

# 1

*Socioeconomic changes, technological advances, and generational trends have been the impetus behind every major paradigm shift in the delivery of career services in higher education during the past century, including the one taking shape today. This chapter will provide an overview of the changing nature and emerging trends that are shaping the future of career services in higher education.*

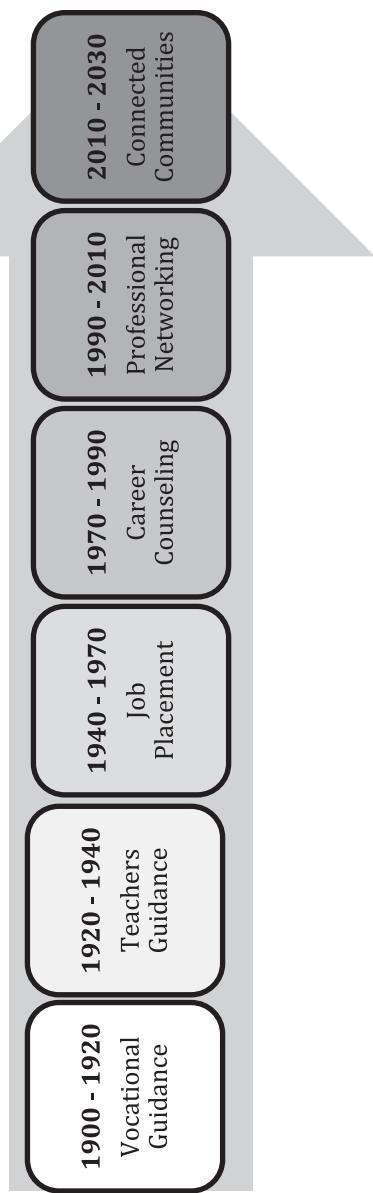
## Evolution of Career Services in Higher Education

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Career services in higher education has evolved since its inception and adapted to various models following economic conditions, trends and demands of the labor market, and needs of the university and society. In the early 1900s, there were vocations bureaus, created to help new immigrants find work. In the 1920s and 1930s, vocational guidance for teachers emerged out of the need for more teachers. In the 1940s and through the 1960s, the need to match GI Bill veterans to jobs allowed for new job placement centers to emerge on college campuses. The 1970s and 1980s brought career planning and counseling centers, which focused on helping students and graduates explore careers and plan their own job search. The information technology and social media revolution of the 1990s and 2000s later transformed career centers into dynamic networking hubs that engaged hiring organizations in campus recruiting and facilitated networking between students and recruiters.

Each paradigm shift in the delivery of career guidance in higher education was connected to changes in economic, political, social, generational, and cultural norms. The economic downturn of 2008 and its aftermath changed the landscape for higher education once again, raising questions about the value of a college degree and engaging all stakeholder communities, including alumni and parents. What will be the new paradigm for how universities help their graduates' transition into careers? Figure 1.1 illustrates the historical evolution of career centers in higher education since their inception in the 1900s and predictions for the future.

**Figure 1.1. Evolution of Career Services in Higher Education (Cruzvergara & Dey, 2014).**



## Historical Overview

Selected aspects of the evolution of career services are discussed in detail in this section.

**Vocational Guidance and Teachers Guidance.** Before there were career centers on college campuses, faculty assumed the responsibility of mentoring their students and preparing them for future employment (Herr, Rayman, & Garis, 1993). Career guidance in higher education can be traced back to the emergence of vocational guidance in the early 1900s and the creation of Frank Parson's first career center, the Vocations Bureau, in the Civic Service House in Boston, MA, a public service entity that helped new immigrants transition to life in America (Vinson, Reardon, & Bertoch, 2011). In the 1920s and 1930s, industrialization and a post–World War I baby boom created an influx of students, which increased the need for educational and vocational guidance for graduating teachers (Vinson et al., 2011), slowly moving faculty away from their mentoring roles. Vocational guidance still remained absent in more than half of colleges and universities in the United States (Pope, 2000).

