

# Insight into Impressive Practices in Career Services: A Reference Guide

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## Introduction

*Insight into Impressive Practices in Career Services: A Reference Guide* is the second of two reports summarizing the findings of a CERIC-funded study that sought to establish the importance publicly funded universities and colleges place on the provision of career development services and to highlight particularly impressive models of career service provision across the country.

Specifically, CERIC's interest in conducting this study was two-fold:

1. To understand the landscape of career service models across Canada
2. To examine the level of institutional commitment to the provision of career services

The study utilized a three-stage, mixed-methods research design consisting of: i) an online survey targeting selected Career Services staff in all Canadian English and French-language colleges and universities, ii) a content analysis of all college and university Career Services web sites to augment the information collected via the web survey and iii) targeted in-depth on-site interviews with Career Services staff at those institutions identified as having an 'impressive' model of service. Findings for parts i) and ii) were summarized in the report entitled *Insight into Canadian Post-Secondary Career Service Models* available on the CERIC website.

This report expands on part iii) of the research design and summarizes the results of interviews with career services staff at fifteen Canadian postsecondary institutions that

scored above the mean on an Impressive Model Scale. The findings are presented below in two parts. The first consists of specific themes identified via content analysis of responses made by the fifteen institutions to selected interview questions. The second, Institutional Profiles, summarizes the key characteristics of the career services model at each of the institutions and information on up to three 'best practices' provided by participants.

The purpose of this report is to highlight the policies and practices Canadian college and university career services practitioners have developed in institutions seen as having an impressive model of career services delivery.

## Methods

The data used for this report were derived from focus groups held at institutions identified as having an impressive model of career services. The responses of career services staff at fifteen institutions were reviewed to identify common themes associated with the areas explored in the interviews. The protocol used to identify institutions having an impressive model of career services is explained briefly in Appendix A. Readers who wish more detail on the calculation of the Impressive Model Scale should refer to the CERIC publication titled *Insight into Canadian Post-Secondary Career Service Models* available on the CERIC web site. The list of institutions and their Impressive Model Scale score is provided in Appendix B.

## Site Visits and Interviews

Site visits with interviews of career services staff were conducted at fifteen institutions scoring above the mean on the Impressive Model Scale. Visits included institutions scoring at the mean, one-half, and one standard deviation above the mean to identify any differences as a function of score. Interviews, with a total of 47 career services staff, lasted between 90-120 minutes following the protocol provided in Appendix C. The objective of these interviews was to,

- Describe the key components of their model
- Describe the historical development of the model
- Identify champion(s) who facilitated development and implementation
- Identify barriers to model development and strategies to overcome these
- Identify funding challenges, if any, and strategies to overcome these
- Identify development and implementation strategies utilized when creating the model

The overall goal of the interviews was to obtain detailed information on the characteristics, development, and implementation of impressive models so that these might inform the efforts of career services practitioners at other institutions who might wish to emulate a model.

## Extracting Themes

The process to extract common themes for areas explored in the interviews began by aggregating responses to each interview question across all institutions. The authors then independently reviewed the transcripts to identify common words and phrases with their frequency of occurrence. These independent lists were then compared, discussed and summarized to arrive at consistent labels for each theme.

## Findings

The findings of this study are presented in two parts. The first consists of themes extracted from the transcripts of responses made during the focus groups conducted at the fifteen institutions. This is followed by a section that provides brief profiles of each institution, key descriptors of their service, and a description of what staff viewed as some of their best practices.

## Themes from Interviews

Eight interview questions were examined to identify themes or specific characteristics that many of the institutions had in common. The focus group questions asked about the characteristics of their career services model, the historical background, institutional commitment to career development services, and barriers encountered when trying to implement the model. Funding issues, the extent to which career-focused curriculum

was embedded at the institution, types of outcome measures tracked and the tactics and strategies used to realize an impressive model were also explored.

## Characteristics of Models

To obtain a fulsome understanding of the career services model in place at each

immediately provide a succinct label or name for their model. Rather, they typically used a variety of terms to describe how they operated and the tactics they employed to achieve their goals.

Interviewees also discussed the overall philosophy of their model, the ways in which they felt it was unique and their aspirations for future development. A review of the transcripts

| Institution                        | Key descriptor   |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Bow Valley College:                | Centralized One-Stop Model                               |
| Centennial College                 | Three-Stage Model (engage, prepare, connect)             |
| Conestoga College:                 | Integrated Model   |
| Dalhousie University:              | Psychological Model                                      |
| Fanshawe College:                  | Open Doors Model   |
| Mohawk College:                    | Advising/Coaching Model                                  |
| Mount Royal University:            | Centralized Work Experience/Career Development           |
| Mount Saint Vincent University:    | Centralized Career/Employment Services Model             |
| Nova Scotia Community College:     | Holistic/Lifespan Focus Model                            |
| Queens University:                 | Efficiency Model   |
| Ryerson University:                | Three-Pillar Model (curricular, co-curricular, personal) |
| Simon Fraser University:           | Partnership Model  |
| St. Francis Xavier University:     | Personal Development/Reflective Model                    |
| University of Toronto-Mississauga: | Skills Development Model/ "Teach How to Fish"            |
| Wilfrid Laurier University:        | Comprehensive Career-Integrated Learning Model           |

institution, interviewees were asked: How would you describe your 'model' of career services? What policies, processes and resources are key to meeting the needs of students? Are there additional developments necessary or planned in order to more effectively meet student need? In the majority cases respondents did not

from all institutions in response to this question revealed striking commonalities. Table 1 shows the five main themes extracted from the interviews and the frequency of occurrence for the fifteen institutions.

## Partnerships

The dominant theme, mentioned by twelve of the fifteen institutions, was the importance of establishing relationships with campus stakeholders. In addition, six of the seven institutions that scored above one standard deviation on the Impressive Model Scale, stressed relationship building as a key to the success of their department. These relationships took various forms including partnerships with other campus services as well as collaborating on service delivery. An example of collaboration was provided by one institution.

*The second thing is relationships. Collaborative structures and integration; those two are related, but I think there's something to be said that relationships themselves are the foundation, and how we do things, we do them very much with collaboration and integration. The relationships are important because that's how you both know what other people need, and you build your credibility with them and their trust in you; you're the place that they want to work with.*

**Table 1: Themes Related to Model**

### Descriptions

| Theme                             | N  |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Partner/Collaborate/Relationships | 12 |
| In Strategic Plan                 | 9  |
| Co-located with other services    | 9  |
| Responsive/Meet Needs             | 8  |
| Proactive/Outreach                | 7  |

Partnerships were also seen as a way to increase the impact of small departments.

*I think one of the other resources that is key to our success are the partnerships that we have with our in-college partners. So, other services, academics, we have amazing partnerships with different groups throughout the college that support things that we do.*

***Developing relationships and partnerships with in-college partners was the key to success***

Partnerships were seen to be a means whereby career services could increase contact with students and improve their visibility on campus.

*Partnership-oriented, developing partnerships around the campus. So we try to get to where the students are. And we do that by building partnerships with faculty, with administrative offices, like residences and alumni and all of those.*

The importance of developing partnerships on campus was operationalized in one university with the strategic decision to create the role of Career Outreach Consultant. The rationale for this was based on the often quoted phrase that “If everyone’s responsible, no one’s responsible”. Holding one person accountable means the work gets done.

*Her role is to work with a lot of the faculty and staff in the different departments as well as student associations, to partner with them on whatever they want to do during the year. As part of all of that feedback we’ve heard from, we know that we want to focus on certain areas.*

Several interviewees mentioned that while relationship development was important, the reality was that more often than not the task was about relationship management.

*Once you’ve got that, and you know how often people change at universities, senior leadership in particular, so just keeping those relationships.*

*And just to follow up on that remark is one change in the structure of the faculty or the personnel within the faculty and things can go south. So that relationship building is also relationship maintenance and it’s also ... I mean, it’s always happening, changing. Different deans....*

## Strategic Plan

Nine institutions, or 60% of the focus groups, discussed the importance of the institutional

strategic plan as a touchstone when developing programming or a framework to guide the development of the career services’ own strategic plan.

*Career Services, for us as an institution is so closely aligned with our mission. Our mission is educating students for career success and our book of commitments around our strategic plan really makes this a priority.*

One institution was very intentional about engaging campus stakeholders when developing their own departmental strategic plan.

*All of our services have really been strategically developed. So about 10 years ago we really started focusing on a strategic plan and we involved all stakeholders in terms of defining what that strategic plan would be so that we could meet the needs of every student on the campus*

## Co-Location

While almost two-thirds (60%) of the institutions were co-located with other services, this varied considerably by institution. One characterized their model as a ‘one-stop’.

*We’re co-located, technically, with six or so other student services. We’re co-located with many, and we have a centralized reception; able to provide students with that kind of triage system*

*and accessibility to a variety of services at one time.*

The model that tended to dominate was co-location of career services with co-op services. In some cases this simply involved the two services being in close physical proximity but with separate administrative structures. In other cases both services reported within the same organizational unit, typically Student Services.

One unique model, characterized as being a 'cooperative' model, was described as having all employment services under one manager; community employment services, cooperative education, entrepreneurialism, and career services. According to the Director, the advantage of this structure was that for clients, both students and employers, there was 'No Wrong Door'. It was a one-stop shop.

### ***Be Responsive/Meet Needs***

The corollaries of building relationships, as expressed by interviewees, were being responsive and meeting needs. Again, almost two thirds of institutions mentioned the notion of being responsive to the needs of campus stakeholders. This was seen to be very important in two ways. First, acknowledging and responding to feedback from clients helped to ensure service quality. As one interviewee stated:

*Whatever's working, we continue but if I find that the feedback from the students or the feedback from the employers is "that didn't quite work so well", then we try to put our heads together and come*

*up with something more creative, more fun. Part of it, we try to make the Career Centre look like a fun place, a cool place.*

Another institution described the focus of their ongoing efforts to demonstrate the value of what they do and therefore gain support on campus.

*It's been about building relationships and building trust and faith in that we understand the distinct needs of programs and we appreciate them, and we're going to take the time to develop things that are tailored to what their students' needs are, and value that.*

Partnerships were also seen as a springboard to engage other campus groups, especially faculty, to promote the perception of career services as something more than 'resumes and cover letters'.

*A little over four years ago my number one mission was to be everybody's best partner, everybody on campus. That model has helped the creation, the delivery and the acceptance by faculty members of what the Career Centre is doing. We want to be there to meet their needs, whatever they are.*

Second, and most importantly, being responsive to the needs of campus stakeholders keeps services relevant and helps to secure buy-in.

*The focus of our model is always on the individual. We are very concerned that every student's individual needs are met*



*around career development. And so we do a lot of work with appointments, individual appointments. We customize a lot of our programming and we target a lot of our programming to specific audiences*

## Proactive/Outreach

Just over half of the institutions cited the importance of being “proactive” in the delivery of services. One college said,

*We’re a travelling roadshow. So, for instance, we would have promo tables in high traffic areas on campus where we have fun, engaging activities with the students. We will have a “spin to win” wheel, so they’ll come and it could be a prize that’s listed on the slots on the wheel or it could be numbers that pertain to different types of questions, career planning or job search to both educate them on what we offer in the Career Centre but also to get them to think “Oh there are these things I should be doing in my job search.”*

Having handouts and “swag” for give-away were also seen as being effective in leveraging participation.

A frequent comment from the web survey participants who had attempted a new initiative that failed was that students simply did not show up for the event. One interviewee expressed her frustration with this by saying,

*It’s a lot of time spent trying to get*

*students to come do something. I want to stop doing that completely, and deliver things without having to force students to get there. Just be where they are.*

Another institution echoed this sentiment simply.

*So we try to reach students on their turf in some way, creating the visibility.*

The solution to student participation, it seems, is reflected in the comments regarding the importance of building partnerships. Collaborating with other campus stakeholders, such as faculty, can significantly increase the audience for career services programming.

*If instead we think about, how do we reach all students in ways that are easy for them because they’re embedded in things they’re already doing, we’ll be able to reach far more people in a more efficient way.*

## Historical Background

In order to obtain a sense of how these models developed over time, focus groups were asked the following: *From an historical perspective, what have been the most critical changes you’ve seen over the past decade in the provision of career services at your institution? Has there been a specific individual that has championed the development of your model?*

A review of the transcripts from all focus groups showed there were very few themes common to all institutions. Rather, each institution had a

relatively unique history driven by location, size, and organizational structure. A few institutions did share similar experiences, however.

The first was the fact that the development of a robust career services department appeared to be relatively recent in many institutions, typically between 2008 and 2011. Prior to that period, a co-op department was present in many institutions, but the career services department of the present day with a focus on career development was less common. The full-service career services department present in most colleges and universities today seems to have developed in the past decade or so.

*Reach students in ways that are easy for them because they're embedded in things they're already doing*

A second feature that occurred in several institutions was that the creation of the career services department often coincided with a trigger event. These varied by institution but included such events as the creation of a retention committee, the development of a new strategic plan or the advent of interest in experiential learning on campus. The relationship between the new career services department and co-op services also varied by institution. In some cases the two were integrated under one umbrella service while in others, career services was integrated with other student services, such as counselling, most often under a student services umbrella. When asked whether there was a specific champion for the development of their service,

a few pointed to the previous director who was a visionary leader with a specific view of what career services should be, and worked hard to make that happen. In other cases, interviewees referenced a Vice President or Dean of Students who championed the development.

In a few occasions focus groups mentioned the impact of the economic downturn, the phenomenon of precarious employment, the debate surrounding the value of a university degree and, most importantly, that the media coverage of these issues prompted institutional efforts in supporting the career development of postsecondary students.

## Institutional Commitment

Interviewees were asked: *How would you describe your institution's current commitment to the provision of career services? What are the factors that contribute to this? Is there a strategic plan/academic plan that speaks to career development?*

Four major themes became evident when discussing institutional commitment to career services. First, that the majority of the institutions, 12 of 15, saw their activity closely aligned with the strategic documents/directions of the institution, and perceived this as extremely important to the continued viability of their services particularly in "embedding career education across the student experience." Five of the top seven institutions on the Impressive Model Scale volunteered that their institution and senior administration was committed to the career development of students.



