

Division

Enrollment Management & Student Affairs

Department

Dean of Students/Student Life - Career Connections

1. What are the main objectives of your unit, and how do you measure success in achieving them?

Every year Career connections submit an annual program review through [IMPROVE](#). Below are the main objectives and the outcomes for AY21.22.

1. Provide resources to assist students and alumni in identifying and achieving their career goals
 - a. Career Connections will provide individual appointments, group workshops, class presentations, and course instruction to help students develop and maintain appropriate career development and management skills
 - i. Over 91 individual student appointments, 32 events/workshops provided
 - b. Career Connections will gather student and alumni information in order to provide SOU with a better understanding of what students do with their degrees upon graduating and ways they can be best supported while in school.
 - i. Destination survey
2. Develop employer relationships
 - a. Career Connections will develop and maintain opportunities for students to find and apply for appropriate jobs, internships, and volunteer opportunities, both on-campus and off-campus.
 - i. Over 2,000 jobs added to Handshake each month
 - ii. Career Fair had 67 employers last year year (Spring 2022)
3. Manage and develop leadership skills and professional relationships with key campus stakeholders (staff, faculty, alumni)
 - a. NSLS: Membership, n= 135 (program Started in Fall 2022)
 - b. PEAK: 93 positions across 28 divisions

2. What are the services that your unit provides and to which customers (students, faculty, staff, donors, others)?

Career Connections serves students, alumni, faculty and staff. In addition, it serves employers both locally and nationally.

[The NACE Career Services Strategic Positioning Task Force](#) released *Positioning Career Services as an Institutional Strategic Priority* (2022) that offers an adaptable roadmap to repositioning the career center, and includes recommendations for how to acquire endorsements to help in repositioning. The rationale provided states that Career Services: “equips students with career readiness competencies and the ability to articulate them to employers; addresses concerns about ROI of college degrees and the value of higher education; finds opportunities to integrate career readiness into academic programs and curriculum; increases engagement between career services and faculty members to better integrate

careers into the classroom and curriculum; helps marginalized students build social capital, increase access to opportunities, and achieve career mobility; increases recruitment, enrollment, retention, and degree completion.”

3. List each position in your unit, and briefly describe the responsibilities of each. Include part-time and work-study student hours. Indicate if functionality of the position is tied to federal, state, or institutional compliance.

- a. Coord. of Career Connections(position vacant since September 2022) is the only full-time staff position. This position is responsible for doing everything Career Connections related.
- b. .5 FTE graduate assistant position. This position in the past has helped with day-to-day operations. However, with the new NSLS program, almost 100% of the GA time is dedicated to serving that program.

The Coordinator of Career Connections has been vacant since September 2022. We have hired a consulting firm to review, evaluate and recommend next steps for Career Connections. That report will be completed in January 2023. One of the SSC’s was previously designated as providing 25% of their time to help with Career Connections(that position has been vacant and unable to assist since October 2022). This position primarily helped with Career Fair and career exploration and preparation activities. Prior to bringing on NSLS the graduate position would focus on career exploration and preparation activities.

4. Do you see needs and demands for services that your unit cannot currently meet? If so, what are they, and how do they relate to the university’s mission?

With a lack of person power Career Connections is very limited in what it is able to do for its stakeholders. The Destination survey, PEAK program, and Career Fair could all be expanded and better developed if there was more time allocated to those areas. The current staffing means that Career Connections focuses on the basics (keep job postings and employer approvals updated in Handshake, offer resume and cover letter appointments but we do not actively promote that service currently). There is no capacity to improve, develop, or innovate existing programs.

SOU has invested ~\$225,000 towards PEAK. This program should be a [high impact practice \(HIP\)](#) but due to a lack of staffing this program has not functioned as a [HIP](#). Although we are waiting for the consultant report, the following [proposal](#) was developed in May of 2022 with a Fall 2023 implementation timeline. At the time of the proposal creation SOU had not started our partnership with the [NSLS Leadership program](#). I would envision this position also supporting NSLS and the forthcoming LAD Scholars program because the learning outcomes are very similar for all three. The LAD Scholars program has some funding that could be applied to this position as well, freeing up some of the PEAK funds to be awarded back to student positions.

5. How could the university help your unit do its job better?

We have hired a consultant to do a 360 review of the department but based on best practices I expect there will be a recommendation to have more than 1 professional staff member dedicated to the department.

6. In what ways does your unit relate to other units of the university, academic and non-academic? For example, what services do you provide to other units? What services do other units provide to you? On what tasks do you collaborate with other offices?

Career Connections serves academic and non-academic units. It works with all majors and departments. Beyond on-campus relationships, it continually engages with local, state, and national employers.

7. What skill sets and resources does your unit possess that can be shared with other units at slack times?

Career Connections does not currently have any slack time due to limited capacity of staffing.