**Job Placement.** The landscape of higher education and career guidance changed once again post–World War II in the 1940s and 1950s. A booming economy and greater employer demand for candidates juxtaposed with the need to place graduating war veterans who returned to college on the GI Bill accelerated the transformation of vocational guidance into the placement paradigm and the expansion of placement centers in higher education (Casella, 1990). Using Parson's trait-and-factor theory as a theoretical foundation, placement centers were responsible for matching graduates' abilities and interests with job criteria (Kretovicks, Honaker, & Kraning, 1999). Driven by a reactive approach and philosophy, and fueled by the increased demand for workforce in manufacturing and mining, career staff played the roles of job fillers and measured their success by placement numbers.

**Career Counseling.** In the 1970s and 1980s, as higher education shifted into a development model, which placed the responsibility of learning and educational outcomes on the student, a slowing economy and increased competition for candidates changed the landscape for career services once again (Kretovicks et al., 1999). This paradigm shift forced students to take ownership of their own career development and job search, and recruiters to manage their own “matching process.” This allowed career centers to step back into the guidance space with more emphasis on counseling, career planning, and job search preparation (Casella, 1990). The self-actualization movement of the 1970s and 1980s continued to strengthen the counseling model in career services, which heightened the clinician identity among staff and shifted the director's profile from a placement manager to a counseling supervisor. As a result, measures of success became less

about placement data and more about appointment and workshop attendance counts. This would last until the next socioeconomic paradigm shift.

**Professional Networking.** In the 1990s and 2000s, the dot-com boom increased the competition for candidates on college campuses, which helped reengage career centers in employer relations and helped transform them into comprehensive career services offices that facilitated the relationship between students and employers through various networking career events and recruiting activities (Dey & Real, 2010). New information technologies accelerated this process through the continuous development of recruiting software, and social media began to redefine how students make meaning of their experience and connect with employers and professional communities. With less funding from universities, corporate partnerships and revenue generation became a critical goal for many career centers, which further shifted the focus for career services from counseling to employer relations. The need to justify career centers' budgetary requests to universities also helped change assessment measures from attendance numbers to learning outcomes.

**Connected Communities.** The economic downturn of 2008 has created an ideal environment for another paradigm shift in college services. Driven by increased pressure and demand for accountability from students, parents, alumni, faculty, and even government, many universities began the process of reinventing their career department, moving them from the traditional transactional model of career services toward a customized connection model that promises specialized career development support to students and meaningful connections to internship and employment opportunities as well as mentoring and experiential learning. As a result of greater investment in career services, career and professional development continues to become a significant element of the student experience rather than a resource that they seek when they approach graduation. Although the career center continues to offer career counseling, résumé assistance, and career fairs, its new iteration offers a stronger emphasis on building connections through partnerships with employers from a variety of sectors, experiential learning, mentoring, and developing career communities of learners and networkers that will engage students and alumni for a lifetime. In this new era of employability accountability for colleges and universities, the assessment focus will continue to be about first destinations and lifelong professional outcomes.

## **Emerging Trends**

Similar to the last four paradigm shifts of college career services in the 20th century, the current transformation in career services requires the acquisition of additional resources, elevating the leadership of career centers to higher levels of influence, designing new and creative organizational structures, and establishing stronger coordinated campus partnerships.

**Elevation of Career Services.** Senior leaders in higher education are beginning to recognize the direct link career services has to recruitment, retention, and revenue for an institution (Ceperley, 2013; Education Advisory Board, 2012). As a result, many are elevating career services, giving their leadership more institutional influence and the ability to convene internal and external stakeholders in order to help students leverage the power of the university network. Elevation includes changes to titles, reporting lines, and resources.

