

Positioning Career Services as An Institutional Strategic Priority

By the *NACE Career Services Strategic Positioning Task Force*

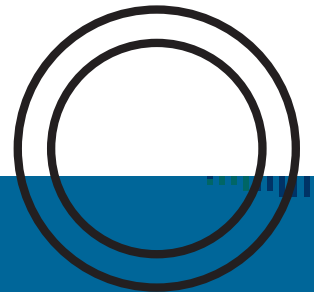




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Introduction

Considering the current economic, political, and social climate, career services needs to be strategically positioned on campuses to provide the vision, guidance, coordination, and relationships to demonstrate its importance and to maximize student outcomes.

The Board of Directors of the National Association of Colleges and Employers formed a task force and charged it with exploring strategic positioning of career services and how career services professionals could bring about repositioning of their operation.

This report presents the work of the task force, providing insights to help us all advance the profession. It includes:

- Case studies that offer real-world examples of how repositioning unfolded at different types of institutions—a small, private Midwestern liberal arts college; a Historically Black College or University (HBCU); a community college; two large Research 1 public institutions; and a mid-sized Research 2 public institution;
- An adaptable roadmap that provides practical guidance for achieving strategic repositioning; and
- Recommendations for acquiring endorsements from influencers, which can be leveraged to elevate career services as a profession not only on your own campus but among employers, the higher education community, and the public.





2022 STRATEGIC POSITIONING OF CAREER SERVICES TASK FORCE

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Case Studies

GRINNELL COLLEGE

Grinnell College is a private, highly selective, liberal arts, co-educational, residential institution of approximately 1,700 students in Grinnell, Iowa. The college’s website claims, “From the middle of the prairie, we quietly lead the pack.” This is certainly true for providing a helpful example related to the elevation and prioritization of career services.

Mark Peltz, now the Daniel and Patricia Jipp Finkelman Dean of the Center for Careers, Life, and Service, was hired in 2011 as the associate dean and director of career development. Approximately six months into his hire, the person to whom he reported left the institution, and Peltz was called into the office of then college President Raynard Kington and asked to think about where career development should be situated within the institution.

President Kington—who was approximately 18 months into his presidency at the time—asked Peltz to consider possibilities before the next time they were to meet. This was during the 2011-12 academic year, which was a time when there was some shifting of reporting structures within the career services field and a few cases of career services operations being elevated.

After doing some benchmarking, Peltz prepared thoughts on the subject. However, when they next met, President Kington said he had already decided that he wanted Peltz to report directly to him. The president noted that he wanted to reconsider how the college was supporting student career development in light of the rising cost of attendance and turbulent job market, as well as growing interest about (and feedback on) career development from students, alumni, faculty, and members of the Board of Trustees (BOT).

While many often assume the realignment was the result of Peltz presenting a compelling case to the president, that was not the case. Even so, this was a best-case scenario since this gave assurance the president wanted this and believed in the importance of career services work and, if done well, would serve to strengthen Grinnell’s value proposition to both current and prospective students.

Flash forward to present day: Peltz reports directly to the president of the institution, is a member of the college’s senior staff, and, as a result, is directly involved and regularly engaged with the college’s BOT.

When Peltz started at Grinnell in 2011, the career staff was composed of six FTE, and one of the positions was vacant, leaving just one staff member to advise students. As of June 2022, he oversees a team of 22, and the department offers students a student-to-adviser ratio of 150:1.



Find out how others elevated career services on their campus:

www.nacweb.org/tag/elevating-career-services



THE CHANGE PROCESS: FROM “FIXER UPPER” TO DREAM HOME

The way in which Peltz describes the change process was that he was asked to repair a “fixer upper,” i.e., there were good bones and a strong history, but a lot of work to do, while simultaneously designing a dream home.

He knew he needed to tackle some short-term, immediate needs while rethinking the office’s present work and imagining the future. This is a challenging task at any time, but particularly so when there are plenty of day-to-day challenges that demand attention.

In addition to the reporting change, President Kington also asked Peltz to co-chair the college’s strategic planning subcommittee on post-graduate success alongside a faculty member. Following this process, it was decided to merge the Career Development Office with two other programmatic areas: 1) civic engagement and 2) post-graduate service and fellowship advising. A desire to provide a more seamless and integrated experience for students motivated these structural shifts.

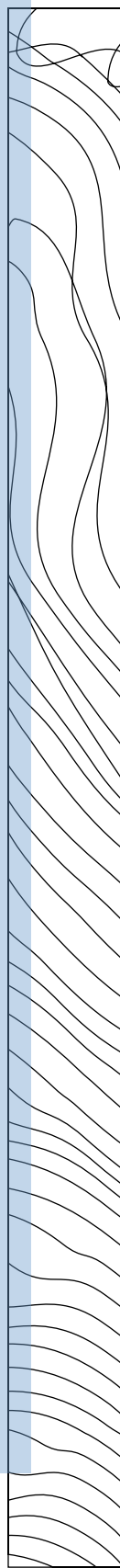
To make the most of this opportunity, Peltz and his team enlisted the support of two consultants to help them go back to the drawing board and to reimagine what an integrated model of career development might look like in this liberal arts context. The team gathered data and held ideation sessions involving students, faculty, and alumni. Ultimately, this resulted in the name change—to the Center for Careers, Life, and Service (CLS)—and a strategic plan and campaign to build awareness at Grinnell about the new name, mission, vision, and impact for the Center.

ADVANTAGES AND CHALLENGES

There were many advantages to reporting directly to the president. These included having a clear and immediate sense of institutional priorities, and, because the president appointed Peltz to the institution’s Budget Planning Committee, having a more-nuanced understanding of how institutional finances work. In addition, Peltz’s position as a direct report to the president gave him ready access to other institutional leaders in other divisions, which helped his understanding of the college’s immediate and pressing challenges and collaboration opportunities, thus boosting his institutional savvy. Finally, as Peltz noted, “it does not hurt that the president knows what you are doing.”