Second, there was a high and sustained support for career services from students and their parents and increased government expectation that postsecondary educational institutions prepare students for the realities of the current economy. Third, despite what most see as a growing value placed on career education, the need to still “win over” some faculty and academic leaders requires attention. Finally, senior management is was seen as sympathetic to career services, but because of competing priorities across the institution in what most describe as an underfunded system, staffing and resource increases are often not forthcoming.

### ***Alignment with Strategic Plan***

Two thirds of the impressive institutions described their department activity as closely aligned with the strategic documents of the institution. Many see this is possible from a growing recognition, particularly with larger research-oriented universities, that the student service side of the house generally, and career services more specifically, are providing valuable supports that contribute to student persistence, resulting in improved retention and academic success.

***Aligning with the institution's business and strategic plans leverages credibility and commitment***

Key informants described different ways that this alignment occurs within their institutions. Some focused on simply ensuring their services

aligned with an existing strategic plan while others expended a good deal of effort to create staff “buy-in” when developing their own strategic plan. Some developed a plan as part of a broader “divisional plan”.

*I think it was fundamental when they wrote it into the business plan. That was a huge move to make it a realistic service. The business plan is part of Vision 2020 and then our strategic plan, as well. Career Services, career development, is written in there, but it also refers to the career development of our staff.*

Some focus groups described an intentional strategy that involved active participation on campus committees, especially academic program committees in order to solidify relationships and identify needs to be met. Satisfying these needs was seen to provide legitimacy for current service provision and essential to making a credible business case when asking for increased resources. This was particularly important given survey results that showed all of the impressive institutions anticipated an increased demand for career services over the next five years.

It would be fair to say that both colleges and universities have taken a more holistic view of the needs of students over the last decade, linking career clarity with increased mental health and wellness and academic success, and this emphasis was reflected in the strategic documents of many institutions. Although not often involved in meeting with “prospective students”, resources produced by Career

Services like “major maps” and graduate survey results are used extensively by those involved in recruitment. Institutions are much more likely to see it as within their mandate to support students as they negotiate the “life stage” events that happen during the educational journey (i.e., choosing a major, academic failure, transitioning to different programs); supporting students by providing “high impact” activities within their programs of study which emphasize “experiential learning” and; actively coaching students by helping them choose co-op placements, part-time jobs and summer jobs that complement their studies. Many of the university-based services particularly mentioned a shift to helping students learn the career value of their degrees, whereas previously it was assumed that having a degree was enough to guarantee success in career and in life. One Director summed up her institution’s commitment by saying;

*Our Centre’s vision is for all students to be engaged in career development as an integral part of the [university] experience... it doesn’t say we have a responsibility to find you a job because we don’t. We have a responsibility to help students develop the skills that they can use for a lifetime to manage their career.*

One college cited the obligation of preparing a student to be “future ready”, described as an alignment between the student’s education and the demands of the labour market. The reality of “lifelong learning” was also reflected in that graduates can access most career services for

a number of years after graduation with some schools offering access for life. One Director summed up the integral role career services plays at her institution:

*Graduate employment and ultimately the impact on enrolment and institutional reputation... that drives current commitment to support career services at our institution.*

## **Labour Market Context**

A number of focus group participants suggested that increased interest and commitment to career services was, in part, a function of media coverage related to the current labour market. Students and their parents alike recognize the importance of a postsecondary education and the real difficulty in securing employment in the current economy.

*Back in the day, school was enough, and I think that sometimes there’s a demographic that believes that if you just get out there and look for a job, you will get one. We teach the “research skills” that you need ... They get the skills, but looking for work is a whole other ball game.*

Gone are the days when simply having a credential from a postsecondary institution (even a prestigious one) is a guarantee of a job. Across the board, colleges and universities have to field “an increasing number of questions from prospective students and their parents

about career outcomes and career support” that will justify the sizeable investment required to attend a postsecondary institution. Student emphasis on the career outcomes of a postsecondary education was also a topic when discussing how career services were funded. In schools where a significant percentage of career services funding came from student fees, convincing students to support career services was not a hard sell. They inherently saw the value of career education.

*...we did a survey with our incoming first-year students, and 97% of those students who responded told us they came to [our university] for a better and/or higher paying job when they graduated. For me, that means that's my mandate. We have to design a service for students that supports them in that mission. Parents were articulating the same thing. That becomes a reality that we cannot avoid anymore.*

A number of institutions also mentioned government interest in more career-oriented educational approaches. Pressured by various stakeholders to deal with high levels of student indebtedness, high youth unemployment rates and newer realities of precarious employment, governments are seen to value educational institutions that provide more “experiential learning experiences” within their programs and graduate students in fields that better match the vocational requirements (both “hard” and “soft” skills) of the current economy.

## ***Engaging Faculty and Staff***

*We're somewhat confident of institutional commitment because... there's more awareness that there's career services for students. But, I think there's still a lot of work that needs to be done in terms of encouraging the different Schools and faculties to focus on us as being the space and place for learners.*

Generally, the career services staff interviewed described an environment receptive to their services, but this was almost always qualified by saying “we still have a way to go.” As mentioned previously, many of the career services professionals emphasized the critical importance of developing and maintaining relationships within the institution, particularly with faculty who can facilitate and support access to their students. Because there is what one Director described as an “inherent mistrust of anything vocational” in larger, research-oriented universities, many emphasized the need to continually educate faculty and administrators on career development from the mundane (the difference between a resume and a CV) to the comprehensive spectrum of career development activities. One Director observed that educating involves:

*...appealing to professors by saying we love the academic environment and that we can actually strengthen the value of that in people's perceptions and we are professional, using evidence based practice.*

Another Director re-iterated this point by saying that they consciously avoid mentioning resumes and interview preparation. Instead, “we deliberately keep our conversations ‘high level’ with faculty” and emphasize that the services provided are evidence-based and contribute to retention and academic success.

In the college system, there generally appears to be more receptivity to the value of career development, but the issue of access by career staff to students within the classroom has more to do with time. One college Director observed that “faculty are generally supportive, but they have tons of curriculum to cram in, so class time is precious”. Taking leadership opportunities and “staying on the radar” of senior leadership was another strategy to “win over” faculty and administration:

*...our commitment is staying current, staying important, being on the radar of the senior leadership in the [institution], both academic and student services, and profiling the ambassadors that we have as a result of the services we’ve provided. This year for example, we took over... a mentorship program where alumni are matched with students, and it was struggling. And so I went to the alumni person, the leader, administrator, and said ‘why don’t you let us take over the student recruitment part of the mentorship program, and alumni services can look after the mentor recruitment?’ And this year they’ve had the most matches. They’ve quadrupled the number*

*of matches they’ve had because of that synergy, that partnership, that sharing, that trust.*

Almost half of the institutions visited commented that support from senior administration may not necessarily be accompanied by increased staff or resources.

*...we’re a small institution; you have to look at priorities. I don’t necessarily see a commitment on the resource side... so I’m saying they’re committed, just not with resources or money.*

Another Director observed that “academics are more likely to think of co-op before they think of career services, and therefore see co-op as more valuable.” This again emphasizes the need to make a strong business case for “anything career services asks for”. It’s a process of “getting buy in, showing evidence and securing investment” within an institutional environment where there are a number of competing interests vying for finite resources.

## Barriers to Implementation

Career services staff at each of the 15 institutions were asked the following: Have there been specific barriers that have hindered or slowed the development of your model? If so, how were these overcome?

Table 2 shows that two main barriers were cited most frequently. As with results from the online survey, a lack of resources, whether financial, human resources or time was mentioned

by two thirds of those interviewed. Some highlighted the impact of a sluggish economy and the influence this had on the provincial treasury. When times were tight, as they were post-2008, postsecondary institutions felt the impact in terms of their ability to hire new staff and increase the menu of services offered.

**Table 2: Barriers to Implementation**

| Barrier                               | N  |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Resources (money, people, time)       | 10 |
| Faculty/Staff attitudes/<br>knowledge | 8  |

The second most frequently mentioned barrier related to the knowledge of and attitudes toward career services on the part of faculty and staff on campus.

*I think ignorance among staff, if I may add. Even staff who have been here for a long time, even within say, a Student Affairs department, they don't really know exactly what we do, or they refer, they give the wrong information to students about what we do,*

*I think a lot of people would say in general in our profession, there's a lack of understanding of what career development is.*

*Some on campus do not understand career development and believe it's just about resumes, cover letters and getting a job*

Resistance to change can also come from within career services staff in terms of how open they are to innovation and a different way of doing things. Staff at one institution commented on what was sometimes heard,

*Yeah, that's not my job. That's not the way we do that. That's how it's always been done. So, the lack of currency or commitment to currency and change, that was a barrier.*

The awareness of senior administration was also seen as a barrier in one institution.

*I would say awareness of senior leadership. Do they really know and understand the breadth of career development and the investment of good career development, and what it entails. Not because they don't want to, but because they're so busy*

Not surprisingly, strategies described as solutions to this lack of knowledge align very well with what interviewees said about key characteristics of their models. The most effective strategy was strategic partnerships.

*Trying to think strategically which departments on campus that there's a lot of synergies, in terms of what we do.*



*So, meeting with the faculty members, for example, to talk about what does the job fair for this upcoming year look like, what are the types of employers you would like to come to the job fair? Can you help us promote it to your graduate students so that they are prepared, or that we can come and do a prep workshop to prep them for the workshop but you can promote it?*

Interviewees also highlighted that some faculty can be resistant and this is a specific group that needs to support the work of career services. A lack of knowledge and understanding is also evident here.

*I believe that there are others that trivialize it and believe that it's ... like, you just ... it's just getting a job, right? It's just about resumes and cover letters,*

*...aside from the trivializing, I think fear is also ... on the academic side of the house, I think fear is also an element here. And fear of vocationalizing the academy if you have a career conversation with someone.*

Again, interviewees suggested that developing partnerships and collaborating on programs could help generate faculty buy-in.

*What I would identify is faculty resistance; what I learned over the years is you work with the faculty that are willing to work with you and then you've got some good examples to take to the others in terms of, you know, what that kind of collaboration*

*can result in.*

The notion of being proactive in developing partnerships with other groups on campus was expressed in a couple of ways. The first was identifying potential partners and reaching out.

*So, for example, reaching out to International Education, knowing that they have a focus on their own separate orientation, they put on their own separate little graduation event. So, inviting ourselves, asking, "Can I come in to promote Career Services?" early on, rather than at the end. So, just recently, they've started inviting us into their orientations. Now they're inviting us into their graduation party as well.*

A second perspective was seeing the various groups on campus who are resistant to career services as clients, and largely due to a lack of understanding. These clients needed educating.

*..to my earlier comment about who we see as our clients, these individuals are our clients in terms of our career educating of them around what the role and scope of our work is.*

A key strategy for doing this was to identify and promote the impact that career services has on students.

*Evidence-based, try to evaluate, show the numbers. Even in terms of our group programs, and down the road, our one-to-one services, to measure impact and do*

*a pre/post-evaluation to say these are the outcomes.*

*We need to start to measure the impact on people. What are the outcomes we want?*

*we have and those kinds of things and to be able to justify it. And I am always transparent about everything in terms of the money. Because I think building that trust with the students is really important.*

Student based funding was also seen to have some advantages.

*I think some of the advantages of student funding for our services is there's a whole sense of accountability, the accountability to the student themselves, and the expectation that they will get service.*

*But it's not a really difficult sell. They get it, yeah But I give them, like I give them stats, I give them everything we have to sort of demonstrate usage and – I give them, you know, five or six year reviews of the growth in programs and service delivery by populations.*

## Funding Sources and Issues

Sources of and difficulties with funding was one area of interest in profiling the key features of institutions with impressive models. To explore this in detail, focus groups were asked: Have there been challenges around funding for your model development? If so, how were these overcome?

Ten of the fifteen institutions received at least part of their funding from student fees and six obtained 50% or more of their funding from this source. Other sources were institutional funding and fees paid by employers.

The institutions funded by student fees viewed the partnership very positively and indicated that their service might not exist were it not for the students' commitment. They also emphasized that they were accountable to their student association and took this very seriously.

*...when you're funded 50% by the student body you need to be accountable, you need to be transparent.*

*...we have to meet with the student government, you know, to present our budgets and any additional requests*

One institution highlighted the potential disadvantage of funding entirely from the institutional operational budget. In this case the level of investment depended on the commitment of the vice provost to student career development. There was a period when this commitment was very low and the career services department suffered severe cutbacks in staff and overall funding.

This particular case highlighted a point made by many of the focus groups when it came to securing funding. Many suggested a two-pronged approach; connecting to the

institutional strategic plan and demonstrating value.

*...now that we've got the strategic plans in place and these really aggressive five year goals, I think it's easier for me as an administrator to go and say to the college, here's how we're going to meet this goal, but here's what I need.*

*...is really aligning it, every opportunity where I can speak to the strategic priority of the college, and show the value-add. One of the things that going forward we are going to be doing more work on is measurement. Because if you can connect the dots to what's important to the college and if you can connect the dots to enrolment and the reputation.*

In highlighting the importance of demonstrating the value of career services one interviewee emphasized the importance of collecting outcomes information.

*...before we weren't really measuring anything, we were just using KPI's when they created our report card. And so I started reporting on an annual basis to the student union executive. I've now ...created a road show where I'm also reporting to the academic senior management team, the student services management team -- so all the student services managers. Anybody that'll listen to me, I'm there.*

One Director was also very explicit about the

importance of outcomes information to his strategy for funding services.

*...there's two ways that I've been successful in getting money, right. One is if it's- if it's directly in a mandate, in a memo from a vice-president or a president saying this is important to us. Or two, if I've got data to show that we're achieving the outcomes we set out to.*

*...we tell every faculty member, every associate dean, after every semester of the outcomes of those students.*

*So we have some legit evidence to say that there's value to this, and so when the president and the executive group are looking at things, we've got the data. And when you put the data right in the proposal things get funded a lot quicker.*

***Collect evidence to show there's value to career services and highlight these data at the budget table***

The themes that were common to the focus group narratives included creating partnerships, especially with student associations and measuring outcomes. The latter was not only important to demonstrating accountability but also in demonstrating the impact and value of career services to campus stakeholders.



