

# Best Practices in Career Services Measurement

Prepared for New York Institute of Technology

November 2019



In the following report, Hanover Research reviews literature on career services measurement in order to identify best practices and effective strategies for monitoring career services success.

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# Executive Summary

## Best Practices in Career Services Measurement

### Recommendations

Based on an analysis of best practices in career services measurement, Hanover recommends that New York Institute of Technology (NYIT):

① **In addition to tracking job placement data, NYIT should implement large- and small-scale surveys to examine the effectiveness of career services overall, as well as the usefulness of specific events and initiatives.** Scaled surveys may be administered to recruiters following a job fair, for example, to determine whether employer expectations were met. Student opinions may also be solicited to provide a multidimensional picture of career service needs. Once compiled, data can be used to develop more targeted career service marketing efforts.

② **NYIT should aim to measure its career services office success with key performance indicators (KPIs) within three main domains:**

1. *Student engagement* (e.g., number of career advising appointments, number of workshops attended, number of job interviews scheduled)
2. *Job search support* (e.g., number of employers at career fairs, number of employers posting jobs and internships, total number of jobs and internships posted)
3. *Student success* (e.g., job placement rates, graduate school placement rates)

③ **NYIT may consider benchmarking its own student outcomes data against aggregated data from external organizations.** NACE, for example, conducts regular surveys on salary statistics for graduating seniors, employment by major, placement rates, and more. This information is aggregated and can provide a benchmark against which NYIT's career services office can compare itself.

### Key Findings

**The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) recommends that institutions follow specific guidelines related to career services program evaluation and assessment.** Evaluation results should be used to revise and improve programs and services, as well as to recognize staff performance. Evaluations should include the following key components:

- ✓ Review of the strategic plan, mission, staffing, diversity efforts, recruiting trends, and other areas
- ✓ Regular feedback from participants on events, programs, and services
- ✓ Systematic needs assessment to guide program development
- ✓ First-destination surveys at or following graduation
- ✓ Employer and student feedback regarding experiential learning programs
- ✓ Alumni follow-up surveys administered at specific times following graduation
- ✓ Reports and satisfaction surveys from students and other constituencies interacting with career services, including employers, faculty, and staff

**In order to gather meaningful data, it is critical to clearly establish goals and relate these goals to standardized metrics.** NACE guidelines note that scaled surveys should always include sufficient descriptions of each interval or level. Small differences in scale development can yield big interpretative gains; accurately measuring student and employer engagement with career services can be both a valuable marketing tool and can also be used to improve existing services.

**Benchmarked career services offices have developed comprehensive Strategic Plans with specific career services-related goals and metrics to track.** Institutions also frequently provide annual reports that highlight the status of such metrics and ensure all relevant data are publicly-accessible to students, parents, alumni, faculty and staff members, employers, and other stakeholders. Frequently, career services offices provide institution-wide data as well as data for individual schools (e.g., attendance at career events by students in the College of Agriculture vs. the College of Engineering). Strong annual reports also highlight changes in metrics from the previous year.

### Fast Facts



3

Number of domains across which career services offices generally measure their success



12-18 months

Time required for a thorough career services office internal review



6-10 members

Optimal size of a career services internal review team

# Overview and Research Questions

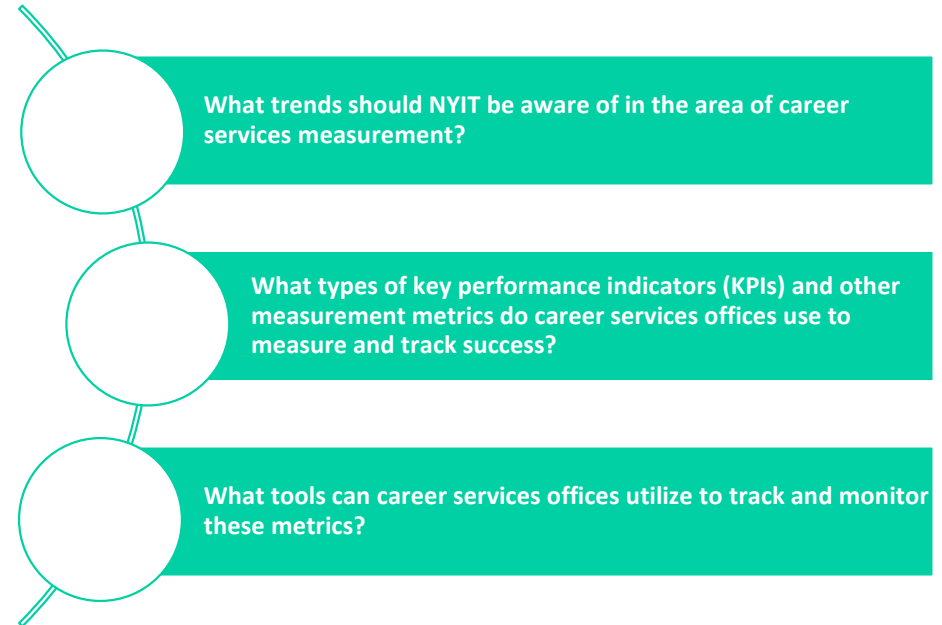
## Best Practices in Career Services Measurement

### Overview

In recent years, career services centers have undergone significant shifts in both structure and function. Traditionally focused on job placement and informational resources, current career service units are characterized by an increased commitment to holistic and ongoing career preparation. Additionally, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) highlights the increasing focus on [assessment and](#), which “requires career services practitioners to use meaningful measures to demonstrate the quality and value of their services to students, administrators, faculty, alumni, employers, parents, and other constituency groups.”