On the flip side, reporting to the president can come with challenges. The nature of the president role means the incumbent is incredibly busy with significant demands. Consequently, it requires one to be “really efficient and really well-prepped for meetings and one-on-ones since there is not a lot of time for side chatter... you have to be pretty well-focused because you may only have 30 minutes with that individual every two or three weeks,” Peltz noted.

Another challenge: Such a change may not be permanent as reporting lines can shift with a new president. Fortunately for Grinnell, this has not been the case. Prior to becoming Grinnell’s current president, Anne Harris was the vice president for academic affairs and dean of the college at Grinnell; Peltz already had a positive working relationship with her, and Harris possessed a degree of familiarity with Peltz’s work.





FUNDING

A gift in 2013 of approximately \$1.5 million from the then chair of the Board and her spouse—with whom Peltz has a close relationship and whom he describes as “true believers in our work” and “tirelessly supportive”—was a game changer. The gift was designated as the “Finkelman Deanship Fund” and offered the named dean complete discretion in how the funds could be used to support career-related initiatives.

The donors were also explicit that they wanted their gift to be additive and not used as budget relief. Their gift—in combination with some other major gifts around the same time—marked the beginning of what has led to more than \$13 million in gifts to support CLS initiatives, including major gifts to launch four of the CLS’s seven career communities. The other three were created through budget allocations and institutional investments.

THE CLS TODAY

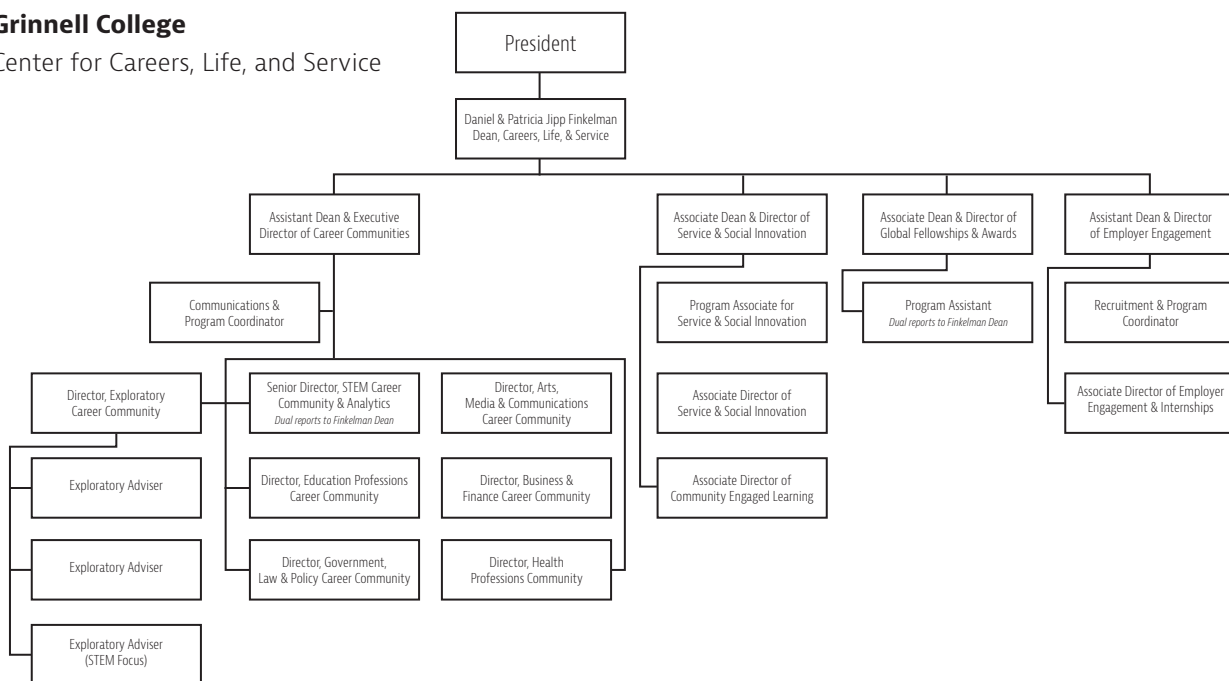
While the entire department consists of 22 team members, 15 are in relatively traditional career development roles. The nine additional roles—growing from six—came through a combination of fundraising, budget restructuring, and strategic investments made by the college. Because of the considerable staffing resources, every incoming first-year and transfer student is now assigned an adviser from the Exploratory Career Community. As their professional aspirations clarify, the student transitions into one or more of the CLS’s pre-professional career communities.

By creating a shared vision, generating stakeholder trust and buy-in, and securing considerable support—financial and institutional—Grinnell College has completely transformed its approach to supporting the career development and post-graduate success of its students.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Grinnell College

Center for Careers, Life, and Service





TOUGALOO COLLEGE

Dr. Whitney McDowell-Robinson serves as the vice president for Enrollment Management and Student Services at Tougaloo College, a private liberal arts institution designated as an HBCU with approximately 700 to 750 students. She oversees enrollment management, student services, communications, and external relations, and areas related to Title IX.

Founded in 1869 and located 25 miles north of Jackson, Mississippi, the college is etched in social justice and activism. The largest producing academic areas and majors include the social and natural sciences. Tougaloo is also transitioning to offer graduate programs in education, business, and cyber security.

Dr. McDowell-Robinson, an alumna of Tougaloo (2010), was asked to be the director of career services as a stand-alone office, initially within a student affairs structure.

In 2016, Tougaloo received a \$2 million grant from the United Negro College Fund Career Pathways Initiative, funded by the Lilly Endowment, to fund career services and career pathways, with a focus on providing more internships and embedding career readiness into the curriculum.

With the grant, career services transitioned to academic affairs in 2018 to be closer to the faculty, and this is where the department currently resides. The current reporting line has the Director of Career Services and Pathways and Internship Coordinator reporting to both the Provost and Dr. McDowell-Robinson.

The impact of the changes dramatically increased the touchpoints with students, especially with faculty building career services into their curriculum and career services being pulled into different levels of the university fabric. On the employer side, changes included a career services council. All of these changes have occurred since 2016.

With the grant ending, and a new vice president for strategic initiatives in position, there is a natural possibility of a new structure. Regardless of future reporting lines, enough positive change has happened with embedding career education into the academic fabric that Dr. McDowell-Robinson is confident career services will remain connected to academics and the curriculum.

LAGUARDIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

LaGuardia Community College is a public community college in Long Island City, New York. It is part of the City University of New York system of approximately 13,000 degree-seeking students and 50,000 non-degree seeking students.

In 2014, LaGuardia Community College was positioning career services to be a priority. However, other initiatives were undertaken and there were changes within the administration.

During the pandemic in 2020, the college inaugurated a new president, Kenneth Adams. President Adams is an advocate for workforce development as well as for internships. In addition, the chancellor for the CUNY system established career services as one of his priorities and one of his legacies. During the positioning and elevation, Jessica Perez served as lead of the Center for Career & Professional Development.



Before the elevation, the Center for Career & Professional Development reported to the dean of Student Success within Student Affairs. With the transition of the new president and the CUNY chancellor's priorities, the Center is now a direct report to the vice president of Adult and Continuing Education, who reports directly to the president. The elevation and change in reporting also enabled the college to centralize experiential learning, internships, and employment.

With the elevation came eight new positions. For LaGuardia, a lot of money flows from the Perkins Grant for different initiatives at the college. Monies were available through grants to hire permanent positions as well as a work-based learning manager, which is a tax levy permanent position not connected to grants. In addition, administrative support is on the horizon.

Budget dollars mostly stem from grants and levies. At this time, no new additional dollars have been earmarked for the Center. However, the college is supportive of ideas with appropriate rationale that improve the work of the Center to better serve students.

With the elevation, the move is to centralize career services operations across the college. This centralization is in progress. In particular, conversations are taking place with the Office of Advancement that pertain to stipend-based internships that are funded by some Board members; the Center has been charged with overseeing these internships.

The sea change at LaGuardia Community College is happening in phases. The next phase of the change is faculty buy-in and active support. The goal is to support faculty, not to take away experiential learning programs (such as clinicals), but to serve as the facilitator, to help support the preparation of students and the documentation of the placements.

Autonomy has always been a part of the culture for the Center and the role of the director. With the elevation and spotlight on career services, more responsibilities have been added. In addition, career services now has the ear of the vice president. In addition, the president's elevation of the Center provided the opportunity for the director to have a seat at the table within the President's Cabinet. The director has the direct reporting line to the vice president and a dotted line to the dean of Student Success to keep that partnership and communication channel open.

The metamorphosis for the Center for Career & Professional Development is ongoing. Structural changes are still afoot, but positioning of the Center and the director are on solid ground. This institution is one to watch with a chancellor focused on career services, a vice president who understands the value of career, and a president who understands that enrollment hinges on outcomes and career support of LaGuardia Community College students.





WILLIAM & MARY

William & Mary (W&M) is a highly selective, Research 2, public, residential research university of approximately 6,500 undergraduates and 3,000 graduate students in Williamsburg, Virginia.

Katherine Anandi Rowe had already developed a reputation as a catalyst for positive change when she was named W&M's president in 2018. Immediately prior to assuming the presidency, she served as the provost and dean of faculty at Smith College, where she was credited with transforming the liberal arts curriculum.

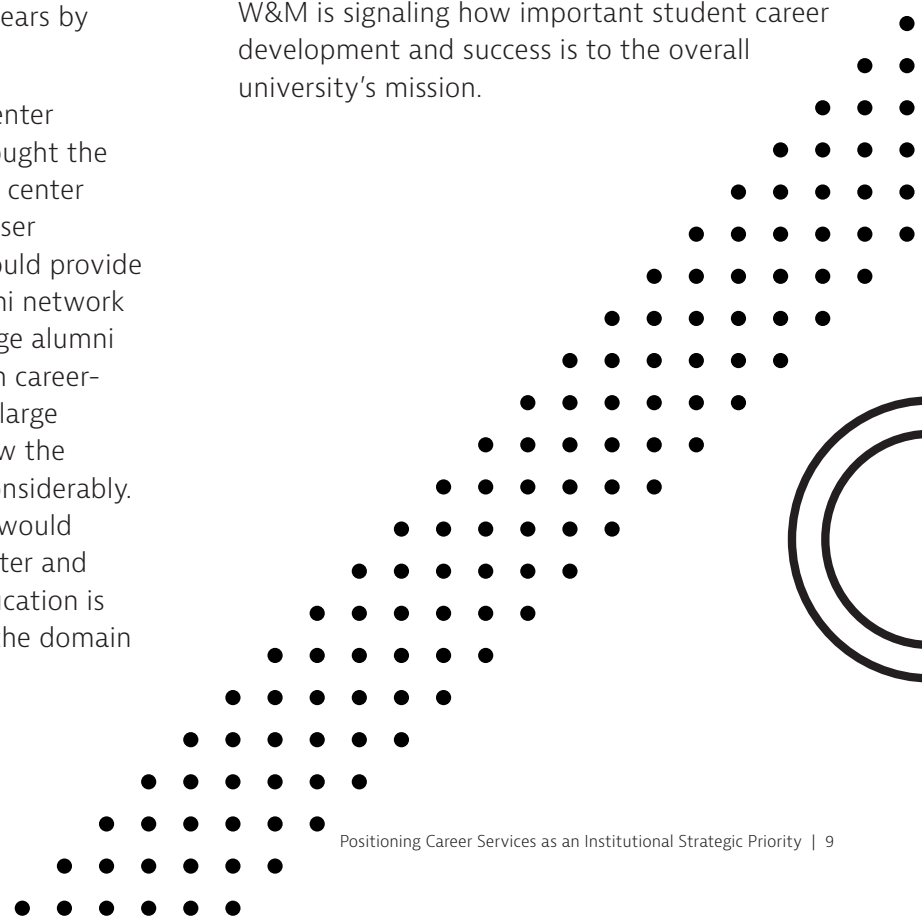
President Rowe expressed her desire to have the career center report to advancement from the moment she arrived on campus. Prior to President Rowe's arrival, the Cohen Career Center reported to Student Affairs and was led by Kathleen Powell, then associate vice president for career development. Some within the university were surprised by this recommendation because the W&M career center under Powell's leadership has always been considered high performing, and W&M has been consistently ranked as one of the top public institutions for internships for the last several years by *The Princeton Review*.