## Development and Implementation Strategies

One of the goals of this report is to support the efforts of career services practitioners should they wish to evolve their services to become more like an impressive model. A key question posed to the focus groups, therefore, was: *What recommendations would you make re: development and implementation strategies for institutions wishing to adopt your model?*

The reader is reminded that, based on the input from practitioners in the field, institutions who were deemed to have an impressive model of career services delivery where those who were proactive, evaluated their services regularly, measured outcomes and collaborated with other campus stakeholders. It is not altogether surprising, therefore, that the five themes extracted from focus group responses to the above question parallel or reflect these four traits.

Table 3 lists the five main themes that were mentioned by one third or more of the institutions visited. The notion of relationship building was mentioned by 60% of the institutions and is consistent with what was found in transcripts reviewed for key descriptors of models. One institution expressed this succinctly.

*I always joke that our bread and butter, our number one most important thing is building relationships. The main theme of our last PD day team meeting was on relationship building, and us really*

*mapping out who are the different people we work with within the college, and how do those relationships impact us?*

Developing relationships with faculty in particular was a frequent comment.

*I think aligning with faculty, connecting to faculty. They're the ones that are the initial contact with students. They make the referral. If they've bought in and like what they're doing, they're going to connect. Whether it's in-class workshops or that one-on-one referral or even them asking for resources from us to support their curriculum, that's essential.*

Being purposeful in identifying critical relationships was also mentioned often.

*So we targeted the pockets within the institution. Sometimes when I think about ..... and the work she's done getting into faculty classrooms to do career support, one person at a time. It sounds really ineffective but really if you find one or two chairs, a program that brings you in and thanks you and tells two people and they tell two people.....*

**Table 3: Strategies for Model Development**

| Theme                    | N |
|--------------------------|---|
| Relationship building    | 9 |
| Collaborate-programming  | 9 |
| Meeting needs            | 7 |
| Demonstrate impact/value | 5 |
| Strategic plan + buy-in  | 5 |

Closely aligned to the theme of relationship building was the notion of collaborating on programming, also mentioned by 60% of institutions.

*..being a collaborator, being someone who seeks out those partnerships as a way to make things happen.*

Two caveats were mentioned around the notion of collaboration with others on campus. Both were related to the importance of support from senior levels of administration.

*..you have to have buy-in from up top, or you're not going to go, get anywhere. You also have to have a very vocal champion, which we have in our manager, to ensure that you are heard and you are seen.*

*..the big thing is I would say collaborate, and get support from whoever you report to and whoever they report to. And the same thing for your partners, make sure that the people you're partnering with have the ability to be able to commit to what you're doing.*

Mention was also made about the risk

associated with “doing things different” as it relates to securing senior support when collaborating with other departments.

*But the more senior level support the better, it helps to provide ... it will help to provide support to people who are going to be doing things different. And there's a lot of fear around doing things different.*

*I think that one of the biggest things going forward is you need to be able to own your failures. And so whoever you're partnering with needs to know they're not going to be thrown under the bus when things go pear shaped. Because they will, they will absolutely go pear shaped.*

One institution highlighted the importance of meeting campus needs and that it sometimes requires an adjustment in attitude.

*'We need something from you'. There's been a decided adjustment to 'what do you need'?*

*So, I went to the faculty meeting and said, "I hear loud and clear, this is what you guys want, I promise I'm going to bring a job fair to you guys." This year will be our third year doing a job fair for them. The first year, I only had five employers. Second year, I had 15 employers for them. So I think they're seeing that Careers does care about us, and Career Week we have a session there as well. So, I think they're starting to see that we are trying our best to provide something for those students.*

This last quote touches on the third theme mentioned by just under one half of institutions, meeting needs on campus. This can occur at both strategic and operational levels.

*That's something I did want to mention: our mission statement, our values, our principles of support – it all mirrors the language of the academic plan. That would be my other big piece of advice: look at what your institution is trying to do, and demonstrate how everything you're doing is mirroring that.*

The theme of meeting the needs of campus stakeholders ties in very well with the next theme of demonstrating the impact and value of career services, mentioned by one third of the focus groups. One interviewee was very articulate in making the case.

*The very first thing I noted is proving value and need. And so I think you have to demonstrate to anyone that will listen how much it's needed and in doing that, I mean, you're really talking about the value that you have within the institution. But it's also looking at how you can create value within the institution.*

*...identifying what's going to help others achieve their goals and finding a way to embed what you want to do within that to help them achieve their goals is really important. It's not just all about us.*

Another institution emphasized the importance of demonstrating the value and impact of

career services by highlighting its relevance to the core academic mission of postsecondary institutions.

*...recognizing who you are as a service provider and what your vulnerabilities are and capitalizing on that you have that understanding that what you do has to make a difference to the core classroom. If you can't link everything you're doing to supporting faculty and student success, then I think you're making yourself very vulnerable.*

A few of the interviewees mentioned that copying the model in place at another institution is not necessarily the wisest thing to do.

*So I would say avoid transplantation, don't do it unless it fits or you can see there are similarities between the cultures.*

*So I think there's not a formula, you have to know your institution, its culture, what its goals are and then look at that.*

Rather, the approach that is captured by the fifth and final theme was the importance of understanding your own institution and using that as the springboard for strategic planning.

*So, know where you are. Know your students, know your faculty, your staff. Figure it out from there. We've tried to think about where we are, what are the needs, and tailor to those needs. What we do here may not work somewhere else, but it's more that philosophy of, really*

*know your audience.*

*So, really understanding that landscape and then doing a needs assessment yourself to find out what's working and what's not working and then figure out the programming from there. So, not transplanting something from another place.*

One institution emphasized the importance of being intentional when writing the strategic plan.

*We're strategic in what we do. We purposely use language from the academic plan in the proposals. We very strategically used the mandate of that academic plan in what we were doing, and when we wrote those annual reports, we very strategically used that language again. When the provost was reading that, of course he's going to give us money, because we're bringing his academic plan to life.*

At the same time, interviewees noted that an effective strategic plan required buy-in from all staff.

*I'll just add to that: Having a really good strategic plan and process, all of the things we've talked about, and then making sure that's fully understood by all of your staff really well. That's key. In order to execute any of this stuff – if people aren't onboard, then nothing else is going to fall into place. In any of*

*these initiatives, it's really leveraging off of the strengths of the staff, so not transplanting,*

So while certain ideas and concepts can be borrowed from other institutions, they may need to be modified or adjusted in light of an institution's own culture.

*So not making the assumption, the way you don't transplant someone else's model from a different institution, you don't transplant an idea from leadership and just say, "here, execute it." People don't necessarily know what that means. It's an overall philosophy of how the group works. That's why it works here, and that's why our staff are game to continue on with this thing and start the planning process for the next time around.*

## Career-focused Curriculum

Participants were asked about the extent to which courses or programs included a career-focused curriculum: *We would like to explore any example of career-focused curriculum that you could show us from your institution (i.e., any course outlines, learning outcomes and approaches that you see as particularly effective.)*

The reason for this question was to determine the extent to which postsecondary institutions have integrated career education into academic curriculum. The importance of this was highlighted further by the results of the online survey. More than two-thirds of respondents

said this characteristic would be associated with an 'impressive' institution.

While a number of institutions had examples of embedded career curriculum, generally it was not frequently observed. One institution indicated that the completion of a five workshop series (career planning, resume writing, cover letter writing, job search and networking strategies and interview success) constituted 20% of the grade in an undergraduate program course. A few schools indicated that they provided workshops within class time with clearly defined learning outcomes which were deemed to be "mandatory" as part of course requirements. But these were the exceptions. One school indicated that a "for-credit" career education course was being created by the General Arts and Science faculty for the upcoming academic year. Another school indicated that a "not-for-credit" career course was being developed as well. For the majority of career services, embedded career curriculum did not appear to be an emphasis. One Director noted,

*...one of the holy grails in career centres in the past was to get into the classroom, get a career course. I didn't see that happening here, so I've spend very little time worrying about that.*

Although most institutions were not able to identify many specific examples of embedded, for-credit career education courses, most indicated that there was a mandatory course for those students enrolled in co-op (both in-class and on-line). Another common response was

that programs did embed career curriculum in certain courses, but career services wasn't necessarily asked to deliver it and the activity was not tracked as the career services department was often not consulted.

Considerable discussion in the focus group centred on the most successful workshops offered with their associated learning outcomes and evaluation processes. Some of these are described in the Institutional Profiles section of this report.

## Outcome Measures

The last question posed to the focus group was: *We would like to explore the specifics of any service outcome measures you are using.*

It was clear that these institutions would be involved in outcomes measurement since that was one of the four metrics career services practitioners considered a hallmark of an "impressive" model. A review of the transcripts across the 15 institutions showed that close to half had what may be described as a highly developed "culture of evaluation". The other half were in varying stages of development. This, of course, corresponds very closely with the distribution of the 15 institutions on the Impressive Model metric of 'measuring outcomes'. Institutions scoring highest on the Impressive Model Scale tended to employ a comprehensive set of measures including 'volume' measures that counted the number of visits and meetings as listed below.

- volume measures of one-on-one appointments, number of workshops and



attendance at each, number of career fairs and other “special events” and attendance, number of internal and external partnerships etc.

Some institutions went beyond measuring service volume or ‘counts’ to documenting outcomes for participants that involved changes in knowledge, skill and attitudes

- establishing and measuring learning outcomes for workshops
- establishing and measuring learning outcomes for career fairs
- established learning outcomes for individual appointments
- post/pre, and less commonly pre/post, evaluation practices for individual appointments and workshops
- measurements of client satisfaction
- measurements of skill development and confidence level

One institution that utilized a “digital doorman” system tracking individual student use of services or attendance at events described their capacity to provide detailed volume measures.

*We’re able to break things down by program, year of study, those are the main demographics that we have access to. We can get a pretty detailed picture of who’s using our services. Most people just want to know, how many first years we have, how many in a certain program, who are the primary users... We can break that down for them. It’s not all about numbers*

*in that sense, but it’s part of an evaluation.*

All of the 15 institutions indicated that volume measurements were tabulated. Some indicated that their data collection occurred for a couple of days at the end of semester (rather than on an ongoing basis) or for targeted periods. One school indicated that career service usage was tracked through an “institution-wide” on-line survey. The largest difference between the top-tier institutions was that they differed significantly to the extent that they had established practices of regularly measuring outcomes. One institution described the process they engaged in for three weeks each semester to evaluate the effectiveness of individual appointments:

*... for three weeks each semester we survey every student that’s come in for an appointment and ask them to fill in an evaluation form. So rather than doing it throughout the whole year we just target each semester, the busy periods and get summaries on that in terms of usefulness of appointments... But then we tie it back to learning outcomes from appointments that match the departmental learning outcomes... we evaluate the heck out of everything...*

Another described a process by which they assessed student satisfaction with every visit. [the brief survey] asks them who they saw, by area, not by name. It asks them generally if they were satisfied with the appointment, was there anything they would like to see improved... very

quick. Our receptionist does the data entry for that and our Director takes the information and summarizes and shares it back with the team.

Learning outcomes were most commonly associated with workshop delivery. The Director from a smaller career centre described the essential elements as follows:

*...for our workshops, we do a post-pre-post evaluation... What we're able to report for workshops, for example, is that amongst students who attended our workshops, 96% said they would recommend it to a friend, and we use that as our satisfaction measure. We can then have a macro one for our entire service. We also measured if they felt they'd increased their skill level and their confidence. Those are the two things we use: a skill related to whatever the topic is, and confidence.*

Those who scored highest on the Impressive Model Scale also tended to link their learning outcomes to evidence-based practice, strategic documents of the institution and/or standards and practices of relevant external organizations. One school for example provided a very detailed matrix that linked learning outcomes for one of its programs to the school's academic plan, the student services plan, Chickering and Reiser's Seven Vectors for Student Development, the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education's (CAS) Learning and Development Outcomes and the Conference Board of Canada Employability Skills.

Participants at one institution mentioned the importance of "storytelling" in order to provide a more qualitative description of "entrepreneurial and career success." Along a similar vein, a "Three Minute Essay" was described as a useful self-reflective exercise that provided evidence of learning at the conclusion of participation in a program. Three institutions referenced utilizing the Guided Reflection on Work Program ((GROW, University of Iowa, (<https://vp.studentlife.uiowa.edu/priorities/grow/>)) in their evaluation process. One institution indicated piloting GROW in one of their human service programs in January 2017.

A common theme across the top-tier schools was the pursuit of continuous improvement. One Director, who administered a service that combines career and co-op, described it this way:

*So when work term students go out, they get evaluated half way through a four-month term and then again at the end. A lot of the content is based on the Conference Board of Canada. But we just did the outcomes exercise on that as well so that we can start tracking and measuring and taking a look at a better way to articulate and measure – and it's really all about continuous improvement to make sure that students are learning, that we're improving and that we stay current.*

What became clear from the many focus groups was that these institutions viewed

## Summary of Themes from Interviews

### Key Model Components

1. Partnerships
2. Strategic plan
3. Co-location
4. Responsive/Meet needs
5. Proactive/Outreach

### Institutional Commitment

1. Alignment with strategic plan
2. Social pressure
3. Engaging faculty/staff

### Barriers to Implementation

1. Resources
2. Faculty/Staff attitudes/knowledge

### Funding Sources and Issues

1. Partnerships
2. Demonstrate impact

### Development & Implementation Strategies

1. Relationship building
2. Collaborate-programming
3. Meeting needs
4. Demonstrate impact/Value
5. Strategic plan + buy-in

### Outcome Measures

1. Volume measures
2. Learning outcomes

There is clear overlap between what survey respondents identified as the four key characteristics of an impressive model and the terms interviewees used to describe their models. This is clearly true for the concepts of being proactive in service delivery, forming partnerships/collaborating or building relationships with other stakeholder groups, and measuring outcomes. One interviewee said,

*..so I would just say the principles are really around collaboration, that's the number one. And not siloing, and going to where students are and partnering with folks that are already doing work with students.*

The notion of being proactive was expressed at another institution,

*But the more people you know, in terms of the students or the staff or the faculty, the more that you can get that word out. And it's not just, "Hey, we have this "in the field," it's really digging in and embedding yourself into the whole community so that people understand.*

Together, the two themes of being proactive, not "siloing" and of developing "partnerships" can be seen to serve as the foundation of an impressive career services department. One institution suggested a simple strategy for forming partnerships.

