



THE CAREER CENTER

at the University of Illinois

STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2020



The Career Center (TCC) at Illinois has a long history of excellence and comprehensive services to educate and empower Illinois students in their professional and career development. Collaboration and innovation have been hallmarks of TCC's programs, services, and resources. The Career Center is a nationally recognized leader in career development practices, campus outreach and engagement, multiple delivery modes, and evidence-based practice.



The Career Center embarked upon a strategic planning process during 2014-15 using the campus and student affairs strategic plans as a foundation. All staff contributed their perspectives as TCC identified strengths, opportunities, and “big, audacious” goals for its future. Working groups and a continuous process of review by all staff during spring 2015 refined the goals to meet strategic opportunities and create metrics to measure success.

Our primary goal is to empower students to connect their “Illinois experience” with their future aspirations. The TCC Strategic Plan highlights our efforts to help students identify professional goals, pursue meaningful experiential learning and transition to post-graduation success. The Career Center emphasizes collaboration with external constituents, partnering with campus stakeholders, and informing career practices with research and assessment.

With our ambitious strategic plan we have established the vision and framework for our work in the future. Yet, we will be consistent with our values, culture of inclusion and outreach, and commitment to students.

Special thanks to TCC staff that contributed their time, strategic thinking, and future perspective to create this plan that will guide The Career Center's work in the coming years.

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MISSION AND VALUES

MISSION

The Career Center provides all Illinois students collaborative and innovative programs, services, and resources focused on career and professional development that educates and empowers them to become thriving professionals in the global community.

VALUES

The Career Center is committed to:

- Excellence, integrity and professional ethics
- Career and professional development
- Empowering and engaging students
- Experiential, transformative, and life-long learning
- Connecting education and careers
- Welcoming, open, and inclusive environment
- Collaboration and innovation
- Evidence-based practice
- Service and contribution to community

AREAS OF DISTINCTION

- Innovative, comprehensive services and resources that prepare students to thrive professionally
- Transformative learning by connecting academic knowledge with experiences outside the classroom
- Individualized career counseling to facilitate self-discovery and connections to professional life, communities, and the larger world
- Creative and responsive services and programs that engage campus partners, external stakeholders, and student communities
- Diverse, culturally competent, and talented staff who are dedicated to excellence in practice and contributions to furthering the field of career development
- Robust model of peer-to-peer career education, provided by well-trained and mentored undergraduate and graduate students, that extends the reach of high-quality programs and services
- Nationally recognized as a model for evidence-based practice, health professions advising, services for international students, and collaboration across a decentralized campus to serve students and employers



STRATEGIC GOAL 1:

Foster Collaboration, Discovery, and Innovation

METRICS:

- Number of partnerships with employers and graduate and professional schools
- Number of employers and admissions representatives that participate in developmental and/or exploration programs with students
- Number of working relationships with student affairs units
- Number of working relationships with academic units
- Number of trainings or educational communications with campus constituents and external partners
- Physical and virtual footprint of career services delivery

STRATEGIC GOAL 1:

Foster Collaboration, Discovery, and Innovation

1a. Cultivating relationships and collaboration with external partners.

- i. Develop outreach strategies informed by analysis of student interests, social/economic trends, and demands for college-educated labor.
- ii. Involve external stakeholders in services and events to provide professional perspective.

1b. Partnering with campus stakeholders as they contribute to career and professional development of students.

- i. Educate campus constituents regarding the impact of intentional career development interventions on student outcomes.
- ii. Leverage expertise and relationships across the University to strategically enhance programs, services, and curricular offerings.
- iii. Lead campus-wide, career-related initiatives to raise awareness, steward resources, and increase efficiency and effectiveness.
- iv. Seek opportunities to integrate career development into curricula.

1c. Transforming career services through research and assessment that encourages excellence in practice and contributes to furthering the field of career development.

- i. Increase knowledge of student outcomes resulting from participation in career services and higher education.
- ii. Develop staff capacity for carrying out high quality program assessment.
- iii. Create data distribution dashboards, portals, and communication strategies to inform decision-making.



