



2009-10 Career Services Benchmark Survey for Four-Year Colleges and Universities

KEY FINDINGS

NACE reaches out to its college members each year to collect benchmarks of interest, and this year 557 members (40.1 percent) at four-year colleges and graduate universities shared their data and insights.

Beyond the traditional benchmarks this study collects, this year's report looked to the effect of the economic recession on career center operations. Two major points of inquiry in this regard were examined. One, did levels of demand for service change for the career centers as a result of the poor labor market? Two, how were career center resources affected by the financial pressures felt by university administrations?

The results of the survey provide a mixed indicator for demand. Activity in traditional venues such as career counseling by appointment did not increase. However, there were sizable increases in less traditional sectors of activity, such as drop-in career counseling and counselors dealing with students in online sessions. This indicates that there was an increased level of demand and that this increase likely came from students who were not as familiar and not as integrated into the career services environment. These students generally need higher levels of personal attention and service to guide them through their issues, coming as they do with little background in the career search process.

Unfortunately, resources for career centers did not match the increase in demand for services. While staffing levels remained fairly static, the financial resources provided to the career centers declined for the most part. This was particularly true of schools in the public sector as state governments cut back on their support for higher education and school administrations, in turn, limited support even for services directly tied to procuring employment for their students. The decline in institutional support was coupled with a decline in fees garnished through traditional venues such as career fairs, where participation from employer representatives fell off significantly in the light of the economic recession.

The increased demand for services, both from students and displaced alumni, along with the decline in financial support for office operations meant that the career service offices at four-year schools faced one of their most difficult years in memory for completing their tasks. This study, the findings of which are summarized below, provides a glimpse of the situation as it evolved in the past year.

OFFICE SPECIFICS

- Nearly half of the schools responding (45.4 percent) fall under the office title of “career services.” The remaining respondents are divided among “career center”—16.6 percent and 13 percent using the title of “career development.” Compared with previous years, there was a jump in the percent of offices that went by titles out of the realm of the main three—25 percent of respondents fell in this “other” category.
- Just over 60 percent of respondent (63.1 percent) reported that their office falls under the division of student affairs and two out of 10 (21.5 percent) fall under academic affairs. The remaining 15.5 percent fall under various other categories. This represents a shift away from the student affairs relationship reported in previous years.

SERVICES OFFERED

- Career counseling by appointment, career fairs, workshops, and assistance to students pursuing employer offered internship, co-op, or externship opportunities are still the most commonly offered services among respondents to the survey.
- For those schools that offer academic internships (82 percent), it is par for the course for the career center to offer assistance to students that want to tap into that resource. Overall, more than three-quarters of respondents (78.4 percent) said they assist students that want to participate in an academic internship being offered by their school.

- For the most part, the services offered among career centers are fairly consistent across the board. There are a few services, however, that are dependent on institution size, namely formal on-campus interviewing programs, specialized career fairs, academic counseling, and credit career classes.
- Nearly all career centers responding to this survey offer career fairs, and employers have consistently rated them as an effective means for recruiting new college graduates (see NACE *Job Outlook* reports), however there was an average 9 percent decline in the number of employers choosing to exhibit at these fairs during the 2008-09 recruiting season.
- There was a smaller but still noticeable drop in the percentage of seniors attending these fairs. An average of 35.5 percent of seniors attended career fairs during the 2007-08 recruiting season while 34.5 percent came to career fairs during 2008-09.
- Respondents were asked to provide details about their outreach to alumni displaced by the recession. Most responding career services offices have instituted such programs. Overall, 67.6 percent have begun these programs.

STUDENT RESOURCES

- Nearly all respondents (96 percent) offered their students a career resource library, and nearly as many (93.1 percent) had career assessment tools available.
- The most commonly mentioned resources that were offered through the library included *Job Choices* magazines, the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, and information from the U.S. Department of Labor.
- For those offering career assessment tools, MBTI is the most popular tool being offered, regardless of school size, with the Strong Vocational Blank second.

