A New Vision for Career Preparation

May 2015
About This Report

President of the University of New Hampshire (UNH), Mark Huddleston, requested the assistance of the Curran Consulting Group (CCG) in assessing the effectiveness of UNH’s efforts in preparing students for successful lives after graduation.

Sheila Curran, president and chief strategy consultant spent five days on campus in April 2015, interviewing more than 50 students, faculty, administrators, Career Center and College-based career advisors, alumni, employers, Board members, and other stakeholders. She was asked to make recommendations on what it would take for the University of New Hampshire to become a national leader in the delivery of career services and career outcomes for its undergraduates. The project included an evaluation of the effectiveness of current services for students and employers within the UNH Career Center, Colleges, and other advising units. It also involved re-imagining the impact a transformational career initiative could have on student prospects for successful lives after graduation. Finally, CCG determined a plan of action that could take UNH from the status quo to a transformed approach to career preparation—one that could become a strategic asset for UNH as a whole.

The recommendations in this report are based on Ms. Curran’s analysis of interviews, written materials received from UNH, and her broad knowledge and understanding of the field. It should be noted that relatively little research is done in the area of careers, and what does exist may be flawed in survey design or response bias. Therefore, references are made to particular surveys only if similar conclusions have been reached by multiple researchers, or are consistent with findings from Ms. Curran’s own work with colleges and universities.

Ms. Curran has run a higher education consulting business since 2008 and is widely recognized as a national leader in re-imagineing institutional approaches to career preparation. Having performed career-related consulting assignments with over two dozen institutions across the United States, Ms. Curran understands the importance of maintaining the integrity of the academy, while encouraging students to build on educational and co-curricular experiences to prepare them for the future. Prior to becoming a consultant, Ms. Curran spent over 25 years at institutions like The University of Michigan, Brown University and Duke University. During that time she transformed two career centers. She is also the author of Smart Moves for Liberal Arts Grads: Finding a Path to Your Perfect Career, Ten Speed Press, 2006.

Career development and planning is now a strategic institutional priority for UNH. It is expected that the implementation of recommendations in this report will positively contribute to achieving UNH’s goals, preparing students for a lifetime of successful pursuits, and equipping them with the ability to make good decisions and choices about the next steps in their lives.
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Executive Summary

Under the leadership of President Mark Huddleston, UNH intends to develop an exemplary career services program that “integrates and enhances curricular, co- and extra-curricular, student development, and job placement”. In the spring of 2015, President Huddleston hired the Curran Consulting Group (CCG) to recommend a plan for identifying the key components for achieving UNH’s desired results, including a vision; key functions; staffing and organizational structure; space and resources; and, required approach.

Significant external pressures make excellent career preparation of great importance to UNH. These include:

1. Family demand for an ROI on their investment in higher education
2. Student focus on “getting a better job” as a key driver for attending college
3. Proposed government regulations relating to career outcomes

Working with Senior Vice Provost of Academic Affairs, P.T. Vasudevan, Sheila Curran, President and Chief Strategy Consultant of CCG, gathered and analyzed relevant career information from multiple sources. She also gained perspective from over 50 interviews conducted with stakeholders on campus from April 6-10, 2015.

CCG reached a number of conclusions from its interviews and review of qualitative and quantitative data:

• Many high quality career services take place across campus, but because they are not coordinated, they do not achieve their institutional potential.

• UNH is using an outdated model of career services. It must embrace systems, technology, and social media that enable a much more personalized and flexible approach. It must also be responsive to the specialized needs of the Colleges and the importance of alumni and employer partnerships.

• The impact of UNH services related to careers and further education is unclear. No cost-benefit analysis is done that demonstrates the value of programs or initiatives.

• Due to lack of vision and resources, career services are primarily reactive. Thus, it is likely that 90% of those who currently pursue services are the 10% of students who need help the least.

In our opinion, incremental change is not an option. Doing more of the same will only produce marginal benefits. Instead, investment must be strategic—based on an appreciation for the UNH culture and also a broad understanding of the factors that contribute to graduate success. We recommend using the research conducted through the Gallup-Purdue Index as a guide to designing new programs and strategies that will most likely influence graduate success.

The most important first step for UNH is to agree on a vision for career preparation. This represents a significant opportunity for the University, because the right vision will not only lead to enhanced career outcomes; it will also drive matriculation, retention, academic success, appreciation for the ROI of a UNH education, lifelong engagement with the University, and contributions to the State of New Hampshire.

UNH can achieve maximum value from its investment in career preparation initiatives if it makes long-term professional success a hallmark of its education. Proven effectiveness in connecting education to professional success, will enable UNH to better articulate its value to prospective students and their parents. Far from taking resources from other areas, we believe any money spent on initiatives relating to professional success will benefit all UNH’s strategic objectives. Ultimately, these objectives can be linked in one overarching institutional vision:

This report explains how professional success is linked both to a great education and to lifelong engagement with UNH. It identifies what an ideal model of career preparation might look like, and offers recommendations for how to achieve the goals of that model. Finally, we propose a plan for engendering the support of the entire university community, whose help will be invaluable as ideas are put into practice.
The “Big Idea” for UNH

Rationale for the “Big Idea”

A Professional Success Initiative that has the capability of transforming graduates’ lives can be of significant value to UNH. However it can have even greater impact if it is part of a “Big Idea” for UNH—one that ties together all of UNH’s six priorities in one overarching initiative. We propose that UNH communicate its value proposition to multiple audiences as:

Great Education...Professional Success...Lifelong Engagement

The six priorities that contribute to the achievement of this concept are:

I. Strengthen and Diversify Enrollment
II. Innovation and a Well-Trained Workforce Through STEM Education
III. Deepen Research and Increase Commercialization
IV. Strengthen the UNH Brand
V. Complete a Successful Fundraising Campaign
VI. Promote Career Development and Planning

For the Professional Success Initiative to successfully contribute to both lifelong engagement and a great education, we envisage the culture of career preparation changing in the following ways:

• Deans and department chairs take responsibility for identifying paths to professional success for their students, including opportunities for experiential education and internships

• Up to 1,000 alumni and parents are involved in advising, mentoring, and presenting on careers through a managed Career Community

• UNH takes responsibility for making sure that no student “drops between the cracks”. The institution’s commitment is to all students

• Students take responsibility for their careers. They become part of an internal career community, whereby they share information about their own experiences and successes with other students

• All information about students’ backgrounds, academic and career progress, and outcomes is coordinated, so that predictions can be made about those who need early help to succeed

• Surveys on career outcomes are standardized so the University talks with one voice. Data on student experiences, internships and outcomes, are widely available to departments, faculty, advisors and students

• Data and outcomes drive decisions about the nature and delivery of services and programs

• All initiatives involving students, employers, faculty and alumni are orchestrated centrally, with distributed services in the Colleges

• The new Associate Vice Provost will report to the Senior Vice Provost; however, since career preparation will be an institutional responsibility, he/she will have a dotted line reporting relationship to the President

For the “Big Idea” to work, all parts of UNH must be committed to its success, and each must be prepared to identify key dashboard indicators that measure their impact.
A New Vision for Professional Success

To make professional success a key part of the value proposition for UNH, and a strategic advantage to the University, a new vision and approach are required that fundamentally change the way students become prepared for their lives after college. We offer this vision statement as a placeholder for further discussion at UNH:

“At UNH preparation for professional success goes hand in hand with a great education. We commit to making a difference in the lives of all our graduates, regardless of their background or course of study. Our innovative approach not only engages academic leaders and career professionals; it relies on the active engagement of the whole community—including faculty, staff, alumni, parents and employers. But it demands an equal commitment from students, whose access to information, resources and opportunity allows them to be the principal architects of their own success. UNH students become part of a broader UNH community that shares information and expertise to promote the professional success of students and fellow alumni. In doing so, they cement their relationship with their alma mater and enhance life long professional satisfaction.”