The following report aims to assist New York Institute of Technology (NYIT) as it aims to improve its ability to track and monitor success across a variety of initiatives and offices, including career services. Therefore, the analysis provides insight into interrelated research questions about trends in the area of career services measurement, key performance indicators and measurement metrics used to track success, and tools that can be utilized to monitor these metrics. The analysis is based on a review of information drawn from institutional websites as well as publicly available data sources.

### Research Questions





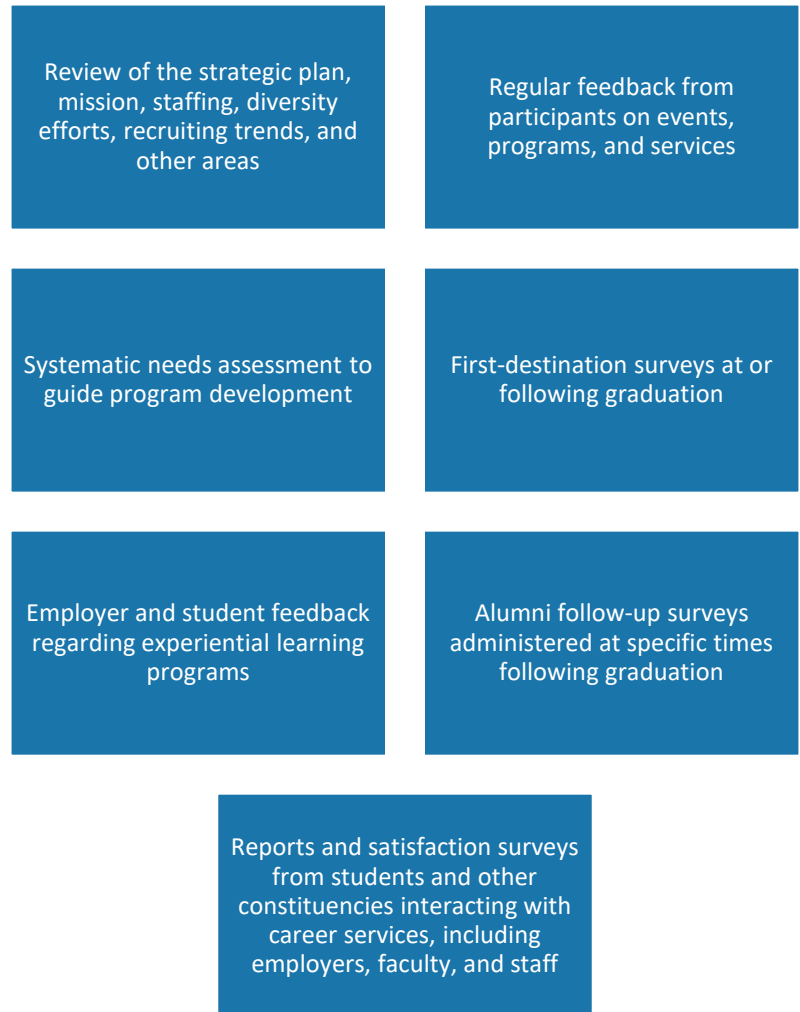
## Program Evaluation, Assessment, and Research

The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) recommends that institutions follow a concrete set of guidelines related to career services program evaluation, assessment, and research. NACE's regularly updated set of ["Professional Standards for College and University Career Services"](#) cover a variety of topics in career services, including mission, program components, organization, human resources and financial resources, facilities, technology, and diversity and equity, among others.

With regard to program evaluation, assessment, and research, NACE recommends that "systematic and regular quantitative and qualitative program evaluations must be conducted in support of career services' mission, goals, and student learning and development outcomes." In addition, the organization notes:

- ✓ Methods of assessment *may vary*, but it is critical to include a "sufficient range of measures to maintain objectivity and comprehensiveness."
- ✓ Data must be collected from a variety of affected constituencies, including both students and employers.

Career services offices should conduct regular evaluations that include seven main components, as shown in the figure on the right. Evaluation results should be used to revise and improve programs and services, as well as to recognize staff performance.