STAFFING

- The average FTE (full-time equivalent) professional staffing level at responding institutions actually increased a bit. In 2008-09, the average FTE professional staff number was 4.57; for the 2009-10 academic year, the average has increased to 5.23. As for clerical or support staff, the number of FTE career services support staff has not changed much over the past year: Overall, the average rose lightly from 4.49 in 2008-09 to 4.56 in 2009-10.
- Salary changes for career services professional staff were mixed. The average director salary registered \$69,023, an increase of just over 7 percent compared with last year's average of \$64,250. Other increases ranged from a low of 2.7 percent for associate director to a high of 3.4 percent for technical coordinators. Most other positions suffered decreases in average salary ranging from a drop of only 0.1 percent for career counselors to a decline of 2.3 percent for internship coordinators.

FINANCES - OPERATING BUDGETS

- During the 2009-10 academic year, career centers, overall, reported working with an average budget of \$72,616. The median budget, however, fell at only \$34,000, making it obvious that the average budget is skewed toward the high end of reported budgets.
- The average budget reported for the current year is down 2.5 percent from the average reported for the 2008-09 academic year (\$74,470), and the current median is down 1.5 percent than what was reported for 2008-09 (\$34,500).
- Direct comparison of individual career center budgets indicated an even more severe decline in operating revenues. The majority of respondents (57.5 percent) suffered a decrease in their operating budget for 2009-10, with nearly 11 percent of the respondents reporting declines in excess of 20 percent. Only 9 percent reported seeing an increase in their budget, with the most common increase being less than 5 percent.

FINANCES - FEES

- When asked about fees for services, responses this year matched those given by respondents in previous years' surveys—their fees are mostly focused on employers, and less on students and alumni.
- Among the career centers that do charge students, they most often charge students for the tests they administer.
- Charges to alumni are more common than charges to students, but still not extremely prevalent. The most common charges to alumni are for accessing job listings, career counseling, and testing.
- Employer fees tend to focus on charges for banner ads and career fairs, with a few respondents reporting charges to access resume books.

TECHNOLOGY

- The career services web site and online job postings are the most commonly used technologies among respondents (as has been the case over the last several years), and online job postings and online interview scheduling systems were rated as being most effective (also consistent with the results of the past several surveys).
- In addition to everyday technologies, four out of five respondents (79.9 percent) also indicated that they have a system or systems in place that they use as a student resume data base, job listing, and/or recruitment scheduling system. Of the various systems tracked, NACELink is being used by the largest group of respondents.

- Respondents were also asked if they have a system in place that allows them to track contact information for their students and to monitor student participation in the programs and services they offer. Six out of 10 respondents have such a system, with vendor-supported products and unique programs designed specifically for their office being most popular.
- Nearly 60 percent of responding career centers have established a Facebook “fan” page, while only 26 percent of centers have created a profile for students and others to track career center activities on Twitter.

ASSESSMENT

- Nearly seven out of 10 respondents (67 percent) plan to conduct an internal and/or external review/assessment of their career center within the next five years, which represents a significant increase over the 39.4 percent that conducted one within the past five years. This differential, however, is very consistent with the numbers reported in previous years, suggesting that many schools that intend to conduct assessments never actually get to them.

GRADUATING STUDENT ACTIVITY FOR THE CLASS OF 2008

- Respondents who were able to provide data on the percentage of students with jobs indicated that 43.3 percent had a job at the time of graduation and 68 percent had jobs by the time of the career center’s follow-up survey. Both of these figures represented significant declines for the figures reported for the Class of 2007.
- The largest group of respondents said they conduct a follow-up survey of their graduates six months after graduation. Following suit with previous years, smaller schools reported higher response rates for their graduate surveys, on average, than did larger schools. Respondents from schools with 1,000 or fewer students reported an average student response rate of 72 percent while those from schools with more than 20,000 students reported an average response rate of 46 percent.
- Whereas for the most part the percentage of students attending graduate school ranged between 23 and 25 percent, the smallest schools averaged only 18 percent.

ABOUT THE SURVEY

NACE’s 2009-10 Career Services Benchmarking Survey for Four-Year Colleges and Universities was sent to 1,389 NACE member schools in September 2009. Data were collected through the end of November 2009 with 557 members responding, for a response rate of 40.1 percent. Those schools that chose to be listed as survey respondents appear on the survey respondent list located on page 7.

Nearly all respondents (87.5 percent) have primarily centralized offices and more than half (54.0 percent) are from private universities.


