

Comprehensive Program Review: Brief Executive Summary



**UC SANTA CRUZ
CAREER CENTER**

Andrew T. Ceperley Consulting

Final Report

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Introduction

As national debates on the return on investment of higher education heighten, multi-audience campus units like career centers are finding themselves in higher level strategic conversations with senior administrators and academic leaders; conversations that are resulting in what we call “new-era” career centers, spaces that are truly hubs of student engagement, career education, and professional action. Concurrently, re-imagined career centers are increasingly being positioned strategically in high profile enrollment services, advancement and alumni engagement, and newly framed student success clusters. At the University of California Santa Cruz, the campus Career Center is in such a position. Andrew T. Ceperley Consulting (ATCC) has completed a comprehensive review of the Career Center, the first in UC Santa Cruz history. This review addresses three overarching goals as articulated by Vice Provost for Student Success, Dr. Jaye Padgett.

1. **Structure**—developing the best campus structures and processes—whether centralized or decentralized—for delivering major navigation support, career and professional development, experiential opportunities, and services for alumni.
2. **Inclusivity**—ensuring that the Career Center and the campus best serve all student populations; including first generation and underrepresented students, graduate students, and students outside of STEM fields.
3. **Resourcing**—identifying where investments need to be made and where resources could be differently allocated in order to meet the above goals, whether in staffing, technology, or otherwise.

To respond to VP Padgett’s goals the review team elected to discover the UC Santa Cruz Career Center through a funnel—starting with national trends that are changing the landscape of university career centers; then featuring the UC Santa Cruz campus, its broad mission and its emerging priority around student success; and concluding with the Career Center itself, assessing its current state and imagining its aspirational future through recommendations set across six strategic opportunity themes.

National Trends in Career Services and Student Success

As colleges and universities compete for the best students and field inquiries from prospective parents and families, many administrators are looking to demonstrate their institutions’ positive return on investment (ROI). Without exception, institutions throughout the United States and beyond are eager to illustrate the value of their educational offerings, the types of academic and co-curricular opportunities available to their students over the course of their college years, and career success post-graduation. Since the recession of 2008, many colleges and universities have elevated their career services functions, repositioning them to lead career readiness efforts across their campuses, broadening their scope of responsibility, and increasing their resource allocations to ensure evidence of student success and ultimately, proof of their overall ROI (Dey & Cruzvergara, 2014). Even at high administrative levels, institutions are beginning to recognize and demonstrate the value of student success, as exemplified by schools like the University of Iowa (2017), an institution structured “to educate students for success and

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personal fulfillment in a diverse world.” Increasingly, efforts to prepare students for success are being integrated with traditional tenets of liberal arts education. The landscape today represents a new era in career services.

Career Readiness Competencies

Colleges and universities are now focusing their attention on employers of their graduates, a stakeholder group long excluded from academic agenda setting outside of profession-oriented programs such as engineering, law, and accounting. Several institutions have begun the arduous effort of establishing career programs offering comprehensive preparation for the employment market. Wake Forest University, New York University, and the University of Arizona are but a few examples. At the same time, the term “career readiness” has found voice, and ROI-driven campuses are building frameworks to support it. Partnerships between academy and industry are striving to build a sustainable bridge to connect college learning and workplace expectations.

A recent study by the Pew Research Center (2016) noted just 16% of Americans think that a four-year degree prepares students for a well-paying job in today’s economy. The National Association of Colleges & Employers (NACE, 2016) published a study on the expectations and needs of employers in recruiting college talent, resulting in the following list of career readiness competencies students should have upon college graduation.

NACE Career Readiness Competencies

- ▶ **Critical Thinking/Problem Solving**—Exercise sound reasoning to analyze issues, make decisions, and overcome problems. The individual is able to obtain, interpret, and use knowledge, facts, and data in this process, and may demonstrate originality and inventiveness.
- ▶ **Oral/Written Communications**—Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively in written and oral forms to persons inside and outside of the organization. The individual has public speaking skills; is able to express ideas to others; and can write/edit memos, letters, and complex technical reports clearly and effectively.
- ▶ **Teamwork/Collaboration**—Build collaborative relationships with colleagues and customers representing diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, religions, lifestyles, and viewpoints. The individual is able to work within a team structure, and can negotiate and manage conflict.
- ▶ **Digital Technology**—Leverage existing digital technologies ethically and efficiently to solve problems, complete tasks, and accomplish goals. The individual demonstrates effective adaptability to new and emerging technologies.
- ▶ **Leadership**—Leverage the strengths of others to achieve common goals, and use interpersonal skills to coach and develop others. The individual is able to assess and manage his/her emotions and those of others; use empathetic skills to guide and

motivate; and organize, prioritize, and delegate work.