*So one of the things that we do is really encourage staff to get involved in committees around campus because you*



*build lots of relationships that way and then people know, are comfortable calling to say “Do you do anything around this area?” or whatever. So I think it’s really important to be engaged on the campus as well.*

The concept of building relationships, developing partnerships and collaborating on programming was clearly critical as it was mentioned by eighty per cent of institutions when describing their model of career services, when discussing funding sources, and again when describing the process of developing and implementing a career services department.

One specific example of a partnership between career services and faculty was in place at two institutions. Called, “Don’t Cancel that Class” the practice involved career services staff taking over a class that a faculty member could not meet due to other commitments known in advance such as conference attendance.

The result was that the class time that might otherwise be lost was used to focus on career development issues targeted to the needs of the specific class of students.

The theme of partnerships or collaboration clearly dominated the discourse about models within the focus groups. Fortunately, the online survey included several questions that explored the level of collaboration between career services departments and various campus stakeholders. This provided a convenient method to validate whether institutions with an impressive model actually collaborated to a greater degree.

Table 4 shows that the top seven institutions on the Impressive Model Scale consistently collaborated more with other campus stakeholders compared to all others in the sample.

**Table 4: Mean Collaboration Score by Group**

| Stakeholder Group                     | All  | Top 7 |
|---------------------------------------|------|-------|
| Personal counselling services         | 6.74 | 7.00  |
| Academic advisors                     | 6.35 | 8.00  |
| Accessibility services                | 6.31 | 8.57  |
| Co-op/experiential education services | 6.29 | 8.00  |
| Faculty                               | 6.26 | 7.57  |
| Community partners                    | 6.25 | 8.14  |
| Recruitment/Admissions Office         | 5.88 | 8.43  |
| Services for Indigenous peoples       | 5.32 | 8.29  |

The institutions that scored one standard deviation above the Scale mean exhibited a higher level of collaboration with all of the campus groups examined compared to all other institutions.

Some interviewees also mentioned the benefits of co-location when delivering services and developing partnerships. Not surprisingly, simply being located in close proximity to other services increased the opportunity to partner.

*So everything else to do with work experience is centralized here. And we love that because we can capitalize*

*on events with both employers, with work experience employers, and career development.*

Indeed, the top seven institutions were all co-located with at least one other service and in all but one case this was co-op/experiential learning services.

*It's about building relationships and building trust and faith that the distinct needs of programs are understood and will be met*

Measuring outcomes was the third area of overlap between the survey description of an impressive model and what interviewees said was an important feature of their models. While the most frequent measures were “counts” consisting of such things as attendance at workshops, career fairs and one-on-one consulting with students, focus group participants suggested that measuring learning outcomes was becoming more important. Three reasons were given for this. The first was that it provided career services departments with evidence of their impact and demonstrated the value of their services which in turn provided ammunition at the budget table. The second was that the concept of learning outcomes was well known to faculty and provided a common vocabulary when career services staff were developing relationships with them. The third reason was that collecting outcome measures allowed career services to demonstrate they were meeting the needs of other campus stakeholders that perhaps could not be met by

any other group on campus.

Being responsive and meeting needs of stakeholders were themes expressed both as part of relationship building, and as a strategy when developing or implementing a career services model. Interviewees viewed this as a foundation and natural by-product of building partnerships.

*Relationships themselves are the foundation. The relationships are important because that's how you both know what other people need, and you build your credibility with them and their trust in you; you're the place that they want to work with.*

In addition, as one institution highlighted, building relationships with the intent of meeting the needs of other stakeholders on campus also has the effect of demonstrating the value of career services.

*It's been about building relationships and building trust and faith in that we understand the distinct needs of programs and we appreciate them, and we're going to take the time to develop things that are tailored to what their students' needs are, and value that. That's really that next big piece on that front (moving it into the curriculum across the board).*

Figure 1 is a Wordle representation of the frequency with which the various themes appeared in the interview transcripts. As

discussed above, developing partnerships and meeting the needs of others were two of the top three themes. The third was the concept of the strategic plan which was expressed in a number of ways.

In the first instance, the strategic plan was seen to validate the importance of career

Finally, when asked what strategies career services departments should adopt when developing and implementing their model, one third of the focus groups suggested that departments engage in creating their own strategic plan and ensure staff buy-in during the process. It was also suggested that during

**Figure 1: Wordle Representation of Interview Themes**



services for their institution, if career services was highlighted either implicitly or explicitly in the plan. In a somewhat similar vein, eight of fifteen focus groups viewed their inclusion in the institutional strategic plan as a testament to the commitment of the institution to career development.

the writing of the plan, wordsmiths should intentionally reflect the themes, concepts and actual text, where possible, from the institutional strategic plan.

The theme of “attitudes” was referenced when discussing attempts to gain institutional commitment to career services and as barriers

to the implementation of a new or renewed model. Faculty as a group were seen to have some difficulty valuing career services. While it was emphasized that such resistance was not uniform across focus groups and, indeed, many examples were given of faculty collaborating to develop course-based initiatives, faculty were seen to be resistant to career services especially in large, research-intensive institutions. Reasons given for this included a lack of understanding of what career services, and especially career development, is, that it's more than resumes and cover letters or "getting a job", that the reward structure of universities emphasizing publication count worked against involvement, and a fear of "vocalizing" the university.

Staff on campus, both inside and outside career

unwilling to work toward the development of a new model. One interviewee observed that in some cases this difficulty could only be resolved with retirements.

Comparing the themes extracted from the focus groups describing an impressive model with the four key characteristics extracted from the online survey shows that focus groups failed to mention the concept of evaluation, at least explicitly. This was the characteristic that ranked most highly in the survey results. While evaluation was not mentioned, a number of comments were suggestive of the concept in that they focused on the qualifications of staff necessary to deliver service excellence.

## A Logic Sequence

It's interesting to speculate how these various themes might be sequenced in practice when developing and implementing an impressive

**Figure 2: Impressive Model Logic Sequence**



services departments could also act as barriers to the development and implementation of a new model. Staff within the department were seen to be barriers when they were unwilling to contemplate "doing things different". They were entrenched in old habits and perhaps antiquated ways of doing business and were

model. For heuristic purposes, one possibility is presented in Figure 2.

Clearly, in the real world the process would not be linear and many if not all of these components would occur concurrently. However, if one were to consider how the themes extracted from the focus groups

might complement each other, the starting point would likely be with career services staff being proactive with both students and campus stakeholders. Indeed, tactics provided by the focus groups involved “going where the students are” and engaging them in interesting and fun activities that also developed knowledge and skills related to career development. Suggestions made for being proactive with staff involved attending the operations committees of faculties and programs.

The second stage of the sequence, partnerships, is a direct product of the first, as highlighted by focus group participants. Being proactive builds relationships and this is facilitated to an even greater degree if services are co-located. As relationships develop, the needs of partners become clearer and to the extent possible, career services staff can attempt to meet these needs through collaborative programming.

Departments that have invested in measuring service outcomes are now at a distinct advantage. Having access to outcomes data is critical as it allows career services staff to demonstrate to partners that their needs have been met through collaborative programming. Not only are the partnerships reinforced in this way, but identifying specific outcomes enables career services to demonstrate their value, not only to their partners but to entire organization as well.

When focus groups were asked about barriers to implementing their career services model,

a lack of resources and faculty/staff attitudes were mentioned most frequently. Resources included budget, staff and time, or the lack thereof. However, among the tactics suggested by focus group participants to overcome these barriers was collecting sufficient data related to service outcomes, in particular learning outcomes, to support funding requests during budget negotiations. Having the ability to demonstrate the value of career services was identified by focus group participants as strengthening funding requests significantly.

At the same time, having outcomes data in hand could clearly leverage the engagement of faculty and other stakeholders on campus. Faculty typically understand the concept of outcomes and conversations built around the lexicon of learning outcomes are likely to be heard more readily.

The penultimate component of the logic sequence is the strategic plan. This component is important on two levels, the department and the institution. Developing a strategic plan and ensuring the buy-in of all staff was cited by some focus groups as a prerequisite for creating an effective career services department. If the discussions, debates and policy planning activities involve all staff there is a greater likelihood that everyone will be “pulling in the same direction” in order to achieve departmental goals and objectives.

Focus group participants also highlighted the tactic of borrowing the language and substance of the institutional strategic plan when developing their own. To the extent that both

the departmental and the institutional plans are seen to complement each other, the former achieves greater weight in the view of senior administration. Or at least there is a greater likelihood that this could happen. Ultimately, to the extent that the goals and objectives become embedded in the institutional strategic plan, career services has become “institutionalized” with the college or

create an impressive model of career services when combined in this way.

## Limitations and Conclusions

The findings of this study are limited to the extent that the fifteen institutions where staff interviews took place are a representative sample of Canadian colleges and universities.

Table 5: Selected Characteristics of Interview Sites

| Province | Institution                    | Impressive Score | Enrollment |       |
|----------|--------------------------------|------------------|------------|-------|
| ON       | Wilfrid Laurier University     | 28.16            | 19,432     |       |
| ON       | Queen’s University             | 26.39            | 22,000     |       |
| BC       | Simon Fraser University        | 24.99            | 35,000     |       |
| ON       | Univ. of Toronto Mississauga   | 24.91            | 14,000     |       |
| AB       | Mount Royal University         | 24.41            | 12,000     |       |
| ON       | Fanshawe College               | 23.86            | 18,000     |       |
| NS       | Nova Scotia Community College  | 23.70            | 10,700     | +1 SD |
| NS       | St. Francis Xavier University  | 23.28            | 4,400      |       |
| ON       | Mohawk College                 | 22.86            | 13,500     |       |
| NS       | Dalhousie University           | 22.82            | 18,500     |       |
| NS       | Mount Saint Vincent University | 22.57            | 4,000      |       |
| AB       | Bow Valley College             | 21.75            | 5,800      |       |
| ON       | Ryerson University             | 21.58            | 42,000     |       |
| ON       | Conestoga College              | 19.92            | 13,000     |       |
| ON       | Centennial College             | 19.92            | 20,000     | Mean  |

university. So, while the logic sequence described above has been presented largely as a heuristic device, it is clear that the set of themes extracted from the focus group interviews could effectively

While it is not possible to determine conclusively if this is the case, and it is unlikely they are, a review of their geographic location, institutional type and enrollments presented in Table 5 shows substantial diversity for all three

characteristics.

Despite this, the consistency of the themes extracted from this diverse sample suggests that these may be generalizable to many Canadian postsecondary institutions.

A second possible limitation is related to the extent that focus groups participants were able to accurately represent their career services models, the barriers to their implementation and realistically prescribe the strategies and tactics others should follow in order to develop their own impressive model. While all participants were provided with the interview questions beforehand, and some were clearly referring to notes during the interviews, others might not have been as well prepared to offer considered responses.

Once again, the consistency of the basic concepts, words and phrases expressed in response to the questions, across institutions, suggests that the themes describe the core components of the impressive model.

## Conclusions

Themes extracted from the focus groups held at fifteen Canadian colleges and universities scoring above the mean on the Impressive Model Scale suggest a number of conclusions. First, while the impressive model scores ranged from the mean of 19.9 to a maximum of 28.1, a review of transcripts showed that there was considerable convergence across institutions in the types of themes extracted. It was not the case that the high-scoring institutions described the key themes discussed above and

the lower scoring institutions did not, or did so less frequently. Rather most focus groups touched on very similar topics, expressed in different ways, when answering the interview questions. These then became clustered as themes.

There also appeared to be little association between institutional size based on enrollment both in terms of the Impressive Model Score and themes expressed. While institutions scoring one standard deviation or more above the mean tended to be larger, some large institutions only scored slightly above the mean. The difference between high and low scoring institutions was solely a function of the degree to which they possessed the four key traits of impressive institutions as defined by career services professionals through the online survey:

1. Services are evaluated regularly
2. Service outcomes are measured
3. Services are delivered proactively
4. Staff collaborate with campus stakeholders

These four traits, together with the key themes extracted from the site interviews with career services staff, provide a practical roadmap for any postsecondary institution wishing to deploy an impressive model of career services.

As mentioned by focus group participants, institutions should not attempt to “transplant” a model from another institution. Indeed, the reality is that there is no need to do so. Rather, college and university career services leaders



only need engage in the key activities of evaluating their services and measuring service outcomes. The resulting information then arms career services staff with the evidence needed to concretely demonstrate the value of their service to the campus.

Other tactics highlighted by the practitioners interviewed are key business practices, including delivering services proactively, collaborating with stakeholders to meet their needs and positioning career services as complementing the institution's strategic plan. The insights into impressive models provided by the interviews with career services practitioners, therefore, further expand on the characteristics of an impressive model of career services in Canadian colleges and universities by incorporating specific tactics that have shown to be effective in building institutional recognition and commitment. This expanded description of the impressive model can be summarized then as one where:

1. Services are evaluated regularly
2. Service outcomes are measured
3. Services are delivered proactively
4. Staff collaborate/partner with campus stakeholders
5. Partners needs are met
6. Value of services is demonstrated
7. Department strategic plan aligned with institutional strategic plan

Insight into Impressive Practices in Career Services: A Reference Guide and Insight into Canadian Post-Secondary Career Service Models represent a significant investment of time, energy and commitment by many Canadian postsecondary career services practitioners and the authors wish to thank all those who devoted precious time to this study. Our hope is that the findings contained within these reports assist all stakeholders in supporting postsecondary students' efforts to achieve their academic, personal, and professional goals.



## Institutional Case Profiles

This section provides career service practitioners with a resource to promote discussion and inspire program development and innovation. It is the result of field visits to 15 postsecondary institutions across Canada involving interviews with 38 informants. The institutional profiles are listed in order of their Impressive Model Score. Forty-seven best practices are explored in this section. While it was impossible to provide access to the extensive documentation supplied by institutions, access to selected resources is provided by web link or appended documents. We have made extensive use of verbatim

comments made by informants during the focus groups to illustrate descriptions of the models and best practices. (There have been minor corrections made for syntax and grammar within the text.) It is hoped that the meaning, insight and thought-provoking nature of the discussion is best represented this way.