Source: [NACE Professional Standards for College and University Career Services](#)



## Student Outcomes Assessment

Experts generally agree that student outcomes data – including both student learning outcomes and student success/placement rates – offer the most accurate assessment of the effectiveness of a career services office. Placement rates are one of the [most frequently requested metrics](#) by legislators and accrediting organizations to measure overall institutional performance. As a result, many institutional strategic plans include [placement rate goals and initiatives](#).

However, such data are often difficult to obtain. Literature indicates that students who have obtained a job are more likely to respond to inquiries regarding their employment status than those who are unemployed, potentially [skewing the data](#). Moreover, placement rates are subject to external forces—namely, [economic trends](#)—that may provide a somewhat inaccurate indicator of career services effectiveness.

### Key Components of Outcomes Assessment

#### STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Career services offices are providers of career education and job search skills. Therefore, it is necessary to demonstrate that the clients are learning something. Assessing student learning is a critical component of the contemporary career services office.

#### MEASURE OF STUDENT SUCCESS

- Measuring the success of students in obtaining jobs, internships, externships, interviews, graduate school admissions, and/or defining career objectives is a critical task to demonstrate the definitive worth of the career services office.

Source: [NACE Guidelines for Internal and External Review of Career Services](#)

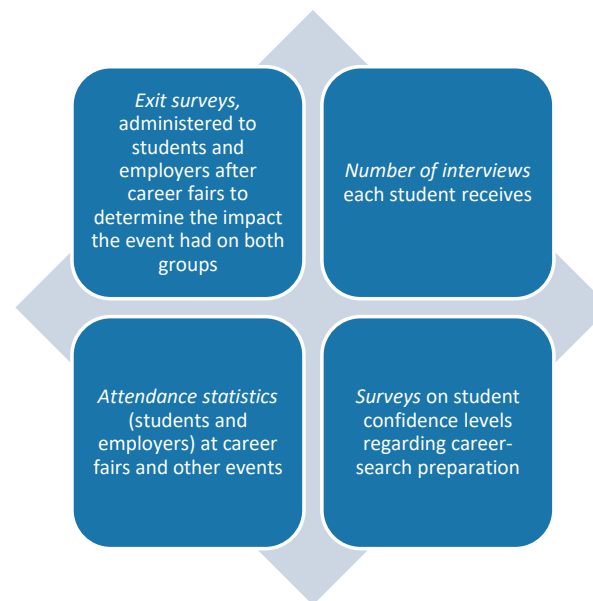


## Strategies for Collecting Outcomes Data

Potential strategies for the collection of student outcomes data include the following:

- ✓ *Benchmark a career services center's own student outcomes data against aggregated data from external organizations.* External organizations, such as [NACE](#), conduct [regular surveys](#) on salary statistics for graduating seniors, employment by major, placement rates, and tools graduating seniors use to conduct their job search. This information is aggregated and can provide a benchmark against which a career services office can compare itself.
- ✓ *Use a variety of surveys and metrics to measure career services performance.* Some institutions employ full-time staff members dedicated to [outcomes tracking](#) (typically data analysts), who are staffed with producing survey instruments and establishing benchmarks for effective performance.

Student outcomes-related surveys and metrics may include the following:



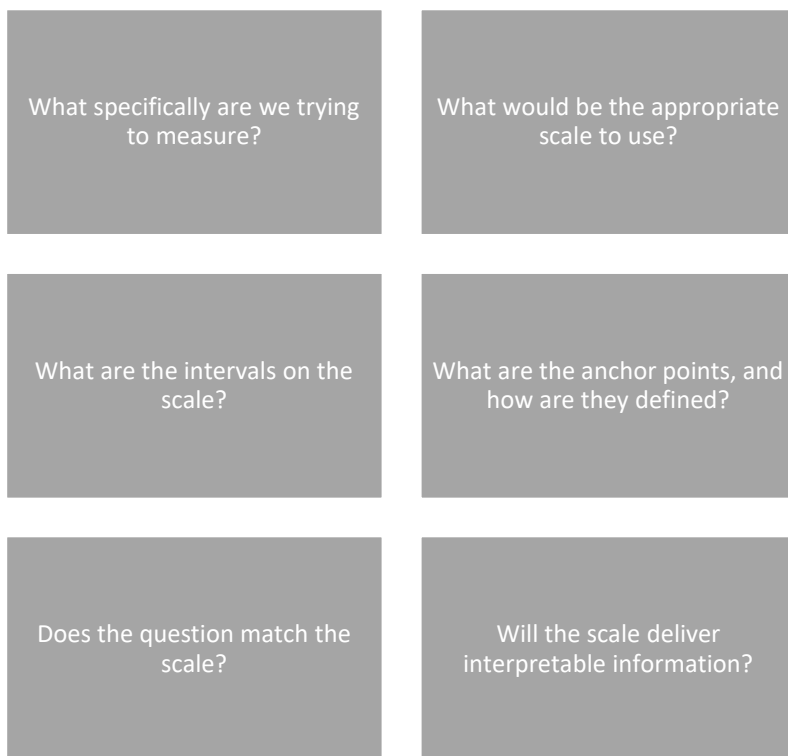
Source: [Symblicity, Association of Private Sector Colleges and Universities](#)