While recognizing that the career center was doing well, President Rowe thought the realignment would allow the career center to become even more effective. Closer coordination with advancement would provide increased access to the W&M alumni network to scale job development and engage alumni who wanted to assist students with career-related issues. Collaborating with a large advancement team would also allow the career center to expand its reach considerably. Moreover, she felt the realignment would elevate the status of the career center and send a strong signal that career education is a university-wide priority, not just the domain of the career center itself.

While President Rowe was engaged in conversation with Powell and senior leadership regarding changes in reporting structure, she was simultaneously guiding the university through a new strategic planning process, culminating in the fall 2021 release of the framework for Vision 2026.

As a result of this comprehensive strategic planning process, the career success of W&M students has been elevated to one of only four cornerstones of the university's five-year strategic plan. The career education initiative states, in part, that "William & Mary will lead in the preparation of lifelong learners equipped to navigate rapid change and thrive from their first job to their last."

This represents a profound shift regarding the importance of career education at research universities. Few research universities currently identify career education and success as a strategic university-wide priority like this. By integrating career success into the strategic planning of the university at the highest level, W&M is signaling how important student career development and success is to the overall university's mission.





Although the strategic plan was launched less than one year ago as of this writing, significant personnel changes are already underway to ensure this vision receives the support it needs. As the president has noted on several occasions, “I want someone waking up every morning focused on our students’ career success at this university.” As a result, Powell has been named the inaugural “Chief Career Officer” at W&M, the first, to our knowledge, with such a title at a research university. She is also a member of the President’s Cabinet and interacts regularly with senior leadership and the Board of Visitors, Foundation Board, and Alumni Board and is positioned on campus as the leader for career development university-wide. The new structure also gives her access to alumni, donors, volunteers, and dollars on a scale that was simply not possible when the career center resided in Student Affairs.

The office currently has a total of 12 staff members and functions as a career cluster industry model; in addition, the career center now has approximately 130 new colleagues to work with and learn from and will have a matrixed model to do its work. The career center is expected to grow considerably in the next few years with regard to both staff and budget since career education is a key priority of the capital campaign. As the institution’s strategic plan is new, it will take time to determine how successful it will be in terms of career education, but the signs are very promising.

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

The University of Texas at Austin (UT Austin) is a public Research 1 university with 52,000 students and 18 colleges and schools, including medical and law schools. Like many large universities, UT Austin has a highly distributed model of 15 career centers within schools, and each area operates independently.

In 2017, the president and provost reviewed the current career services space through a task force, considering such factors such as the climate on campus and technology resources, and recommended the creation of a new career center: Enter Texas Career Engagement (TCE) in November of 2018.

Norma Guerra Gaier was brought on board as the executive director for TCE and tasked with creating the strategic vision, budgeting model, design, and space for all students focused on two pillars—equity and access, ensuring that all students have access to everything career-related, and all employers have equitable access to diverse talent.

Strategically, TCE is part of the provost’s portfolio and sits within undergraduate studies, curriculum design, and enrollment management. Gaier sits in an inaugural position on campus. Upon starting, she embarked on a listening tour and was clear that her role was to enhance (not replace) the work that the existing career centers were doing to best serve their students. TCE was created to supplement their work; for example, working together, TCE and the career strategized on various technology tools and purchased and implemented career tech tools for all of the career centers.

One outcome from the work of the TCE and campus prioritization of career services is the creation of a zero-credit internship course. This allows students to gain the benefit of a curricular internship noted on their transcript, but without the burden of paying for associated tuition. Content is provided on essential skills such as budgeting and badging programs.



The other initiative was implementing a university-wide job board—initially, only one college was using Handshake. Under Gaier’s leadership, Handshake was launched across campus, and the outcomes have been very encouraging; now, 70% of UT Austin’s colleges have adopted Handshake, and both employers and students have provided positive feedback about the change. Employers prefer having one system to manage for recruitment across the entire university, and students like the Handshake platform.

The strategy has focused on constant communication in working with the various offices, especially essential on a large campus. This has been managed through a director’s meeting that Gaier facilitates monthly. In addition, the Texas Campus Career Council (TC3), comprised of all of the career services professionals on campus, does front-line sharing and meets nearly monthly. Prior to Gaier, staff paid dues to TC3 to fund its work; she altered this so that TCE funds any expenses related to TC3.

The organizational model within TCE focuses on different areas:

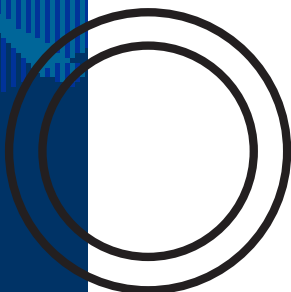
- Graduate students and post-docs and some master’s-level students; this was the first team to support Ph.D. and post-docs to focus on academic and industry positions;
- Undergraduate students who may not be pursuing traditional opportunities;
- Students who have interdisciplinary interests;
- Career and identity development and how they interact;
- Internships and career experiences with a focus on research and entrepreneurship; and
- A first-destination and career outcomes focus with coordination of the various efforts on campus.

All of these include a focus on equity and access.

A critical component of the TCE is the employer engagement team, especially the collaboration with Development and Alumni Engagement. TCE provides a gateway for employers to more easily navigate campus and connect with students. Policies and procedures are also a focus for TCE with the other career centers. Currently, there are 25+ staff members within TCE.

Parallel to the model, Gaier and TCE were allowed to create a new space for staff, and they just opened a new center that features an ample event space, as well as 40 interview room suites for those who are recruiting across campus or for use by career offices that do not have dedicated space.

In summary, within TCE, successes include collaborative partnerships both on and off-campus, leadership within student employment with a focus on career readiness, serving graduate students, a one-stop or central area for employer engagement, bringing interdisciplinary majors to the forefront for students, and serving students that may be at a disadvantage.





MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Michigan State University (MSU) is a large Research 1 university with 50,000 students, approximately 42,000 of which are undergraduates. Career services at MSU is a centralized/hybrid organization of offices and is well-known for its Career Services Network, which is composed of career services professionals strategically located in central and college-based offices.

Jeff Beavers serves as the executive director of career services and is a part of the newly unified division—Student Life and Engagement. This is a merger of the areas of Student Affairs and Residential and Hospitality Services. One of the most notable areas of the career services is the well-known and respected Collegiate Employment Research Institute (CERI). This adds a vital research component to career services and has long served as a leading indicator of college graduate hiring trends. This credibility has helped career services gain an additional level of credibility for the department within the campus, helping secure its strong position within the university structure.

The budget model is comprised of two-thirds general and one-third discretionary. Staffing consists of 25 full-time employees and 40 student career peers. Career services is also central to the university's 2030 strategic plan with the areas of advising, alumni, and mentoring being highlighted, so even greater positioning of career services for the future is expected.



Our case studies illustrate that there is no one single path to achieving strategic repositioning: Changes in leadership, a president and others who champion career services and career education, explicit prioritization of career services within institutional strategic plans, external funding through grants or donors, and enhanced credibility of a department and a top career services leader are all examples of avenues to repositioning career services within a college or university.

The next section details these routes.

Strategic Positioning of Career Services: A Roadmap

As noted, there are different ways to achieve a strategic positioning for career services, and this roadmap presents different routes to reach your destination. We encourage you to review the roadmap using your unique institutional lens to formulate strategies that align with the culture, mission, and goals at your campus. The roadmap was informed by a literature review, case studies, and a spring 2022 NACE survey distributed to campuses where elevations of career services have taken place. (*See the Appendix for details about the survey.*)

The roadmap includes:

- Why: Rationales for Strategic Positioning
- How: Guiding Principles
- Who: Change Leaders
- When: Signals and Challenges
- Where: Reporting Lines
- What: Toolkit of Tactics, Roles, and Responsibilities

The roadmap also includes the sources surfaced through the literature review.

WHY: RATIONALES FOR STRATEGIC POSITIONING

The rationales listed below are presented to help you make a case no matter where you are on your elevation journey—in initial phases of influencing leadership; in the midst of an elevation process with competing decision-maker motivations; or after an elevation when intentional effort is required to sustain the elevation through changes in campus leadership and priorities.

A spring 2022 NACE survey validated these rationales, and they are listed in order of the most “strongly agree” survey responses. (See the Appendix for details about the survey.)

Rationales:

- Equip students with career readiness competencies and the ability to articulate them to employers.
- Address concerns about the ROI of college degrees and the value of higher education.
- Find opportunities to integrate career readiness into academic programs and curriculum.
- Increase engagement between career services and faculty members to better integrate careers into the classroom and curriculum.
- Help marginalized students build social capital, increase access to opportunities, and achieve career mobility.
- Increase recruitment, enrollment, retention, and degree completion.





HOW: GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following guiding principles provide model strategies for how to reposition career services. They are presented in order of “most instrumental in elevating career services” according to our survey respondents.

- Hire or identify a career services leader with the vision and capacity to align career services with the highest levels of institutional strategies.
- Find an organizational position for career services that maximizes its ability to facilitate and convene cross-campus initiatives and partnerships across departments and divisions.
- Structurally include career services leadership in institutional strategy setting, such as senior leadership teams and/or governance committees.
- Resource career services in ways that maximize student engagement and outreach.
- Integrate academics and career preparation.
- Position career professionals as active brokers of connections, opportunities, and resources.
- Adopt a title for the career services leader that signals high-level institutional responsibilities.
- Build career services into institutional diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies and outcomes.
- Design elevation to be sustainable through transitions in campus leadership and emerging initiatives.

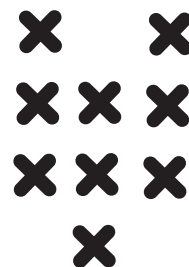
WHO: CHANGE LEADERS

While initiatives to reposition career services often start with a career services leader, the impulse for change can come from a variety of places. Building relationships with key stakeholders who are interested in elevating career services can facilitate an elevation.

According to our survey results, here are the top five stakeholders who most often—either individually or in partnership—instigated strategic repositioning.

- Career Services Director/Leader
- College President/Chancellor
- College Provost/Chief Academic Officer
- Deans
- Vice Chancellor Student Affairs

Other stakeholders cited less frequently include alumni, Board of Trustees, donors, employers, enrollment management professionals, faculty, state legislators, and students.





WHEN: SIGNALS AND CHALLENGES

Recognizing activities and behaviors that signal interest in the elevation of career services—and being aware of challenges that may accompany a repositioning—can help career services leaders know when to prepare or take action.

Strategic positioning may be opportune under these circumstances:

- There is a change in leadership, e.g., new career services leader, vice president, provost, or president.
- There is a champion leader at the cabinet level.
- There is an update to the institution's strategic plan and career development and/or co-curricular engagement is prioritized.
- Career services is restructured to report to a different area; the career services leader now reports to executive leadership.
- There is institution-wide focus on career outcomes.
- An institutional accreditation is in process.
- An external review of career services is in process.
- The institution receives a large gift from a donor.
- The state legislature is demanding accountability for career outcomes and the impact higher education institutions have on the region.

Common challenges career services face when becoming a strategic priority include:

- Expectations to do more without an accompanying increase in funding, staffing, and resources;
- Difficulty connecting with faculty, prioritizing career services in the academic curriculum, and lack of faculty preparation/understanding of career development and outcomes;
- Dealing with competing university priorities that silo academics and career services; and
- Decentralization of career services, which can dilute the impact of the elevation.





WHERE: REPORTING LINES

When an elevation of career services emerges as a priority, options for an administrative relocation are often explored.

NACE data indicate that career services units reporting lines vary greatly. Determining the best place for your career center on the campus org chart depends on factors such as campus culture, goals, and support from leadership. These data can help career centers and campus leadership explore options.

