

University Career Services

A Report to the:
Student Fees Advisory Committee
University of Houston

November __, 2013

**UNIVERSITY CAREER SERVICES
STUDENT FEES ADVISORY COMMITTEE
FY2015 PROGRAM QUESTIONNAIRE**

I. Executive Summary

The mission of University Career Services (UCS) is to serve University of Houston students and alumni at all stages of career development. UCS promotes and encourages personal responsibility in the exploration and achievement of both career and employment goals. UCS actively creates relationships with campus and community entities that will help to ensure the success of UH job candidates during and after their college careers at the University of Houston.

University Career Services' mission is accomplished by first assessing individual students' needs and by providing the appropriate resources to foster self-understanding and goal-clarification. Depending on students' interests and level of career development, additional resources are often utilized, including resume-writing assistance, interview skill development, part-time and summer job search assistance, assistance in securing an internship, a referral to a career advisor/mentor, and/or suggested sources for additional reading and research. In addition, the unit accomplishes its mission by embracing the principles of quality customer service in its relations with the campus and corporate communities. Corporate entities are advised as to the most effective ways to target and hire UH job candidates, depending on the employer's needs and level of commitment. The unit's mission is advanced by maintaining a highly-qualified staff of career counselors and managers and by providing opportunities for staff/professional development. The unit strives to be abreast of, and apply, the latest technologies in making career services accessible to students of a major research university. This is accomplished by creating both personalized and automated systems for job search, interview scheduling, notification of new job opportunities, resume submittal, and employer research.

The benefits of a robust and vital career services unit on a university campus are multifold. The literature strongly suggests that a student with a career goal, even a tentative career goal, is more likely to persist and achieve his/her educational objectives than a student without a career goal. Students who are successful and satisfied in their pursuit of a career are more likely to become satisfied alumni, many of whom may be in a position to assist the university in annual giving, recruitment of qualified students, and legislative relations. In addition, students benefit when the career center builds bridges between the university and the larger community. Public and corporate support, while intangibles, are extremely important to a public university and they often lead to tangible benefits to be enjoyed by current students, alumni, faculty, and staff.

This Program Questionnaire attempts to present an accurate assessment of University Career Services' accomplishments during the previous year and of its goals and objectives for the ensuing year. The management of the unit feels that through prudent resource allocation significant progress will continue to be made in meeting the career development needs of students as well as the human resource needs of the larger community. University Career Services is grateful for the continuing support of the Student Fees Advisory Committee.

II. An organizational chart for University Career Services is attached as Appendix 1.

**III. List the action steps that you provided with your 2013-2014 SFAC request.
Action steps and comments are as follows:**

- A. Action Step One. Increase participation by UH faculty and staff in the Campus Contact Network (CCN). Seek to reach 200 subscribers by Spring, 2013 with continued growth beyond the academic year.

Comment: This objective was not achieved due to a malfunction in the database program that supports CCN. Faculty and staff users continue to subscribe to the service, however, email address changes and departures were not accounted for. Thus, when expired addresses were purged in spring, 2013, a total of 129 faculty and staff subscribers remained. That number is currently at 162 confirmed subscribers. Steps are in place to ensure the subscriber emails are kept current.

Strategic Initiative 6: Create and engage in strategic partnerships.

- B. Action Step Two. Increase from 250 to 300 the number of mentors in the University Career Advisory Network (UCAN).

Comment: The number of mentors/volunteers who have signed on with UCAN is currently at 564. The increase in numbers is attributed to the merging of UCAN with the social networking site LinkedIn, giving community members easier access to this advising and mentoring tool. There is an average of about 1600 monthly followers to the site.

Strategic Initiative 1: Create new opportunities for student success through learning, engagement, and discovery.

- C. Action Step Three. Maintain and exceed scores of 4.5 (5.0 scale) on career counseling and workshop follow-up surveys.

Comment. UCS career counselors have received student/alumni satisfaction scores averaging in excess of 4.7 for individual counseling sessions and 4.5 for career development workshops.

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- D. Action Step Four. Conduct a program evaluation of the Ambassador Program during spring semester, 2013 to determine the effectiveness and future viability of the program.

Comment. A thorough program evaluation of the (then) new Ambassador Program was completed in spring, 2013. Among the findings was the broad extent to which UCS Ambassadors complemented and extended UCS services through, among other avenues, presentations for student organizations and orientation groups, assistance in organizing and promoting career fairs, and the development of handout materials and flyers. UCS is strongly committed to the continuation of the Ambassador Program as a result of the program evaluation.