## Measuring Career-Related Student Learning Outcomes

NACE has developed several guidelines in an effort to aid career services offices in developing student and employer surveys. Surveys may be administered before and/or after career fairs or career counseling sessions. Key factors related to effective survey design include:

Clearly establishing goals, and relating these goals to standardized metrics, is key to gathering meaningful data. NACE guidelines note that scaled surveys should always include sufficient descriptions of each interval/level. For example:



**4 = I feel extremely confident** of my career decisions and career plans. I know what I want to do and how to make it all happen. At this time, I do not feel like I need any assistance.



**0 = I don't feel confident** with my career decisions and/or career plans. I feel lost and I need help deciding what to do with my major and career.

NACE concludes that small differences in scale development can yield big interpretative gains. Accurately measuring student and employer engagement with career services offices can be a valuable tool in marketing campaigns, and can be used to improve existing services.

Hanover can help facilitate research design by reviewing existing survey instruments and providing feedback, or by designing custom instruments for NYIT following industry best practices.

Source: [NACE Guidelines for Internal and External Review of Career Services](#), [NACE Professional Standards for College and University Career Services](#)



# Key Performance Indicators

Best Practices in Career Services Measurement



## Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Career services offices use a variety of KPIs and measurement metrics to measure and track success. Symplicity, an organization devoted to helping institutions prepare students for success in career readiness, highlights [three main metrics](#) to consider when analyzing the success of a career center: number of career advising/coaching appointments, number of workshops or events attended, and number of job interviews scheduled. Based on the literature and other institutional practices, career services offices generally measure their success across three domains:

1. *Student engagement* (e.g., number of career advising appointments, number of workshops attended, number of job interviews scheduled)
2. *Job search support* (e.g., number of employers at career fairs, number of employers posting jobs and internships, total number of jobs and internships posted)
3. *Student success* (e.g., job placement rates, graduate school placement rates)

Snapshots of the specific KPIs used at the career services offices at the University of Northern Iowa and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee are shown on the right and below, respectively.

## University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's Student Affairs Assessment Team provides a list of specific metrics or KPIs its career services unit may wish to collect to assess its performance:

- ✓ Counselor to student ratio
- ✓ Number of programs and/or attendance at each
- ✓ On-campus employment activities/opportunities
- ✓ Internships available
- ✓ Employer participation/contacts
- ✓ Career fair satisfaction for employers/students
- ✓ Number of employers/students at career fair
- ✓ Job placement/graduate placement rates
- ✓ Usage of facilities/services (in-person, phone, online)
- ✓ Alumni involvement/usage of services
- ✓ Counseling/staff satisfaction

## University of Northern Iowa

University of Northern Iowa's Division of Student Affairs sets key performance indicators for each of its departments. Within the domain of career services, the core functions, KPIs associated with those functions, and assessment methods/data sources are shown below:

Core Function	Key Performance Indicators	Assessment Method/Data Source
Assist students with career decision-making	# of students served	CS annual report
	# of for-credit students	CI signed contracts, course enrollment, CS annual report
Provide internships and cooperative education	# of zero-credit students	CI course enrollment, CS annual report
	# of employers	Contract analysis, CS annual report
	# of mock interviews	CareerLink audit
Provide job search services	# of employers at fairs	Event surveys
	# of on-campus interviews	CareerLink audit
	% of students employed post-graduation	Follow-up data survey
	% of students attending graduate school post-graduation	Follow-up data survey
	% of students employed in Iowa post-graduation	Follow-up data survey
	# of employers posting jobs and internships	CareerLink audit
Maintain positive employer relations	# of jobs and internships	CareerLink audit
	# of employer visits	AAR (After Action Reports)

Source: [University of Northern Iowa](#)





