

FULL-CIRCLE ASSESSMENT WITH STUDENT VOICE

Career and Professional Aspirations

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The response group was emailed in early March 2012 with the charge to review the prompts of the Full-Circle Assessment and the Career and Professional Aspirations results of the Student Voice Survey prior to our scheduled meeting on Monday, March 12, 2012.

Introduction

Career Centers are quite varied across the landscape of higher education institutions. Some have depth in many areas (discernment, resume writing, interview preparation, job search assistance, hosting recruiter visits, career fairs, maintaining credentials files, and so on) while some have more of a focus in a few of these areas. Our Career Development Center has engaged with students in particular on career/life planning, self-knowledge, discernment and articulation of career aspirations, knowledge, and job skills. This is apparent both in our name – Career Development – and in the foci of our programming. The data from the recent Student Voice survey are useful not only for showing how students use and value our services, but more importantly for revealing more detail about who our students are, their attitudes and aspirations around careers and work.

What do these data show that encourages us to continue existing services?

Career Services areas in which students report benefits more strongly than student respondents from other colleges are: articulation of life goals, values, attitudes, beliefs; understanding of diverse perspectives and ability to work with diverse populations; and critical thinking and problem-solving. These strengths are particularly gratifying in that they line up with some of the expectations of an Evergreen Graduate: “articulate and assume responsibility for your own learning,” “participate collaboratively and responsibly in our diverse society,” and “demonstrate independent, integrative, and critical thinking.” These also line up with an intentional focus of the work of the Career Development Center in terms of reflective discernment, self-knowledge, and career planning based on that.

Every other year the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment surveys Evergreen undergraduate alumni one year after having received their baccalaureate degrees. What follows are highlights from the 2010 Alumni Survey of the Class of 2009.

Overall employment /graduate school rate

At the time of the survey 84% of alumni respondents were employed and/or attending graduate or professional school.

Employment status

71% of alumni were employed, and 78% of those employed felt their Evergreen experiences prepared them *Adequately* or *Very well* for their current employment.

Career Development Center ratings of helpfulness

After a few years of fairly low usage and ratings of helpfulness, the class of 2009 was more likely to have used the Career Development Center to discuss employment and graduate school opportunities, and those who used this service were much happier with their experience.

Students also report placing greater importance on organizational values when considering job opportunities. The Career Development Center, through our assessment processes and career

counseling focus, understands and validates the values, idealism, and importance of meaningful work our students desire, in our own practices and counseling efforts.

What do these data show that can suggest new directions for Career Development services or programming?

The data indicate that the following are more important to our students than to the national “average” students: entrepreneurial careers, work with non-profit organizations, and taking time off between graduation and a next step such as work or graduate school. If these are of particular interest to our students, we could focus more programming around these topics. Examples include:

- Programming panels of alums or others who have launched entrepreneurial ventures, work for non-profits, or have done interesting things during the year or two immediately after graduation.
- Create a less intrusive periodic contact with all students, no matter what their class level, in the form of an email to TescCrier and a posting on the web site and Facebook site of a series of timely tips from Career Development. These could be short and invite reflection on students’ part, perhaps provoking more questions for students which our web site resources could address in more detail.
- Develop a direct and personal outreach by contacting graduating seniors that have responded in “Exit Interviews” interests in career assistance.

Update Career Development Center Website to Support our Projects

The three projects that we have identified require that our website be updated to navigate more easily and provide additional career service resources. We also need to make better use of our Facebook page. We will refer many of our students and alums to these two resources and the upgrades will help make them more effective. We have assigned staff to the information update process which will become an ongoing commitment to provide the best career information we can to the widest audience. This project is underway. Until a new Director is in place, we will not undertake a redesign of the web site. Rather, we have divided the existing web resources into segments and assigned to specific staff for reviewing, editing, and updating as needed.

FULL CIRCLE ASSESSMENT PLAN FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Initiatives:

1. Add Entrepreneurship to Career Information Panels
2. Increase Contacts with Current Students at All Levels
3. Increase Contacts with Graduating Seniors

Description, Rationale, Status, and Planned Assessment of Initiatives:

Initiative: Offer at least one alumni/community panel each academic year that deals with entrepreneurship.

- Rationale: Survey data suggest that Evergreen students have a greater interest (9% Evergreen vs. 4.0% National Average) in creating businesses and less interest (22% E vs. 33% N) in working for a private sector company or organization.
- Status: To be implemented 2012-13. Alumni and professional panel presentations are ongoing, and a panel specific to entrepreneurship is scheduled for Spring, 2013.
- Assessment plans for this initiative: Attendance records will be kept for all panel presentations, and attendees for the entrepreneurship panel will be asked to provide a written evaluation at the end, with information about their own entrepreneurial interests.

Initiative: Create new information contacts with students to bring career planning, and Career Development services, to their attention.

- Rationale: Survey data suggest less contact by freshman and sophomore students, less awareness of the services we provide in general, and that students receive more career advice from “others” than from Career Development staff or related resources.
- Status: Under development 2012-13. A staff member is designing a template for a periodic newsletter to be emailed to all students. A Facebook page has been launched and is maintained by a staff member; links to the FB page are on the web site and will be added to email signature files and to our fliers.
- Assessment plans for this initiative: Intake records (for students visiting Career Development) and program protocols will be revised include the question, “How did you hear about Career Development/this event?” Additionally, contact numbers will be compared to the periods immediately following the sending of the newsletter or other group contact messages, to see if there is a corresponding increase in usage of Career Development services. Future Alumni Surveys will be reviewed to see if there is an increased awareness and usage of Career Development services. If deemed appropriate, Facebook usage data can be tracked.

Initiative: Increase individual contact with graduating seniors.

- Rationale: Survey data suggest that only 17% of Evergreen students received career information from Career Development while other categories such as friends/peers scored in the 80% category. To begin to change this practice, we will remind graduating seniors of the career services available to them as alumni. In the past we had sufficient time and staff to give an in-person briefing to practically all graduating seniors. Because our staffing is lower, we are developing a mailing to replace the personal contact with graduates who express an interest in career services.
- Status: Implementation began in Summer, 2012. Based on graduates’ response to the Career Development question on the exit survey for graduating seniors, staff will email individuals who asked for further information or assistance with career matters, to let them know of the array of services available to them as alumni.
- Assessment plans for this initiative: We will track the numbers of contacts from recent alumni who have received the individual outreach message, to compare with typical numbers before this outreach was implemented.