While leaders, regardless of titles, need to exercise savvy leadership to gain buy-in and demonstrate value, positional power adds a layer of systemic and organizational support that is also necessary to elevate career services in higher education over time. Titles for many leaders in career services are beginning to take the form of assistant/associate vice presidents/provosts, deans, and associate deans. Recent examples of elevated college career services include University of Chicago, Stanford, University of South Florida, University of Virginia, Wake Forest, and William and Mary. This change has allowed institutions to more accurately represent the scope of responsibility and accountability placed on career services. Uniquely positioned as one of few units within a university that must actively engage with all academic deans, senior leadership, boards of trustees, advancement, the external community, and other campus partners, the upgraded title further illustrates the institution's support and value for career services. The change in title indicates a level of significance, accountability, and relevance to the university and to internal and external stakeholders. Similar to the evolution of admissions and enrollment management, it is our prediction that over the next couple of decades career and professional development will continue to be elevated and eventually sit as its own division reporting directly to the president or provost and serving on the senior cabinet.

As a result of title changes for leaders in career services, many institutions are adjusting reporting lines and merging offices. While the majority of career offices still report up through student affairs (National Association of Colleges and Employers [NACE], 2014), more institutions are considering new reporting structures to other divisions, such as academic affairs/provost office, alumni relations, advancement, and enrollment management. Recent examples include Seattle University's career services merging with academic advising, University of Chicago's career advancement moving to enrollment management, University of Richmond's career services moving to alumni relations, and University of California San Diego's career services moving to advancement. To be successful, such changes in reporting structures must be handled carefully, with the full consideration of institutional circumstances and engagement of all stakeholders and without compromising the integrity of professional standards.

Because of elevated titles, leaders of career services are typically reporting directly to the vice president of their respective division or to the provost. This direct connection to senior leadership gives career services a

seat at the table with more exposure and more influence on the factors that will impact student success. In addition to changes in reporting structure, institutions are also considering strategic mergers to combine career and experiential learning opportunities, career and academic advising pathways, and career and alumni connections. These new reporting lines create opportunities for aligning institutional goals and embedding career development into the students' experience in a more seamless manner.

As institutions across the country look for better ways to prepare students for postgraduate success, the most strategic universities are investing heavily in a centralized career education model that maximizes resources and cuts redundancies. With greater visibility and accountability, institutions that recognize the value of career services have started to increase the amount of resources allocated for additional staff, increased operational funds to support programs and technology, grants or seed money to start new initiatives, and fundraising support for a new or renovated space that is prominently located on campus. Institutions are recognizing the need to more fully resource career services in order to better meet the needs of their constituents, to work more collaboratively with deans, to more adequately engage employers and alumni, and to develop more career-ready graduates.

**Customized Connections and Communities.** Gone are the days of transactional services and general career information. Instead, new levels of expectations have emerged requiring career services professionals to redefine their value proposition for a larger group of stakeholders. With extensive amounts of information easily accessible on the web and through mobile devices, students and employers in particular are looking for customized information that will be specific to their needs or desires. By focusing on authentic relationships with stakeholders, career services professionals can transform their offices into hubs of connectivity and provide more tailored advice, strategy, and feedback to their constituents.

The ability to build these strong connections leads to the creation of customized career communities that better support student success. Recent examples of career communities include Stanford, William and Mary, and Miami University. At Stanford University, frequent career meet-ups, which are informal discussion circles guided by career counselors who are assigned to various student communities, are replacing the traditional workshops and presentations. In an era of information overload, students turn to their trusted network of friends, family, and advisors to help them cut through the noise. In order for career centers to best connect and serve students, it is critical to focus on building relationships with the people they trust, their inner circle. Creating customized communities allows for multiple networks to overlap and for reinforced support to guide students through their college and postgraduate experiences. By convening stakeholders across campus and beyond, career services can bring employers, alumni, faculty, families,

and administrators into virtual and physical communities that better promote and encourage students' aspirations.

The concept of community also reinforces the notion of career services becoming an ecosystem rather than a place. The days of career services simply being a brick-and-mortar center are over. Career services must become a *presence* that permeates the institutional culture and experience. The success of students remains a responsibility shared by the full university community (Contomanolis & Steinfeld, 2014). In order for this type of ecosystem to be developed, forward-thinking career professionals will recognize the opportunity to activate the large and complex network that exists on a college campus in order to connect key stakeholders. Equally important is the need for career services to meet students in their space across campus and virtually. Flexibility in delivering services and creating communities will lead to increase connections. Career services can leverage the university network to bring everyone together to connect and collaborate in an environment where trust and influence can lead to opportunity and success.