Each institution listed in this section of the report has provided expressed permission to publish the information that follows.

### Profile Format

A brief profile of each school provides some basic information including a contact person for potential follow up if desired.

## Name of Institution

|  |  |                         |
|--|--|-------------------------|
| <b>Impressive Model Score:</b> <b>0.0</b> <div>Derived from 7 selected metrics</div> |  | <b>Institution Logo</b> |
| <b>Location:</b> <div>of the main campus/location of focus group</div>               | <b>F.T.E.:</b> <div>Current full-time equivalent enrolment</div>   |                         |
| <b>Name of Department:</b>   |  |                         |
| <b>Service Delivery:</b> Centralized/Decentralized/Hybrid                            |  |                         |
| <b># of staff:</b> <div>Full time/<br/>Part time/<br/>Student assistants</div>       | <b>Category:</b> <div>The titles of career practitioners and associated core functions as per the "Burwell, Kalbfleisch and Woodside" typology</div> |                         |
| <b>Web address:</b><br><b>Contact:</b>   |  |                         |

## Model Descriptors

When asked to describe their "model" of service delivery, a number of informants provided an actual name. If this wasn't provided, we proffered a "potential" model name. Key elements that distinguish this model are then listed.

## Best Practices

Most of the best practices were documented on the original questionnaire, but some came to light during the focus group discussions. The descriptions of the best practices vary in length and some are further illustrated using the web links provided.

## Wilfrid Laurier University

**Impressive Model Score:** **28.16**



**Location:** Waterloo, ON



**F.T.E.:** 19, 432



**Name of Department:** Career Development Centre



**Service Delivery:** Hybrid



**# of staff:** 20 full time/ 0 part time/ 20 student assistants



**Category:** 10 career consultants

### Web address:

<https://students.wlu.ca/work-leadership-and-volunteering/career-centre/>

### Contact:

Jan Basso, Assistant Vice-President, Experiential Learning & Career Development, [jbasso@wlu.ca](mailto:jbasso@wlu.ca)

## Model Descriptors

### *Potential Name: Comprehensive Service Delivery/Career Integrated Learning*

- Emphasis on the individual, service has to be customized and targeted to be relevant
- At the foundation of the service is "self-knowledge"
- Partnership oriented... with faculty, administrative offices, residences, alumni, student government, student clubs
- Through partnerships students can be reached on their turf in some way
- Responsive, "never turn requests down"
- Master's level trained staff called career consultants and provide career counselling
- Strategic plan aligned with institution's vision and mission
- Large staff, large stand-alone extremely well-

appointed office, Career Development Centre

- Strong culture of evaluation, very comprehensive tracking of service delivery, graduate survey only one of its kind in Canada. See Career Centre by the Numbers in Appendix

## Best Practices

### *Graduate Survey*

The department has conducted an annual graduate survey of the entire graduating class for the past 35 years. The current-year graduating class is approximately 4,300 students and a response rate of 83% to 85% has been obtained in each of the past three years. Data is collected within one year of graduation using a variety of data collection methods such as surveys at Convocation, email, surface mail and telephone follow-up. A number of customized reports are then prepared and distributed to Faculties and academic departments, summary reports are available on the Career Centre website, 8-year summary reports are generated for departmental cyclical reviews, and select data is used in Career Centre resources for students, institutional publications and reports.

The survey is brief and requires approximately three to five minutes of the respondent's time. The questions focus on the graduate's pursuits following graduation including employment, further education, seeking employment or other. If employed, position, organization, location,

and salary are requested. If pursuing further education, institution, discipline, and degree are requested. 'Other' represents those respondents not seeking employment or further education such as those travelling or those involved in volunteer roles.

### *2015 Graduate Survey Report*

<https://navigator.wlu.ca/content/documents/fileItemController/Summary%20Report%202015%20-%20Grad%20Survey%20FINAL.pdf>

This survey is definitely very important to the Career Centre and the overall institution and would never be discontinued. As career professionals, we advise students not to let their degree define them. This survey validates that message. The survey results clearly indicate the diverse opportunities graduates in specific fields of study have pursued. It is very beneficial from a career counselling perspective in terms of demonstrating to students that their skills are transferable and a vast array of career options are open to them. It also gives our colleagues throughout the institution comprehensive data to assist in their work and confirms the value of a university degree.

### *Partnerships on career development programming throughout institution*

Engaging all students in their career development as an integral part of the Laurier experience is the vision of the Career Centre. To do this, it is essential to integrate career

development programming throughout the institution to maximize the Centre's connections with students. In 2015-2016, the Career Centre was involved in the delivery of 136 programs through partnerships, 50 of which were with faculty or academic units. Connecting what the Career Centre needs done to reach our goals with what others need done to reach theirs has been a goal in partnership development.

The majority of partnerships were established with partners internal to the institution but a number involved external partners as well. An example of an external partnership is the collaboration among the four post-secondary institutions in the Waterloo-Wellington regions to co-host joint Career and Job Fairs over the past 20+ years which have been very successful and the largest of their kind in the country.

A goal articulated in the department's strategic plan is to increase student participation through growth in supportive partnerships on campus, and through increased integrated programming within faculties and departments. This requires each Career Centre unit to establish specific goals annually focussed on partnership development.

Partnerships have resulted in increased visibility and student engagement, increased funding for staffing and new programs, shared responsibility for program planning, and increased funding for a new position in the department they have strengthened the value of the Career Centre within the campus context.

## *Comprehensive service delivery*

Because our vision is for all students to be engaged in their career development while at Laurier, our services must be customized and comprehensive to meet the individual needs of all students. A full range of programming and services are offered including individual appointments focussed on self-assessment, career exploration, job search, further education and career management (7000 each year); over 600 workshops and events annually; a daily drop-in service; targeted programming for distinct groups of students such as those with disabilities, international students, aboriginal students, first-year students, graduate students, and varsity athletes.; a comprehensive website and online tools; resources developed in-house for students; employment services for part-time and summer employment, for graduating students, alumni, international students, and work/study students; employer development and engagement within the campus community; a peer advising and outreach program; and extensive programming partnerships to integrate career development programming throughout the campus. Lifetime service is also provided to alumni. Comprehensive services are provided at all Laurier campus locations...Waterloo, Brantford, Kitchener and Toronto.

## Queen's University

**Impressive Model Score:** **26.39**



**Location:** Kingston, ON

**F.T.E.:** 22, 000



**Name of Department:** Career Services



**Service Delivery:** Hybrid



**# of staff:** 9 full time/ 12 part time/ 34 student assistants



**Category:**

### Web address:

<http://careers.queensu.ca/>

### Contact:

Cathy Keates, Director, Career Services, [cathy.keates@queensu.ca](mailto:cathy.keates@queensu.ca)

## Model Descriptors

### *Suggested Name: Efficiency Model*

- Three foundational elements of the model:
  - ◇ Having a lean organization... decreasing the amount of time spent on administration, increasing the time available for innovation and service delivery
  - ◇ Relationship building across the institution

◇ Building collaborative structures and integration

- “Career is important, but not urgent.”
- Emphasis on embedded programming, embedded in “things students are already doing” so that we reach all students in a far more efficient way
- Emphasis on aligning activity with all university strategic directions/documents

Links to the strategic documents:

Strategic Framework <http://www.queensu.ca/>

strategicplanning/framework

Student Services Strategic Planning Framework

<http://ow.ly/w7LE1000Usq>

## Best Practices

### *Major Maps and Grad Maps*

Major Maps are holistic, integrated tools for career development, reinforcing early engagement and building experience throughout the degree experience. The maps were created with, and are used by, multiple stakeholders across the university; for example, academic and career advisors now have this tool in their offices on-hand for their meetings with students. The undergrad maps were completed first, and the masters and doctoral maps were launched in fall 2016. For the original undergraduate Major Maps, Career Services led the project in collaboration with units across the university. The project team was chaired by a career counsellor, and had student representatives and an Academic Advisor representative from the Faculty of Arts and Science. That project team worked on the project charter, objectives, and work schedule. The Department of Chemistry generously participated as the pilot to create a prototype. The prototype went to user testing with students, and then we worked with Marketing and Communications for the final design. In terms of content, the project team generated the initial content, such as career steps, examples of co-curricular opportunities, and the list of possible careers and academic

advisors pre-populated some of the academic information. We tried to pre-populate the drafts as much as possible to make it as easy as possible for departments. Draft maps were then sent to every department, and they inserted their own department-specific content. Every summer the maps are updated. In the second year the overall document was improved when the Arts and Science communications manager proposed merging the “pitch pages” they had been using to educate prospective students about programs, with the Major Maps into one tool. The maps now have program information on the front, the map in the centre, and in the back, a tailored set of skills that are developed in that program. We first launched the Major Maps three years ago and were hoping to have a couple thousand hits online and distribute print copies. Once launched we had 20,000 hits in the first few months, and 60,000 by the end of the first year. We were overwhelmed by the interest with great feedback from current students, but also from prospective students, their parents, and guidance counsellors. One example of how the project has grown at the university is that the maps are now profiled in the viewbook for prospective students, including a sample map in the careers section

<http://careers.queensu.ca/students/wondering-about-career-options/major-maps-2015>

### *It All Adds Up*

In partnership with our undergraduate student



government, the Alma Mater Society, we created a “career health promotion campaign,” It All Adds Up, which was very successful on our campus. After that first year other career centres joined for a shared campaign, and this year, there are 43 career centres from across Canada and one in Australia participating. We support the collaboration across universities by maintaining the shared website and a plug-and-play toolkit online, doing a webinar to introduce the project, and collecting information about reach and impact. Career centres adapt the campaign to their campus and have done some very creative things.

**<https://italladdsup.ca/>**

### ***Experiential Learning Hub***

We are creating an experiential learning hub within Career Services, which capitalizes on our skills, processes and connections, and embeds career into this conversation. The EL Hub creation is the result of a recommendation of the Experiential Learning Working Group – report found at **<http://ow.ly/Qzvn1000usA>**

## Simon Fraser University

**Impressive  
Model Score:** **24.99**



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY  
ENGAGING THE WORLD



**Location:** Burnaby, BC



**F.T.E.:** 35, 000



**Name of Department:** Career and Volunteer Services



**Service Delivery:** Hybrid



**# of staff:** 9 full time/ 2 part time/ 4 student assistants



**Category:** 8 Career Education Specialists (practicing in the career coaching category)

### Web address:

<http://www.sfu.ca/career.html>

### Contact:

Tony Botelho, Director, Career and Volunteer Services, [botelho@sfu.ca](mailto:botelho@sfu.ca)

## Model Descriptors

### *Suggested Name: Partnership Model*

- Broad conceptualization of who are clients, and they see clients as “partners”
- Two main components of the model:
  - ◇ How we support students and

◇ How we support the institution in providing better career education to students

- One-to-one support is the focus as well as a workshop series
- Also partner with numerous academic and non-academic groups on campus in terms of outreach activity, finding ways “to better embed programming, messaging in the other aspects of university life
- Emphasize theoretical underpinning of

“happenstance” and “non-linearity” in approaching career education

- Align service providers to leverage their skill, interest, talent
- Promote a staff culture of innovation and risk... “nothing’s perfect, but it can be good”
- Few policies are seen to contribute to freedom, flexibility and responsiveness
- “...retention, engagement and career all go hand in hand”

## Best Practices

### *Measuring the impact of our services/committing to a culture of evaluation*

Students evaluate their individual sessions/workshops with post/pre design based on specific outcome measures (multiple examples provided). Sample Classroom to Career (CTC) Workshop Outline and Evaluations Appendices for Institutions: Simon Fraser University

Students write “three minute essays” on how they have changed during the enrolment in the “Back on Track” program, originally designed as a retention tool, to provide unsuccessful students a way to move on in their studies, which has a significant career education component. For more information see:

(<https://www.sfu.ca/students/bot.html>).

### *Activities based on contemporary theories and research*

“...we’ve developed niche programming and services for different populations [such as] undeclared students, graduate students, adults in transition. And we’ve paid significantly more attention to research both in our field and in student, again, retention and engagement. And have built programs and services that are grounded in contemporary theories and research. In my mind, that is incredibly important and it’s been very strategic in our part. We’re functioning in an academic environment.”

### *Working with institutional partners to embed our services in multiple areas*

“When you deal with, I think particularly, with academics I think there is an inherent suspicion of anything career vocational, particularly at large research universities. And it [career education] just hasn’t been top of mind for them, right? So a lot of our communication is, sort of, undoing this perception.”

“Well, and one of the things tied to that is we actually made a conscious effort ... Talks with faculty are as high level as we can be... so let’s have our conversations on the higher-level stuff. Let’s talk about how career clarity impacts retention. Let’s talk about the research... let’s get as close to peer to peer as we can in our conversations.”

“This also ties to another principle that we know that not every student sees us when they have career questions. So the better we can get the institution providing resources... so at the very

least, people including academics, don't give bad career information... and then at some point know how and when to refer. Because we know in any of the literature we're probably third at best in terms of who's doing the advising when it comes to career questions. Professors, instructors, faculties, TA's, first; various friends, other students, family second and then we're probably third. So, you know, let's acknowledge that and ask, 'how else can we influence'... so at least the conversations that we know are existing are happening at a higher level."