8. Which individuals in your unit are cross-trained and in what areas?

Career Connections is more niche specific but when we had a person in the position they would assist with Student Life events (i.e. assisting with check-ins, set ups, Preview Days, Orientation, Convocation etc.), sit on committees, teach courses, and partner with academic departments.

9. What resources do you need to improve your services to a superior level?

An actual Career Connections office space (needs 3 private offices, small conference room, storage room, and lobby area). Also need 4 position lines (Director, two Coordinators, and one administrative assistant). Maintaining the GA line and allocating funds for student employees.

10. What technologies are available to you to provide your services better? What training do you need to be more effective users of the technology?

Currently we use Handshake, Navigate, Presence, and Banner. No additional training is needed at this time. We are currently looking to see if we can eliminate Handshake (~\$9K) and partner with the Alumni Association or Student Activities on a shared software (PeopleGrove, CampusGroups, etc.).

11. What one thing do you wish you could do differently to improve your effectiveness but have not had the opportunity, time, or resources to do?

There is a lot more than one thing that I wish we could improve and so I have them ranked in order of importance based on impact to retention.

- Develop the PEAK program so that it is actually a meaningful, HIP experience for the students and their supervisors. Participate in the Student Employee of the Year Awards (National program).
- Transition from a spring Career Fair (focused solely on seniors) to a Fall career fair (focused on jobs, internships, and all student levels) and another Spring career fair that is focused on soon-to-be graduates that have not secured employment.

- Develop and expand the Career Readiness skills development program.
- Enhance our First Destination Survey through increased response rate

12. How do you review and evaluate your department's yearly performance?

Every year the department completes the [IMPROVE](#) review. When there is time a [PEAK satisfaction survey](#) has been administered.

13. Explain how your unit could function with:

Due to the current limited staffing and budget any reductions would result in the elimination of services. We would need to change how we do/manage PEAK, on-campus employment, and Career Fair(s).

- a. A 10 percent reduction to staff
- b. A 20 percent reduction to staff
- c. A 30 percent reduction to staff
- d. A 10 percent reduction to non-personnel resources
- e. A 20 percent reduction to non-personnel resources
- f. A 30 percent reduction to non-personnel resource
- g. What would be the consequences or other effects on service delivery in each case?

14. What opportunities exist for greater collaboration and team approaches in the delivery of services?

Having the Career Connections Coordinator position vacant has created a stronger collaboration between HR (they have been managing on-campus employment in Handshake) BUT that is only a temporary fix because they are also limited in staff.

If additional investment in Career Connections is not possible we need to look across departments to determine if various positions could absorb aspects of services (for example if primary advisors supported resume and cover letter feedback, if administrative assistants in each academic department took on responsibilities of employer recruitment for the career fair and all of them assisted in putting career fair on the coordinator could focus their time on the First Destination survey and general management of services. We could change where Career Connections is housed organizationally.

15. How many "middle managers" do we have? Are there opportunities to reduce middle strata in the organization and expand the span of control?

There are no middle managers

16. What technological improvements could be made that would result in labor savings?

N/A

17. How can a service be more efficiently delivered?

If we reduced what we do, we could be more focused and efficient in our delivery. Right now only the bare minimum is being done and I believe that is a disservice to all of our stakeholders.

If staffing levels remain at 1.0FTE I would recommend reductions in the following services:

-On-campus student employment management is removed from Career Connections (this would include PEAK and Bridge) instead we would focus on off-campus employment opportunities for students and alumni.

18. What processes do we have that can be streamlined or eliminated to improve service delivery?

We could look at who manages on-campus student employment and who assists with career exploration and preparation.

19. Restructuring: What efficiencies might be gained by consolidating similar entities?

We could look at the role of SSC's and faculty in regards to career development and readiness (i.e. if departments are already helping students with their resumes and cover letter we could simply refer students back to their faculty) and the time Career Connections spends on resume and cover letters could be more focused on interview techniques and the actual job search process instead.

20. Personnel: Have we worked around or structured around non-effective personnel and other personnel issues, and is this the time to stop indulging and start confronting the issue(s)?

N/A

21. Outsourcing: Are there other opportunities to outsource non-mission-critical services to private contractors who could do it better, faster, cheaper?

We could potentially outsource the First Destination Survey but I am not sure on how much that would cost.