Key Messages to the UNH Community

We believe the “Great Education...Professional Success...Lifelong Engagement” motto can be a strong selling point to prospective students and their families. But it can also be a powerful force to bring together disparate parts of the educational community at UNH. We believe the following are messages that will resonate with faculty and staff:

- No longer is a great education enough. To survive and thrive in today’s challenging economic environment, that great education must lead to professional success and lifelong engagement.
- Any one of these ideas cannot, on its own, be effective
- Together, these ideas will allow UNH to demonstrate the value of its education, attract and enroll higher caliber applicants, and, build alumni engagement and philanthropy
- Parents may have significant influence on their student’s progress in college, and need accurate information on how to get maximum ROI from a UNH education. They should be encouraged to be a part of the Professional Success initiative.
- Accountability for achieving the “Big Idea” belongs to the institution. But, every part of UNH needs to be involved and share that accountability
- There are key roles to be played by deans of the Colleges, faculty, staff, alumni, and parents
- This “Big Idea” does not diminish any part of the educational experience; nor does it favor one type of education over another. Instead it will demonstrate the value of all majors and the capacity for success of all students
- Changing demographics, rising costs, family expectations for ROI, and government regulation mean “business as usual” is not an option
Key Components of a New Approach to Professional Success

Preparation for professional success is an integral part of the UNH experience.

It is everyone's responsibility.

Expectations that students take responsibility for their own career development, are consistently communicated prior to matriculation and throughout their time at UNH.

Multiple pathways from College to Career are established for each major and College, with an expectation for applied learning and experiential education.

A Career Community of alumni and parent volunteers plays a key role in providing or connecting students to specialized information and advice.

Students each have at least one academic advisor and one professional advisor, who use demographics and shared notes to inform their guidance.

Career Exploration and Professional Development staff are:
- Guides
- Coaches
- Connectors
- Optimizers
- Orchestrators of Opportunity

Technology, and understanding of how millennial students access information, guide development of targeted resources and programs.

Students have access to an interactive database of employment data from UNH grads, UNH employers and national employers, motivating them towards their goals.
## Pre-requisites for Achieving Goals of a Professional Success Initiative

1. **Clear institutional communication, leadership and accountability**  
   - All staff and faculty interested or involved in the Professional Success Initiative (PSI) have the opportunity to influence the direction of the PSI, and commit to one overarching vision  
   - Leadership of PSI is with a new cabinet-level administrator reporting to the Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, with dotted line to President. (Placeholder title for position: Associate Vice Provost (AVP). Placeholder title for new department: Center for Professional Success (Career Center))  
   - The AVP has primary accountability for the Professional Success project. Secondary accountability is established for other key players, e.g., Deans  
   - There are clear metrics for success

2. **New organizational model supports Professional Success initiative**  
   - The Career Center becomes its own department, separate from Academic Advising. It continues to have close relationships with Deans, Academic Advising, Admissions, Student Affairs, Alumni Relations, and Advancement  
   - The AVP leads and/or orchestrates all career functions and all career professionals, paying particular attention to the staffing and support needs of each College  
   - One to three career professionals support, and are located in, each College, selected by Dean and AVP or designees  
   - Deans of Colleges and of Manchester Campus are responsible for determining career-related educational requirements, developing and promoting “Pathways to Professional Success” for each major/program, and for gathering internships and outcomes data from students  
   - There is cross-campus coordination and promotion of:  
     - Programs and events  
     - Services  
     - Employer outreach and cultivation  
     - Engagement of alumni and parent career volunteers  
     - Student, employer and alumni surveys

3. **Professional Success Initiative is integrated with other strategic University goals**  
   - The AVP regularly updates the President’s Cabinet on results of the Professional Success Initiative, and convenes a semi-annual meeting with other key departments to share goals, strategies and initiatives, and to support each other’s efforts in a coordinated way. Key departments include:  
     - Academic Affairs  
     - Admissions  
     - Retention  
     - Academic Advising  
     - Alumni Relations  
     - Advancement  
   - The AVP actively participates in Advancement events and meetings, promoting UNH’s innovative approach to the lifelong success of its graduates

4. **Entire university community is involved in the PSI**  
   - Each student is assigned, or can choose, a career mentor who will work with them for the entire time they are at UNH (unless either party wishes to change). Mentors may be:  
     - Faculty  
     - Staff  
     - Alumni  
     - Parents  
   - A significant number of student employment jobs are converted into internships, providing underclass students opportunities to build skills in a supportive environment overseen by UNH supervisors  
   - A Career Community of alumni and parents is established, through which volunteers choose the type of engagement they want with students—from answering questions, to mentoring, to providing expert advice  
   - A Career Advising Team (WildCATS) serves as the outreach arm for the Career Center. As trained paraprofessionals they:  
     - Initiate and teach programs, and offer resume/cover letter critiques  
     - Provide entree into student groups  
     - Provide peer advising services in the Colleges
**Innovative technology is integral part of professional success strategy**
- A new website uses interactive technology, artificial intelligence, and multimedia to:
  - Teach essential job search skills, both online and through a flipped classroom format
  - Involve alumni/parent career field experts, without being location dependent
  - Engage students in interesting ways that reinforce career learning
  - Convey information on career fields and how UNH grads achieved their goals. All aggregate data gathered from students and grads about internship and professional success is shared
  - Motivate students to action by projecting increased chances of achieving specific career goals if they make changes, e.g., improve GPA, obtain specific skills

**Decision making is driven by data**
- Data is gathered and analyzed to determine:
  - Student career interests, and whom to invite to campus to present on careers
  - Student progress towards professional development goals
  - What programs and services should be offered
  - Where additional web resources must be developed
  - How effectively students are using technology
  - Where student needs are not being met
  - Extent to which students are engaged with Career Center
  - Impact of the PSI on outcomes
- UNH mandates completion of brief (30 second) career surveys before signing up for classes, so student progress and interests can be tracked
- The Office of Institutional Research is an active partner in all initiatives to gather data on outcomes
- Surveys on career experiences and outcomes are completed when:
  - Students complete internships
  - Students graduate
  - 6 months after graduation
  - 5 years after graduation
  - 10 years after graduation
- The Office of Institutional Research is consulted on any data-related initiatives to ensure coordination of University-wide initiatives