### *How I Met My Major*

Programming to help undecided students choose their major. <https://www.sfu.ca/students/academicadvising/himmm.html>

## University of Toronto - Mississauga

**Impressive Model Score:** **24.91**



UNIVERSITY OF  
**TORONTO**  
MISSISSAUGA



**Location:** Mississauga, ON



**F.T.E.:** 14, 000



**Name of Department:** Career Centre



**Service Delivery:** Decentralized



**# of staff:** 11 full time/ 3 part time/ 17 student assistants



**Category:** 2 Resource Centre Coordinators (practicing in the advising category), 2 Employment Advisors (practicing in the educating category), 4 Career Counsellors (practicing in the counselling category)

### Web address:

<http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/careers/>

### Contact:

Felicity Morgan, Director, Career Centre, [felicity.morgan@utoronto.ca](mailto:felicity.morgan@utoronto.ca)

## Model Descriptors

### *Potential Name: Teach How to Fish/Lifelong, Skill-Development Model*

- Student funded, valued, informed and determined
- Four important elements

- ◇ Accountability is key, built into this 100% student funded model
- ◇ Partnerships to tailor to student and campus needs
- ◇ Staff training, including student employees
- ◇ Business process infrastructure
- Outreach culture which emphasizes relationship development both inside and

outside the institution

- All relationship-building activity/partnership development funnelled through a “Career Outreach Consultant” to facilitate strategic decision making
- Development of programming that can involve “short term/brief” contact but high impact, both personal and on-line
- Programming is learning outcome-based
- Emphasize a “culture of evaluation”

## Best Practices

### *Tailored programming for academic departments and student societies*

“I think one of the departments Monica did a lot of work with was Geography. That’s a really nice model because now, we’re in the classroom doing a few workshops as part of their internship course, then we organize a networking night for them with industry professionals, and before the networking night, the students have done the two prep pieces plus they’ve done a networking course, then they have an assignment that’s part of their curriculum. That came out of Monica working closely with the department to really embed that and then the professor being really amenable to that and really proactively embedding in a lot of concrete ways. It’s a really nice, strong partnership. It’s capped off by this networking night where we have industry professionals working in occupations

and careers that are really of interest to the students, so they get to actually meet those people.”

### *Proactive service delivery*

“...in the last few years, we’ve gotten out on the campus a lot more. We have little pop-up shops, where we get out on campus, whether it’s to promote something or offer a basic level of service to students... We did hear from students that, we know we’re not in a great location. We’re kind of tucked away in the back here, so getting out on the campus more. And also, our Career Counsellors are out in different areas, that’s part of that whole initiative, too. To get out of our offices and embed them in different places. Also, going into classrooms as much as possible. So the internship classes are the ones that are sort of the easiest sells, but recently, we’ve been able to go to the Chairs meetings. So, presenting at a Chairs meeting, or presenting at a departmental meeting, talking about what we do. We often connect with faculty after those meetings. It’s more of an education kind of thing, but once they know and they see the value of it and the variety of different ways that you can do it, we’re invited into classroom. Either to do a workshop – usually resume or job search, so fairly transactional. Not a lot of them want us to do a career planning type of thing, but occasionally, from that and through relationship management, you can get to that point. It’s almost a tiered thing – you get in one way, but then it escalates to other things. That’s a continuous goal that we have.”

## *Professional standards for high quality service*

"UTM Career Centre is seen as a primary ally by students, staff, faculty and external partners for the development and execution of student career education activities. Our services, supported by the talents of our professional career educators are tailored, current, innovative and excellent through a combination of proactive and consultation planning. In order to assist students in reaching their goals, we offer services in a variety of ways, maintaining in person, individual responsiveness. We work closely with internal partners at UTM and across U of T in order to integrate career education in to our students' experience. Our industry and employer partners value our input and assistance and bring their expertise to interactions that prepare UTM students and recent graduates for successful transition. We can demonstrate evidence of our impact, which serves to further influence career education activities on campus. Our Centre encourages a broad framework of career education at the UTM campus, including all partners and their work both with us and independently." <http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/careers/mission>

## *Mandatory workshop for graduating students*

"... even with all that we do, there are still some fourth-year students who don't know that they have a Career Centre or what we do. So, we have a workshop that's mandatory for students and the hook we have is that they'll get access

to the full-time jobs. We try to put a marketing focus on it as well – they do get access to the full-time jobs but it's more about showing them job search strategies, career exploration strategies, and all of the resources they have access to. It's an hour-and-a-half workshop. So we've had a lot of discussions over the years with other career centres and stakeholders to say "why is this mandatory" but it is a strategy. It's a best practice strategy because one of our strategic directions is intentionally attracting students, and this is one of them. The name of the workshop is, 'Now That I'm Graduating, What's Next?'"



## Mount Royal University

**Impressive Model Score:** **24.41**



**Location:** Calgary, AB

**F.T.E.:** 12, 000



**Name of Department:** Career Services



**Service Delivery:** Centralized



**# of staff:** 29 full time/ 3 part time/ 0 student assistants



**Category:** 3 certified CCDP Career Development Coordinators (operating in the advising, educating, coaching and consulting categories)

### Web address:

<http://www.mtroyal.ca/EmploymentCareers/CareerServices/index.htm>

### Contact:

Colleen Bradley, Director, Career Services, [cbradley@mtroyal.ca](mailto:cbradley@mtroyal.ca)

## Model Descriptors

### *Suggested Name: Centralized Work Experience/Career Development*

- Concerted effort over the years to keep work experience and career development together
- Centralized structure for quality service to students and employers
- Service model evolved as the institution transitioned from a college to a university
- As a college, the emphasis was on “applied degrees”... as a university, this has translated on an emphasis on providing “high impact practices/experiential learning” for all students
- A great deal of rigour is applied to developing programming that is outcome-based and research/evidence based

- Services provided include one-on-one, facilitated group sessions, group workshops, counselling approaches, information sharing, referring them to resources, coaching models and other career development models
- Smaller department requires strategic approach to considering additional programs/practices, must be “sustainable and maintainable” and support core classroom learning
- Department plan aligns with Divisional and Institutional strategic plans

## Best Practices

### *Blending career development with work experience*

The department is a blend of career development coordinators and work experience coordinators. Along with support staff, design and technology staff. The working relationship between both areas has great benefits in capitalizing on resources and expertise.

Prior to becoming a University, in addition to core services for all credit students in Career Education, we were also responsible for the directed field studies portion of 22 applied degree programs. Today all of those programs have transitioned into 4 year baccalaureate degrees. We offer a variety of work experience models ranging from internships, Co-operative Education for business students and a variety of other mandatory work experience models embedded in credentials.

We have a collaborative approach internally between work experience coordinators and career development coordinators along with the additional infrastructure of staff that supports all the work we do. We have also developed what I would consider a seamless model in working with students and faculty. We also share a partnership model for employers that is cross functional. We are fortunate that given the size of our Institution, a centralized model works very well and has strong support.

### *Required professional development course*

All students participating in Co-op, work experience, internships must complete a non-credit required professional development course (full semester) before participating in the placement process. Also, students in each program must meet specific course requirements to be eligible for a work term.

“Students must participate in scheduled class time to complete the professional development course. In all programs this is a pre-requisite to participating in a work term. Workplace preparation is a range of topics as well as events with employers and alumni, specific to each program area.”

### *Strategic plan aligned with Division and University Plan*

Student Affairs and Campus Life Strategic Plan, 2015-2020

<https://www.mtroyal.ca/AboutMountRoyal/OfficesGovernance/>

VPStudentAffairsCampusLife/  
DocumentsPresentations/2015-2020\_SACL\_  
Strat\_Plan.htm

Mount Royal's Strategic Plan to 2025

[http://www.mtroyal.ca/AboutMountRoyal/  
OfficesGovernance/OfficePresident/  
StrategicPlan2025/index.htm](http://www.mtroyal.ca/AboutMountRoyal/OfficesGovernance/OfficePresident/StrategicPlan2025/index.htm)

### *Student Affairs and Campus Life Learning Outcomes Team*

"Each department in SACL has a learning outcomes team. In addition, a member of each department sits on an assessment team and a learning outcomes team. And they do PD for everyone to get everyone up to the same level but they also have people that are working on basically championing assessment and being outcomes driven into every area of the division."

## Fanshawe College

**Impressive  
Model Score:** **23.86**




 **Location:** London, ON

 **F.T.E.:** 18, 000

 **Name of Department:** Employment and Student Entrepreneurial Services

 **Service Delivery:** Centralized

 **# of staff:** 11 full time/ 2 part time/ 0 student assistants

 **Category:** 4 Career Consultants (practice in the career counselling category)

### Web address:

<https://www.fanshawec.ca/student-life/campus-services/employment>

### Contact:

Darlene O'Neill, Senior Manager, Employment and Student Entrepreneurial Services, [doneill@fanshawec.ca](mailto:doneill@fanshawec.ca)

## Model Descriptors

### *Suggested Name: Open Doors Model*

- No wrong door, see themselves providing seamless services to students
- Department is included in the integrated master academic plan
- Everything having to do with employment

in one administrative unit: co-op, career services, employment services... including entrepreneurialism... called the Employment and Entrepreneurial Services umbrella

- "Accessible, responsive, fluid and consistent"
- Service provided to everyone, regardless of who they are... clients, students, graduates, employers, academics and very "solution focused"
- Stressed the importance of on-campus

partnerships

- Describes department as the “least policy, process and procedural” driven, value innovation, responsiveness and being “nimble” in program development and delivery
- Fully student-funded
- In discussing outcome measures, emphasized the importance of “storytelling”... “make sure you’re telling the entrepreneurial or the career success stories”

## Best Practices

### *Ignite Career Conference*

Delivered on a Saturday that focuses on “soft skills” development which is repeatedly addressed in the literature as a gap for new graduates.

“Ignite consists of a keynote speaker, a series of workshops that students can select from, and it’s not like you only go -- it’s exactly like any conference. You have choices. You can go to workshop A or B or C in each block of workshops. An employer panel. And lots of door prizes that we recruit from all of our partners in the college. They give nice door prizes, like gift cards from retail services, which is always a bonus. And a free lunch. Participants also get a portfolio for when they go on their job interviews.”

“We took huge risk from 8:00 am till 4:00 in the afternoon. And the first one, 138 students spent the entire day with us, on a Saturday. And

no, they weren’t all international. There was a great mixture. This year it almost doubled... and there was no resume workshop, there was no interview skills workshop --it was a very conscious effort not to offer the things that can be normally accessed through our services, it was to go above and beyond, give them access to the “soft skill” focus, to very different kinds of activities or workshops. It is open to our CES clients and graduates. So, it’s not just our current students, which is nice for some of our graduates that have left and maybe feel that they’re still looking for some support, they’re more than welcome. And actually, for us, it’s actually a really great opportunity to reconnect.”

<https://www.fanshawec.ca/student-life/student-services/employment-and-student-entrepreneurial-services/career-services/ignite>

### *“Don’t Cancel that Class”*

A service for academics that are aware they may have to cancel a class due to conference attendance, travel etc. We offer to meet their class and deliver career related workshops tailored to specific needs.

“The dream is to do it as a student services initiative where sexual violence or mental health or accessibility or entrepreneurialism or any of the student services -- library services, research, you know -- could have a suite of alternatives to cancelling a class, because just this morning, you know, walked by, two stickers on the door. I can’t imagine being a student how ticked off I would be!”

“We’ve asked for 48 hours’ notice... our career

services specialist can talk about our services, about Ignite, career fair and... it's just another way to build those relationships and tell the students that we're there."

### ***Partnerships with academics, employers, entrepreneurs and alumni***

Membership on campus committees such as program advisory meetings and academic team meetings are essential to building a profile.

"Fanshawe has a magazine that they've created called Engage. And in the second edition, our team work was highlighted. So I used the high five messages of career development, and wrote an article on high five and how to, you know, look after your career. But that went out to I think like 100,000 people in the catchment it's delivered, and now it's online..."

## Nova Scotia Community College

**Impressive  
Model Score:** **23.70**

**nscc**



**Location:** Halifax, NS



**F.T.E.:** 10, 700



**Name of Department:** Career Development Services



**Service Delivery:** Hybrid



**# of staff:** 13 full time staff specializing in career



**Category:** 5 Student Services Advisors specializing in Career (practice in advising category);

6 Career Advising and Counselling staff specializing in career (educating and counselling category);

2 Director/Coordinators (consulting)

### Web address:

<http://www.nscc.ca/services/careerservices/index.asp>

### Contact:

Laurie Edwards, Director, Career and Counselling Services,  
edwards@nscc.ca

laurie.

## Model Descriptors

### *Suggested Name: Holistic/ Lifespan Focus Model*

- NSCC defines 'career' as more than just employment. "We're encouraging people

seeking career assistance to take into account an examination of their future work, leisure, and learning: formal and informal. NSCC is not just concentrated on helping people with training or education options; we're focusing on helping people learn what inspires them to be the best that they can be



in their total life – including work!”

- Four fundamental questions that guide our career interventions: 1) Who am I? 2) What are the constraints/challenges affecting my decision-making at this time? 3) What is out there for opportunities – work, learning, leisure? 4) How do I navigate the transitions?
- We provide services to prospective, transitioning-in, in-progress and transitioning-out students
- NSCC focus for career is not on the “right fit”, but asking what is a “good fit” at this time.
- We facilitate career education through individual and group learning activities in classrooms or campus wide events and use of an on-line instrument for access anywhere.
- We distinguish between “career planning” vs NSCC’s focus on “career management”
- Career services are aligned with strategic plan of institution ([https://www.nsc.ca/docs/about-nsc/publications/nsc\\_strategic\\_plan\\_2012.pdf](https://www.nsc.ca/docs/about-nsc/publications/nsc_strategic_plan_2012.pdf))

## Best Practices

### *Online tool “Career in Gear”*

Access is provided prior to first appointment or assigned by NSCC staff during one-to-one or group sessions. “NSCC designed a website called Career in Gear to allow people to start learning about career development. Much of this can be started prior to seeing a person one-to-one. With Career in Gear, we took processes

that we have done in groups and in our one-to-ones and face-to-face services, and gamify the exercises. People using the site often expect to go in and just do it in an hour. We’re saying, it’s a career development process and we want them to go in and out of the website and reflect, think, and bounce their reactions off their teachers, employment officer, parents, friends or colleagues. We are encouraging teachers in Nova Scotia and staff working for Nova Scotia Works to assign them pieces of Career in Gear a few at a time, and then become the sounding board for what they are saying and reacting to. It is about creating active engagement. And engagement is about meaning-making. Otherwise, Career in Gear may just remain information on a screen.”

<https://careeringear.nsc.ca/>

### *Trained Live Chat & Email Help by Career Advisors (Career in Gear)*

“[Live Chat and Email Help] is connected to Career in Gear. NSCC trained Career Advisors are able to inform and explain career development principles, concepts and activities within Career in Gear. If a person needs assistance beyond Live Chat, staff can refer them to a campus. This is the focus of Live Chat and Email Help”.

<https://careeringear.nsc.ca/>

### *Career Builder - A Group Program*

“If you are unemployed, or working at a job you’d rather not be – we can help. Every day people are making changes in their work lives

– finding new work, going back to school, or switching careers. Figuring out where to start is not easy.”