- ▶ **Professionalism/Work Ethic**—Demonstrate personal accountability and effective work habits, (e.g., punctuality, working productively with others, and time workload management) and understand the impact of non-verbal communication on professional work image. The individual demonstrates integrity and ethical behavior, acts responsibly with the interests of the larger community in mind, and is able to learn from his/her mistakes.
- ▶ **Career Management**—Identify and articulate one's skills, strengths, knowledge, and experiences relevant to the position desired and career goals, and identify areas necessary for professional growth. The individual is able to navigate and explore job options, understands and can take the steps necessary to pursue opportunities, and understands how to self-advocate for opportunities in the workplace.
- ▶ **Global/Intercultural Fluency**—Value, respect, and learn from diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, sexual orientations, and religions. The individual demonstrates openness, inclusiveness, sensitivity, and the ability to interact respectfully with all people and understand individuals' differences.

Expectations are rising among parents, students, alumni, employers, and even regents and trustees to improve higher education's performance in preparing students for post-graduate professional success in a fast-changing economy. And perhaps as a result, trends indicate a new recognition and loftier expectations of once under-the-radar career services' departments. These operations, like the Career Center at UC Santa Cruz, provide logical infusion points for an investment in career readiness as a campus-wide priority.

Staff Attributes

Successful professionals in the new era of career services demonstrate skills not always seen as essential in the profession. With career readiness as an institutional priority and the need to engage the full campus ecosystem, career center practitioners are shifting from traditional service provision such as one-on-one counseling, resume reviews, and workshop delivery roles to broader, more agile, and higher impact roles as facilitators, consultants, content experts, and network catalysts. Traditionally trained career counselors or student affairs practitioners who have risen through the ranks may or may not provide the needed fit in today's highly visible career operations. The following table more specifically outlines the changing landscape of skills needed for career services practitioners and leaders:

New Era Approaches to Career Services Delivery

Traditional Career Services Staff	New Era Career Services Staff
Generalized	Customized
Transactional	Community development
Protect turfs	Leverage interconnected ecosystem
Resource and time intensive	Scalable

Intimidating	Approachable
Referral source	Agile expert and thought leader
Counselor/Advisor	Consultant/Coach/Facilitator
1 on 1 counseling	Group facilitating, stakeholder convening
Workshops (teaching)	Meet-ups (flipped classroom)
Promotions	Branding
Web and print resources	Customized connections
On campus recruiting	Employer engagement
Job fairs	Networking events
Measure learning outcomes and attendance	Measure destination outcomes and reputation

(Dey & Cruzvergara, 2014)

UC Santa Cruz Strategic Vision and Envisioned Future

The review of the University's Career Center is coming at an auspicious time for UC Santa Cruz, as institutionally and divisionally, themes of student success have become preeminent. According to its vision statement, the University claims to be "distinguished by our high-impact research and our commitment to diversity, social justice, the environment, and educational opportunity. Our innovative approach to research and experiential education provides a transformative student experience." This student experience is further referenced in one of the six goal areas: "to advance student success."

As of the creation of the UC Santa Cruz strategic plan, called *Envision*, in 2015, the University's graduation rate was below the University of California mean. At the same time, senior administration is proud that Santa Cruz differs from most other UC campuses in the proportion of underserved students it enrolls and educates.

Connected closely to *Envision* is the October 2015 *Student Success Strategic Plan*, a 26-page document providing additional detail to improve campus performance. Specifically, the plan's three goals are to:

- ▶ Increase overall graduation rates
- ▶ Decrease time to degree, and
- ▶ Eliminate disparities in graduation rates between African American and Latino students as compared to White students, as well as low-income students relative to their non-low income peers.

One advantage, among many, of the physical and organizational placement of the Career Center, as is referenced elsewhere in this report, is its adjacency to the Ethnic Resource Centers (ERC's). A second advantage is Director Silverthorne's background in and current synergistic relationship with Student Organizations' Advising and Resources (SOAR). Both represent essential stakeholder groups, necessary to further activate and sustain the career ecosystem.