Figure 1: Locations of Career Services 2014-2019: A Five-Year Comparison

	2019	2014	(% change)
Student Affairs	47.1%	54.6%	- 7.5%
Academic Affairs	26.7%	20.2%	+ 6.5%
Other	3.3%	11.0%	- 7.7%
School	6.5%	6.9%	- 0.4%
Enrollment Management	4.8%	4.1%	+ 0.7%
Institutional Development	3.5%	2.7%	+0.8%
Joint: Student and Academic	3.1%	—	+3.1%
Own Division	2.5%	—	+2.5%
Office of the President	2.5%	—	+2.5%

Source: NACE Career Services Benchmarks Surveys, 2014 – 2019.



WHAT: TOOLKIT OF TACTICS, ROLES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This toolkit expands upon the guiding principles, presents tactics to enact the principles, and explains key responsibilities and roles. As you will see, the toolkit offers various options, and its wording is purposefully open-ended so that it can be adapted for your campus.

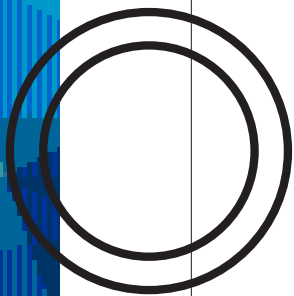
The bibliography of sources surfaced through the literature review is provided if you need supporting evidence.

Principles that signal or enable strategic repositioning	Tactics to enact principles	Career services responsibilities/roles to enact tactics	Campus administration responsibilities/roles to enact tactics	Cross-campus and off-campus partners, integrations, and involvements to enact tactics
<p>Hire or identify a career services leader with the vision and capacity to align career services with the highest levels of institutional strategies.</p>	<p>Determine whether there is internal talent. If so, create a development or transition plan for the internal leader to set them up for success.</p> <p>If looking externally for talent, consider engaging a national search firm or create a plan for the search.</p>	<p>Inform decision making by sharing best practices and benchmarks for career services and NACE's Professional Competencies for College and University Career Services Practitioners with anyone involved in the identification of the leader.</p>	<p>Reorganize as needed to elevate a career services leader.</p> <p>Implement and allocate funding as needed to support search firm hiring and/or search and onboarding process.</p> <p>Contribute to onboarding plans for candidate (either internal or external).</p>	<p>Include stakeholders in identification or recruitment processes.</p>
<p>Find an organizational position for career services that maximizes its ability to facilitate and convene cross-campus initiatives and partnerships across departments and divisions.</p>	<p>Consider the next steps that would most accelerate career services at the institution. What positionality would help with these objectives? For example, to increase ties to alumni networks, alignment with Advancement might help; or, to increase ties to the curriculum, greater alignment with Academic Affairs might help.</p>	<p>Assess and share areas of current strength and areas of opportunity that are challenging to realize under the current structure.</p> <p>Share NACE benchmarks about career services' reporting lines with decision makers.</p> <p>Represent career/market perspective on campus committees.</p>	<p>Facilitate introductions for career services with potential partners.</p> <p>Place career services leaders on cross-campus committees to expand influence and partnerships.</p> <p>To create an infrastructure of collaboration, provide career services with staff, salary support, and budget allocations to cover shared technologies.</p>	<p>Engage a campus task force to help identify strategic positioning that elevates career services.</p> <p>Engage a higher education search firm or external consultancy organization or consultants to develop a position elevation strategy.</p>





Principles that signal or enable strategic repositioning	Tactics to enact principles	Career services responsibilities/roles to enact tactics	Campus administration responsibilities/roles to enact tactics	Cross-campus and off-campus partners, integrations, and involvements to enact tactics
<p>Structurally include career services leadership/representatives in institutional strategy-setting, such as senior leadership teams and/or governance committees.</p>	<p>Prioritize career services work in strategic plans.</p> <p>Link institutional learning outcomes to career services work.</p>	<p>Tell the story of how career services impacts institutional outcomes, such as enrollment, retention, persistence, sense of belonging, and the institution's financial health.</p> <p>Actively contribute and advance the work of committees and leadership structures.</p> <p>Represent career/market perspective on campus committees.</p>	<p>Elevate the leader of career services to join the executive leadership team.</p> <p>Facilitate introductions and invitations to participate in collaborations.</p> <p>Consider where the career services leader can be a convener of on- and off-campus partners in advancing priorities.</p> <p>Ask the career services leader to serve and/or volunteer to serve on institutional strategic planning committees.</p> <p>On an ongoing and consistent basis, share the story of the impact of career services work with leadership and boards.</p>	<p>Partner with institutional research to collect, analyze, and present data that illustrate career interventions' impact on student success, employer and alumni engagement, and greater university strategies.</p>
<p>Resource career services in ways that maximize student engagement and outreach.</p>	<p>Present a vision for what a fully resourced career services operation can achieve.</p>	<p>Gather and present benchmarking information from peers and sources, such as NACE, to show resource gaps.</p> <p>Identify goals and gather data to project the percentage increase in output that might be needed to move from current state to future goals.</p> <p>Use evaluation and assessment data to demonstrate how career services uses budget allocations wisely.</p>	<p>Provide competitive salaries and career pathways for career services professionals.</p> <p>Move the career center to a visible campus location, and ensure it is designed to facilitate student and employer engagement.</p> <p>Empower and support innovative thinking and prototyping of services, resources, and culture elements that can contribute to the integration of career services into the student experience.</p> <p>Provide funding for necessary infrastructure development, including professional development opportunities and new technologies.</p>	<p>Promote and support a culture of collaboration of career services infrastructure and coordination.</p> <p>Engage innovative vendors who offer new technologies necessary for the elevation of career services.</p> <p>Partner with the institution's communications office for elevated communication strategies.</p> <p>Work with campus advancement staff to identify and pursue grant opportunities.</p>