Strategic Initiative 1: Create new opportunities for student success through learning, engagement, and discovery.

- E. Action Step Five. Incorporate modifications to UCS follow-up surveys to capture counselor, workshop, and campus recruitment assessment data.

Comment. A revised and updated UCS assessment plan has been completed and awaits IT support for implementation. Existing assessments include intake and post-event questionnaires addressing student/alumni ease of scheduling an appointment, knowledge and friendliness of the career counselor, whether the client would recommend the counselor to others, and demographic data. The updated format retains these features and expands on learning outcomes and the understanding of career planning concepts, including how the choice of major relates to a possible career path, how individual interests, values, and skills relate to career choice, and understanding the benefits and limitations of vocational assessment instruments.

Strategic Initiative 4: Develop a culture of innovation and accountability in the redesign of Division policies, processes, and procedures.

- F. Action Step Six. Determine if the Corporate Sponsorship Program can be extended and/or enhanced to help defray the costs of career/job fairs, the Career Success Series, and other UCS events and projects, while assisting employer entities in promoting their brands on the UH campus.

Comment. In coordination with University Advancement, UCS has expanded its Corporate Sponsorship Program. Four levels of sponsorships are available, offering employers a range of options and benefits. Employers have responded by supporting career fairs and the Career Success Series of seminars and workshops. Other examples of support include donations for food at UCS events, alumni scholarships, and recognition plaques. Participating employers are recognized with their logo on the UCS website, complementary job postings and resume searches, free Daily Cougar ads, and other benefits.

Strategic Initiative 6: Create and engage in strategic partnerships.

- G. Action Step Seven. Redesign the online Campus Recruitment Workshop module to facilitate ease of use.

Comment. The online Campus Recruitment module has been streamlined to enable users to complete the workshop in less time while ensuring that they gain an understanding of the required content. The text has been condensed, the user questions reduced from 10 to five, and the user questions have been changed from a true/false or multiple choice format to “I Understand” or “I Do Not Understand” dyad. For “I Do Not Understand” responses, users are redirected to re-read the corresponding text.

Strategic Initiative 4: Develop a culture of innovation and accountability in the redesign of Division policies, processes, and procedures.

IV. Please discuss the means that you are utilizing to evaluate both your success in achieving the aforementioned objectives and their importance as compared to other objectives that you might pursue. Where data exist, discuss the number of persons served by each of your programs. Please provide the method for collecting these data.

The means of evaluating departmental objectives include student and employer satisfaction surveys; the use of intake forms to track the number of users by: the type of service requested, student classification, and academic major; client surveys following all counseling sessions; JOBank follow-up survey (employers); the Campus Recruitment Survey (employers); informal feedback; University-coordinated surveys; and professional assessments based on observation and anecdotal information. The results of these analyses served the evaluation and planning functions for University Career Services in 2012-2013.

With reference to the importance of the objectives that the unit has pursued, the weight of evidence affirms that the objectives outlined above, as well as those articulated for FY2015, are consistent with the mission and goals of the unit and of the University. The defining and prevailing goals of UCS are: 1) to make job vacancy, resume referral, and job interview services as efficient, effective, and accessible as possible for both job candidates and private sector entities, and 2) to assist UH students and alumni in career assessment and career decision-making. These objectives are relevant and realistic given the unit's resource base.

The following presents an overview of selected critical user indices:

A. There were 18,870 job postings received by JOBank and JobScan in 2012-2013. The majority of job postings are from local employers and most are targeted specifically to UH job candidates. UCS offers links to national and international job posting services as well.

B. The JOBank program automatically forwards an e-mail survey questionnaire to employers one week after their job postings expire. Approximately 50 percent of survey respondents report that they hired a UH student as a result of their posting and approximately 93.6 percent indicate that they will use JOBank again when they have a hiring need.

C. There were 146,496 log-ons to the UCS website by 13,108 different users.

D. The number of job search/career development workshops conducted at UCS in 2012-2013 was 230. The majority of these workshops were for resume writing, interview preparation, choosing a major, preparation for campus recruitment, how to work a career fair, and organizing a job search.

E. UCS conducted an additional 99 workshops outside of UCS facilities in 2012-2013 for classes, student organizations, community groups, and in other settings. Some of these workshops were custom-designed for campus organizations.

F. An additional 91 presentations were made during the reporting period by UCS staff for campus events, including career panels in academic departments, student orientations, transfer student orientations, international student orientations, Cougar Previews, Honors College functions, and other events and venues. A total of 8,851 individuals (students, alumni, parents, faculty, staff) attended events in this latter category.