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Career Center Mission

Whereas the University at large and the newly formed Division of Student Success seem to be moving in a direction of clarity, the Career Center will need to firmly articulate its connection to the greater good. The current mission of the Career Center, as stated on the website, is to promote the career development and related life planning skills of UC Santa Cruz students and alumni, and to provide access to internships and employment opportunities so students may explore career choices and nurture career goals. The Center's vision is to achieve distinction as a resource for information and education about career development for students, and to provide outstanding service to employers seeking to recruit UC Santa Cruz graduates.

Both statements are appropriate, comprehensive, and safe—in a previous era. But today, the classic two-party student/employer relationship described reads as dated and does not align effectively with the University's or the Student Success Division's strategic priorities. In the Career Center's defense, their organizational position in the hierarchy has shifted recently, and our reviewers suggest that now is the time to completely overhaul the Center's guiding statements to better echo campus priorities.

Consider the timely bond between the increasingly popular Student Success paradigm and growing examples nationwide of new era career centers claiming a philosophy of "Career Success." Whereas terms like career development define a process of change—counseling and coaching do as well—career success speaks to a destination, one comprised of eight vital competencies described earlier in this report. So, following a rigorous strategic planning process, our review team hopes that a measurable outcome of a re-imagined mission of career success at UC Santa Cruz involves evidence among graduating students of achievement across all career readiness competencies.

Career Center Status

The Career Center is the centralized career services office at the UC Santa Cruz, serving all students—both undergraduate and graduate. We see this as a strategic advantage over time. The Center provides one-on-one career advising, career-related workshops, programs and training, job fairs, graduate school preparation assistance, and student employment coordination. The Center also establishes and maintains relationships with employers representing a wide variety of industries in order to help them find the talent they seek for internships and full-time opportunities. Before we can offer recommendation for enhancement to position the Center for the new era of career services, we extend our thanks to Barbara Silverthorne and her staff for developing such a rich collection of discovery artifacts. Dozens of documents were compiled or developed in preparation for this study; including organizational charts, position descriptions, survey results, marketing materials, budget projections, and many other reports that have enabled our review team to assess the Center's current state. In particular, their thorough and reflective completion of the *NACE Professional Standards* assessment demonstrates considerable awareness of successes and vulnerabilities among the Center's management team.

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Recent Statistics

The Career Center's *2016-17 Annual Report* and other data sources offer the following data points:

- ▶ The number of students the Career Center is reaching is declining.
- ▶ The Center has experienced a 30% decrease in individual student advising (now called "coaching" since 2011. This decrease has crossed all ethnic groups and is believed to be due at least partially to a drop in staff.
- ▶ Workshops have also decreased markedly.
- ▶ Career Fairs represent the primary growth area, posting an increase of 40%.
- ▶ Students from the School of Engineering are the only cohort demonstrating growth in Career Center usage.
- ▶ Career Center usage among White/Caucasian students has continued to drop while under-represented student usage has remained flat or demonstrated growth (Asian students in particular).

From our observation, the Center's four primary effort categories (individual coaching, workshops, career fairs, and Student Employment) will need to be carefully analyzed as part of a recommended Efforts Inventory and a thorough strategic planning process.

Featured Services and Metrics

Trend and utilization data (2010 – 2016) provided to our review team showed a sharp decline in the past three years in workshop attendance, a steady decline in advising appointments, and a steady increase in career fair attendance. By most key metrics where Career Center data is available, the UC Santa Cruz Career Center falls below the national average according to NACE. Staff turnover and unfilled positions at the Career Center likely have contributed to the declines, as have possibly the location of the Career Center, a need for improved communication with students, faculty, and staff, and better resource allocation. Bringing big name employers (e.g. Google) to career fairs has boosted attendance.

On-campus Interviewing

Although our team recognizes that according to NACE data, employer reliance on traditional on-campus interview programs has decreased slightly in the last five years (approximately 76% to 74%) as have the resulting hires (60% to 59%), these hardly point to significant trends when we take into account the substantial growth in employer utilization of video interviewing which jumped from 27% in 2012 to 55% in 2016. The Career Center includes a variety of conference rooms and offices, six in total, for employment interviews. One is dedicated to video conferencing, and our review team recommends incorporating similar technology to at least half of these flexible spaces.

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Internships

The Career Center posts internships and full-time job opportunities on SlugQuest, and while the Career Center is off to a good start supporting experiential education through its support of the Chancellor's Undergraduate Internship Program, CUIP serves only 35 students per year. If a similar program could be scaled for a variety of academic disciplines, it could provide the needed connections to internship, employment, and experiential learning opportunities for all UC Santa Cruz students.