Effective use of technology allows career services to not only provide customized services and create communities in person, but also engage students virtually and beyond the normal workday. With numerous video conferencing tools, social media platforms, and mobile apps, students and employers can benefit from more tailored programs that match their interests, customized advice that is specific to their needs, and continuous opportunities to connect with individuals in their selected industry or field. Social media platforms are changing the nature of how career centers engage with students, how groups of like-minded professionals can exchange ideas and innovation, and how barriers can be removed so that students feel more comfortable connecting with career professionals. New platforms and vendors are working to create technology that can complement the efforts of career services and extend career centers' reach beyond traditional networking events, panels, and career fairs. Effective use of social media and new technology can help career services and students create new environments and opportunities for career communities.

**Outcomes and Accountability.** The conversation about return on investment and value of higher education has never been more prominent (Carlson, 2013; The Economist, 2014). It is critical for all career centers to develop clear strategic plans that align with institutional priorities (Contomanolis & Steinfeld, 2014), to determine key resulting outcomes, and to define key performance indicators. The ability to effectively collect data and craft a compelling story will become a standard operating practice. The measures of success for career services are shifting to first-destination data, reputation, and engagement of key stakeholders.

With the new NACE First-Destination Survey Standards and Protocols (NACE, 2014), guidelines have been provided to help institutions collect

data in a more standardized manner. While some leaders of career services are still hesitant to engage in conversations about placement or career outcomes, the most successful career centers will be those that embrace the occasion to play a lead role in the collection and dissemination of information. Career services leaders have the unique ability to use first-destination data as a catalyst for university-wide discussion on how all stakeholders can play defined and active roles in supporting the career readiness of students (Contomanolis & Steinfeld, 2014).

First-destination and career outcomes data only tell part of the story, and career services must continue to illustrate additional value added by showcasing metrics on reputation, referral, and engagement of key stakeholders. As noted previously, the ability for career services to connect and create communities will lead to greater student success, and therefore, measuring the reputation of the career center and staff becomes a critical assessment of success. Stanford University now measures the reputation of its career center and staff using a net promoter score, a popular metric in the retail and business. Career services must be willing to ask stakeholders for feedback on how they are perceived and their willingness to refer. As networks begin to grow, career services will also need to showcase the breadth and depth of stakeholder engagement.

In order to effectively show success, it is critical for leaders in career services to have a solid understanding of assessment and to have a clear vision as this sets the stage for proper data collection and storytelling. Additionally, more career centers are beginning to create research roles to prominently focus on strong efforts in assessment. This emerging paradigm provides a unique level of accountability, and the ability of leaders to utilize creative and visual displays of assessment data to connect with audiences will only further promote the success of career services. Universities such as Carnegie Mellon, George Mason, and University of Miami are replacing their long annual reports with dynamic infographics that give life to data and tell the university's story in a powerful way. A strong focus on assessment and alignment with university's strategic goals is critical in showcasing value to an institution.

**Branding.** Establishing presence, creating a culture of career readiness, and showcasing institutional value require a high level of brand recognition—both for employers and career services. For employers, the need to build a cohesive and compelling brand on campus is core to an effective recruitment strategy (NACE, 2013). The best marketing tool continues to be word of mouth, and an employer's image among students can heavily impact recruiting efforts on any given campus. Career services professionals have the opportunity to play a vital role in helping employers differentiate from competitors and speak to the values that are most prominent for the institution. Through customized relationships and in-depth understanding of various student profiles, career services can partner with employers to develop an employer value

proposition (Bailey, 2014) that will resonate with the targeted student populations.