G. The number of individuals served in individual counseling sessions in 2012-2013 was 3,864; an additional 1,001 individuals were served in career development workshops; 779 completed the on-line workshop module for campus recruitment; 996 students and alumni attended the Texas Job Fair which is co-sponsored by UCS; 810 students attended Campus Jobs for Coogs; 605 students attended the Summer Jobs Fair; 407 students attended the Internship Career Fair; and 754 UH alumni attended the Alumni Mixer and Alumni Job Fairs. The grand total of individuals served in counseling sessions and workshops, job fair attendance is 9,216. The above represents a major portion of events in which UCS participated.

H. Registration with UCS is categorized as either "Express" or "Full." Express registration enables students and alumni to receive email notice of new job postings related to their interests; Full registration requires the uploading of at least one resume and it makes resumes available to employers who search online. The number of express registrants, September 1, 2012 to October 24, 2013 was 10,838; the number of individuals in the full registration category was 3,732. Total registrants: 13,770.

I. There were 235 corporate recruitment visits in 2012-2013, resulting in 307 interview schedules and 2,055 on-campus interviews.

J. There were 119 resume searches and 1,969 resumes retrieved by employers through the on-line resume search service during 2012-2013.

K. There were 1,528 on-campus Work-Study positions and 341 off-campus Work-Study positions posted through UCS in 2012-2013.

L. There were 999 internship opportunities posted by 718 employers in 2012-2013. One-to-one career counseling sessions served 496 students interested in internship opportunities.

M. Interfolio continues to be a convenient service for graduate students applying for academic jobs, undergraduates applying to graduate school, and teaching candidates applying for teaching jobs. This service enables writers of letters of recommendation to reproduce and edit these documents. Letter writers can track for whom they have written letters and where the letters were sent. As of October, 2013, there were 65 new student/alumni users of Interfolio during 2012-2013 and 451 continuing users.

N. National recognition: 1) University Career Services was ranked 18th nationally among the “25 Most Popular College Career Services Departments on Social Media in 2013.” Rankings were compiled by a national media research and marketing company. 2) A UCS publication, “Career Visions,” was highlighted at a National Association of Employers and Colleges (NACE) national institute as an example of a “Best Practices” marketing tool. 3) A UCS *Daily Cougar* advertisement, developed jointly by UCS and *Daily Cougar* staff members, won first place in a national competition of advertisers in collegiate newspapers.

O. UCS collects satisfaction data from students, alumni, and employers. Student and alumni data are collected via e-mail surveys forwarded to each counseling client one week following the respective counseling session. The survey queries such items as appointment scheduling, how well questions and/or concerns were addressed by the counselor, level of knowledge and friendliness displayed by the counselor, and whether the client would recommend the counselor to others. The results are tabulated by counselor name, client’s college or degree, and purpose of visit as determined by completion of an intake form. The combined score for counselors is consistently in the 4.7+ range on a five point Likert scale (five = high). Workshop participants gave UCS workshop facilitators a rating of 4.5+ on the same scale.

P. The Campus Recruitment Survey is administered to employers who utilize the campus recruitment service. A one-page questionnaire is inserted into employers’ information and resume packets and employers are asked to leave the completed questionnaires with UCS at the end of the day. The questionnaire contains questions on services, student preparedness, the UH curriculum (as it relates to employers’ needs), and the job performance of UH alumni. As for UCS services, questionnaire responses are consistently over 97 percent favorable.

V. Question. Please discuss any budget changes from that which you requested from SFAC, their impact on your programs, and your reasons for implementing them.

The following changes impacted the UCS budget in 2012-2013:

A. UCS continues to seek and receive funding from external sources with the objective of reducing its reliance on Student Service Fees. As documented in its current SFAC financial report, UCS received during the previous year \$3000 in corporate gifts; \$102,098 in generated income; and a \$60,000 Federal grant. With more employers utilizing job postings and career fairs as cost-effective avenues from which to recruit new college graduates, UCS realized a 32.9 percent increase in generated income over the previous year.

B. As noted above, UCS has received \$60,000 for FY 2013 from the US Department of Education for the continued administration of the Job Location and Development (JLD) program. This Federal program allows college and university career centers to use a portion of an institution's Work-Study monies to develop off-campus job opportunities for students. The grant is used, in part, to support salaries and operating expenses for the JOBank and JobScan programs. UCS's participation in the JLD program generated \$2,680,474 in student wages for 2012-2013, the equivalent of \$1,177 per each of the 2,277 students placed through the program.