Student Employment and Work Study

While UC Santa Cruz hires over 2000 student workers each year, over 50% higher than the national NACE average, the Career Center's responsibility for administrative processing associated with student employment on campus is highly problematic. Parts of several positions are dedicated to this transactional work. According to data provided by the Career Center 80-85% of Career Center users only used the Career Center once (UCSC: Analysis of Student Crossover Payroll Sign Up to Career Center Service, 2015-2016). Comments by stakeholders suggest that bureaucratic nature of the student employment process does little more than reinforce a perception that the Career Center is a transactional service, and not an essential partner in student career development.

Underserved Student Engagement

Underrepresented student populations appear well served by the Career Center. The Career Center hosts a signature Multicultural Career Conference (MCC) each year including: EOP, Ethnic Resource Center, Women's Center, and Lionel Cantú Queer Center. Nearly 140 students and 50 Banana Slug alumni have participated each year. In the data and reports submitted to our review team, minorities make up more than 50% of overall usage of the Career Center services, which may be due in part to the location of Career Center adjacent to the Ethnic Resource Centers. It should also be noted that among UC Career Center Directors, the UC Santa Cruz Career Center is known as a leader in best practices regarding undocumented students.

Graduate Student Engagement

It is clear to our review team that graduate students would like more contact with alumni, workshops tailored for their needs, and communication targeted towards them. For example, one graduate student leader observed that there is little or no communication between Graduate Student Commons and the Career Center. There were also strong words from Graduate Division leadership that the Career Center is undergraduate focused, and has not established any credibility with graduate students. Graduate Division leadership suggested they might hire on their own a dedicated graduate student counselor with a terminal degree. Our review team believes this would not be a strategic use of precious resources and indicates an alternative solution in our recommendations later in this report. Finally, while services for all graduate students were mentioned as deficient, services for Ph.D. candidates appear to be in greatest need. One surprising finding is that by show of hands most graduate students felt their

faculty members are supportive of intentions to pursue alternatives to traditional tenure-track and research pathways. They just don't know how to provide that support.

Non-STEM Student Engagement

Humanities Division students account for 22% of all Career Center appointments, and for Arts, 20%. However, participation in Career Fairs drops to 13% for Humanities and 8% for Arts, leading to our conclusion that if the Career Center relies too heavily on Career Fairs for engagement with Humanities and Arts students, these students would not be well served by the Career Center. More tailored programs for non-STEM students should be developed in collaboration with Academic Advisors. For example, the Director of the Institute for Humanities is developing her own programs for alternative careers without Career Center support, and academic advisors for Humanities and Arts students also put on career-related programs for their students, underscoring a perception that well-intentioned Career Center staff members are best equipped to deliver high level general career support and are not capable of deep-level expertise.

Staffing and Resources

The Career Center staff consists of 14 practitioners, nearly half who were hired within the last year. While the number of staff is in line with the reported national average for a Research 1 institution (NACE, 2017), such comparison is deceiving since many large research universities have several additional career offices and staff within academic colleges and schools—those numbers are not reflected in averages. While such offices can bring multiple challenges and UC Santa Cruz has the unique focused strength of a single career services operation, there are significantly fewer staff members providing career education and professional development for Santa Cruz students than the typical large, research university.

The average of professional to student ratio is 1:2,580 students (seven staff that provide direct student contact to the 18,063 students). This presents a significant—if not impossible—challenge to effectively serve the majority of students at the University. The Career Center's staffing complement is lean without question, and in our view and per national benchmark metrics is sub-standard. As referenced earlier in this report, national trends demonstrate a growing emphasis on career development services, and institutions that understand the importance of preparing students for their first destinations are significantly expanding staff. For example, the University of Virginia, Florida State University, the University of Vermont, and numerous others are adding new positions to better meet the needs of their constituents and produce more career-ready graduates.

Connection Between Coaching and Employer Relations

Our review team was surprised by the apparent lack of connection between the career coaching and employer relations' staff members. We also learned that the employer-facing staff members do not feel fully reflected in the Center's current mission. In our experience, this obvious disconnect between core career delivery areas leads to an overall lack of awareness and insufficient strategy—those working with students may not have a clear understanding of local and national employer trends and realities and those serving employers may not have a clear

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understanding of the gaps between employer expectations and graduating students' abilities. Later in this report, we showcase Binghamton's Career Communities strategy, which provides a possible model of integration for these two units.