Data throughout the full report are provided for the entire group of respondents, and are also broken out by size of total enrollment. Total enrollment size was calculated only for those offices that provided figures for both the number of undergraduate and graduate degree students at their institution (zero was an acceptable response). Among those for which the total enrollment size was calculated (n=530), the number of respondents in each category is outlined in Figure 1. 

Figure 1: Enrollment Size

Size Category	Respondents by Enrollment Size	
	No. of Respondents	% of Total
Less than or equal to 1,000	41	7.7%
1,001 - 2,500	122	23.0%
2,501 - 5,000	121	22.8%
5,001 - 10,000	96	18.1%
10,001 - 20,000	92	17.4%
> 20,000	58	10.9%
Total	530	100.0%

FULL SURVEY REPORT AVAILABLE

The full survey report is available for purchase. See www.nacweb.org for details.

NACE member schools that responded to the survey received a complimentary copy; nonparticipating members can purchase the full report at the member rate.

For information on customized data based on the results of this survey, contact Edwin Koc, ext. 164, 800/544-5272, ekoc@nacweb.org. (Note: Survey respondents receive a 50 percent discount on all custom data cuts.)

SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Note: Although there were 557 respondents to the survey, the list below reflects only those that agreed to be listed.

Abilene Christian University	California Polytechnic State University	East Carolina University - College of Business
Abilene Christian University - College of Business	California State Polytechnic University	East Central University
Adelphi University	California State University - East Bay	Eastern Illinois University
AIB College of Business	California State University - Northridge	Eastern Kentucky University
Albertus Magnus College	California State University - San Bernardino	Eastern Mennonite University
Albion College	Campbell University	Eastern Nazarene College
Alfred University	Canisius College	Eckerd College
Alma College	Capilano University - School of Business	Elmira College
Alverno College	Capital University	Elon University
American University in Bulgaria	Carroll College	Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University - Daytona Beach
Angelo State University	Carroll University	Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University - Prescott Campus
Arcadia University	Case Western Reserve University	Emerson College
Arizona State University	Cazenovia College	Evangel University
Arizona State University - Polytechnic Campus	Cedarville University	Fairleigh Dickinson University - College at Florham
Ashland University	Centenary College of Louisiana	Ferrum College
Athens State University	Central Methodist University	Flagler College
Auburn University	Central Pennsylvania College	Florida A&M University
Augusta State University	Central State University	Florida Gulf Coast University
Austin College	Chapman University	Florida International University - College of Business
Austin Peay State University	Clarkson University	Florida Southern College
Babson College	Clayton State University	Florida State University
Bacone College	Clemson University	Fontbonne University
Baker University	Colgate University	Fordham University - Rose Hill Campus
Baldwin-Wallace College	College of Charleston	Fort Hays State University
Ball State University	College of Mount St. Joseph	Framingham State College
Barry University	College of Saint Benedict	Franklin & Marshall College
Baruch College	College of Saint Elizabeth	Franklin College
Baylor University	College of Saint Rose	Fresno Pacific University
Becker College	College of the Holy Cross	Friends University
Beckfield College	Columbia College	Frostburg State University
Belmont Abbey College	Concordia University - Texas	Furman University
Benedictine College	Concordia University - Wisconsin	Gannon University
Bennington College	Cornerstone University	George Fox University
Bethany College	Creighton University	George Mason University
Bethel University	Crown College	Georgetown University
Binghamton University - SUNY	Daemen College	Georgia College & State University
Black Hills State University	Daniel Webster College	Georgia Gwinnett College
Boise State University	Davenport University - Lansing	Georgia Southern University
Bond University	Defiance College	Georgia State University
Boston College	Delta State University	Georgian Court University
Bowling Green State University	Denison University	Gettysburg College
Bridgewater College	DePaul University	Golden Gate University
Brigham Young University - Hawaii	DePauw University	Gonzaga University
Brock University	DeSales University	Goucher College
Brown University	Dominican University	Grambling State University
Buffalo State College - SUNY	Drake University	Grove City College
Butler University	Drew University	
Cabrini College	Duke University - Career Center	
California Maritime Academy	Duquesne University	