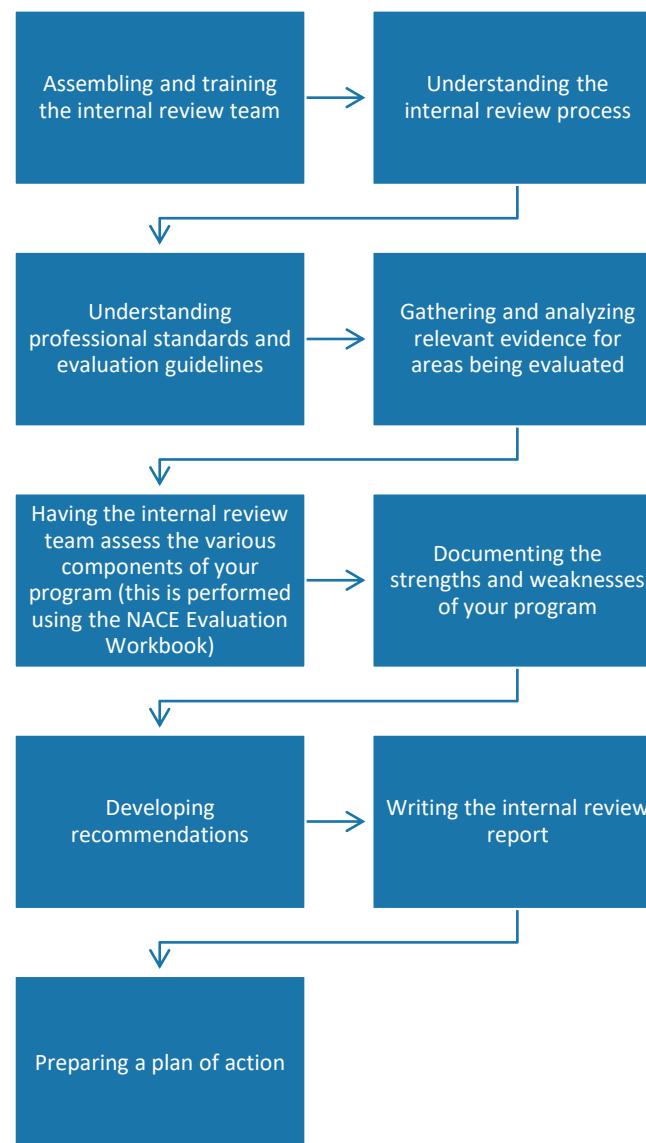
## Best Practices: Internal Review Process

NACE provides a recommended step-by-step plan for a career services internal review process, as outlined in the figure on the right. The organization recommends that career services offices use this framework to conduct their own internal reviews, which can be done as a stand-alone process or prior to going through a formal external review. NACE states that a career services office can expect a thorough internal review to take approximately 12 to 18 months. Other key guidelines related to the career services internal review process include the following:

- ✓ An optimal size for the internal review team is six to 10 members, including key individuals from career services, student affairs, academic affairs, administration, finance, and student leadership.
- ✓ The internal review team should identify the data and documentation needs that should be gathered and distributed to facilitate the review process. Examples of evaluative evidence may include:

- Program documents; staff activity reports; publications; administrative documents; student activity/event reports; and research and evaluation data.
- *Quantitative data:* Questionnaires or program/event evaluation response summaries, demographic data, needs assessments, follow-up studies, and institutional research reports.
- *Qualitative data:* Focus group information; client satisfaction surveys; open-ended response summaries from interviews and evaluations.

- ✓ When assessing the various program components, individual teach members should rate each and every criterion for areas assigned. At subsequent meetings, each individual's scores should be reviewed and discussed until the team reaches consensus.



## Louisiana State University Career Services

Louisiana State University (LSU)'s career services office, the **Olinde Career Center**, has developed a comprehensive [Strategic Plan](#) outlining its mission, vision, values, and goals. As outlined in the Plan, the overall mission of the Career Center is to “assist students and alumni in choosing careers, obtaining career-related work experiences while in school, developing job search skills, and securing employment or to graduate or professional school.” An examination of the Strategic Plan highlights the great emphasis that LSU’s Career Center places upon setting goals and tracking and monitoring its success.