Strategic Direction

Our review team noted a significant lack of long-term strategic planning. We learned that although there was a recent strategic planning session, several staff indicated that it was not terribly effective in helping to establish a new mission and vision. The 30% reduction of staff nearly a decade ago seems to have affected both the psyche and workload of staff, both new and long-time, particularly at the upper administrative level. For us, the continued emphasis on the past, though historically noteworthy, is testament to a rather crippling inability to invent the future. This, we argue, is a shared burden, and cannot be carried only by Career Center leadership. It is likely more systemic and not uncommon at institutions where administration around resource scarcity becomes the norm, getting through another cycle the expectation, and innovation merely an unsupported dream. It is our review team's hope for the campus that the recent establishment and influential growth of the Division of Student Success will place a laser focus and appropriate resulting support on the value of student career success.

Essential Leadership and Structure

We credit Vice Provost Padgett for changing the reporting structure for the Career Center in October of 2016, and as will be noted in our recommendations, this perhaps positions the Division to establish a senior position for Career Success. During the course of our stakeholder interviews, it became apparent that there is considerable concern among a number of people both within and outside the Career Center that those in the highest positions in the Center need to demonstrate much higher skill levels in strategic planning, risk taking, vision setting, and "telling the story" for the Center. We believe it is not only important but is vital that the primary voice for career success at UC Santa Cruz fully embody these skills.

Stakeholder Perceptions

To determine how the Career Center correlates with UC Santa Cruz's approach to student success, our review team enjoyed the opportunity to meet with well over 100 individuals in 11 focus group settings, over meals, and on numerous phone calls. This proved to be an illuminating exercise and one that reminded our team that those who are invested in the success of the Career Center define that success in many ways, sometimes congruent and other times quite disconnected. It is clear that the Career Center's narrative within a student success framework needs to be first established—as it does not currently exist—then elevated, clarified, shared, and re-shared to ensure that expectations are aligned with existing realities and future aspirations. We summarize in our full report the information gathered from each stakeholder group, starting with perceptions shared by the staff of the Career Center followed by impressions from students and other external stakeholder groups that are part of the ultimate "Culture of Career" ecosystem we hope that a new era Career Center will soon activate.

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Toward an Aspirational Future: Recommendations

Following our comprehensive document review and nearly four days facilitating focus groups and conducting phone conversations with Career Center stakeholders in May, July, and August, our review team framed the following areas of opportunity and within them correlating recommendations. We recognize that some of our recommendations may be already in progress. Others may at first glimpse appear to be challenging to enact until significant organizational transformation takes place. Over time, it is the opinion of this review team that most or all of our recommendations are achievable and will position career success efforts at UC Santa Cruz for much greater impact. It is in this spirit that we offer the following recommendations, in no particular order.

Strategic Direction

Opportunity—The Career Center needs a fresh, contemporary, and visionary reason for being. The Center’s current complement of programs, services, and resources should be thoroughly inventoried, analyzed, and integrated with new statements of mission, core values, and strategic goals that align with the ongoing strategy in the Division of Student Success and the University’s plan, *Envision*.

Recommendation 1: Construct a comprehensive Efforts Inventory. Utilizing staff position descriptions, programs and services lists, and any available assessment metrics, break down all Career Center offerings into effort categories (e.g. coordinating job fairs, approving internship postings, writing web content, developing workshops, meeting individually with students, etc.) Establish a rubric and decision strategy for each effort. Consider the amount of staff time the effort requires, number stakeholders engaged, and learning impact. Determine which efforts to maintain as is, which to modify for greater efficiency and impact, and which to sunset. The review team encourages special attention be paid to the following potentially high effort/low impact areas: Student Employment, career classes, and dedicated internship coordination.

Recommendation 2: Establish a Community and Campus Steering Committee of diverse internal and external stakeholders—including faculty, staff, students, alumni and employers—to advise on strategic priorities, new initiatives, and programs/services prime for online delivery, re-development, enhancement, or outright elimination. Our review team acknowledges that a group already exists but encourages a revitalization of this group and a broader mix of stakeholders.

Recommendation 3: Develop a new, student-outcome oriented strategic plan, connecting UC Santa Cruz career success efforts with campus and divisional priorities. Include vision, mission, core values, goals and objectives, and key performance indicators in the plan. Ensure a clear focus on the NACE Career Readiness Competencies as articulated earlier in this report.