For career services professionals, the need to create brand recognition has never been more critical. In order to build effective communities, establish credibility with various stakeholders, and best serve students and employers, career services will focus time and attention on branding. One method for achieving this has been the creation of marketing and communications positions to create, enhance, and promote the perception of career services on campus and beyond. Social media is allowing career centers to create a dynamic presence and creative content, and making it possible for innovative staff to become thought leaders in their campus communities and professional networks. The ability to create an authentic brand leads to a culture where students regularly share positive experiences and promote the value of career services by referring peers.

Efforts to manage an effective brand will happen across all media; however, the web and social media will play a particularly critical role. As students and career services professionals engage and use technology to connect, the opportunity to utilize social media as it was intended provides a unique platform to showcase approachability and relevance—two factors that have often plagued career services operations in the past.

**New Breed of College Career Services Staff.** A paradigm shift in college career services requires career staff to not only upgrade their skills and knowledge, but also change their attitudes and philosophy about the new needs of their stakeholders and how to help students transition from college to career. The new emphasis on connections and communities requires an identity shift from counselor to group facilitator and expert consultant. Workshops are no longer effective. Instead, career staff must think of less formal and more interactive meet-ups that take place in various student “hot spots” around campus. Rather than a strategy of outreach and promotions, they must create a brand for themselves and their departments. Protecting the career center’s turf is also a strategy of the past. Instead, the focus should be on leveraging the entire campus ecosystem through partnerships and collaboration. Customized connections and self-sufficient communities will be the new way of doing business, and new assessments will measure reputation, engagement, and destination outcomes rather than learning outcomes, attendance, and appointment counts. To be successful, career staff must become agile experts who are comfortable leading communities and making meaningful connections among their constituents. Table 1.1 illustrates the contrast between the pre- and post-2010 career services staff.

## The Future: Connected Communities

The emerging trends discussed in this chapter further highlight the ever-evolving environment and the need for career services to embrace and drive

**Table 1.1. Changing Face of College Career Services Staff  
(Cruzvergara & Dey, 2014)**

<i>Pre-2010 Career Services Staff</i>	<i>Post-2010 Career Services Staff</i>
Generalized	Customized
Transactional	Community development
Protect turf	Leverage interconnected ecosystem
Resource and time intensive	Scalable
May be intimidating	Approachable
Referral source	Agile expert and thought leader
Counselor/advisor	Consultant/facilitator
One-on-one 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 destinations outcomes and reputation

change. Through relationship building and creating strong career communities within and beyond campus, career services can provide customized approaches and stronger outcomes for institutions. With growing accountability in higher education and the opportunity to activate a wide network of stakeholders, this current paradigm positions career services to play a critical role in the recruitment, retention, and postgraduate success of students. It is also clear that the skills and competencies necessary to navigate a complex and rapidly advancing economy are different than previous paradigms and will require leaders who can be strategic, political, relationship-building change agents.

As career centers gain more influence in their campus communities and become better resources and more connected to all their stakeholders, they will be better equipped to engage students early and often within their communities, offer them specialized career development support, and connect them to internship and employment opportunities as well as mentoring and experiential learning. Career and professional development will continue to rise as a critical part of the fabric of the student experience rather than a resource that they seek when they approach graduation. Rather than seeking transactional career services and programs, students will be able to engage with meaningful experiences, caring mentors, and knowledgeable career experts within their communities of professional interest who will help them design their career journey, launch life missions rather than academic majors, and connect with career ventures rather than jobs.

The mission of the career center of the future will be to build meaningful connections through partnerships with employers, experiences, and

mentors, and developing career communities of learners and networkers that will engage students and alumni for a lifetime.

Every paradigm shift in college career services in the past century was preceded by a major change in societal or economic norms. Based on historical trends, the transformation in college career services post-2008 is inevitable, but it requires courage from career services leaders to lead and envision a new future for their profession, upper-administrators to elevate and invest more resources in career services, career staff to transform the way they engage their constituents, campus partners to coordinate efforts, students to engage in programs and services, and alumni to give back to their communities. Using Casella's (1990) original framework and its various adaptations, Table 1.2 illustrates the evolution and future trends of career services in higher education (Dey & Real, 2010).