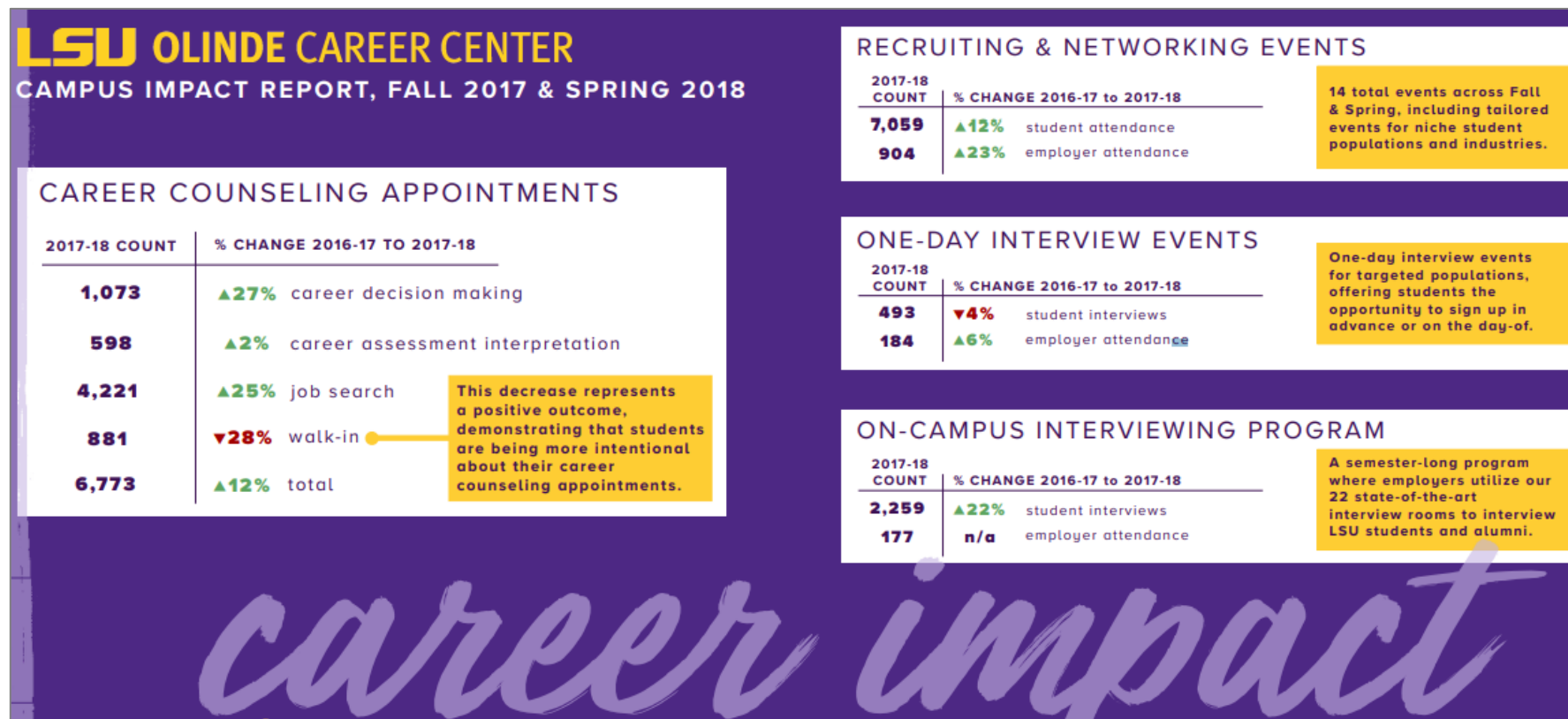
LSU has set concrete goals in the areas of student engagement, student success, transition to a career through engagement, and general transition to a career. The institution highlights overall targets, strategies for reaching these targets, and key performance indicators that will be used to track success:

Performance Area	Target	Strategy	Key Performance Indicators
<b>Student Engagement</b>	Increased attendance and interactions with students, parents, and targeted campus partners	Create and enhance relationships which promote student engagement in their career development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of communications with students and parents</li> <li>• Number of communications &amp; collaborative programs with campus partner</li> <li>• Number of student interactions</li> </ul>
<b>Student Success</b>	Increased number of experiential opportunities and number of applicants	Develop a campus culture that recognizes the importance of experiential opportunities on student transition into a career field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total number of internships, part-time jobs, volunteer opportunities in Careers2Geaux</li> <li>• Number of student/alumni mentors in Careers2Geaux</li> <li>• Percentage of “Approved” Resumes versus “Not Approved” or “Approved with Reservations” at the end of each semester</li> </ul>
<b>Transition to a Career through Engagement</b>	Increased engagement of students through recruiting events	Implement recruitment needs survey(s), then develop an on-campus outreach and marketing plan to promote subsequent program(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of students in attendance at Career Services recruitment events, particularly the Career Expo(s), one-day events, and on-campus interviewing</li> </ul>
<b>Transition to a Career</b>	Collect hiring data to assess student employment success	Utilize the Employer Job Offer Reporting Survey, Work Experience Survey, and Graduating Student Survey to better collect employment data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yearly percentage increase of employers and students reporting hires</li> </ul>

Source: [Louisiana State University](#)

## Louisiana State University Career Services: Continued

In addition to setting a Strategic Plan with specific goals and concrete metrics to track, LSU's Career Center also provides annual Campus Impact Reports that highlight the status of such metrics and ensure all relevant data are publicly-accessible to all stakeholders. The most recent [Fall 2017 and Spring 2018 Campus Impact Report](#), for example, reports the number of career counseling appointments, number of job postings on its online career platform, and number of recruiting/networking events and student and employer attendance at these events, among other metrics. The Career Center provides institution-wide data as well as data for individual schools (e.g., attendance at career events by students in the College of Agriculture vs. the College of Engineering). Finally, the report also highlights the percentage change in each of these metrics from the previous year, making it easier for all stakeholders to actively track the success (or lack of success) of individual metrics and of the Career Center as a whole. A snapshot of part of the report is shown in the figure below:



Source: [Louisiana State University](#)

## University of Illinois Career Services

The Career Center at the University of Illinois's [2015-2020 Strategic Plan](#) is based on a comprehensive strategic planning process which involved working groups and a continuous process of review by all staff. Overall, the Strategic Plan was developed in an effort to refine Career Center goals, meet strategic opportunities, and create metrics to measure success. The Plan is organized into four main strategic goals, with each overarching goal associated with several specific KPIs or metrics for monitoring success. The first two strategic goals and associated subgoals and metrics are presented on this page, and the other two goals are shown on the following page.