**UNH systems and data are coordinated and optimized**
- Major systems purchased by UNH (e.g., Salesforce) are evaluated to see whether they have applications for the Professional Success Initiative
- There is one recruiting system for the entire university and one employer point of entry
- Duplication of effort is eliminated through shared CRM system(s) that manage employment relationships and strategic employer development, and track the engagement of alumni and parents
- Advising notes are shared by all with a “need to know”, and are linked to demographic information about a student

**National (e.g., Gallup) and UNH-specific research on professional success drive actions and policies**
- Based on current research, the following are strongly encouraged:
  - Faculty who mentor students and excite them about learning
  - Mentors who encourage students’ dreams for their futures
  - The integration of long-term projects and experiential education into “Pathways to Professional Success” plans for each major
  - Student deep engagement in extra-curricular activities
  - Activities that strengthen a student’s connection with UNH, e.g., through engagement with alumni
  - Activities that give students confidence that they are becoming well prepared for life after college
The Case for a Professional Success Initiative

The Call for ROI on a College Education

US Higher Education is in the cross hairs of a multifaceted assault, which challenges the ways we have educated students for over a hundred years. Concerns have been brewing for many years, but the extended jobs recession for all students—particularly those with bachelor’s degrees who are under age 25—has brought the problem into sharp relief.

Parents and prospective students have long complained about the increasing cost of higher education, and for good reason: Since 1978, tuition costs have risen 1120%—about 4 times higher than the growth in the CPI. But when the economy was good, it was easy to point to the high salaries and low unemployment of entry-level grads, as a marker for the “ROI” of a college investment. That argument holds less and less water, with new data showing that even after the recession ended, wages for new graduates remained stagnant, underemployment is projected at close to 50%, and hundreds of thousands of students are in danger of defaulting on their college loans.

Many state governments have called for a more “work-centric” approach to higher education, calling for more resources to be distributed to programs and majors that directly align with a state’s economic development initiatives. While such a focus is anathema to virtually all higher education leaders, the fact remains that there is significant pressure to justify the economic value of certain majors, particularly those in the liberal arts and sciences.

Another good reason for universities like UNH to pay attention to careers is that, nationally, over 86% of all incoming freshmen say a key reason for going to college is to get a better job. Their ability to find employment commensurate with their educational attainment influences future matriculation and philanthropy—key institutional strategic priorities—in addition to determining whether students can repay their loans. Kathleen Kelley, a parent, recently made this comment: “Three of my four children are in the work force and one is still in college, wondering who to turn to for advice. One University did a great job of putting the student needs front and center. They continue to assist him, because his success is theirs. One University could care less. Guess which one will receive the biggest donation in the future.”

It is no longer sufficient for colleges and universities to concentrate on student learning outcomes, without linking those outcomes to graduate success.
Federal Government Intervention

The federal government has responded to the call for ROI by requiring more transparency. The College Scorecard, which was introduced in February 2013, does provide some useful information for consumers. They can now compare data points on colleges like relative cost, graduation rates, indebtedness, and how aggressively the college has raised tuition. However, the Scorecard section on career outcomes has, for the most part, remained blank, since no uniform system existed to track this data¹.

Not content with simply knowing what colleges cost and how well their graduates do, the federal government is now proposing its “Postsecondary Institutional Ratings System” or PIRS for colleges and universities, based on schools’ success in enhancing affordability and outcomes”. The idea of PIRS is to “name and shame” schools that underperform in the areas of government concern, withdrawing federal loans and funds when schools do not measure up in a variety of categories. While few would argue with the universal good of making college available to those who qualify, controlling college costs, and having students easily transition to positions with sufficient remuneration to repay college loans, the devil is in the details. The proposed “framework” issued by PIRS in December 2014 has been universally dismissed by higher education leaders, particularly the emphasis on entry level salary as a proxy for good career preparation.

While the exact nature of the federal government rules may change significantly, it is highly likely that the emphasis on “placement” and entry level salaries will, to some extent, continue to exist. This provides a particular challenge for liberal arts colleges within larger institutions. In such organizations, major rarely equates exactly to a particular career, and first salary is not a good predictor of ultimate success in the work world—even financial success. Research conducted as part of the LEAP project of the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AACC) demonstrates that while liberal arts graduates typically start off with salaries lower than graduates with business degrees, more liberally educated graduates eventually overtake their pre-professional peers—with the exception of those who study engineering.

The AACCU survey calls into question whether entry-level salaries as a reasonable proxy for educational success. However, it should be noted that universities with a focus on liberal arts, creative arts, and sciences have not typically done a good job of explaining to the public or the employer community why their graduates are good candidates for employment. Further, there is a significant disagreement between higher education and employers on whether new college graduates are prepared for the work world.

¹ The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) has now developed recommendations for reporting on career outcomes. In 2015, 90 schools reported career outcomes using the NACE protocol. A “knowledge” rate of 65% of survey respondents is required.
Changing the Definition of Graduate Success

If UNH does not want salary at graduation to be considered the defining factor in determining whether it did a good job in preparing students for their lives after graduation, it may want to consider adopting and communicating other measures of success. Gallup provides a good alternative, talking about “well-being”.

The Gallup-Purdue Index, conducted in 2014 surveyed over 30,000 graduates to discover whether the experiences students had in college have promoted a well-lived life. “Well-being” was divided into five different measures by Gallup and its partner, Healthways. The graduate survey asked questions that would ascertain the impact of various factors on these measures of well-being:

- **Purpose Well-Being**: Liking what you do each day and being motivated to achieve your goals
- **Social Well-Being**: Having strong and supportive relationships and love in your life
- **Financial Well-Being**: Effectively managing your economic life to reduce stress and increase security
- **Community Well-Being**: The sense of engagement you have with the areas where you live, liking where you live, and feeling safe and having pride in your community
- **Physical Well-Being**: Having good health and enough energy to get things done on a daily basis

Findings of the Gallup-Purdue Survey

As the University of New Hampshire determines how it wants to change career outcomes, it would be helpful for the entire community to understand how certain actions it can take may influence graduates’ well-being. The odds of thriving in well-being (purpose, financial, physical, social and community) go up significantly if the following happens:

- The graduate is emotionally attached to the school (**2.0 times impact**)
- The graduate says school prepared them well for life after college (**2.5 times impact**)
- The graduate is engaged at work (**4.6 times impact**)

**Emotional Attachment**: The odds of being emotionally attached to ones’ alma mater are:

- **8.1x** more likely if graduates say their college is passionate about the long-term success of its students
- **8.7x** if graduates say college prepared them well for life after college

**Preparation for life after college**: Only 29% of respondents “strongly agree” that college prepared them well for life outside of college, indicating opportunity for a huge impact on graduates’ lives if a college re-thinks and re-imagines career preparation.
**Workforce Engagement:** There is also significant room for improvement in developing the kinds of resources and student expectations that are closely correlated with eventual workplace engagement. In particular, attention should be paid to developing a system of mentoring; setting clear expectations for long-term project work and internships; and, communicating an appreciation for the impact of participation in extra-curricular activities and faculty support for students. According to the Gallup report: “Feeling supported and having deep learning experiences means everything when it comes to long-term outcomes for college graduates”.