C. As a means to support UCS career counselors who are in the process of completing the requirements for licensure (Professional Licensed Counselor), the unit budgeted \$5000 to help defray costs of supervision and consultation with a certified LPC. State of Texas requirements call for a total of 3000 hours of supervision with 1,500 direct and 1,500 indirect hours. The rate, typically, is for one hour of supervision per work week. UCS will continue its commitment to the professional development of career counselors into FY2014 to ensure that students are served by highly qualified and skilled career counselors.

VI. List 2013-2014 action steps in priority order.

- A. Capitalize on the surge of interest in, and the success of, the social media initiatives launched by University Career Services, including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Pinterest. Track utilization rates and user expectations to modify/expand social media services accordingly.

Strategic Initiative 2: Actualize and leverage the fiscal, human, technological, and facility resources that enhance the student experience.

- B. Collaborate with Student Housing and Residential Life to launch the Passport Program, providing incentives for students to become involved with career counseling, job search, and other campus student development programs.

Strategic Initiative 6: Create and engage in strategic partnerships.

- C. Coordinate each semester with Registration and Academic Records to obtain the roster of students who have applied for graduation. Communicate with this unique population to extend and offer career planning services as they prepare for their transition to the work world and/or professional or graduate school. The Assistant Director for Alumni Career Services will develop specific workshops and counseling services to help address this need.

Strategic Initiative 6: Create and engage in strategic partnerships.

- D. Explore the interest of individual colleges for on-site resume critique sessions for students. As interest warrants, tables will be set up at strategic locations and dates and times advertised for these services.

Strategic Initiative 1: Create new opportunities for student success through learning, engagement, and discovery.

- E. Conduct as a pilot program a “speed interviewing” seminar in which students and employers participate in brief mock interview sessions, followed by feedback from employers as to students’ strengths and weaknesses. Determine the interest and feasibility in conducting similar sessions each semester, or in alternate semesters.

Strategic Initiative 1: Create new opportunities for student success through learning, engagement, and discovery.

- F. Complete and implement the Campus Recruitment assessment plan, to be administered at the conclusion of fall semester, 2013.

Strategic Initiative 4: Develop a culture of innovation and accountability in the redesign of Division policies, processes, and procedures.

VII. What are the other possible sources of funding available to your unit and what efforts are being made to access them?

The current sources of funding for the unit are as follows: SFAC annual allocations; corporate/foundation gifts; government grants; and generated income from user fees. Each of these sources is detailed in the financial section of this report. JOBank postings, resume searches, and alumni career services continue to provide revenue sources, although these sources are affected substantially by general job market and economic conditions. As noted, there was a 32.9 percent increase in generated income during the past year and the unit expects the upward trend to continue into the 2013-2014 fiscal year.

VIII. Describe any overlap between your unit and any other unit(s) providing services to students.

Career counseling and advising is, and should be, available at multiple points of student contact, including academic advising sessions, personal counseling sessions, student/faculty conferences, student employment offices, Work-Study offices, career services offices, and other offices where qualified assistance is available. This unit has supported, with personnel and materials, the availability of career advising services in multiple locations on this campus. UCS does not advocate for the needless duplication of campus services, but it does support initiatives where strides can be realized in the accessibility, integration, and reinforcement of career development services.

Concomitantly, if the career development needs of students are to be adequately addressed, it is generally recognized that a strong, collaborative, central career services operation is highly desirable. The centralized model for undergraduate students is embraced by over 88 percent of colleges and universities in the U.S. The administration of career services within one centralized unit enables the institution to capitalize on the

synergy between the inter-related services of career decision-making, vocational assessment, internships, co-operative education, student employment, and graduating student/alumni job search services. In such an environment, students can more easily navigate from service-to-service as their goals and objectives achieve clarity. There is no question that a central location helps to increase familiarity and accessibility for students, and that a unifying institutional philosophy of career development (sorely lacking at the University of Houston) helps to ensure continuity at all stages of students' career growth. As for relations with the external community, it is well established that potential employers strongly prefer the "one-stop shop" model in setting up recruitment and interview schedules for the purpose of hiring college-level job candidates.

Within these constructs, the need for close coordination between a centralized career services operation and academic departments and schools cannot be overstated. University Career Services will continue to embrace in philosophy and in practice, a model that incorporates the demonstrated institutional advantages of an efficient, centralized service together with the best features of college-based models.

APPENDIX 1.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

UNIVERSITY CAREER SERVICES UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON FY2014

