

# PROGRAM REVIEW ACTION PLAN

Fall 2019 - Spring 2024



**WEBER STATE UNIVERSITY**  
Career Services

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## INTRODUCTION

The WSU Career Team has carefully reviewed the excellent recommendations of the review committee. After considerable discussion, we have developed the following action plan that addresses many of these recommendations. This plan is an expansion of our 2024-2025 academic year goals which have already been submitted to and approved by our leadership. It includes the following:

1. A brief overview of our mission, vision, and core values
2. A new, tiered model for serving students that articulates our vision
3. Action items for immediate implementation
4. Directions for future action (as financial and staffing resources allow)

*Action Plan Submission Date: 12/18/2024*

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## I - CAREER SERVICES MISSION, VISION, AND CORE VALUES

One benefit of this review for our team was that it provided an opportunity to step back, evaluate our operations as a whole, and update our vision for how we can accomplish our mission. The new vision statement in Figure 1 was developed in early 2024 and formalized during the review process to emphasize significant changes in our core philosophy as a center. With the current emphasis on career alignment/readiness in the Utah Legislature, increased emphasis has been placed on extending career discussions to settings outside of the Career Services department. We plan to extend our reach by taking a leadership role in recognizing, training, and providing helpful tools/resources to “career champions” across the university, in addition to providing direct services through our office. The action items in the report were developed in this context.

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- *Mission Statement:* We provide welcoming services that empower students to design their careers, develop professional skills, and prepare for lifelong success.
- *Vision:* We build a future where career-related discussions, training, and resources are embedded throughout a student’s university experience by being an essential leader in developing resources in these areas.
- *Core Values:* Treat everyone with courtesy, respect, and professionalism - remembering that every student, colleague, and contact is a valued person.

Figure 1. The mission, vision, and core values of WSU Career Services. For a discussion of how these goals align with those of the division and university as a whole see WSU Career Services, 2024a.

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## II - THE CAREER SERVICES PYRAMID OF SUPPORT

As Career Services takes on new initiatives, it is important to consider how these will fit in the framework of our existing programs that support students. We have given substantial consideration for how to best structure our services to be as efficient and effective as possible with limited resources. In addition, there is a need for a comprehensive, scalable framework that defines how our various programs and services fit together and compliment each other. The Career Support Pyramid (Figs. 2&3) was developed as an outgrowth of these discussions. It is based on the *Multi-tiered System of Supports* (MTSS) framework, an intentional and data-driven model which is widely-used by school counselors and educators in secondary education settings.