In the past, UNH has not collected information from its graduates that could be used to compare with the Gallup data. That will change, starting in the upcoming year, now that UNH has signed a contract with Gallup.
The Current Employment Environment

Recent surveys suggest that 2015 may be one of the best times since 2001 for new graduates to find work. Employer surveys are conducted annually by the Center for Employment Research Institute (CERI) at Michigan State. The press release of the survey conducted in 2014, predicts double-digit growth in 2015 in the following sectors: Nonprofits; Manufacturing; Government; Professional, Business & Scientific Services; Finance and Insurance; and, Information Services. Only Educational Services are predicted to be in decline (-2% growth); the Health Services sector is likely to experience a comparatively small 8% growth.

The question is: Will universities like the University of New Hampshire be ready to take advantage of this extraordinary hiring boom, or will the graduates of other institutions get there first? And, when students get interviews, will UNH students be the ones hired? There is significant concern about whether students were ready for employment in the past, and no indication that has changed in the past year.

According to the 2015 CERI survey, respondents are concerned about “lackluster resumes and slipshod cover letters”. They also claim those interviewed often appear “unfocused and unmotivated”. One of the key challenges for UNH is to clarify what students must do to get hired, to provide the information and training they need, and to hold them responsible for their own career success.

Student Preparedness for the Workforce

According to a survey done by Inside Higher Ed's 2015 Survey of College and University Chief Academic Officers, 97% of public institutions think they are either somewhat effective or very effective at preparing their students for the work world. However, a survey conducted by Hart Research Associates and released in January 2015 by the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AACU) highlights a big disconnect between institutional and employer opinions of their students' preparation for the workforce. AACU concludes:

"When it comes to the types of skills and knowledge that employers feel are most important to workplace success, large majorities of employers do NOT feel that recent college graduates are well prepared." Students particularly lack ability to:

- Apply knowledge and skills in real-world settings
- Think critically
- Communicate orally and in writing

The Hart Research Associates study identified seven actions students can take in college that significantly increase their chances of getting hired, with the most effective being getting an internship or apprenticeship, of completing a senior thesis or project:

Perhaps because educational leaders think they are already doing a good job, the vast majority of institutions have not invested in career initiatives, often marginalizing their career services offices. The National Association of Colleges and Employers reports in the NACE Journal February 2015, that between 2007 and 2014, the average operational budget of career services offices nationwide actually declined—despite the fact that this period represented one of the most difficult in decades for graduate employment. In universities with 10,000-20,000 students, the average decline in operating budget was 33.1% in 2007 dollars.
What Students Need for Success

A first step in ensuring the impact of an expanded career transformation effort that evolves from the Professional Success Initiative is to understand what students need.

Recent surveys from Inside Higher Ed and Gallup suggest that almost all college presidents and senior academic officers now agree that colleges and universities have an obligation to prepare students for their futures. However, there is a big disconnect between the perception of higher education and the perception of employers when it comes to the employability of new college grads. Colleges and universities think they're already doing a good job of preparing students for the job search. Fewer than a third of employers concur.

According to a 2012 survey conducted by The Chronicle of Higher Education and American Public Media’s Marketplace, only 16% of employers considered applicants to be “very prepared” with the knowledge and skills they would need for the job.

Reasons for the disconnect between college and career

• Many academic leaders still believe that providing an excellent education will automatically lead to meaningful work, and do not realize how great a disadvantage it is for students to start paying attention to careers in their junior year.

• In many selective institutions, there is often a fear that paying more attention to the career needs of students will be the first step on a slippery slope to “vocationalism” and a less academic approach to education.

• Most of those who are currently in senior academic leadership positions graduated at a time when the rules governing how to find a job were much clearer—and stresses of loan repayment less onerous. They may not know what it takes to be successful in the modern job search or for what they can hold a Career Services office accountable.

• Few colleges and universities are aware of new integrated models of career preparation, which use a “Career Community” concept to broaden opportunities and advising. These models encourage students to reflect and build on their learning in and outside the classroom from the first year on. They also ensure the involvement of alumni, parents and employers, helping students connect the dots between their talents, interests and opportunities.

What employers seek

The higher the GPA and the more relevant the subject matter of the major, the lower the need for transferable skills. Career Services offices disproportionately see those students who have high grades, relevant majors, and high skills. These are often the most ambitious students, who participate in on-campus recruiting. Any career initiative could increase its impact significantly by focusing efforts on those who would not naturally find opportunities. These are represented in the dark red sections of the chart on page 16.
St. John’s University is an excellent example of a university that tracks students to make sure they are making progress on career as well as academic milestones, and proactively reaches out to students when they might benefit from additional attention.

**Mapping how students can acquire the necessary skills**

No amount of career assistance will help the student who is not qualified. Yet few institutions are intimately familiar with what employers are expecting of students and graduates when they hire them for internships and full time work. According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) Job Outlook 2015 Spring Update, employers rank the most desired skills and characteristics as follows:

#1 Leadership  
#2 Ability to work in a team  
#3 Written communication skills  
#4 Problem solving skills  
#5 Strong work ethic  
#6 Analytical/quantitative skills  
#7 Technical knowledge related to the job  
#8 Verbal communication skills  
#9 Initiative  
#10 Computer Skills

During the time a student is in college, he or she typically has four ways through which to develop the skills required by employers: the classroom; co-curricular or extracurricular activities; internships or other experiential education; and, Career Services. The easiest way to become competent in any of these areas is through internships. But that does not mean it is impossible to significantly boost many students’ skill sets and desired characteristics while they are on campus. The following chart illustrates the opportunities for students to acquire skills through existing educational and co-curricular experiences.
Career-related skills can rarely be acquired simply by taking advantage of career services. It takes time to acquire them, and they are primarily learned or practiced through the classroom, extra-curricular activities, and internships/experiential education. Where a Career Center can make the most difference is in ensuring students understand and take advantage of the pathways available to them to achieve their goals. In a transformative Career Center, staff are experts in how their students find success; and, they connect students to a combination of online and people resources who can help them achieve their goals. Thus, the role of a Career Center is partly to orchestrate all the career activities that take place across the university; partly to provide direct services that help students explore and connect their education to employment; and, partly to design the systems, networks, and resources that greatly expand the ways in which students access services.
Career Transformation at UNH and Nationwide

