students; many have families, work full-time, are older or career-changers, and are academically underprepared. Common reasons a student might select a community college could be to prepare to transfer to a four-year institution, job training, professional/workforce development, or enhancement of basic knowledge in an area of study.

The convenience and affordability of community colleges make them a more accessible option for marginalized, low-income, and non-traditional students. However, these underserved students

face unique barriers to persistence in higher education, drastically impacting their career-goal achievement. Supporting these students with a fantastic set of obstacles like utilizing technology, accessing resources outside of the classroom, and professional development should be at the forefront of the goals and mission of career services to deliver equitable and inclusive support that is not one-size-fits-all.

SLCC has done an exceptional job providing access to on-campus internships, like the CIP program. The diverse offerings of on-campus services to students who identify with multiple identities demonstrate the institution's awareness of their student body needs. But when it comes down to equitable and inclusive practices demonstrated or taught is still yet to be fully seen within the Career Services department. When asked if there are any diversity efforts or programming to support their students, the Career Services staff had little to say. There was one response of attending a diversity training, but no implementation has affected practices or policies within the Career Services. Due to their limited capacity, there is little time to receive training or create programming supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion—a lost opportunity to connect and support a large population of students on campus.

Relationship Management with other SLCC Departments

Career Services staff work with many departments across the college in both Academic Affairs and Student Affairs. Feedback from stakeholders about working with Career Services staff and understanding their resources was garnered from more than a dozen areas, including Academic Advising, Academic Affairs, Admissions/Orientation, Financial Aid, TRIO STEM, People and Workplace Culture/HR, and beyond. Colleagues across the college enjoy working with the very knowledgeable and passionate Career Services staff. They shared general feedback about what is working well and highlighted areas that need improvement. Praise was given for the job and industry fairs, peer mentorship coordination, hybrid services, Co-Op Ed classes, Career Studio, and the Campus Internship Program. However, the overwhelming consensus was that these services are largely unknown and not quickly/intuitively found. Transparent and collaborative communication is a must amongst internal partners, and many other departments also acknowledged their role in these actions. Colleagues in a couple of areas shared valuable details about their collaborative efforts and when and how communication elevated their coordinated efforts on projects.

Although outside the intended scope of their role, Academic Advisors often do career coaching when meeting with students. This is essentially a result of students asking questions about career trajectories because they don't know about Career Services. There was interest but slight hesitation from Academic Advisors referring students to Career Services; more apparent training or an understanding of programming and resources students can access would increase the likelihood of Advisors encouraging students to access career support through the Career Services department.

Orientation Specialists who work closely with Career Services staff who present at orientation events are impressed with their extensive knowledge and ability to coach students. However, the few minutes Career Services is allotted during Orientation is not enough time, and more direct instruction in the following steps for students should be given.

The resounding theme from internal partners at SLCC about the Career Services department is that they welcome more opportunities to collaborate with their department. Still, there needs to be much greater visibility and marketing of services across campus. In addition, they added their awareness of the team's need for more full-time staff to support the current and growing demand placed on them. The overall feedback from internal stakeholders is centered on timely communication to partners about services, programs, and events. Additionally, more alignment is needed from Career Services with orientation, academic advising, and the university transfer center to provide full-scale student support and be more visible to students and the college community.

Financial Resources and Budget

Career Services provides many resources critical to student success, but they need a great deal of additional financial support to make the resources known and available to many students. The overwhelming and unsustainable workload on this small staff has far-reaching detrimental effects. While the Career Services department brings in additional revenue through programs, events, and partnerships each year, the revenue is not guaranteed yearly.

A shared experience reported by Career Services staff was burnout due to shouldering such a demanding workload that a much larger team should share. Another common experience was uncertainty. Staff members are asked to do so many tasks that they can't possibly compete, and they often don't know how to prioritize them. There's a strong desire to offer high-quality service to many students. Still, they don't have enough time or capacity because they are responsible for too many tasks and connecting with too many students. Career Services staff shared their heavy workload is also shared with the Director and Assistant Director, who also have large workloads and both do their best to also support non-management responsibilities.