Gustavus Adolphus College
 Hampden-Sydney College
 Hampshire College
 Harding University
 Hardin-Simmons University
 Harris-Stowe State University
 Hartwick College
 Harvey Mudd College
 Heidelberg College
 Hendrix College
 Hobart and William Smith Colleges
 Houston Baptist University
 Humboldt State University
 Huntington University
 Idaho State University
 Illinois State University
 Indiana Institute of Technology
 Indiana University - Bloomington -
 College of Arts & Sciences
 Indiana University - Bloomington -
 Kelley School of Business
 Indiana University - Bloomington -
 School of Public &
 Environmental Affairs
 Indiana University - Southeast
 Indiana University-Purdue University
 - Indianapolis
 Indiana University-Purdue University
 Fort Wayne
 Iowa State University - College of
 Liberal Arts & Sciences
 Ithaca College
 Jacksonville State University
 James Cook University -
 Townsville Campus
 John Brown University
 John Carroll University
 Johnson & Wales University
 Johnson C. Smith University
 Juniata College
 Kansas State University
 Kennesaw State University
 Kentucky Wesleyan College
 King College
 Kutztown University of Pennsylvania
 La Roche College
 Lafayette College
 Lake Forest College
 Lake Superior State University
 Lamar University
 Lambuth University
 Lebanon Valley College
 Lee University
 Lesley University
 Lewis & Clark College
 Lewis-Clark State College
 Liberty University
 Life University
 Lipscomb University
 Los Angeles College International
 Louisiana State University
 Louisiana State University in Shreveport
 Loyola University Chicago
 Loyola University Chicago -
 Graduate School of Business
 Loyola University New Orleans
 Luther College
 Lyon College
 Manchester College
 Manhattan College
 Manhattanville College
 Marian College
 Marietta College
 Marist College
 Marquette University
 Mars Hill College
 Marymount University
 Maryville University of St. Louis
 Massachusetts Institute of Technology
 McDaniel College
 McGill University
 McGill University - Faculty of
 Engineering
 McKendree University
 McMurry University
 McPherson College
 Medaille College
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 Mercyhurst College
 Messiah College
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 Minnesota State University - Moorhead
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 Missouri University of Science &
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 Missouri Western State University
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 Monmouth University
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 Montana Tech of The University of
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 North Dakota State University
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 University
 Northeastern State University -
 Tahlequah
 Northeastern University -
 Experiential Learning
 Northern Kentucky University
 Northern Michigan University
 Northwest Missouri State University
 Northwestern University
 Oberlin College
 Oglethorpe University
 Ohio Northern University
 Ohio Wesleyan University
 Oklahoma Baptist University
 Oklahoma State University
 Olivet Nazarene University
 Oregon Institute of Technology
 Otterbein College
 Peace College
 Pennsylvania College of Technology
 Pennsylvania State University
 Pepperdine University
 Pepperdine University - Graduate
 School of Education
 Peru State College
 Philadelphia University
 Plymouth State University
 Portland State University
 Prairie View A&M University
 Presbyterian College
 Providence College
 Purdue University
 Purdue University - Calumet
 Purdue University - North Central
 Queen's University
 Radford University
 Ramapo College of New Jersey
 Reed College
 Remington College - Honolulu
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 Rhodes College
 Ringling College of Art & Design
 Rochester Institute of Technology
 Rockhurst University
 Rocky Mountain College
 Roger Williams University
 Rollins College
 Roosevelt University
 Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology

Research Brief

Rutgers University - Camden
 Rutgers University - New Brunswick
 Sacred Heart University
 Saint Joseph's College of Maine
 Saint Joseph's University
 Saint Louis University
 Saint Mary's College
 Saint Michael's College
 Salisbury University
 Salve Regina University
 San Diego State University
 Santa Clara University
 Sarah Lawrence College
 Savannah College of Art & Design
 Scripps College
 Seattle Pacific University
 Seton Hill University
 Shorter College
 Simon Fraser University - Vancouver
 Campus - Segal
 Slippery Rock University of
 Pennsylvania
 South Dakota School of Mines &
 Technology
 South Dakota State University
 Southeast Missouri State University
 Southern Connecticut State University
 Southern Illinois University -
 Carbondale
 Southern Illinois University -
 Edwardsville
 Southern New Hampshire University
 Southern Vermont College
 Southwest Baptist University
 Southwestern University
 Spring Arbor University
 Springfield College
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 University of Louisville
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