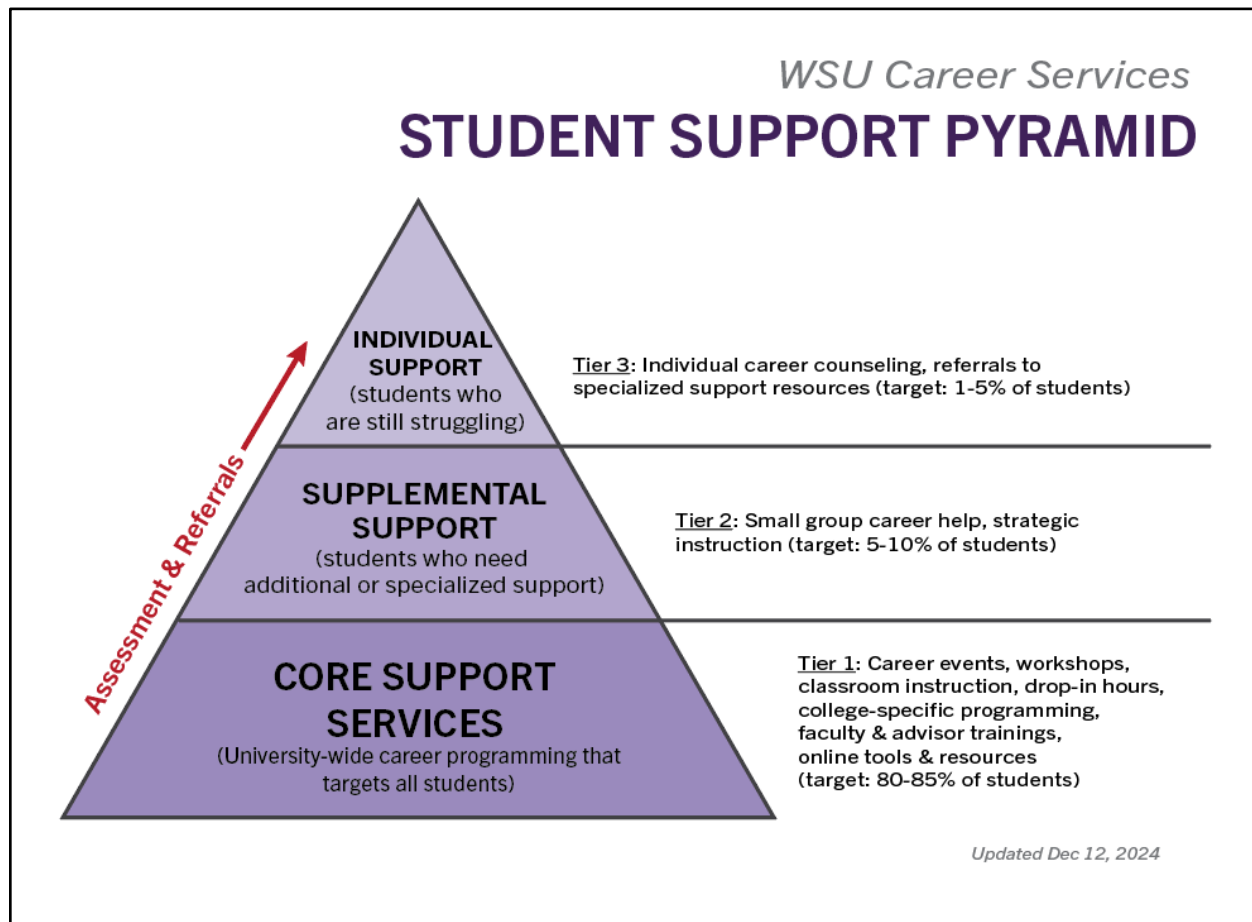


Figure 2. The Career Services Student Support Pyramid. Adapted from the *Multi-Tiered System of Supports* (MTSS) model (e.g., Loftus-Rattan et al., 2023). Tiers 2 and 3 are designed to supplement and not supplant tier 1 services (ibid).

TIER	TYPE	SUPPORTS/SERVICES
1	Proactive & Preventative	Classroom instruction (embedded), Educ 2900, Career Design workshops, other career readiness workshops, employer info session, career fairs (general, focused college, student job, summer job, grad school, alumni), Career Station (drop-in hours), counselor drop-in hours, Career Pop-Ups (in-college drop-ins), college-specific programming, Career Champions Program, online tools and resources (and trainings on using these tools and having career discussions with students)
2	Responsive	Small group sessions (e.g., students who rate their major confidence as being low, students who are changing majors, etc.)
3	Responsive	Individual career counseling, referral to specialized services, crisis intervention

Figure 3. Career Services

### III - ACTION ITEMS FOR IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION

#### **Initiative 1: Develop and implement a comprehensive, strategic framework for how we support students**

- *Timetable:* Spring, 2025
- *Rationale:* This action item addresses several recommendations in the final committee report (WSU Career Services, 2024b including embedding career discussions in the classroom (p. 11), better balancing counselor/mentor student loads (p. 3), and supporting departments in developing “career off-ramps” (p. 2). A strategic framework is needed for how our services fit together in support of WSU’s strategic plan if we are to effectively support students and better tell our story to our colleagues (p. 12).
- *Deliverable:* Completed framework

- *Status:* We have already met as a team and completed this item (Figure 2). The other items in this plan are mapped to this framework (Figure 3).

**Initiative 2: Develop and validate a quick and simple tool to assess a student’s current level of career readiness related specifically to the “Career and Self-Development” NACE competency (including satisfaction and confidence in their current major).**

- *Timetable:* Spring and Summer, 2025
- *Rationale:* The National Association of College and Employers (NACE) has developed a set of career readiness competencies that are used by several stakeholders at WSU (NACE, n.d.a.). A recommendation of the program review committee is that “CS become NACE competency champions and potentially own the Career & Self Development module” (WSU Career Services, 2024b, p. 12). Because much of our work is tied to this NACE competency, assessing it regularly is a key component of our Student Support Pyramid (Fig 2.). The new NACE Competency Assessment Tool (NACE, n.d.b.) is a start but would need to be adapted operationally to meet our needs.
- *Deliverable:* QR code of completed assessment

**Initiative 3: Formalize our program in each of the colleges served by CS to substantially increase (from 28 to 40) the number of academic, in-class presentations (non-FYE) being provided for students and assessing student learning through this program. (2024-2025 Academic Year)**

- *Timetable:* 2024-2025 academic year
- *Rationale:* This action item addresses the recommendation to expand our partnership with faculty and embed discussions of career development into curriculum for every student (p. 11; Fig. 1 - Vision Statement). We view expanding these presentations as an initial step in expanding the reach of our tier 1 support to students. Because faculty are generally present in these presentations, they also serve to build faculty relationships and lay the groundwork for future training and partnerships (see Section IV). Assessing student's current level of “Career and Self-Development” competency in these presentations will allow us to establish a baseline and better target our marketing of tier 2 & 3 services (Fig. 2; this is the first

time this will have been assessed in these classes).

