Career Center
2008 – 2009 Blueprint for Service Excellence
Progress Report 05-15-2009

Division of Student Affairs & Department of Academic Support (DSADAS)

Vision Statement - The Division of Student Affairs and Department of Academic Support fosters a community of scholars guided by integrity, engaged in collaboration, and dedicated to success.

Mission Statement - The Division of Student Affairs and Department of Academic Support, through partnerships with campus and community constituents, promotes the intellectual, emotional, physical, spiritual, cultural, and social development of students and educators, thus preparing them for a life of learning, service, and engagement. The Division supports the mission of the University of South Carolina and is guided by its dedication to learning, commitment to diversity and devotion to values of the Carolinian Creed.

Career Center

Mission Statement - The Career Center serves as a comprehensive career information center providing programs to enhance the career development of college-bound high school students, currently enrolled students, faculty, staff, and alumni. The Career Center provides counseling and testing to assist students in career clarification along with opportunities to gain career-related experience, explore career goals, develop marketable skills and make contact with employers for part and full-time employment. The Center facilitates communication among employers, faculty, students, and alumni concerning employment and enrollment trends. The Center adheres to the code of ethics of NACE, the National Association of Colleges and Employers.

DSADAS Goal 2: Optimize student retention and persistence to degree completion by increasing engagement in campus life and by providing essential programs, services, and educational activities that lead to student success and satisfaction.

Initiative 2(b): Establish, coordinate, and enhance programmatic initiatives, research and assessment, and policy development to promote students’ academic success by incorporating cross campus partnerships and effective use of data to guide decision making.

Career Center Goal – Programmatic Review and Enhancement

A. The Career Center leadership and staff will identify priority areas of focus and programming.

KPIs:

- Host an external review of current programs and services. Review will be completed no later than 1 October by regional career services professionals and employer representatives.

Response: In August 2008, an independent external review of Career Center programs and services was conducted under the auspices of the Southern Association of Colleges and Employers (SoACE). The review team consisted of two career center directors and two employers.
During their two-day visit, team members met with and interviewed Career Center staff members as well as students, faculty, and senior staff from across the campus. The team submitted a written summary of the visit with specific recommendations in October 2008.

Using the external review as a foundation, the Career Center management team identified five areas of focus and priority for the next one to three years. These areas are 1) Career Events, 2) Employer Relations, 3) Outcomes Assessment, 4) Career Counseling/Advising, and 5) Experiential Education.

In February 2009, required competencies in each of the five priority areas were identified and a self-assessment tool was created for staff members to complete. Each professional level staff person assessed her/his competencies in each of the five areas and identified their priority competencies for the next year.

Using the five areas of focus and the staff competency priorities, the Career Center management team developed the 2009-2010 Career Center Blueprint for Service Excellence.

- Student focus groups will be conducted to learn student programmatic needs. A demographically representative group of students will participate in focus groups to be completed by December 1.
  
  **Response:**
  Students participated in the August 2008 external review. Their comments were incorporated into the review team’s final report. Additional attempts to organize student focus groups were unsuccessful. Focus groups will be held in 2009-2010.

- Demographic data of student participants will be reviewed. Participants of fall 2008 and spring 2009 programs will be reviewed in May 2009. Significant under-represented student populations (ethnicity, college, gender, etc.) will be identified. Marketing and outreach initiatives will be developed that focus on under-represented student populations.
  
  **Response:**
  A review of student demographic data shows that for the most part student participation in Career Center programs and services mirrors University enrollment demographics with regards to college, gender, race, and class. There is greater student participation from the Moore School of Business and the College of Engineering and Computing. Improvement is needed with regards to the Colleges of Arts and Sciences, Mass Communication and Information Studies, and Nursing.

  With regards to race, student participation in Career Center programs and services is very consistent with the University’s percentages.

  Juniors make up approximately 16% of the undergraduate population at USC. Among students who use Career Center programs and services, only 11% are juniors.

  Looking toward the 2009-2010 academic year, marketing efforts will be increased for students in the underrepresented colleges and University juniors.
• Develop and implement a comprehensive Employer Outreach Plan. Plan will detail organizations, industries and time frame to conduct outreach. Fall 2008 will kickoff outreach efforts to targeted state, regional, and national employers. Full plan finalized by June 2009.
Response: The comprehensive Employer Outreach Plan was drafted, revised, and is ready for implementation. Lack of funding and a critical staff vacancy in 2008-2009 severely limited implementation of the plan. With the anticipated hiring of the Associate Director for Employer Relations in July 2009, implementation will begin in fall 2009.

• In cooperation with the Moore School of Business Office of Career Management (MSOB OCM), a new service delivery model for business students will be developed. Response: A new service delivery was developed where the MSOB OCM became the primary service provider for upper division business students. Career Center staff continued to work with lower division business students through counseling sessions and presentations as well as targeted connections through orientation of new students, UNIV 101 sections for business students, and MGMT 250 classes. Although the loss of upper division students affected the overall number of student contacts with the Career Center, attendance at CareerFest by lower division students nearly doubled from the previous year. The Career Center liaison to the MSOB communicates regularly with the OCM staff and attends their staff meetings.

• New initiatives will be developed within the College of Engineering & Computing (CEC) that promote greater student and employer interactions.
Response: Three specific initiatives were developed. 1) The Science, Engineering, and Technology Job Fair was expanded to include both the fall and spring semesters. 2) Staff members developed a Facebook group for the CEC Career Center and used this resource to connect with CEC students, advertise events, promote on campus interviewing, and encourage attendance at employer information sessions. Students used the Facebook site to communicate with staff members. 3) CEC Career Center staff members developed a monthly drop-in for faculty, staff and students, encouraging them to visit the Center.

DSADAS Goal 4: Develop and practice methods of research and assessment that guide improvements enhancing student success and satisfaction.

Initiative 4(a): Encourage departments, staff members, and graduate students to engage in research activities that promote student learning, success, and satisfaction.

Career Center Goal – Outcomes-Based Strategic Planning

A. The Career Center leadership and staff will develop a 1 – 3 year strategic plan that incorporates learning outcomes.

KPIs:
• A draft of the strategic plan will be developed by June 1.
Response: With anticipated changes in the University’s and the Division’s strategic plans, the 2009-2010 Blueprint for Service Excellence will be used as the Career Center’s strategic planning document for the next year. The blueprint has been created and will guide staff members’
work as they focus on the 5 priority areas of the Center. Once the University’s and the Division’s plans are solidified, the Career Center plan will be re-examined.

- An assessment plan based on the newly developed strategic plan will be created by June 15. 
  **Response:** The key performance indicators (KPIs) of the 2009-2010 Blueprint for Service Excellence will provide the means of assessment. The Blueprint includes a section that will help Career Center staff members become more proficient in developing clear, measureable learning outcomes for programs and services.