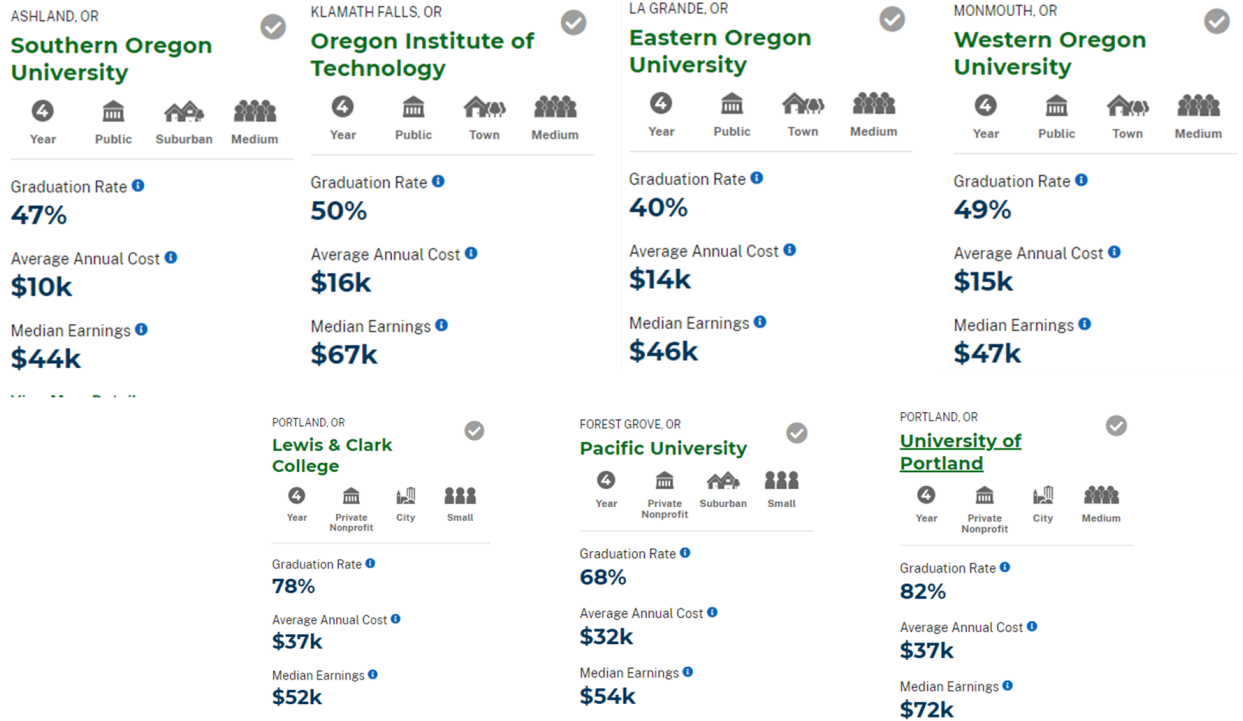
22. Customer focus: How might our services be structured or delivered to meet the needs of students, faculty, staff, donors, and others better?

I believe that SOU should focus on investing in creating a true Career Connections department. This would include an actual space and staff. If this is not possible then we need to start researching a decentralized model instead of the current hybrid which seems to be trying to function as a centralized model.

23. Benchmarking: Compare your unit with similar units at other institutions or national norms.

We have a larger headcount than our Oregon Peer institutions, similar if not identical services, but the *smallest* staff of all the schools. [Federal Student Aid](#) recommends that students consider the following

four items when choosing a college: 1. Net Cost; 2. Graduation Rate; 3. Students paying down their debt; and 4. Post-enrollment earnings. They also recommend reviewing the [Department of Education Scorecard](#)(see image below). SOU has the most affordable tuition, 2nd lowest graduation rate, and the second lowest median earnings. If we want to compete with other schools in the state we need to invest in Career Connections.



SOU: Career Connections Coord., .5 FTE Graduate Assistant (enrollment = 5,089, Fall 2021)

Public Peers

OIT: Has a Director, AD, and and Employer Relations/Career Advisor (Enrollment, 4,910, Fall 2021)

Eastern Oregon: Has a dir. and a career development Coord. (Enrollment = 2,825, Fall 2021)

Western Oregon: Has a Director, Asst. Dir., and a Career Development Coord., + Peer Career Advisors (Enrollment = 4,029, Fall 2021)

Private Peers

Lewis & Clark College: Ex. Director, Senior Associate Director, Associate Director, Career Advisor, Assist. Dir. of Employer and Student Engagement, Administrative Specialist (Enrollment = 3,509, Fall 2021)

Pacific University: Have an Academic & Career Advising Center, Dir, Associate Dir., Internship Coord./Career Advisor, + 6 other professional staff (Enrollment,= 3,751 Year unknown)

University of Portland: Dir, Career Counselor, Career and Program Advisor, Program Assist. (Enrollment = 3,731, 2021)

24. What can we stop doing?

We can stop doing most services but I would not recommend that option. Again our campus needs to invest in Career Connections (that includes space, staffing, and financial support) so that we can at least be comparable to our peers.

25. How and where might we apply an EDI lens to this cost management discussion?

Career Connections would use the [7 key steps to advance and embed race Equity](#) and apply it not only to race but other historically underrepresented groups at SOU. We would use this plan when looking at the PEAK program participants, Handshake users, students utilizing one on one appointments, First Destination respondents, Career Fair attendants, and NSLS program.