Academic Integration

Opportunity—There are more stakeholders eager to learn from and partner with the Career Center than there are those who in any way dismiss it. With an enviable strength as a campus-wide hub of career success and employability activity and existing and potential partners

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interested in it reaching its potential, the Center should strengthen its imprint across all undergraduate Academic Divisions, the School of Engineering, and the Division of Graduate Studies.

Recommendation 4: Establish partnerships with College-based required core courses to tie a customized career component into each of the themes in the 10 Colleges. Like academic majors, the Santa Cruz College system expresses a community focus, and to the extent that the Career Center can connect career success to the unique interest theme of the College, it can reach more students, and with greater impact.

Recommendation 5: Increase regularity of contact between Career Center staff and advisors—including college advisors, preceptors, and program/major/department advisors—by including these vital colleagues in appropriate committees, ensuring that the advising community is “touched” by liaison career coaches at least once per academic term, and finding partnership opportunities to support students’ career development. This recommendation requires a mindset of proactivity and responsiveness with the Career Center as a frequent driver, not responder.

Recommendation 6: Set up calls and ideally visits to campuses known for strong integration of curricular and co-curricular collaboration. For instance, within the UC System, the Davis campus enjoys a long tradition of academic connection between their Career and Internship Center and internship partners throughout their academic community. UC Merced is newer than and far more remote than Santa Cruz and is building an innovative model of integration.

Recommendation 7: Ritualize ongoing support from academic partners by creating a festive event during the spring term to recognize and celebrate collaborative partners who demonstrate above-and-beyond impact on students’ career success.

Organizational Capacity

Opportunity—The current staffing plan needs to be overhauled and tied completely to facets of student success (e.g. career readiness competencies), ecosystem activation, and a campus-wide culture of career. Regardless of staff size, the Career Center needs to be perceived as out in front of career trends, graduate outcomes, and an active partner in all efforts on campus that relate to career.

Recommendation 8: Create a new high-level position, reporting to the Vice Provost of Student Success, called Assistant Vice Provost for Career Success, (or Career Education or similar). The position might oversee both the existing Career Center and perhaps another strategic partner in the Student Success Portfolio, such as SOAR. This hybrid might create greater synergy within the Division, reduce supervisory workload for an existing AVP, and position professional development, leadership development, and career success solidly within the Division’s strategic plan. UC Merced offers a potential benchmark worth consideration. The AVP would be an externally facing practitioner, building collaborations across campus and with alumni, bolstering the career ecosystem through powerful relationships with high profile stakeholders, articulating the Center’s narrative in public forums, and leading strategic planning and continuous

improvement efforts. The staff attributes referenced earlier in this report will be essential for a leader in this new role.

Recommendation 9: Recast the Career Center Management team to support the new AVP for Career Success with three positions (rewrites of existing position descriptions): Director of Career Communities (DCC), Director of Employment Communities (DEC), and Director of Operations and Strategy (DOS). The DCC and DOE will equally balance their supervisory accountabilities among the existing career coaches and employer relations' staff members, with the DCC addressing relationships, programs and services for student populations with broader or uncertain career aspirations and the The DES covering students with clearer pipelines (e.g. engineering, economics, accounting, etc.). The DOS would supervise the administrative staff, events assistant, and newly developed assessment coordinator (existing student employment analyst).

Recommendation 10: Rewrite all Career Center position descriptions in phases, starting with management team descriptions, followed by coaches (adopting a model similar to Binghamton's Career Communities Model as described elsewhere in this report), followed by all other staff.

Recommendation 11: During AVP for Career Success recruitment, begin justification for two new staff lines in the Career Center. The first is a Graduate Student Career Coach (GSCC) to provide exclusive support for doctoral level students. The GSCC would be accountable for enhanced online and programmatic services (possible cost-share with the Division of Graduate Studies.) The second is an Alumni Catalyst to serve as primary liaison and program head for career education programs that leverage the talents, interests, expertise, and connections of Banana Slug alumni (possible cost-share with Alumni Relations).

Recommendation 12: Expand partnerships with Staff Human Resources and with Financial Aid to relinquish administrative duties affiliated with Student Employment, while maintaining SlugQuest as the primary portal to promote student employment opportunities on campus.