The challenges faced by the Career Center at UNH are very similar to those faced by virtually every other Career Center across the nation. They include:

- Insufficient resources to offer the programs and services they would like
- There is no time to do strategic employer development
- Only a relatively small segment of the student population can be seen in personal appointments
- Students increasingly shun on-site career programs
- Students do not read email, and career preparation competes with other more appealing or urgent requirements
- Signing up for a program does not guarantee attendance. In many cases, there is at least a 50% rate of non-attendance, even for events with prominent alumni or serving food
- Internships and career courses are generally not required; when they are, there is often little quality control
- Students often start their career search too late, missing opportunities
- Many students have not mastered the basics of how to talk to employers or alumni
- Many students erroneously think that a good education automatically leads to a good career

Few careers offices, including at the University of New Hampshire, are held accountable for results of any kind. Goals typically focus on the number of collaborations, or student participation in programs. There is rarely any attempt to determine whether participation or engagement with a careers office leads to better results. Indeed, very little data is gathered at all on the impact of career initiatives.

Given the demand for ROI and the increasing competition institutions face in trying to attract applicants, a small but growing number of colleges and universities have committed themselves to transformative change.

Many colleges and universities ask who is doing the most innovative work in career transformation. The simple answer is that while many institutions, including the University of Wisconsin (College of Letters & Science), Wake Forest, Stanford, St. Olaf, Augustana College (IL), St. Johns University, and Miami University are doing terrific work, no one institution has a model that can simply be adopted wholesale by UNH. Some models would be too expensive; others focus on elements that are less relevant to public institutions. Nevertheless there are six components of transformation that are pre-requisites for success, and need to be implemented at UNH:

- **Institutional commitment**
- **Effective leadership of transformational efforts, positioned at a sufficiently high level**
- **Data-driven planning and a targeted approach to providing services**
- **Effective performance management and metrics for success**
- **Judicious use of resources to produce specific results**
- **A student-centered, proactive approach**
Moving from Traditional Career Services to a Transformative Model

In the consultant’s opinion, UNH’s ambitious goals cannot be reached unless it abandons its more traditional practices, replacing them with a transformative career model. The table below identifies the key characteristics of traditional and transformative models. Characteristics of both can be found at UNH, but the majority of work appears to fall in the “traditional” category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Traditional Career Model</th>
<th>Transformative Career Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mission</td>
<td>Serve all students and alumni</td>
<td>Aligned with strategic goals for the institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility for career preparation</td>
<td>Career Services</td>
<td>1. Institutional responsibility, AND 2. Student responsibility, AND 3. Career Center responsibility: • Strategic direction • Providers of direct service • Connectors for students, faculty, employers, alumni • “Orchestrators of Opportunity”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration</td>
<td>Career Services is stand-alone operation</td>
<td>Career preparation is integrated with academic advising, classroom education and experiential education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals</td>
<td>Operational • Based on increasing participation in services or programs</td>
<td>Strategic, Opportunistic, and Operational • Derived from data and opportunity analysis • Related to achieving the university’s mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Transactional</td>
<td>Targeted • Who needs service? • What assistance do they need?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population served</td>
<td>Those who request service</td>
<td>Those who are most in need of service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>Virtually none</td>
<td>Clear accountability for producing well-defined results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data</td>
<td>Participation and satisfaction data collected. In general: • Limited data • Limited analysis • Data not used for planning</td>
<td>Data gathered for specific reporting or planning purposes. Data analyzed: • Graduate outcomes • Impact of career services on outcomes • Impact of student characteristics on outcomes • Internship experiences • Student &amp; alumni interests and engagement • Employer needs and engagement (longitudinal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staffing &amp; Technology</td>
<td>1 professional staff member for 1000 students or more</td>
<td>1 professional staff member for 500 students or less, supplemented by: • Student peer advisors • Alumni/Parent Career Community volunteers • Innovative technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total budget</td>
<td>Less than $100 per student per year</td>
<td>In excess of $200 per student, per year • Significant funds set aside for funding unpaid or poorly paid internships for low-income students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functions</td>
<td>Main functions: counseling, job skills development &amp; recruiting system</td>
<td>Functions derive from understanding how students find success after graduation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer Approach</td>
<td>Recruiting system for posting jobs</td>
<td>Comprehensive college to employment strategy • Pipelines and partnerships established with employers • Two-way intelligence exchange on hiring and students • Concierge/consulting approach focused on meeting employer needs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Achieving Professional Success at UNH

Obstacles

Lack of investment in careers

There is no way that a careers staff of seven can adequately meet the professional development needs of an undergraduate population of 12,000, plus graduate students and alumni. Not surprisingly, fewer than 12% of undergraduate students are seen in individual appointments, and although much positive work is being done on an individual level, the overall impact on students’ professional success is not likely to be high. Simply adding staff will not solve the problem. UNH will need to commit to a transformational approach that happens over a period of several years.

Decentralization confusion

Perceived lack of support from the central careers office has encouraged the different Colleges at UNH to establish their own career operations. The Peter T. Paul College for Business and Economics (PAUL) is the best resourced: there are currently 2 FTEs and it will soon add another. The College of Engineering and Physical Sciences (CEPS) and the College of Life Sciences and Agriculture (COLSA) each have a career director. The only Colleges without dedicated career personnel are the College of Liberal Arts (COLA) and the College of Health and Human Services (CHHS). The unequal distribution of career resources is an issue of concern. It makes sense for there to be staff dedicated to understanding and addressing the individual needs of the Colleges, but we believe that it is prudent to centralize systems and strategies. Under the current situation, there is sometimes perceived competition for employers and space. And, when there is no common agreement about things like outcomes surveys, the University is unable to present a unified face to students or the outside world. Clearly, a balance must be struck between the needs of the University and the Colleges, with both interests being served to the extent possible. We recommend that careers staff in the Colleges report to a new Center for Professional Success, but that Deans have significant input into shaping career services for their Colleges.

Data and results

In 2014 UNH made a serious commitment to gathering information on the outcomes of new graduates. Response rates increased significantly from 2013 to 2014—in key Colleges from under 40% to over 60%. Response rates for COLSA and PAUL were exceptional, with over an 80% response rate. Of concern, however, is the fact that the survey was left open until 9 months after graduation, rather than the current national (NACE) standard of 6 months out. Further, the number of students still seeking work was significantly higher than the national average in CEPS, CHHS, COLA, COLSA and UNHM. In each of these Colleges, the percentage of students seeking work exceeded 25% nine months after graduation, compared to a national average of 18.7%, six months after graduation.