- *Assessments:* Participant headcount, number of participants who completed our “Career and Self-Development” competency assessment
- *Status:* In process (set as a formal department goal for the 2024-2025 academic year)

**Initiative 4: Enhance student awareness and participation in our *Career Design* workshops**

- *Timetable:* 2024-2025 academic year.
- *Rationale:* As responsibility for “exploring” students (those who are general studies or have not yet declared a major) has now shifted to the General Studies and Exploratory Advisement (GSEA) office, our focus has become career design and readiness for those who have already declared a major (Fig. 1; WSU Career Services 2024a, Fig. 23). In the scope of our tier 1 student support, during the last summer we set up regular career design workshops that were designed to supplement our classroom instruction and other tier-1 initiatives. These will also be a resource for students who have completed the major exploration workshops offered through GSEA. Promoting these workshops through the colleges, GSEA, and other division colleagues will help us better tell our story (3, 12) and increase referrals. The workshops will also serve as a point of assessment to identify and promote our tier 2 and tier 3 supports to students who need additional help.
- *Assessment:* Participant headcount, number of participants who completed our “Career and Self-Development” competency assessment
- *Status:* In process (set as a formal department goal for the 2024-2025 academic year)

**Initiative 5: Offer and market drop-in “Career Pop-ups” designed to bring services to the student and make it easy and convenient to meet with our counselors and mentors.**

- *Timetable:* Spring 2025; 2025-2026 academic year
- *Rationale:* Due to the loss of our dedicated marketing person, most of our recent marketing has necessarily focused on our career fairs and similar campus-wide

events. Over the next academic year, we would like to focus more of our marketing resources toward other tier 1 services including drop-in services. Marketing efforts will also include our division colleagues in order to help them better understand the supports we provide to students.

- *Sub-Initiatives:*
  - Set up dedicated specialty walk-in hours for our counselors that can be added to our website and effectively marketed.
  - Create “Career Pop-Ups,” or periodic career-themed tabling events in each college to provide onsite, drop-in services to students in the building where they tend to hang out.
  - Create a targeted marketing campaign to make students aware of these.
- *Assessment:* participant headcount

### **Initiative 6. Expand the APEX program in the College of Arts & Humanities (increase student participation)**

- *Timetable:* 2024-2025 academic year
- *Rationale:* One recommendation of the program review committee was that CS become NACE career readiness competency champions, particularly related to the Career & Self Development competency (WSU Career Services 2024b, p. 12). The APEX program in the College of Arts and Humanities represents a useful test case for how this competency can be effectively applied. In addition, it represents the type of partnership that allows us to pursue the committee’s recommendation “moving(ing) change within.” Assessing the success of this program will inform future initiatives to embed career discussions and programs throughout a student’s university experience. This will also act as a model for how our Student Support Pyramid can be implemented campus-wide.
- *Assessment:* Participant headcount, number of participants who completed our “Career and Self-Development” competency assessment
- *Status:* In process (set as a formal department goal for the 2024-2025 academic year)



### **Initiative 7: Explore a career readiness program connected with the implementation of Lightcast**

- *Timetable:* 2024-2025 academic year
- *Rationale:* As was mentioned in the committee report at substantial expense (p. 4). This tool has now been integrated into WSU's "major pages" ([weber.edu/majors](http://weber.edu/majors)). Career Services has been asked to help promote this tool so that more students will learn about career options through professors and advisors in the colleges. This will help lay the groundwork for a future program to embed career-related discussions, training, and resources throughout a student's university experience (WSU Career Services 2024b, p. 11; Figure 1).
- *Assessment:* Lightcast Analytics
- *Status:* In process (set as a formal department goal for the 2024-2025 academic year).