STRATEGIC GOAL 2:

Provide Transformative Learning Experiences

METRICS:

- Total number of student contacts and number of unique students receiving career services
- Number of appointments and drop-in services conducted, providing individualized student services
- Number of résumés, cover letters, and personal statements reviewed
- Number of mock interviews conducted
- Number of experiential learning opportunities that are supported by TCC
- Number of programs designed for special populations (e.g., first- and second-year students, international students, underrepresented students)
- Number of students enrolled in certificate programs at TCC; Percent of students completing these programs
- Number of undergraduate and graduate students receiving paraprofessional learning experiences in roles at The Career Center
- Use of service history, program assessment, and outcomes data for relational marketing of programs and services
- Percent of repeat users of TCC services
- Percent of students who come to The Career Center via referral from a friend

STRATEGIC GOAL 2:

Provide Transformative Learning Experiences

2a. Empowering students to discover, understand, and communicate how their interests, skills, values, passions, and Illinois experience are connected to future aspirations.

- i. Offer multiple methods for students to increase self-awareness and explore options.
- ii. Guide students through the process of describing their “Illinois Story” in a variety of formats.
- iii. Inform students of key career development milestones.

2b. Connecting with students in a meaningful, personalized way throughout their Illinois experience.

- i. Build rapport to foster use of services among first- and second-year students.
- ii. Expand capacity to respond effectively by utilizing technology and the talent of graduate and undergraduate paraprofessionals.
- iii. Engage in relationship-based marketing that leverages knowledge of individual students’ interests and needs to recommend personally-relevant opportunities and services.
- iv. Provide student-centered and culturally relevant service delivery options.

2c. Encouraging students to pursue meaningful experiential learning as an integral component of their Illinois experience.

- i. Enhance student awareness of opportunities on campus, locally, nationally, and globally.
- ii. Provide paraprofessional opportunities that enhance students’ skills and preparation for post-graduation pursuits.
- iii. Identify and ease barriers to pursuit of experiential learning opportunities.



STRATEGIC GOAL 3:

Make a Significant and Visible Societal and Community Impact

METRICS:

- Number of students using tools and platforms to connect to post-graduation endeavors (e.g., I-Link)
- Number of employers and admissions representatives that participate in recruiting activities
- Number of programs focused on professionalism and transition to the workplace
- Percent of undergraduate degree graduates employed, enrolled in graduate school, or otherwise secured a first destination at graduation and 6-months after graduation
- Documentation of success stories of Illinois students and graduates
- Number of research projects that TCC conducts, supports, or participates in
- Number of students financially supported to seek experiential learning and research opportunities
- Number of presentations and publications that share quality work of The Career Center's team
- Number of individual and program award nominations and recognitions received

STRATEGIC GOAL 3:

Make a Significant and Visible Societal and Community Impact

3a. Supporting students' transition to post-graduation success.

- i. Build awareness of tools, connections, and platforms that enable and inform pursuit of post-graduation endeavors.
- ii. Coordinate events and activities that offer purposeful connections to people and opportunities.

3b. Contributing to students' ability to thrive professionally as engaged citizens and leaders.

- i. Educate students regarding the role of leadership, integrity, ethics, and professional engagement in the world of work.
- ii. Share success stories of Illinois students and graduates to demonstrate their impact within professions and communities.

3c. Designing, delivering, and communicating the results of high-quality career services and programs.

- i. Educate and collaborate within the career services community regarding best practices.
- ii. Contribute to relevant professional associations through presentations, committee involvement, and leadership.
- iii. Communicate best practices to campus and external groups through recognition and awards programs.
- iv. Publish and present research and assessment findings to further practice in the field of career development and advocate for the value of career services.



STRATEGIC GOAL 4: *Steward Current Resources*

METRICS:

- Number of students choosing to receive regular career information via office Listservs
- Usage statistics for technology tools used to meet student needs
- List of staff professional development program topics and trainings
- Summary of annual physical and virtual space reviews
- Revenue earned from the Illini Career and Internship Fair and Graduate and Professional School Fair, used to support additional student programming

STRATEGIC GOAL 4:

Steward Current Resources

4a. Supporting professional development, work-life balance, and a positive, inspiring work environment.

- i. Provide outcome-based professional development using multiple modalities for all TCC staff.
- ii. Foster continuous staff growth and productivity through organizational practices, training and recognition.

4b. Optimizing use of staff talent, physical spaces, and technology for effective service delivery.

- i. Evaluate effective use of TCC virtual space for exceptional delivery of services.
- ii. Assess physical space for efficiency and effectiveness of service and staff productivity.
- iii. Evaluate hardware and software acquisition, use, effectiveness, and replacement regularly to enhance service delivery, staff productivity, and stewardship of resources.