The Professional Success Initiative will require that the following data be gathered and analyzed on an on-going basis, and—like outcomes data—be broadly distributed to students and departments:

- The relationship of students’ educational and career experiences and background to outcomes
- Professional outcomes of students and graduates (at graduation, 6 months out, 5 years out, 10 years out, 20 years out)
- Employer assessment of skill sets required of new hires, and knowledge/experience gaps of UNH applicants
- Gap analysis of curriculum compared to knowledge requirements of employers
- Data from faculty/staff/alumni mentors on skills gaps of students
- Data on which alumni/parents are participating in what kinds of activities, at what level
- Impact of different factors, e.g., GPA, participation in particular programs, connections, on graduate success
Internships

In addition to the data points listed above, we also recommend tracking the experiential activities of students. This is currently not done at UNH in a way that could help the next class of students seeking internships to benefit from the experiences of their older peers. The pursuit of internships will undoubtedly be a critical part of a career transformation strategy since such activities are the easiest route to full-time employment for students. According to Michigan State’s CERI Recruiting Trends 2013-2014 report, 60% of employers hiring interns do so to identify and develop talent, and another 21% of employers hiring interns use them to supplement staffing for special projects and targeted assignments.

Employer Development

Efforts are made wherever possible to cultivate employer relationships. However it is clear that in some areas of the University, employer requests to get involved fall on deaf ears. It appears that many faculty have robust pipelines to employers through their personal connections. They are unwilling to share these opportunities broadly, partly because their employment relationships rely on the fact that the employer only wants the faculty member’s “best” students, and partly because there is a lack of trust that if the relationships were shared with an administrative area, they would no longer be nurtured. Given that there is no customer relationship management system (CRM) in place, there is some justification for this opinion; the situation must be remedied. A CRM system would also allow employer information and outreach to be shared across Colleges and the Career Center, eliminating the territoriality that currently exists in some places.

Organizational structure and leadership

The Career Center is ideally located in the center of campus, but it has a very low public profile. Reporting to the Associate Provost for Academic Advising and Career Center, it does not have a clear mission, vision or goals. And, its budget is co-mingled with that of the entire office, making it difficult to ascertain where investments have made the greatest difference. There is a rudimentary budget for career fairs. Almost every college in the country seems to make money on their fairs. At UNH, however, the budgets seem to indicate a slight loss. The sense of lack of direction is compounded by the fact that three of the seven staff appear to report directly to the Associate Provost of the University Advising and Career Center, while the other three report to the Associate Director of Career Support and Employer Outreach. No one claims the title of Career Director, contributing to our assertion that this is an area in need of bold leadership.

Approach

Not surprisingly, given the staff size, the current approach is traditional and transactional. Those who walk into the office or attend programs can often be very well served, but this is the kind of approach that is unlikely to attract less motivated students, or ones whose backgrounds make them initially less compelling candidates for internships or employment. The current approach and staffing is particularly bad for the College of Liberal Arts (COLA). There is an argument to be made that where major does not equal career, the amount of attention paid to students by career professionals needs to be twice as great as it is for more pre-professional students. It will take time to get the balance right between services to Colleges and centralized services. It may also be difficult for some staff to adapt to a much more proactive approach, which demands clear accountability for learning and/or results.
Assets and Opportunities

Use the University’s focus on strategic priorities as a starting point for discussion

The University of New Hampshire is currently redefining its strategic priorities to include Career Development and Planning. The *Professional Success* Initiative speaks directly to the Career goal; it can also contribute to four other priorities:

- Strengthen and Diversify Enrollment
- Innovation and a Well-Trained Workforce
- Strengthen the UNH Brand
- Complete a Successful Fundraising Campaign

Recognize pockets of support and excellence

Ms. Curran was particularly favorably impressed by the dedication and enthusiasm for change of many of the staff in the Career Center and in the Colleges. This bodes well for a transformational initiative and for their interest in better supporting student career needs. While there will always be naysayers, and those who want to see the lay of the land before committing, Ms. Curran found that the staff, faculty and deans with whom she met were generally positive towards the idea of enhancing student prospects for successful futures. When there is broad discussion about this report and its recommendations, it is likely that many additional people will emerge as advocates and contributors.

Take advantage of the career peer advising program

There is already a model in place for peer career advising. We recommend expanding and capitalizing on this program to do the following:

- Increase outreach in the Colleges, and to under-represented groups
- Plan and promote programs and events, using personal contacts and social media
- Provide intelligence on student needs
- Provide expanded opportunities for resume and cover letter critiques
- Build peer advisors’ own career competencies, e.g., in presentation skills, organization, initiative, team work

Capitalize on Alumni and Parent desire for engagement

It was reported during the on-campus interviews that there is a great deal of interest on the part of alumni and parents for engagement with students on career issues. These groups will play a critical role in career transformation efforts. Up until now, their involvement has been relatively sporadic and uncoordinated. Research shows that the engagement of alumni and parents not only benefits the students, but also cements a relationship with the University that often leads to greater philanthropy. The Advancement Office will be a valuable partner in building the kind of Career Community that meets the needs of students, alumni and the University.
A New Organizational Model

Rationale for the New Model

A new organizational model will be required to meet ambitious goals of the proposed Professional Success Initiative. The role of the leader will be substantially different from that of a traditional career director. Instead of simply managing a department that provides transactional services and a limited range of programs, the new leader will accountable for orchestrating initiatives that involve the entire University and impact UNH’s ability to attract and retain students and engage alumni.

The Curran Consulting Group (CCG) recommends a modified distributed structure, through which Deans of each of the Colleges on both the Durham and Manchester campuses determine paths to professional success for their departments, and approve the hiring of career staff assigned to and located in the Colleges. However, in order to avoid duplication and maintain a consistent philosophy and approach, we propose that supervision of college-based career staff and those on the Manchester campus be through the Center for Professional Success. There may be some meetings that are not applicable to Manchester staff, or in which they can participate remotely. However, their voice is important in strategic discussions.

The directors of functions titled Career Communities, Employer Relations and Internships, and Career Advising and Programs, are expected to ensure institution-wide coordination of services and programs, and effective use of resources. They will oversee work related to their respective areas that is performed in the Colleges.

Given that the Associate Vice Provost will have many outward-facing duties, it is essential to have internal support for technology, systems management, and administrative/budget oversight that will maximize the impact of UNH’s investment in the Professional Success initiative.
Assumptions Underlying Organizational Structure and Responsibilities

1. The Associate Vice Provost (AVP) will report to the Senior Vice Provost and will oversee all career related functions. He/she will have a dotted line report to the President, and will participate in Cabinet meetings at least quarterly.

2. The AVP will develop a close partnership with the Deans of the Colleges. Every College will have its own career director. In some cases, that person will do both advising and employer relations; in other cases functions may be done by different people, according to the need. The AVP will manage career directors in the Colleges, and together with the relevant Dean will select and evaluate them. *

3. Career advising of students in a particular College, and employer relations for a particular College, will be performed by staff dedicated to that College who will be located in that College.

4. Advising staff in a particular College will advise not only their own majors, but also students in other Colleges with a particular interest in career fields more normally associated with a different College, e.g., a College of Liberal Arts student interested in a business career. Staffing levels in Colleges will reflect this.