“The four sessions in Career Builder are for prospective students (the public). Anyone who considers NSCC is a prospective student, even prior to putting in an application. This is why Career Builder is not just a recruitment tool. Our goal is to help people make the best choice in their life based on who they are while acknowledging their life context. Maybe NSCC is not the place for them to come at this time! This is great! We want Nova Scotian to make an informed decision about what life and work options align for them at this time in their life.”

**[https://www.nsc.ca/about\\_nsc/events/career\\_exploration.asp](https://www.nsc.ca/about_nsc/events/career_exploration.asp)**

## St. Francis Xavier University

**Impressive Model Score:** **23.28**



**Location:** Antigonish, NS

**F.T.E.:** 4, 400



**Name of Department:** Student Career Services



**Service Delivery:** Centralized



**# of staff:** 1 full time/ 0 part time/ 0 student assistants



**Category:** 1 Manager (practices in advising, educating, counselling and coaching categories)

### Web address:

<http://sites.stfx.ca/scc/>

### Contact:

Jane MacDonald, Manager of Student Career Services/Manager of Co-Operative Education, [jsmacdon@stfx.ca](mailto:jsmacdon@stfx.ca)

## Model Descriptors

### *Potential Name: Personal Development/Reflective Model*

- Personal development focus
- Described as organic, adaptable, selective, proactive and seeking opportunities
- Emphasis on supporting students to be reflective and constructivist, promoting

student self-advocacy

- Strong collaboration between co-op and career services
- Increasing collaboration with faculty and staff
- One person office

## Best Practices

### *Building relationships with faculty*

Worked in collaboration with two Biology professors to provide content / deliver session on careers. BIOL 112 Careers Lab (first year biology students, run the lab in March, had over 330 first year students complete this lab)

### *EXIT program*

“EXIT stands for Employment Strategies for Students in Transition, and basically, it was a four-module workshop in-person, up to 12 students would take it. We would go through a little bit of self-assessment, looking at the occupations, making decisions, and then also looking at action steps – what would you need to get there – in addition to a mock interview activity to get students to practice their skills. That worked very well. Getting students to commit for four modules was a little challenging, but we had good turnout for those 12 students. It had a post/pre evaluation component.”

### *ME, My Employability*

“ME (My Employability); basically created ME as a group career counselling session, so borrowing material for career counselling and designing it for a group setting and emphasizing the self-assessment component. We actually developed a pre- and post-evaluation for that.”

## Mohawk College

**Impressive  
Model Score:** **22.86**



 **Location:** Hamilton, ON

 **F.T.E.:** 13, 500

 **Name of Department:** Student and Graduate Employment

 **Service Delivery:** Hybrid

 **# of staff:** 2 full time/ 0 part time/ 0 student assistants

 **Category:** 3 Career Coach/Career Advisors (practice in advising category)

### Web address:

<http://www.mohawkcollege.ca/student-life/employment>

### Contact:

Tim Fricker, Dean of Students, [tim.fricker@mohawkcollege.ca](mailto:tim.fricker@mohawkcollege.ca)

## Model Descriptors

### *Suggested Name: Advising/ Coaching Model*

- Provision of services for "non co-op" students
- Traditional advising services offered: one-on-one support, resume critiquing, workshop facilitation
- Career coach can meet with CE students
- Career clarification is part of each
- Use of technology big part of the model (i.e., Orbis career platform)
- Moving in the direction of integrating academic and career advising
- Provide services for graduates and alumni as well

- Services align with the college Academic Plan, 2012 ([https://www.mohawkcollege.ca/sites/default/files/Reports%20and%20Documents/mohawk-college-academic-plan-v7-2012\\_0.pdf](https://www.mohawkcollege.ca/sites/default/files/Reports%20and%20Documents/mohawk-college-academic-plan-v7-2012_0.pdf))
- The college-wide Job Ready/future ready guarantee

## Best Practices

### *Online job posting and advising website*

"CareerReady provides students with an enhanced experience when looking for and applying to jobs or accessing information on Co-Curricular opportunities. There are additional services offered through the portal including event calendar access, appointment booking capabilities, interview schedule access and much, much more."

<https://www.mohawkcollege.ca/student-life/employment/careerready-at-mohawk>

### *Development of Career Tools*

An on-line interest testing resource to help students select programs.

<https://www.mohawkcollege.ca/future-students/resources-for-future-students/career-tools>

## Dalhousie University

**Impressive Model Score:** **22.82**



**Location:** Halifax, NS

**F.T.E.:** 18, 500



**Name of Department:** Counselling and Psychological Services



**Service Delivery:** Hybrid



**# of staff:** 1 full time/ 6 during school year/ 2 during summer, part time/ 2 student assistants



**Category:** Career Counsellor (practices in counselling category)

### Web address:

[https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/career-and-leadership.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/career-and-leadership.html)

### Contact:

Jeanette Hung, Career Counsellor, Counselling and Psychological Services,  
jeanette.hung@dal.ca

## Model Descriptors

### *Suggested Name: Psychological Model*

- Part of Counselling and Psychological Services
- Generalist model, "career counsellor" service which deals with career, academic and personal issues
- Mostly appointment-based service
- There is a "Career and Leadership Development Centre" on campus which interacts with employers, oversees experiential learning provides student employment advising and reports to a different manager
- Anonymous data is collected from clients twice per year for evaluation
- Outcome measures are also used for



workshop delivery

- The outcome measures focus on confidence level, impact on anxiety and retention related questions (i.e., “were you thinking of dropping out?” “What impact did the service have on you?”)

## Best Practices

### *Individual career counselling*

Conversations with students can move from the career to the academic to the personal – where all three things might come up during a conversation. These interactions are guided by psychological theoretical approaches informed by career development theories.

*“The very first thing that a student and I would talk about is confidentiality. We would move from there to whatever it is that brought them. They would make an appointment because they want to talk about their career, but really, what they really need to talk about is how they’ve been rejected three times from the program that they’re trying to get into, and how they’ve internalized that rejection as somehow less-than, and not worthy.”*

### *Supervision of practicum interns*

*“These are largely M.Ed. interns studying at Acadia University who wish to specialize in career counselling.”*

### *The provision of student workshops*

*“I probably see maybe 1,000 students in a particular year that would just come for my workshops, particularly around communication skills. These are group workshops. Students will come because they want to learn how to present themselves more effectively and then I show them how to change their lives, so it’s better in all areas!”*

## Mount St. Vincent University

**Impressive Model Score:** **22.57**



**Location:** Halifax, NS

**F.T.E.:** 4, 000



**Name of Department:** Career Services



**Service Delivery:** Centralized



**# of staff:** 1 full time/ 1 part time/ 2 student assistants



**Category:** Coordinator (practices in advising, educating, counselling, coaching and consulting categories)

### Web address:

<http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/student-services/career-planning-services/>

### Contact:

Christine Frigault, Career Services Coordinator, [christine.frigault@msvu.ca](mailto:christine.frigault@msvu.ca)

## Model Descriptors

### *Suggested Name: Centralized Career/Employment Services Model*

- Theory based intervention, leads students through a career development process: self- assessment, identification of suitable options, career research, job searching
- Collaborative approach is essential, both internal and external
- External collaboration includes 20 year partnership with Dalhousie and St. Mary's to put on the Halifax Career Fair
- University's academic plan for all students to have an "applied learning opportunity"
- One-person department
- Student career assistants provide resume critiques and LinkedIn profile reviews, as well

as promotions and administrative support

- Cooperative education is a separate department, but co-located to promote more collaboration
- Service aligns with institution's academic plan in terms of providing "applied learning opportunities" for students (<http://www.msvu.ca/site/media/msvu/AcademicPlan.pdf>)

## Best Practices:

### *The Learning Passport*

"About six or seven years ago, the Business and Tourism Department developed something called the Learning Passport. Students can get a stamp on their Learning Passport for attending professional development activities. In the early stages of that, career events were included, and they still are, so as a result of that, I saw a massive increase in my workshop attendance, attendance at career fairs and other career events. I do directly partner with them on the planning of events, and I have lists of activities each term. I can give you my fall workshops that I did last term – all of these are open to any student, but they actually list them on the website for the Learning Passport, so students can then see that this is eligible and then they'll go to the event. We put the learning outcome in there as well, so students know what they'll learn from it and they are also given an evaluation at the end of each workshop. They get bonus points that can count towards their grade – up to four points per term. It can't

change a fail to a pass, but it can increase from a B- to a B. The students love it, and I love it, because they actually come to my workshops now. When I first started in this position 15 years ago, I would offer so many workshops and I would be so excited if I got five students. But I've actually filled auditoriums with some of these sessions."

### *Researching the impact of the Co-Curricular Record*

*"Another area around collaboration and best practice would be with the co-curricular record: that came out of the retention committee on campus (of which I am a member). I was also a member (and eventually the chair) of the cross-campus committee that developed the co-curricular record for the Mount. Now, we're starting to evaluate the success and what kinds of skills students are gaining from the co-curricular record. We've done surveys to find out what kind of skills they've developed. This year, we did another survey to our CCRP participants and they're showing increases in teamwork, problem solving, and so many other important core skills. The other thing we've been looking at is retention data. Now that the program's been in place for six years, I can tell you that our students that participate in the co-curricular record actually have a 12% higher rate of retention than our average*

*university retention rate."*

### ***"Don't Cancel that Class"***

*"I have mentioned to the faculty, if they can't be there for a class, contact me and I'll do a career workshop for your students. Maybe they can't be there, but they don't have to cancel the class. I encourage them to make it a career event instead. It really is good. I can go in and deliver a workshop that is tailored to the students' program and year of study."*

*students currently working, are both in the Business program. I draw on their expertise as well."*

### ***Collaboration with Alumni Relations***

*"...we partner with the Alumni office as well. We do events with them, where they invite alumni to events and students can network with them. And we seek extra funding too, from other partners, to do things. We have a professional dining etiquette brunch coming up in March, so we have some funding from our Alumni Association, and we have some sponsorship from one of the academic departments on campus as well. They'll send some students and it will also be open to all students. We piece it together to make it work. Sometimes, I feel on this job that I should have taken a Marketing degree, because it is a lot about funding and promotions. But luckily, I can hire Public Relations students. I have one who works for me now, and my two*

## Bow Valley College

**Impressive  
Model Score:** **21.75**



**Location:** Calgary, AB



**F.T.E.:** 5, 800



**Name of Department:** Learner Success Services



**Service Delivery:** Centralized



**# of staff:** 6 full time/ 0 part time/ 0 student assistants



**Category:** 2 Career Advisors (practicing in the advising, educating and coaching categories), access to a team of 5 Counsellors (career counselling category)

### Web address:

<http://bowvalleycollege.ca/campus-services/learner-success-services/career->

### Contact:

Victoria Chio, Coordinator, Learner Engagement and Employment, [vchio@bowvalleycollege.ca](mailto:vchio@bowvalleycollege.ca)

## Model Descriptors

### *Suggested Name: Centralized One-Stop Model*

- Co-located with six other student services (Accessibility, Counselling and Wellness, Student Awards, Financial Aid, Student Life, Aboriginal Centre and in close proximity the Library and Learning Commons) providing a

suite of services which promotes a holistic view of student

- Part of Learner Success Services whose mandate is support students academically, professionally and personally
- Aligned with the business plan of the institution (RISE: Comprehensive Institutional Plan, 2016-2019) and the Vision 2020 strategic planning document (result

of a community engagement process to set the course for the college from 2010-2020) (these and other documents which guide services/processes can be seen at <http://bowvalleycollege.ca/about-bvc/college-publications.html>)

- Responsive to whatever students or staff are requesting, “ground up” model, described as “grass-roots”
- In keeping with lifelong learning, alumni have unlimited access to service

## Best Practices

### *Supporting students in job search and career development*

*“Back in the day, school was enough, and I think that sometimes there’s a demographic concept that if you just get out there and look for a job, you will get one. Everything is more complex, whether it’s looking online, the language, the self confidence that you need, to the kind of research skills that you need... They get the skills, but looking for work is a whole other ball game, especially with our demographic often coming from backgrounds either as part of a new culture or their parents have never gone to post-secondary, or there’s no support at all, they don’t know how to go from retail or restaurant work to a professional job... It’s harder than people think. This is a bit of a demographic concept: if you*

*just pull yourself up by the boot straps, it’s all going to be okay. I don’t agree with that. It’s harder than ever for a variety of reasons.”*

### *Collaborating with academic departments*

*“I think that’s definitely one of our best practices, and that comes back to relationship building.*

*I always joke that our bread and butter, our number one most important thing is building relationships. The main theme of our last PD day team meeting was on relationship building, and us really mapping out who are the different people we work with within the college, and how do those relationships impact us? It’s also the maintenance of those relationships... so we find that relationship building is constant and ongoing.”*

### *Personalized career advising/coaching*

*“I think having that individual, holistic approach as well, and ensuring that we’re not taking a blanket approach. We need to be flexible with scheduling workshops and appointments. Does it work better if we go to classes or if we meet with students in the aboriginal gathering space?*

*“Flexibility is one of our core strengths for sure. We don’t get too caught up in what’s*

*been done before."*

*"But we need to build that relationship with students while they're here, first. We can't just slip in after they've graduated and then somehow get their e-mail from the student database... That's where that model of holistic student services comes in. On my team, we run new student orientation, we run Student Life activities, and then before, we also had Alumni Relations. We were really connected to that learner during their full life cycle. That's an important process and model to consider as well in working with learners. I'm not saying that ten years after someone graduates and is out of a job – it's uncommon for people to think to go back to where they went to school for career services. But, we do get them. And that's part of the changing world of work. There isn't a linear projection that people go on."*



## Ryerson University

**Impressive Model Score:** **21.58**

**Ryerson University**

**Career Centre**  
Student Affairs



**Location:** Toronto, ON



**F.T.E.:**



**Name of Department:** Career Centre



**Service Delivery:**



**# of staff:** 18 full time/ 0 part time/ 23 student assistants



**Category:** 6 Career Education Specialists / 5 Campus Engagement Specialists / 3 Managers (1 per Specialist team plus an Operations Manager) / Total: 14

### Web address:

<http://www.ryerson.ca/career/>

### Contact:

Caroline Konrad, Director, Career Centre, [caroline.konrad@ryerson.ca](mailto:caroline.konrad@ryerson.ca)

## Model Descriptors

### *Name: Three-Pillar Model*

- The three pillars of the model are:

- ◇ Curricular: hub and spoke, essentially portfolio organization, staff developing detailed knowledge of their Faculty and the labour market sectors aligned to the corresponding programs of study

- ◇ Co-curricular: helping students articulate their co-curricular learning to potential employers, with a dedicated team who proactively engage with students through clubs, course unions and societies.