This demand has led to a high turnover rate, making strong collaborations typically built over time impossible. This was brought up by several SLCC employees across the college, who repeatedly stressed the need for additional Career Services staff.

A more extensive staff would also increase the office's visibility because staff members would have time to interact with more students, market the services offered, and collaborate with Academic Affairs to increase classroom exposure. In addition, a more extensive staff would better programmatic support efforts, networking with employers, and designing innovative and relevant workshops.

The Campus Internship program alone needs the support of many additional staff members to maximize its potential. Those who know about and participate in the program rave about it, but the staff is at capacity, meeting the administrative needs to keep it running at the current level. The goal is to grow the program exponentially.

Suppose marketing continues to be the responsibility of Career Services staff. In that case, this should not land on the plate of Career Coaches, but a Marketing Manager should be hired to handle all marketing needs for the department, or an outsourced agreement should be made with institutional marketing and communications.

Summarize Organizational Strengths

The Career Services department embodies many strengths as a team. As a review team, we would like to highlight those strengths before proceeding to recommendations.

Career Services team strengths are as follows:

- Transformational leadership who cares about staff and student success
- The staff has innovative ideas
- Passionate about career coaching
- Eager to create new ways to interface with students directly and proactively
- Vision beyond resume writing and interview preparation
- Understand the importance of collaboration inside the department and across the college, and in the industry
- Supportive of one another
- Look for positives in each situation
- Creative use of limited resources
- Open to feedback and taking direction
- Campus Internship Program is incredibly successful
- Strong collaborations with other employees and departments

Feedback from stakeholders describing the Career Services team's strengths was plentiful and filled with appreciation for their hard work. Related feedback highlighted their strength, their care for student success, and the importance of building confidence professionally. One of the areas many highlighted and commended was scaling services to support students and hosting the CIP program that serves students to advance their careers. In addition, there was stressed importance around growing and scaling internships across campus, in which many hoped this program would continue to flourish.

Final Recommendations

The program review team compiled a thorough list of recommendations and suggestions for Career Services to consider. We have separated recommendations below based on key themes, which include: (a) operations of services, (b) mission, vision, and values, (c) academic partnership, (d) staffing & support for future needs, and (e) strengthening departmental relationships, and (f) budget and resources.

Operations and Services

The Career Services office, as currently configured, has minimal staff stretched across six campuses. However, due to the demand of employers seeking candidates and the success of the CIP program, there will need to be serious considerations to increase staffing levels. In addition, review to implement some form of student employment program dedicated to the career services office could serve as ambassadors or liaisons to each academic unit. These efforts will increase the branding of career services across campus and raise student awareness of the office through a peer-to-peer connection.

The review team recommends that the Career Services staff explore ways to maximize Handshake as the #1 recruiting place for hiring, interviewing, and engaging employers. The increased emphasis on students using the software as a place for resumes and events and other

relevant recruiting/interviewing tools will help decrease duplicate efforts across the campus while making visible what is happening on campus that is career-related. Additionally, if more units were educated on Handshake and centralized all student hiring processes to this system, it would increase student awareness of their resources, and Handshake could streamline communication and marketing efforts for all career-related programs and events if career services can gain the buy-in of the units and departments to utilize the system.

We recommend hiring an Events and Marketing Specialist within the department regarding marketing and outreach needs. If the budget is unavailable, establish a billable and set partnership with institutional marketing to design a comprehensive marketing campaign for Career Services. Finally, assessments should be implemented to measure the effectiveness of programs and services, and timely adjustments should be made to ensure efficacy and efficiency; this responsibility can easily be assumed by the Events & Marketing specialist in partnership with the Director of Career Services.