5. While the AVP has overall responsibility for College-based personnel and initiatives, the directors of Career Advising and Programs, and Director of Employer Relations and Internships will provide day-to-day supervision of the College career directors. The Colleges will have input into performance appraisals.

6. Semi-annual strategic planning meetings will take place between the Dean of each College; the Associate VP; the Director of Employer Relations and Internships; the Director of Career Advising and Programs; the Manager of Career Communities; and, College career directors and staff. More frequent operational meetings are expected to take place, involving subsets of those listed above.

7. Peer advising and programming will be expanded significantly, from 4 peers currently to 10-25. The Director of Career Advising will be responsible for overseeing training and weekly meetings. As many as 20 peer advisors may be deployed in the Colleges.

8. A network of alumni, parents and friends (Career Community) will expand the reach of the Center for Career Exploration and Professional Success. A Manager of Career Communities, reporting to the AVP, will oversee these relationships. He/she will closely collaborate with Institutional Advancement, as will the AVP.

9. Job and internship opportunities and programs will be open to all students. Exceptions to this will have a clear rationale.

10. All position postings will be through the University’s Wildcat Careers Symplicity system. The system will be configured so that the default is approval, but that those who need access to review listings can do so quickly and easily.

11. The AVP will promote efforts to serve the employment needs of the State and ensure that UNH is well prepared for expected government requirements relating to career outcomes.

* Deans may initially be skeptical that a centrally-supervised organizational structure will work for them. However, there is a good model in the Advancement Office, and the new Associate Vice Provost will be deemed successful only to the extent that services and outcomes for each of the Colleges significantly exceed current levels.
### Proposed Staff and Locations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSITIONS/COLLEGE</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>FY16/17 Staff Requirements</th>
<th>Additional Staff Requirements For FY18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CENTRALLY-BASED</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Vice Provost</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>AVP Systems and Technology Administration and Assessment</td>
<td>Communications and Marketing Mgr. Administrative Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Communities</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>Promote Manager to Director; add Administrative Assistant Internship Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer Relations &amp; Internships</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>Director Job Development Locator Recruiting Coordinator Administrative Assistant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Advising &amp; Programs</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>Director Career Counselor (for undecided students)</td>
<td>Program and events assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COLLEGE-BASED</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Liberal Arts</td>
<td>In College</td>
<td>COLA career director Career advisor</td>
<td>Career advisor/program support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Health and Human Services</td>
<td>In College</td>
<td>CHHS career director</td>
<td>Career advisor/program support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Engineering and Physical Sciences</td>
<td>In College</td>
<td>CEPS career director</td>
<td>Career advisor/program support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter T. Paul College of Business and Economics</td>
<td>In College</td>
<td>PAUL career director Career advisor/program support (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Life Sciences and Agriculture</td>
<td>In College</td>
<td>COLSA career director</td>
<td>Career advisor/program support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18 Staff required in FY16/FY17 (currently 7 central and 5 in Colleges: proposed 10 central and 8 in Colleges)</td>
<td>Add 9 Staff by FY18 (4 of 9 in Colleges)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Expected Results

We believe the proposed organizational structure represents the most cost-effective way to achieve essential goals. Our plan calls for adding 6 additional staff in FY16/FY17, and an additional 9 by FY18, bringing the staff to a total size of 27. Twelve of these staff would be assigned specifically to the Colleges. We also recommend working with 25 trained peer advisors, 20 of whom would be assigned to the Colleges and 2 graduate assistants. Graduate students would be responsible for the development of career content for the website. The ratio of full-time staff to undergraduate students would be 1:444, a ratio rarely seen in public institutions, and one that would allow UNH to do the following:

• Promise personal attention to every undergraduate and graduate student. All undergraduate students would be assigned their own career advisor, who monitors their progress from the first year on, ensuring they take the steps that will lead to successful career outcomes.

• Promise curated access to an extensive and diverse network of alumni, parents and friends, whose volunteer work engaging with students around career issues will not only significantly impact student success, but is also likely to lead to greater philanthropy.

• Provide a better ratio of engaged employers to students of any public institution in the country, and a retention rate of employers of 95%.

• Promise data to all audiences on the career outcomes of 90% of UNH graduates, 90% of whom will have firm plans within 6 months of graduation, and 90% of graduates will have had a close mentoring relationship with an adult during their time at UNH.
Space Considerations

The Career Center, which is currently part of the University Advising and Career Center, is ideally located in the center of campus. However, its facilities—particularly for employers—are substantially inferior to those in the Peter T. Paul College of Business and Economics (PAUL). Despite recent cosmetic renovation, the space is not inviting to either students or employers. While Ms. Curran was visiting UNH, reports were made of visible cockroaches in an office where an advisor was working with a student.

Increasingly, colleges and universities around the country are renovating or building new space that creates a positive image to prospective students and families. Key features of a state-of-the-art Center include:

- High visibility signage
- Small private offices for professional staff where they can hold confidential counseling sessions, with wall projection of web tools, providing student with a personalized, one-on-one, interactive, theatre style experience
- Several small group training areas that can accommodate from 10-20 students, with technology to maximize use of staff time, and allow them to concentrate on how general information/presentations relate to students’ individual situations
- At least one larger meeting area that can accommodate all staff for meetings, and which has at least one “writeable” glass wall
- Open, comfortable and inviting spaces for students to wait, study, or overhear walk-in appointments and peer advising sessions
- Flat screen TVs in all open areas featuring UNH career statistics and other relevant FAQ-type advice
- Interview rooms that can double as student group meeting rooms when not in use by employers

With the proposed staff expansion of the Center for Professional Success, it would be hard to simply reallocate existing space, unless a gut renovation occurred and academic advising staff moved out. We believe at least 5000 square feet will be required. The cost to build or substantially renovate a building is likely to be in the $2-3million range.
Financial Considerations

Many of the recommendations made in this report actually cost very little to implement, because they simply involve better use of existing resources. Key among these is the recommendation to ensure that all career efforts across campus be in support of one overarching goal: to enable students to more effectively find the kind of professional success they desire.

Lower cost/high impact financial investments:

1. Enhance peer career advising program (the WildCATs)
2. Build Career Community (requires administrative oversight, resources to train and thank volunteers, and a system to manage Career Community relationships)
3. Hire graduate students to write career content or video scripts for the website
4. Raise tuition by $500 a year, but guarantee every student the opportunity to get a $2000 grant after they have completed their first year to support them taking an internship, studying abroad, conducting research with faculty, or other experiential opportunity*

Higher cost/high impact financial investments:

1. Build new, renovate a different building, or gut existing space
2. Develop innovative technology and web services to expand reach of Center for Career Exploration and Professional Development
3. Build staff to adequate, and then ideal, levels
4. Provide internship funding or supplements to support low income students who are doing unpaid or poorly paid internship

* This program has been very successfully implemented at Augustana College in Rock Island, IL
Summaries and Action Plans

Summary of Professional Success Model

Preparation for professional success is an integral part of the UNH experience. It is everyone’s responsibility.