Recommendation 13: Develop a new, more regular staff meeting structure to enhance communication, professional development, and collegiality among the staff. One 60-minute all-staff meeting model adopted by another client of ATCC includes the following: 10 minutes of lightning updates, 10 minutes of director's updates, 15 minutes called "Individual Spotlight" delivered by a staff member showcasing an area of interest and or expertise, and 25 minutes dedicated to discussion, shared decision making, and/or a guest speaker.

Recommendation 14: Develop an annual performance professional development goal for all Career Center staff to overcome an existing perceived lack of growth opportunities. More intentional and regular performance and professional development conversations between supervisory leadership team members and their staffs will help clarify expectations and solidify a culture of staff growth and capacity building.

Recommendation 15: Expand touch points with students by overhauling careers.ucsc.edu to incorporate contemporary approaches to online career content, reflect the Center's new mission, and provide richer descriptions of staff members and their roles. The new site should significantly decrease the number of individual pages (currently over 400).

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Recommendation 16: Develop memoranda of understanding for added clarity between the Career Center and key partners with whom labor-intensive programs are delivered.

Facility

Opportunity—Although office space was not part of the review team’s charge, we feel compelled to offer solutions to create a more professional, multi-functional, and welcoming physical environment.

Recommendation 17: Improve computer lab space to be more collaborative by reconfiguring the lab so that workstations face each other, not the walls. Add a flat screen on a cart with micro PC attached, and integrate Zoom into all offices and spaces. Add networked flat screen monitor that mirrors front desk monitor in front of elevator on 1st floor.

Recommendation 18: Open up the Center’s primary lounge space by eliminating or reducing the number of student computer workstations, desks, and other barriers. Ideally, this area might incorporate a variety of chair and sofa options and a few high top round tables for resume reviews. Upon entering through the front doors, this area should open up to the visitor.

Recommendation 19: The lack of space for interviews and a dated environment should be improved to provide a more up-to-date environment including videoconferencing options for employers as the use video interviewing has grown significantly.

Recommendation 20: The initial impression at the Center’s Main entrance needs to be improved so as to be professional while not overwhelming. There should not be multiple signs for the Career Center. Currently, there are two: “Career Center: Careers, Internships, Student Employment” and Career and Internship Services.” Handwritten whiteboard signage should be eliminated, and the welcome area should be within the actual Center, not the existing “dentist’s office” check-in window which serves as an uninviting barrier. Consider building out a double front door (in glass) to welcome students into the Center.

Recommendation 21: Reconsider all signage and art throughout the Center and replace “do not” signage with more affirming messages or none at all. Ensure that all public spaces and hallways are free of clutter, and position new art that better aligns with a new era strategic direction.

Alumni and Employer Cultivation and Collaboration

Opportunity—UC Santa Cruz alumni, current, and prospective employers are primed for greater career engagement with undergraduate Banana Slugs. As mentors, coaches, and recruiters their involvement should be assured and linked closely to industry career clusters. Alumni Engagement needs to play a significant role in program enhancements in this area.

Recommendation 22: Host career-related mixers, lectures, and other events on the UC Santa C Extension campus by collaborating with alumni, Career Center, corporate sponsors and other campus stakeholders.

Recommendation 23: Co-present educational programs with alumni (live or virtual) to assist students with both career decision-making and professional development. Such an effort could be branded in collaboration with other offices on campus (e.g. student clubs and organizations, colleges, academic departments, etc.) Ideally, the program partners could take the lead in coordination and the Career Center could provide the technical support and marketing strategy and execution. Such programs could be pushed simultaneously to other sites on campus.

Educational Program Innovation

Opportunity—The Career Center’s mix of individual, online, classroom, workshop, conference, and fair programs need alternation, in some cases refinement for scalability and impact and in others elimination to create space for higher impact innovation.

Recommendation 24: Re-invent all traditional workshops to incorporate different venues on campus, in keeping with Career Center Hangout strategy (rather than exclusively the Bay Tree Cervantes & Velasquez Conference Room) and to be 100% co-sponsored by at least one other partner, ideally two including a SOAR group. Reduce all lecture time to enhance engagement, utilizing a “Meet-up” format.

Recommendation 25: Launch videoconferencing/Zoom breakout panels aimed at specific majors or industries at multiple college locations, with live panel at Career Center.

Recommendation 26: Expand LinkedIn search workshop, or create animated video to show how to use LinkedIn for different types of searches: e.g., by major, by degree, job function, industry, etc.).

Recommendation 27: Establish a standing work team to focus exclusively on online delivery of baseline career services and programs.