Strategic Goal	Subgoals	Metrics
<b>Foster collaboration, discovery, and innovation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultivate relationships and collaboration with external partners</li> <li>Partner with campus stakeholders as they contribute to career and professional development of students</li> <li>Transform career services through research and assessment that encourages excellence in practice and contributes to furthering the field of career development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of partnerships with employers and graduate and professional schools</li> <li>Number of employers and admissions representatives that participate in developmental and/or exploration programs with students</li> <li>Number of working relationships with student affairs units</li> <li>Number of working relationships with academic units</li> <li>Number of trainings or educational communications with campus constituents and external partners</li> <li>Physical and virtual footprint of career services delivery</li> </ul>
<b>Provide transformative learning experiences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Empower students to discover, understand, and communicate how their interests, skills, values, passions, and Illinois experience are connected to future aspirations</li> <li>Connect with students in a meaningful, personalized way throughout their Illinois experience</li> <li>Encourage students to pursue meaningful experiential learning as an integral component of their Illinois experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total number of student contacts and number of unique students receiving career services</li> <li>Number of appointments and drop-in services conducted, providing individualized student services</li> <li>Number of résumés, cover letters, and personal statements reviewed</li> <li>Number of mock interviews conducted</li> <li>Number of experiential learning opportunities that are supported by TCC</li> <li>Number of programs designed for special populations (e.g., first- and second year students, international students, underrepresented students)</li> <li>Number of students enrolled in certificate programs at TCC; percentage of students completing these programs</li> <li>Number of undergraduate and graduate students receiving paraprofessional learning experiences in roles at The Career Center</li> <li>Use of service history, program assessment, and outcomes data for relational marketing of programs and services</li> <li>Percentage of repeat users of TCC services</li> <li>Percentage of students who come to The Career Center via referral from a friend</li> </ul>

Source: [University of Illinois](#)

## University of Illinois Career Services: Continued

Strategic Goal	Subgoals	Metrics	
<p><b>Make a significant and visible societal and community impact</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support students' transition to post-graduation success</li> <li>Contribute to students' ability to thrive professionally as engaged citizens and leaders</li> <li>Design, deliver, and communicate the results of high-quality career services and programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of students using tools and platforms to connect to post-graduation endeavors (e.g., I-Link)</li> <li>Number of employers and admissions representatives that participate in recruiting activities</li> <li>Number of programs focused on professionalism and transition to the workplace</li> <li>Percentage of undergraduate degree graduates employed, enrolled in graduate school, or otherwise secured a first destination at graduation and 6 months after graduation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documentation of success stories of Illinois students and graduates</li> <li>Number of research projects that TCC conducts, supports, or participates in</li> <li>Number of students financially supported to seek experiential learning/research opportunities</li> <li>Number of presentations and publications that share quality work of The Career Center's team</li> <li>Number of individual and program award nominations and recognitions received</li> </ul>
<p><b>Steward current resources</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support professional development, work-life balance, and a positive, inspiring work environment</li> <li>Optimize use of staff talent, physical spaces, and technology for effective service delivery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of students choosing to receive regular career information via office Listservs</li> <li>Usage statistics for technology tools used to meet student needs</li> <li>List of staff professional development program topics and trainings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summary of annual physical and virtual space reviews</li> <li>Revenue earned from the Illini Career and Internship Fair and Graduate and Professional School Fair, used to support additional student programming</li> </ul>

## University of Illinois Career Services: Continued

The Career Center at the University of Illinois also provides an **“Impact”** section on its website, which allows all stakeholders to **“experience the difference that The Career Center makes for Illinois’ students, alumni, employers, members of our campus community, and beyond.”** The institution communicates the success of the Career Center through the regular publication of three main reports, as highlighted on the website:

### *Annual Report*

“Experience a comprehensive review of activities and achievements at The Career Center in the past academic year. Learn about the scope of programs and services offered, and see what students and colleagues say about the quality of their experiences with our team!”

### *Illini Success*

“Explore the employment and graduate school destinations of recent Illinois graduates. This information is presented through the Illini Success initiative, a campus-wide effort initiated by The Career Center.”