Mission, Vision, and Values

Career Services would benefit from creating a mission statement specific to their department/efforts that clearly defines their vision and direction. This mission should be shared with career services staff, many of whom are currently uncertain about the idea, scope, and sequence of their individual role/workload and that of the department. These goals are critical for the team to follow the vision set forth, knowing set objections and actions to achieve goal success. For this team to scale up and provide these services to more students, additional Career Services staff is necessary. This would allow for more high-quality programming, greater collaboration across the college, increased awareness of CSES and associated resources, a more prominent presence at each campus, more touch points for connecting with students, and a greater likelihood of increased student success/employment. Until then, the current team members need directives on prioritizing the overwhelming workload. In addition, goals could be expanded to address each college value specifically.

SLCC is approaching the end of the current strategic plan and is calling for input from various departments/employees to inform the new strategic plan. This is an opportune time for Career Services to understand clearly and articulate current and projected workforce trends/demands and assist the college in mapping out specific ways to prepare students for meaningful employment. Many departments should share this responsibility, and a concerted effort should be encouraged college-wide and maybe even explicitly articulated in the strategic plan. Assessments should be implemented to measure how successful Career Services is in moving toward achieving the goals outlined.

Create greater trust by involving the team in developing programs and manuals, embedding equity instead of equality, and setting team members up for success with clear instructions/direction and a manageable workload.

Academic Partnership

The development of stronger academic partnerships with Career Services will be critical moving forward as a college and a system. As career readiness trends permeate strategic plans, objectives, and action steps, there must be ongoing communication and partnerships with academic heads (Deans, Associate Deans, Department Chairs/Coordinators). A task force

between the Divisions of Academic & Student Affairs will be essential to collectively build the next steps of embedding career readiness behaviors into the related curriculum.

Additionally, it is highly recommended to design digital marketing and live presentations like an active roadshow about Career Services to share with departments and at school/faculty meetings. Finally, we recommend the Director bring in relevant data from national sources, such as NACE and The Chronicle of Higher Education, to demonstrate how career services are changing and to help dictate critical next steps in moving forward as a college.

There is a recommendation to establish college and department liaisons with whom stakeholders can contact in career services to develop targeted programming, discuss area-specific industry needs and how to meet them, and promote career coaching. Doing so will increase Career Services staff presence in academic departments and all campuses. The hindrance of this recommendation, though, comes down to staffing. Thus, appropriate staffing must be established if these recommendations are to thrive in the college system. Additionally, to help aid in active communication with colleges, we suggest maintaining a career services calendar of events to share with academic departments (i.e., job fairs, workshops, etc.).

Finally, to aid in academic partnerships, innovatively publish an annual report highlighting Career Services achievements/success across all areas and campuses. This could include data such as: served x number of students; supported x number of students in CIP; assisted x number of students securing meaningful employment; and articulate placement numbers in each academic area, industry, education type, or degree earned. Additionally, to expand the culture of collaboration in working with Academic Affairs partners, we suggest the following:

- Develop and support Career and Technical Education programs/student placement
- Targeted rather than general outreach and correspondence (i.e., connect the Accounting students to Accounting job opportunities)
- Unified messaging and accurate information sharing with students from career coaches and Academic Affairs
- Student employment tracking and data collection (Utah System of Higher Education collection requirements are changing and not being met)
- Alternative ways of offering course credit for vocational students
- Opening more regular and effective lines of communication between Career Services and Academic Affairs
- Ways to encourage or even incentivize degree completion rather than short-term employment

Staffing & Support for Future Needs

Meeting the extreme demand of assisting a significant number of students at SLCC, 1:3,000, Utah's largest college, in preparing for and securing meaningful employment will require additional CSES staff. Therefore, the review team recommends the following other staff positions:

Assistant Director for Career Education and Student Employment
Events & Marketing Specialist

8 Career Coaches serving 5 different campuses
CIP & Internship Coordinator

The scope and sequence of each position in Career Services should be clearly defined and mapped to support the department's goals and vision of the future state of career readiness. In addition, training and development should be built into the onboarding of each position, as well as retraining current career services staff on future trends in career services.