Recommendation 28: Create a strong “Request a Program” campaign targeted to faculty, key academic units, student services departments, and student organizations that can offer captive audiences. Considering partnering with alumni and/or employers on delivery when possible and ensure strong content to enhance credibility. Such programs might include modules on outcomes for particular majors, resume and LinkedIn profile development, branding for the workplace, and strengths identification.

Recommendation 29: Focus flagship career fair events on welcoming external partners to campus (e.g. employers and alumni not embedded in the UC Santa Cruz community of a daily basis). Reduce or eliminate programming like Campus Job and Internship Fairs. The labor expended on events exposing students to opportunities to which students already have easy access should be minimized (see Recommendation 1) to create space for more external partner engagements. Students would be unlikely to interact with these organizations if others (i.e. the Career Center) were not creatively bringing them into the Santa Cruz community.

Leveraging Smart Data

Opportunity—The Career Center has demonstrated proficiency with data, particularly with regard to service usage. With an innovative, fresh, and future-focused strategic plan, along with staffing dedicated to assessment and analytics, the Center can enhance its program performance and build its narrative.

Recommendation 30: Work with the Division’s assessment director (or like position) on the development of a complete assessment plan that would identify all programs to be assessed for satisfaction, usage, and learning outcomes. The Career Center already captures a great deal of data, but it calls for greater coordination and strategy. An annually updated assessment plan will create a helpful dashboard for decision-making and stakeholder communication about Career Services’ various accomplishments.

Recommendation 31: Create easy-to-read documentation and communication strategy around data points that are essential to creating the Career Center’s narrative (aka “telling the story”). American University, Loyola Marymount University, the University of San Diego, and Binghamton University provide examples of how this might be achieved:

- ▶ <http://www.american.edu/careercenter/Outcomes-and-Statistics.cfm>
- ▶ <http://outcomes.lmu.edu>
- ▶ <https://www.sandiego.edu/careers/stats-and-stories.php>
- ▶ <https://www.binghamton.edu/ccpd/docs-outcomes/Fleishman%202015-2016%20Donor%20Report.pdf>

Recommendation 32: Conduct annual meetings with Deans, Division and Unit Heads, and other key stakeholders to share information about Career Center innovations and student employability data.

Conclusion

Throughout this report we have introduced terms like ecosystem, activation, new era career centers, career readiness competencies, and career success, among others. For some, it may seem as though we are simply spouting the latest jargon from a student-facing service we find essential to a successful college experience. And, maybe we are. Yet we deliver this report to UC Santa Cruz at a time of substantial national, and increasingly international, interest on the sweet spot between student life and post-graduate success. As we have argued, this is being studied and beta tested, nuanced and tweaked. We are at a place where there are so many models of how a campus community can “activate” a culture of career. And school-by-school, this is just what is happening. It is happening to appease parents and trustees, to respond to employers long underwhelmed by the graduates we send out into the world, to improve admissions, and to raise money. Whatever the underlying rationale for UC Santa Cruz to champion this sort of report, it is coming at the right time as its Career Center hopefully moves

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from a model of what many stakeholders perceive to be a transactional service delivery to an approach of student transformation and real program impact, with the help of partners near and far.

Andrew T. Ceperley Consulting, and its review team have worked on and been exposed to countless colleges and universities throughout our higher education trajectories, and at UC Santa Cruz we have a warm feeling for all we have met over the course of this project. Director Barbara Silverthorne and her staff are to be commended for creating such a productive experience for us, before, during, after our site visit. The openness with which they shared and the level of detail they provided truly enabled our understanding of the current state and potential aspiration for the Career Center. The student, employer, alumni, faculty, and staff stakeholder groups we interviewed were eager to share their positive support for the Career Center and their challenge for it to evolve. Vice Provost Jaye Padgett has given us much more of his time than many at his level would, an affirmation that the work of the Center is important in the evolving Division of Student Success. He met us with a steady and engaging curiosity, and we trust that our recommendations serve the Division he leads and his Career Center team as together they build a future of career success for UC Santa Cruz students.

Without question, all University of California students deserve a transformative educational experience—one that facilitates discovery of their professional passions and skills; provides them with experiences to develop those attributes; and connects them with post-graduate opportunities in order to launch successful careers. Our external review team looks forward to learning of their evolving success in the years ahead. We share our sincere thanks for including us in this journey.

Andrew Ceperley, Sean Gil, and Kelli Smith, Ph.D.