Principles that signal or enable strategic repositioning	Tactics to enact principles	Career services responsibilities/roles to enact tactics	Campus administration responsibilities/roles to enact tactics	Cross-campus and off-campus partners, integrations, and involvements to enact tactics
<p>Integrate academics and career preparation.</p>	<p>Create an academic – career development integration strategy with academic administration and faculty to ensure career is integrated across institutional outcomes and/or curriculum.</p> <p>Identify institutional change opportunities to influence career development integration.</p>	<p>Identify campus champions and advocates to partner with, such as academic college staff, faculty senate, and student senate.</p> <p>Initiate relationships with partners who share commitment to advancing career integrations/learning.</p> <p>Create and implement trainings and resources for campus staff and faculty to facilitate career development integrations.</p> <p>Demonstrate the value of career integrations by providing relevant student outcomes data and market data to inform curriculum.</p> <p>Share career development positions with academic colleges.</p> <p>Lead micro-credential and badging initiatives for co-curricular experiences and experiential learning.</p>	<p>Make appropriate introductions and ensure career services staff are invited to academic planning meetings.</p> <p>Make career development activities part of the "service" aspect of the faculty tenure process.</p> <p>Connect career services data with retention and persistence outcomes.</p> <p>Recommend embedding career readiness competencies into general education courses.</p> <p>Create an accredited internship course accessible to students across all academic disciplines.</p>	<p>Collaborate with institutional research staff to study the impact of career integrations.</p> <p>If career integration is your key strategy, consider advocating to report to and/or partner with Academic Affairs.</p> <p>Work with faculty to infuse career integrations into grant applications and publications.</p> <p>Represent career/market perspective on academic curricular committees.</p>
<p>Position career professionals as active brokers of connections, opportunities, and resources.</p>	<p>Review job announcements/descriptions, onboarding, training, and performance evaluations to emphasize promoting and supporting equitable, scalable models for inclusive career development engagement and community involvement.</p>	<p>Review and enhance related communications, such as how roles are described on the website, social media, and other collateral.</p> <p>Provide ongoing professional development for staff to build professional networks and increase capacity to innovate and collaborate.</p> <p>Equip all career services staff with a consistent story to tell about their roles and the role of career services.</p>	<p>Recognize and voice support for the evolving roles of career services professionals.</p> <p>Invite career services leaders and staff to participate in meetings with employers and donors.</p> <p>Provide support, such as travel and conference funding, that enables broader and more robust employer outreach.</p>	<p>Develop stronger partnerships with external community members, such as alumni, employers, and donors.</p>
<p>Adopt a title for the career services leader that signals high-level institutional responsibilities.</p>	<p>Align the career services leader's title with the title conventions for other positions on the executive leadership team.</p>	<p>Inform the title decision by sharing college career services' best practices, examples, and benchmarks with decision makers.</p>	<p>Reorganize necessary structures to ensure the career services leader has a broader student success portfolio.</p>	<p>Communicate the title and role internally and externally.</p>





Principles that signal or enable strategic repositioning	Tactics to enact principles	Career services responsibilities/roles to enact tactics	Campus administration responsibilities/roles to enact tactics	Cross-campus and off-campus partners, integrations, and involvements to enact tactics
<p>Build career services into institutional diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies and outcomes.</p>	<p>Demonstrate how career services interventions lead to career-ready graduates.</p> <p>Provide opportunities for students to increase equity and inclusion capacity as leaders and as team members.</p>	<p>Equip all career services staff with a consistent story to tell about their roles as direct contributors to institutional goals of preparing a diverse, interculturally developed, and systemic-challenge-ready next generation of leaders.</p> <p>Prioritize equitable access to services. Activate intentional strategies to reach and engage all students.</p> <p>Create and assess student learning outcomes focused on increasing students' capacity for equity and inclusion.</p> <p>Hire staff who are focused on diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) or realign functions and strategies to ensure DEIB is integrated across all aspects of work.</p> <p>Ensure career services staff have professional development opportunities to increase competency in equity and inclusion.</p>	<p>Recognize the contributions career services makes to advancing campus DEIB goals and outcomes.</p> <p>Invite career services to participate on campus-wide DEI committees and initiatives.</p> <p>Support career services' review and enhancement of DEIB communication, procedures, and policies.</p> <p>Ensure campus HR departments promote and use DEIB practices in recruitment, on-boarding, performance evaluations, and ongoing professional development options.</p>	<p>Work with institutional research to study how career interventions affect student success factors across diverse student populations. Use findings to identify needs for additional and different interventions.</p> <p>Collaborate with offices of diversity, equity, and inclusion to ensure equitable and inclusive practices are in place.</p> <p>Engage employers in programming and commitment to DEIB.</p>
<p>Design elevation to be sustainable through transitions in campus leadership and emerging initiatives.</p>	<p>Ensure the strategic positioning of career services is included in long-term campus strategic plans.</p>	<p>Continuously collect and present data illustrating increases in career engagement and success pre-and post-strategic repositioning.</p> <p>Equip all career services staff with a consistent story to tell about the benefits of career services' elevation.</p>	<p>Memorialize rationale for elevating/repositioning career services and share with incoming leadership.</p> <p>Invite career services to present at campus meetings to showcase how the repositioned career services enhances student career outcomes and advances campus strategies.</p>	<p>Collect student, employer, and alumni feedback and testimonials about the effectiveness of career services, especially after a strategic repositioning.</p> <p>Work with institutional research and communications offices to collect and share data to illustrate the impact of career services on overall outcomes.</p>