Scaling services and resources provided by Career Services is necessary and will require additional staff members to meet the needs of the college, the division, and the department. Adding other staff lines to the Career Services department would allow for more high-quality programming, leveraging people power through greater collaboration across the college, increased awareness of services and resources, a more prominent presence at each campus, more touch points for connecting with students, and a greater likelihood of increased student success/employment. Until then, the current team members need directives on prioritizing the overwhelming workload, especially having the Director managing up to the administration to clearly articulate what can and can't get done based on the current staffing structure. In addition, when new tasks/responsibilities are added to a career services team member, an existing task/responsibility should be removed.

Training and development around diversity, equity, and inclusion principles need to be implemented regularly, and assessing how the learning is being actualized through embedded implantation in coaching, programming, partnerships, and events.

Finally, we recommend that a Career Services task force be assembled with internal and external stakeholders to evaluate the current organizational structure. Distribution of work (alignment of self-reported tasks and job description, equitable distribution across the team) and allocation of resources (competitive compensation, funding for existing programs, financial need). This task force could reconceptualize the department and contribute to crafting a strategic plan to move the department forward based on the college's goals and objectives around career readiness behavior.

Strengthening Departmental Relationships

We recommend expanding the culture of collaboration by creating a career readiness committee centered around student success throughout the college. This committee should be comprised of a representative from each partnering area (e.g., Career Services Academic Advising, Academic Affairs, Admissions/Orientation, Financial Aid, TRIO STEM, People, Workplace Culture/HR, Summer Bridge Program, and others, if applicable). Meetings could be held quarterly for information sharing about efforts in each area, calendar alignment, identifying gaps in programming and resources for students, and giving and garnering support. Career Services Director should serve as Chair, and we strongly recommend a senior leadership member in both Student Affairs and Academic Affairs serve on this committee.

A calendar of events should be created and shared among internal stakeholders to view and add events to avoid duplication of efforts or overlapping events. We also suggest adding a meeting with a Career Coach to the required next steps communicated to students newly admitted to the

college in their welcome letter. In addition, collaboration with the Office of Diversity and Multicultural Affairs should focus on a targeted effort to create more internships and employment opportunities for Dreamers; involving employer partners where there is opportunity would be critical in this recommendation. Finally, a Student Affairs strategic plan should be designed, if not already, with a clearly articulated goal and objective to increase Career Services visibility by leveraging and scaffolding existing touchpoints and services offered in the division to ensure career readiness is available early and often, and consistently throughout the co-curricular lifecycle of the student.

Budget & Financial Support

Career Services' most salient financial need is additional salary dollars to hire more staff. Ideally, the team would expand by adding the following positions described under our recommendations for staffing and support for future needs. We did hear a faculty member express they feel Career Services has enough staff; we wholeheartedly disagree, as it was evident in every interview we held that the career services team is currently being stretched thin, including the Director, and losing momentum to keep up with new and upcoming trends in career services. We suggest auditing and articulating roles and responsibilities of all staff members in Career Services, along with exact percentages of time spent in related duties, identifying gaps where work is being stretched, and instating a start, stop, continue method in evaluating work (i.e., projects, events, programs, etc.).

Suppose marketing continues to be the responsibility of the Career Services staff. In that case, this should not land on the plate of Career Coaches, but an Events and Marketing Specialist should be hired to handle all marketing needs. Finally, Career Coaches' technology/equipment should be upgraded to ensure proper function and reliability as they move from campus to campus; many shared that they are working with outdated equipment that runs slowly. While this need may seem minor, it significantly impacts the bottom line if it prohibits student and coach conversations from thriving.

Conclusion

In summary, the Career Services department is commended for its commitment to student success, especially for elevating career readiness through the college system and aiding in the growth and development of students' skills needed in the workforce. Skill development is critical in a student's educational journey and essential for job attainment. The review team is excited to see career readiness continue to grow and thrive throughout the SLCC system.

References

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