### **Initiative 8: Develop a simple web app that links a student's Interest Code provided by the Light Cast Assessment Tool to potential majors.**

- *Timetable:* 2024-2025 academic year
- *Rationale:* Developing and promoting this tool will expand its utility as a tier 1 resource for students and increase its utilization. It is anticipated that this tool will be a helpful tool for advisors and will be a concrete step embedding career resources throughout campus as recommended by the committee (WSU Career Services 2024b, p. 12).
- *Deliverables:* Web App QR Code
- *Status:* In process

### **Initiative 9: Explore methods to more effectively link Handshake with Starfish and WSU's NOW database**

- *Timetable:* Spring, 2024
- *Rationale:* As the report suggests, we are presently doing a good job tracking engagement data but could do a better job in correlational and even causal

relationships to the university's key indicators (Career Services 2024b, p. 10-12). Doing a better job in this area is key to raising awareness of the Career Services Office and more effectively telling our story (p. 13). As one element of accomplishing this, the process of extracting and correlating Handshake data with other university systems needs to be streamlined. Right now, this is a mostly manual process. Although there is no app presently available to allow Handshake and Starfish to communicate, the lead reviewer mentioned that the University of Idaho has in-house code that allows them to connect to some degree. Handshake does offer a limited API and it may be possible to either create software or have it created that would allow the data to also automatically transfer data to the NOW database where it is automatically correlated with retention data.

- *Deliverables:* An outline of what connections are possible and a set of recommended options (see Section IV).
- *Status:* Not Started

**Initiative 10: Explore teaching the face-to-face section(s) of our EDUC 2900 class via adjunct instructors instead of in-load.**

- *Timetable:* Summer, 2024
- *Rationale:* As the review document states (p. 3), teaching the EDUC 2900 class in-load is a huge time commitment that results in a lot of additional stress and a loss of counseling productivity when the rotation falls on a counselor as their other responsibilities do not go away). Acquiring funding to teach the class outside of load as adjunct instructors (as the online sections are) will remediate this issue and provide for the possible future expansion of this class.
- *Deliverables:* An arrangement that allows the class to be taught outside of load
- *Status:* Not Started

#### IV - POSSIBLE DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE ACTION (as financial and staffing resources allow)

- *Convert the employment outreach specialist to a full-time position:* We will continue to promote the need for a full-time employer relations specialist position, to not only increase our employer outreach and event attendance (see p. 4-5, 7, 13) but to also better maintain existing relationships. We realize that in the existing context of university-wide budget cuts, such an investment may presently not be feasible and will explore suggestions outlined in the report and continue to have our counselors help out in this area until funding for a full-time position can be obtained.
- *Streamline our data collection and analysis processes and do a better job “telling our story” to colleagues, faculty, and administrators* (p. 13). Data collection is currently managed by our Career Services Specialist position (Rachel’s old position) with oversight by the associate director. Data analysis and reporting responsibility is presently listed as a tertiary (~5%) responsibility of the associate director. To be honest, we have the capability and interest in doing more in this area but the current breadth of responsibilities in these positions make it difficult to find the time. We do view this area as critical and will look for solutions as we move into summer.
- *Optimize and embed our career data tools and resources.* WSU Handshake does not presently have a relationship manager as suggested in the committee report (p. 13). This is not by design - we once had someone serving in this role but it was broken up and absorbed into other roles as the result of staffing losses and reorganizations. Presently, responsibility for Handshake falls under the Career Services Specialist position. That individual has done a good job of troubleshooting and maintaining the system but more could be done with additional resources. We have had multiple discussions about the need to optimize and better promote Handshake and would especially love to see faculty and advisors trained on it. Once other initiatives are in place we will plan to look at potentially shifting some responsibilities and priorities in order to accomplish this.
- *Catalogue the benefit of indirect services to students.* Career Services is unique in that our clientele includes not only students but also employers, college administrators, faculty, and advisors - each of which require time and attention. We also spend a lot of time developing tools, implementing programs, preparing events, and in other indirect services. Although all of these benefit students and fit into our mission, they

may sometimes be overlooked when telling our story.

- *Expand our employer recognition program to encompass tools, resources, and trainings designed to help faculty and advisors become career champions.* We agree with the review committee that Career Services should take a leadership role in training and incentivizing faculty, staff, and advisors campus-wide to incorporate career discussion into their work (p. 11; Figure 1 - Vision Statement). This is a huge initiative that involves a lot of parts and ideally could use a dedicated coordinator. We realize that this is something that will take time and will be discussing strategies to continue to move this initiative forward during our summer staff retreat.
- *Bolster oversight of student/advisor/faculty awareness and utilization of Handshake.* With all of the changes in the last few years less emphasis has been placed on the marketing of Handshake to students. In the future we would like to build more familiarity with Handshake - not just with students but also advisors and faculty.
- *Expand and promote our career readiness handouts and technologies for use by faculty and advisors and provide trainings to help them know how to use these and be comfortable having career discussions with students.* This will be a key element in embedding career discussions with students.

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## REFERENCES

Loftus-Rattan, S.M., Wrightington, M., Furey, J., & Case, J. (2023). Multi-Tiered System of Supports: An Ecological Approach to School Psychology Service Delivery. *Teaching of Psychology*, 50, p. 77-85. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00986283211024262>

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