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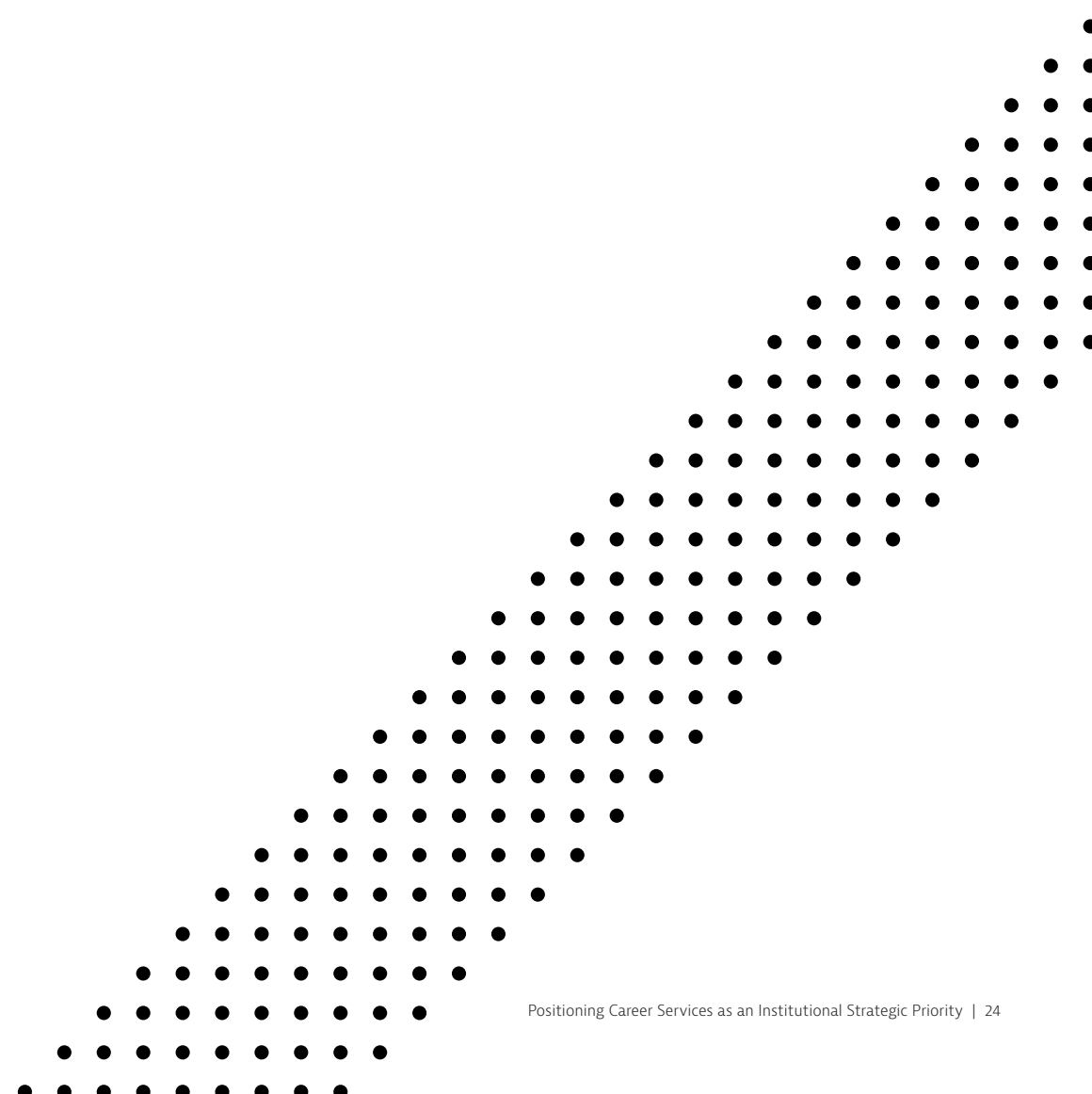


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Career Centers of the Future

The Career Centers of the Future subgroup developed a strategy and templates for identifying and inviting endorsements from influencers of the career services field to support the growth of the career services profession. The strategy includes:

- Reaching out to a diverse group of higher education, business, and government influencers to request endorsements about the critical importance of career services, especially in this challenging moment
- Distributing endorsements to career services professionals to use in documents, presentations, and other areas to support efforts to elevate the role of career services on their campuses
- Collecting endorsements of NACE members who work in this field, including video testimonials collected at the NACE Conference & Expo
- Including endorsements on the NACE website and in social media promotion
- Leveraging National Career Development Day in November as a moment to launch the testimonials

Sample Request:

Dear _____,

I am part of a task force formed by NACE (National Association of Colleges and Employers) to promote the importance of university career services to ensure a strong start for college students coming out of the pandemic.

We are reaching out to respected leaders like you to support our colleagues doing this important work on college campuses across the U.S., from community colleges to small liberal arts colleges to large public universities.

May I ask you to share a 1-2 sentence testimonial about the critical importance of career services? Some prompt questions and sample language are below if that is helpful.

Many thanks for your support!





Prompts for Influencers:

1. Why is career services important to the future of our country?

Sample responses:

"The role of university career services is more important now than ever. These offices play a critical role in ensuring that students have the skills, connections, and equitable access they need to become the future leaders we need."

"Every day, university career services offices work to ensure the future success of our country's diverse young people, and, therefore, the future success of our country. Their work is among the most important functions of higher education."

2. How has a career services professional supported your journey/success?

"I would not be where I am today without the support of my college career advisor. I encourage every student at every institution to take advantage of this incredible resource."

3. NACE members: What is your "why" for working in this field?

"It's all about inclusion. I'm in the field and dedicated to this work because so much of our employment landscape is exclusionary..."

Potential Influencers to Approach:

Higher Education

- University presidents, chancellors, provosts, deans, and senior vice presidents for student life
- Chief diversity officers
- Prominent university alumni

Government and NGO

- Senators, representatives, and governors
- Mayors and city council members
- Workforce development leads

Business Leaders

- CEOs, entrepreneurs, and business owners
- Speakers, social media influencers, and entertainers
- Best-selling authors





Appendix

TASK FORCE CHARGE FROM THE NACE BOARD

The 2022 Strategic Positioning of Career Services Task Force was charged with the following:

As a starting point, the task force will review past work of the association and career services leadership, the recent Positioning of Career Services qualitative study, and the most recent *Career Services Benchmark* report to examine the successes of various operations that have been elevated and repositioned on their respective campuses to have a “seat at the table.”

The task force will use its findings to determine how NACE can assist its members to implement strategic leading practices that will enable career services operations to adapt the strategies for their college/university. The task force will also consider how to best position career services as a desirable higher education occupation.

ABOUT THE REPOSITIONING CAREER SERVICES SURVEY

The survey was conducted mid-February through March 15, 2022, among 2,446 NACE college members with titles indicating they held elevated positions, e.g., executive director, vice president, associate dean. A total of 261 responses were received.

In addition to collecting data and insights on rationales and principles related to elevating career services, the survey also addressed who instigated the elevation, conditions that signaled strategic positioning was forthcoming, and strategies and tactics used to influence strategic positioning.