## Implications

It is important to view the evolution of career services in higher education as continuous building blocks that maintain the integrity of past models and build upon them as new ones emerge rather than a process of letting go. For example, the shift from the counseling and planning paradigm to networking does not mean that counseling is dead in career services. On the contrary, counseling may be a critical intervention in the new networking model, although it is no longer the emphasis of the model. Likewise, the transition from placement to counseling does not completely dismiss the candidate–employer matching procedure, which remains a critical operational element, but no longer the central mission of a career center.

Every paradigm shift presents a set of great challenges for career centers, but the opportunities to redesign their mission and attain higher relevance and more resources in their institutions are greater. Visionary leadership helps present career centers and their staff as the solution to the pressures and challenges that colleges and universities experience as a result of changes in the economy or other environmental factors. Outcomes that align with the institution's strategic priorities help stakeholders, such as faculty and alumni, view career centers beyond the transactional procedures for which they are responsible.

Whether vocational bureaus, placement centers, career planning offices, networking hubs, or catalysts for connections and communities, career centers have always been and will continue to be about one key element: relationships. Shifts in environmental factors have changed expectations, methods, and players only, yet relationships remain the core of what we do. Career services in higher education continue to be about building relationships with stakeholders for the purpose of establishing communities that serve the career and professional needs of students and alumni for a lifetime.

**Table 1.2. Evolution of Career Services in Higher Education (Cruzvergara & Dey, 2014)**

PARADIGM	1940–1970 PLACEMENT Reactive	1970–1990 COUNSELLING Proactive	1990–2010 NETWORKING Interactive	2010–2030 CONNECTIONS Hyperactive
Environmental Factors	GI Bill and manufacturing boom	Self-factualization movements, diversity of candidates and opportunities, and less jobs	Dot Com boom, technology, university funding, globalization, and generational changes	Economic downturn, less jobs, society's expectations, value of higher education, and social media
Purpose	Placement	Decision making and skill development	Preparing, educating, and revenue generating	Building connections and communities
Method	Employment service	Counseling, workshops, and print resources	Coaching, courses, career fairs, and web resources	Facilitating, relationship development, and social media
Name	Placement center	Career development center	Career services	Career and professional development
Stakeholders	Students and employers	Students	Students, employers, and parents	Community: students, alumni, employers, parents, faculty, administrators, and government
Theoretical Orientation	Trait factor (criteria matching)	Typology: matching based on personality, interests, and skills	Eclectic: based on counselor's theoretical orientation	Design thinking: strength based, chaos, and happenstance
Provider Identity	Job filler	Generalist counselor	Supportive coach, organizer, and educator	Customized connector, multifaceted, relationship developer, and group facilitator
Provider Skills	Processing	Counseling	Multitasking, coaching, and coordinating	Facilitating, synthesizing, connecting, and specialized expertise

(Continued)

**Table 1.2. Continued**

PARADIGM	1940–1970 PLACEMENT Reactive	1970–1990 COUNSELING Proactive	1990–2010 NETWORKING Interactive	2010–2030 CONNECTIONS Hyperactive
Director Profile	Placement director	Director: senior counselor, staff trainer, and supervisor	Executive director: manager of operations, employer developer, and fundraiser agent	Elevated role (AVP, VP, Dean): visionary, strategic and political leader, convener of stakeholders, and change agent
Reporting Line	Student affairs	Student affairs	Student affairs and academic affairs	Enrollment management, advancement and development, alumni relations, academic affairs, and student affairs
Location	Placement office	Counseling office	Web, classroom, and event hall	Mobile, social media, and hot spots
Employer Recruiting Strategy	Demand	Selective	Experiential learning (early identification)	Branding and campus engagement
Industry Growth	Manufacturing and mining	Retail and service	Technology, finance, real estate, and government	STEM, energy, social impact, healthcare, and media
Measures of Success	Placement data	Appointments and attendance at programs	Learning outcomes, engagement, and generated revenues	Employability: first destinations, reputation, and engagement

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