### *Recruitment Benchmarks Report*

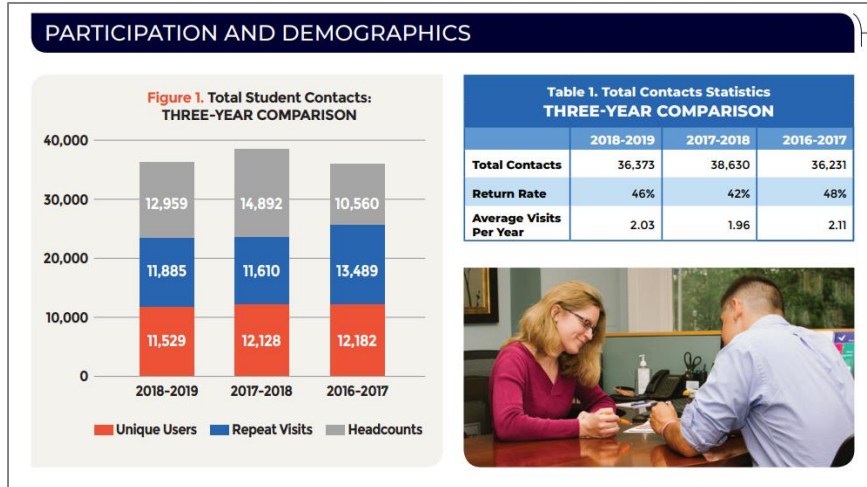
“Review the annual Recruitment Benchmarks Report, produced by the Career Services Council, to track engagement between students and employers in recruiting activities across the campus. See multi-year trends in recruiting activity, and gain a strong picture of the employers and organizations who recruit across campus.”

These reports provide insight into the Career Center’s success through a variety of concrete metrics. For example, the most recent [2018-2019 Career Center Annual Report](#) provides metrics and KPIs related to who the Career Center serves (disaggregated by college and by academic class), number of appointments and career consultations, number of resume or cover letter reviews, number of mock interviews, number of visitors to the Career Center website, and more. The Annual Report also highlights graduate placement outcomes, including the percentage of students who secured their first destination, the overall percentage employed, the percentage pursuing continuing education, and the percentage still seeking an opportunity, as well as average salaries of full-time employed graduates.

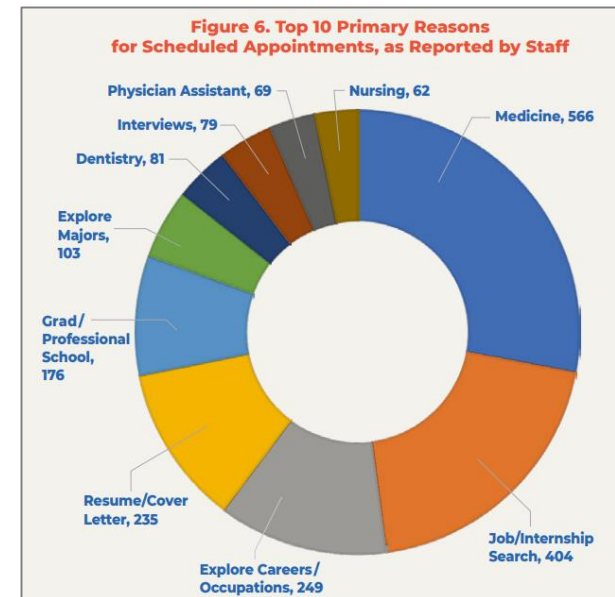
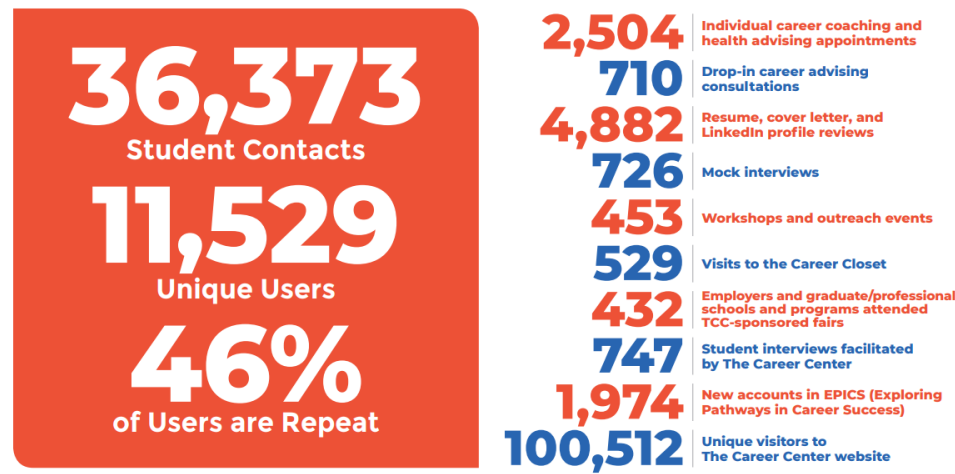
## University of Illinois Career Services: Continued

Snapshots of some of the key metrics provided in the [2018-2019 Career Center Annual Report](#), presented in an easily-digestible format for all stakeholders, are shown below:

Event	2018-2019 Partners Attending	2017-2018 Partners Attending	2016-2017 Partners Attending
Part-Time Job Fair	24	--	--
Educators' Job Fair	134	125	121
Graduate & Professional School Fair	131	91	120
Fighting Illini Career Night	25	33	--
Spring Illini Career & Internship Fair	117	116	103
Fall Illini Career & Internship Fair	--	--	82
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>432</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>426</b>
% Difference from Previous Year	+18%	-14%	



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