- ◇ Personal: focuses on providing programming tailored to the needs of distinct student groups, irrespective of their program of study

- Emphasis on holistic view of student

- Given the diverse student population (significant numbers of new Canadians, international students, students with declared disabilities, students from “equity seeking” backgrounds) career services needs to speak to the realities and challenges students will face in the job market
- Overview of the Three Pillar Model published in CACUSS Communique, Winter, 2016. ([http://www.cacuss.ca/\\_Library/Communique/CACUSS-Q1-FINAL\\_AMENDED4\\_Digital\\_compressed.pdf](http://www.cacuss.ca/_Library/Communique/CACUSS-Q1-FINAL_AMENDED4_Digital_compressed.pdf)) Link doesn't work – use CERIC site
- Aligned with strategic plan of institution ([http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/provost/pdfs/RU\\_Academic%20Plan\\_2014\\_PrintFriendly%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/provost/pdfs/RU_Academic%20Plan_2014_PrintFriendly%20(1).pdf))

## Best Practices

### Career Checkpoint

*“A toolkit for employers of student staff, to enable professional development to be seamlessly incorporated into the on-campus job. To include specific sections for supervisors working with International ( and Aboriginal (May 2017) student staff, as well as returning student staff. A workbook for students will be rolled out (Fall 2017). Also involves a cross-campus induction day program with on-campus partners, for all c. 950 student employees. All student jobs must list learning outcomes according to the 10 outlined by the Career Centre following*

*its steering of a cross-departmental committee on co-curricular learning (drawn from student development theory and practical references, including the Conference Board of Canada’s Employability Skills 2000+).” See <http://ryersonstudentaffairs.com/career-checkpoint/>*

### Employer Education Seminar Series: Investing in Inclusion

*“This series forms the cornerstone of our new offering for employers - supporting external organizations with absorbing best practice and recognizing their ability to build inclusive recruitment, onboarding and retention programs for recruits from equity-seeking backgrounds. Launched in June 2016, the series’ first half day seminar program centred on LGBTQ community recruitment. 2016/17 programs will focus on: International Students and Mental Health & Wellbeing (providing businesses with tools to create more inclusive and welcoming work places for diverse communities)).” See:*

<http://www.ryerson.ca/career/employers/investingininclusion/>

### Career Boost Off Campus Placement Program

*“Career Boost Off Campus is an experiential learning program designed to support:*

community engagement, city building and equity, diversity and inclusion.

The program's two goals are:

1. Enabling non-profits and small and medium sized enterprises to engage with university talent and
2. Providing valuable, meaningful work experiences for students who are from equity-seeking backgrounds, and / or enrolled in non-linear degree programs (e.g. Humanities).

Operating on a shared funding model between the University and the host organization, Ryerson Career Centre oversees the first stage of recruitment screening. This ensures value-added feedback to all candidates throughout the recruitment process, to assist in every student applicant's professional development."

See:

**<http://www.ryerson.ca/career/about-us/CareerBoost/>**

## Conestoga College

**Impressive Model Score:** **19.92**



**Location:** Kitchener, ON

**F.T.E.:** 13, 000



**Name of Department:** Career Hub



**Service Delivery:** Centralized



**# of staff:** Full time/ part time/ student assistants



**Category:** 3 Career Advisors (practicing in the advising, educating and coaching category), 1.6 Employment Advisor (practicing in the advising and coaching categories)

### Web address:

<http://www.conestogac.on.ca/career-hub/>

### Contact:

Alice Michaud, Manager, Career Hub, [amichaud@conestogac.on.ca](mailto:amichaud@conestogac.on.ca)

## Model Descriptors

### *Suggested Name: Integrated Model*

- Service integrates educational planning, career pathing and employment advising
- Named the "Career Hub", houses career advisors and employment advisors, to distinguish itself from the services provided

by Employment Ontario's Career Centre and the Welcome Centre which provides program advising for prospective students

- Providing service in a commuter college characterized by a growing student body, increasing number of international students, increasing diversity in terms of needs, accessibility, mental health and multi-campus
- The "commuter" aspect of the college makes

attendance at on-campus programming a challenge

- Key focus for the future is to partner with faculty to integrate compelling programming in the classroom
- College does not have centralized academic advising

to develop workplace survival skills through an analysis of workplace structures, leadership roles, ethics and behaviours that will enable them to approach opportunities and challenges, and engage in the workforce both independently and in teams." A brief overview of GCM2000 and frequently asked questions is provided in *Appendices for Institutions: Conestoga*.

## Best Practices

### *Career maps*

Have been developed in 30 program areas, which can be used to expose students to the varied career paths they can follow in their chosen program. When formatted to comply with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, they will be available on the Conestoga website. A sample Career Map is provided in *Appendices for Institutions: Conestoga*.

### *Career Management in Canada*

The 225 hour GCM 2000 "Career Management in Canada" course delivered by Brian McDowell, was originally designed as an alternative to a co-operative work term for students in Optional Co-op programs of post-graduate certificate programs in the School of IT and Engineering.

"In this course students learn to establish career goals and objectives, build career management tools, identify appropriate career-related job opportunities, and acquire networking, self-marketing, job search, and interview skills for lifelong employment success. Students learn

## Centennial College

Impressive  
Model Score: **19.92**

**CENTENNIAL**  
COLLEGE



**Location:** Scarborough, ON



**F.T.E.:** 20, 000



**Name of Department:** Career Services and Co-operative Education



**Service Delivery:** Centralized



**# of staff:** 8 full time/ 0 part time/ 0 student assistants



**Category:** 4 Employment Advisors (practicing in the advising category), 1 Career Counsellor (practicing in the counselling category)

### Web address:

<https://www.centennialcollege.ca/student-life/career-services-co-operative-education/>

### Contact:

Tracey Lloyd, Director, Career and Counselling Services,  
centennialcollege.ca

tlloyd@

## Model Descriptors

### *Suggested Name: Three-Stage Model*

- Engage, prepare, connect
- Serving a very diverse student population who require support to develop networks for

career success

- Emphasized the “outreach” nature of their service, “we’re out there, we’re not in the office”, multi-campus to service
- Aligning generalist advisors with schools (portfolio-based)
- Moving to more of a “career education” approach, i.e. combining career with health

and wellness

- Very closely aligned with the mission of the institution, the “Book of Commitments” (<https://www.centennialcollege.ca/pdf/publications/Centennial-Book-of-Commitments-2013.pdf>), which speaks of “educating students for career success”
- Physical co-location with other student services

## Best Practices

### Annual Career Week

Effective in terms of student engagement, raising awareness, skill development and connecting with industry professionals.

*“Traditionally, Career Week has always been for students to raise their awareness about career planning. So this year we extended to include sessions for staff as well. We worked with our HR department who coordinated with our EAP provider to facilitate a session on work-life balance. In terms of partnerships, we also reached out to our on-campus spa services to provide free chair massages as part of the session. For the first time, Career Week was livestreamed – staff from our marketing department recorded workshops and employer speaker panels for promotion on the College’s Facebook page. It was amazing, people were commenting online, and students could go back and watch the presentations.*

*That was really good.”*

### Career Success Guide

*“This is housed on e-Centennial, our learning management portal... all students can enroll and stay in the course for their entire time at Centennial. It’s built so that they can access pieces of it. They don’t have to go through the entire course or all four modules. They get badges, certificates and medals when they’ve completed different parts of it.”*

(<https://www.centennialcollege.ca/studenthub/your-support/here-for-you/career-services-and-co-op/career-success-guide/>)

Students also have access to online career planning resources and advising services up to two years after graduation.

### Employer relations staff

Hiring of specialized employer relations staff to market services and engage employers in career development activities and also to secure employment opportunities for students. The College has also recently launched a one-stop concierge service (Signature Industry Experience) for industry partners so they have one access point to engage with various areas of the college - career, co-op, applied research, our development office etc.

*“Employers who want to engage with the College can register, join our database and indicate how they want to be involved with the college. We can then track*



*the type and level of their activity. For example, we would be able to see how many employers are involved in our career development activities, how many are donors and where the crossover is. So that's where we're going in an ideal world. We're actively recruiting new employers and the hope is that existing employers or industry partners across the college will also be part of this network, and this database will interface with other databases being used. We want a central point where we can monitor and track our industry engagement."*

## Appendix A: Identifying Institutions with an Impressive Model

The approach to identifying institutions with impressive models of career services began with input from practitioners via a web survey. A questionnaire item asked respondents to rate the utility of eighteen metrics that could potentially characterize an impressive model of career services.

The top seven metrics, those endorsed by 66% or more of respondents, were selected as the characteristics of institutions with impressive career service models. While selecting a cut-off of 66% may appear arbitrary, it was felt that if at least two-in-three respondents identified a specific metric as “very useful” this constituted significant agreement on the utility of a criterion measure.

An Impressive Model Scale Score was then computed for each institution using institutional responses to questionnaire items that measured each of the seven metrics. This process resulted in a total of 43 institutions with an Impressive Model Scale Score. Twenty four institutions scored above the scale mean and seven had a score more than one standard deviation (+1 SD) above the mean. An institution that scores one standard deviation or more above the mean is significantly different from others in the sample and exemplifies an impressive model based on the criteria endorsed by career services practitioners.

In effect, career services practitioners in Canadian colleges and universities characterized institutions with an “Impressive Model” of career service delivery as being those where

1. Services are evaluated regularly
2. Service outcomes are measured
3. Services are delivered proactively
4. Staff collaborate with campus stakeholders

An examination of other characteristics the seven top-scoring institutions had in common showed that:

- Six required a Master’s level credential of the Director
- Five of the seven required or preferred the Director to have a “career” designation
- All were organized within the Student Affairs/Student Services area
- Six were co-located with co-op/experiential learning services

- Four said departmental practices were “very” established in written policy and three reported practices were “somewhat” established in written policy.
- Six said their senior administration was “very” or “quite” committed to student career development

## Appendix B: Institutions Scoring above the Mean on Impressive Scale

| Province | Institution                                   | Impressive Score |         |
|----------|---|------------------|---------|
| ON       | Wilfrid Laurier University                    | 28.16            |         |
| ON       | Queen's University                            | 26.39            |         |
| BC       | Simon Fraser University                       | 24.99            |         |
| ON       | University of Toronto Mississauga             | 24.91            |         |
| AB       | Mount Royal University                        | 24.41            |         |
| ON       | Fanshawe College                              | 23.86            |         |
| NS       | Nova Scotia Community College                 | 23.70            | +1 SD   |
| NS       | St. Francis Xavier University                 | 23.28            |         |
| ON       | Mohawk College                                | 22.86            |         |
| NS       | Dalhousie University                          | 22.82            |         |
| NS       | Mount Saint Vincent University                | 22.57            |         |
| AB       | Bow Valley College                            | 21.75            |         |
| ON       | Brock University                              | 21.71            |         |
| ON       | Ryerson University                            | 21.58            | +0.5 SD |
| QC       | Université Laval                              | 21.37            |         |
| ON       | University of Ottawa                          | 21.21            |         |
| QC       | Concordia University                          | 20.93            |         |
| ON       | University of Ontario Institute of Technology | 20.63            |         |
| BC       | Vancouver Community College                   | 20.55            |         |
| QC       | McGill University                             | 20.43            |         |
| ON       | Fleming College                               | 20.12            |         |
| NB       | St. Thomas University                         | 19.96            |         |
| ON       | Conestoga College                             | 19.92            |         |
| ON       | Centennial College                            | 19.92            | Mean    |

## Appendix C: Site Interview Protocol

### SURVEY OF CAREER SERVICES IN CANADIAN POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

#### *Objective*

To facilitate an interactive discussion that enables managers of career services and other key stakeholders to respond to questions regarding the policies, processes and resources associated with their delivery of career services to students.

The overall goal of the site interviews is to obtain sufficient information on the development and implementation of 'impressive' models so that these might replicated at other institutions.

#### *Organization*

- a. **Session length:** 60-90 mins
- b. **Group Size:** Managers will be asked to invite relevant stakeholders at their institutions. To facilitate transcription, a maximum group size of four participants is recommended.
- c. **Consent Form:** Managers will be sent a consent form by email and will be asked to distribute the form to each participant. Signed hard copies will be collected before the group discussion.
- d. **Format:** A semi-structured discussion of questions as listed below. The session will be digitally recorded and transcribed for analysis. Participants will be provided with a numerical identifier that will not allow for identification of individual participants.

#### *Questions for Discussion*

1. How would you describe your 'model' of career services? What policies, processes and resources are key to meeting the needs of students? Are there additional developments necessary/planned in order to more effectively meet student need?
2. From an historical perspective, what have been the most critical changes you've seen over the past decade in the provision of career services at your institution? Has there been a specific individual that has championed the development of your model?
3. How would you describe your institution's current commitment to the provision of career services? What are the factors that contribute to this? Is there a strategic plan/academic plan that speaks to career development (These can be present-day and/or historical factors.)

4. Have there been specific barriers that have hindered or slowed the development of your model? If so, how were these overcome?
5. Have there been challenges around funding for your model development? If so, how were these overcome?
6. What recommendations would you make re: development and implementation strategies for institutions wishing to adopt your model?
7. Has your centre developed programs/approaches to deal with any of the following “special needs”? (i.e. students with mental health issues, students with disabilities, international/ students with English as a second language, Indigenous students)
8. We would like to explore any best practices which you listed in the on-line survey. (In addition to our focus group discussion, we would appreciate any documentation you could provide that more comprehensively describes your best practice(s).)
9. We would like to explore any example of career-focused curriculum that you could show us from your institution (i.e., any course outlines, learning outcomes and approaches that you see as particularly effective.)
10. We would like to explore the specifics of any service outcome measures you are using.