Career Exploration and Professional Development staff are:
- Guides
- Coaches
- Connectors
- Optimizers
- Orchestrators of Opportunity
Summary of Key Recommendations

- Make UNH’s commitment to the professional success of its students and graduates a hallmark of its value proposition.

- Engage all parts of the University community in designing ways to better integrate formal and informal education with successful lives after college.

- Build an overarching philosophy and vision for professional success that guides all career and professional development activities across campus.

- Establish a new Center for Professional Success, led by a high level individual who is accountable to the Senior Vice Provost and, ultimately, the President for results. Recruit or reassign the kind of staff who embrace UNH’s vision of professional success.

- Design an employer development and sponsorship plan, based on leveraging connections, that results in substantially increased access to jobs and internships.

- Provide the experiences students need to have while on campus that are known to contribute to professional well-being after graduation:
  - Faculty/student connections
  - Personal mentors
  - Long-term projects, applied learning and experiential education

- Significantly increase access to internships, and build a fund to support those who must take unpaid or poorly paid internships.

- Gather, analyze, and communicate:
  - Key drivers of professional success for UNH students and graduates
  - Graduate outcomes by major/College

- Introduce innovative learning technology, developing the kind of career content that will enhance student decision-making and actions.

- Expand the reach of career professionals with:
  - Career Community of alumni and parents
  - Enhanced peer career advising and outreach

- Develop the systems, processes and policies that support recommended transformational initiatives.

- Hold students accountable for being the architects of their own professional success.
## Quick Wins

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Quick Win</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong> Develop marketing campaign around UNH’s “Big Idea”</td>
<td>Professional success seen in a broader institutional context, to which</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>multiple parts of the University can contribute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong> Broadly distribute and discuss Curran Report</td>
<td>University community understands reasons for change and proposed actions,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and has input into implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong> Establish a Presidential Professional Success Taskforce</td>
<td>Representation on Task Force of academic, student and alumni community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>assures ownership of the Professional Success project, and strong,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>consistent movement towards action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong> Recruit an excellent leader of the new Center for Professional</td>
<td>Task Force is confident it will be able to hand over its responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success</td>
<td>to the new leader, and transition to being in an advisory capacity to the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Center for Professional Success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5</strong> Establish a Presidential “seed fund” for major career initiatives</td>
<td>University commitment is immediate and visible. Colleges, student groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to occur prior to December, 2015</td>
<td>and others can apply for these one-time funds, evaluated by Task Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6</strong> Design and publish four-year Pathways to Professional Success</td>
<td>Students see immediate progress being made towards the goal of better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for each major</td>
<td>professional outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7</strong> Start a pilot program to convert student employment jobs into</td>
<td>UNH supervisors understand the roles they can play in the Professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>internships</td>
<td>Success Initiative, and are instrumental in helping students acquire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>essential skills</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>8</strong> Expand the existing, small peer career advising program into the</td>
<td>Students become a visible part of the new Professional Success initiative,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WildCAT program</td>
<td>playing paraprofessional and leadership roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9</strong> Develop the infrastructure for a Career Community</td>
<td>Thousands of alumni and parents will become engaged in the Professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Success Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10</strong> Change Admissions marketing materials and messages</td>
<td>New students matriculating in FY 16 and beyond understand how UNH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>expects to impact their ultimate professional success, and their</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>responsibilities in taking ownership of their career development from the</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>first year on</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Action Plan

Step 1:

President, with Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and VP Advancement, make decision to pursue Professional Success Initiative (PSI), and determine:

- What recommendations are “givens” and represent cornerstones of the University’s plan
- What level of investment UNH is prepared to make
- Time frame for implementation of the PSI
- How the PSI will be communicated internally and externally to create the greatest excitement and commitment

Step 2:

President appoints a Professional Success Strategic Planning Task Force and Co-Chairs.

Responsibilities:

- Facilitate discussions of the Professional Success Initiative in meetings across campus, with the alumni body, and with the parent community
- Recommend which parts of the Curran report to accept
- Clarify vision, mission, high level goals, metrics, and dashboards for the Professional Success Initiative
- Provide guidance to Search Consultant Sheila Curran, as she sources and evaluates candidates for the Associate Vice Provost, Center for Professional Success
- Establish a planning and implementation timeline and communication plan
- Task Force Co-Chairs select heads of six planning sub-groups, and sets expectations
- Oversee the planning work of sub-groups focusing on:
  - Academic issues and integration
  - Organizational structure for new Center for Career Exploration and Professional Success
  - Alumni and parent engagement
  - Experiential education and employment
  - Infrastructure: Technology, Data, Space
  - Communications
- Sub-groups investigate what new or existing systems might best support the PSI e.g., Symplicity, Graduway, 12Twenty, Salesforce, Gallup
- Determine what UNH policies might be changed to better support goals of Professional Success Initiative

Recommended Task Force Co-Chairs: Senior Vice Provost P.T. Vasudevan and VP Advancement Debbie Dutton. Planning Task Force work to be completed by October 31, 2015

Step 3:

Task Force cost outs the following, based on sub-group recommendations:

- Staffing additions and changes
- Systems (modified and new)
- Infrastructure needs, e.g., space, web resources

Task Force leaders work with VP HR and others determine what possible reallocations or new funding sources could support career transformation initiatives.
Step 4A:

Task Force moves into Implementation Phase.

- Task Force Co-Chairs reassign planning sub-group leaders, or selects new leaders to head six implementation sub-groups
- Co-Chairs oversee the implementation work of sub-groups focusing on:
  - Initiatives connected to the Colleges or curriculum
  - The new Center for Professional Success
    - Search for a new leader
    - Job descriptions
    - Metrics for success for each position
  - Systems
    - Alumni and parent engagement
    - Career mentoring program
    - Employer development and sponsorships
    - Advising notes
    - Outcomes
  - Technology
  - Employer engagement and relationships with State of New Hampshire
  - New initiatives e.g., Career Community, WildCAT program, 4-year mentor initiative,

Step 4B:

Task Force Co-Chairs work with Human Resources to determine how to effectively manage the personnel aspects of organizational change, including:

- Existing staff transitions to new, changed, or different positions
- Training and coaching
- Performance management strategies

Step 5:

All Professional Success initiatives have started and are beginning to bear fruit (by June 30, 2016)

- New leader has been hired and is well integrated into all parts of UNH
- Professional Success plans are fully operational
- State of New Hampshire is working with UNH to enhance employment initiatives
- Existing staff are up-to-speed on new responsibilities
- New staff have been hired, where required
- New policies and systems, e.g., for alumni engagement and data tracking, have been introduced
- The Professional Success Initiative is gaining positive reviews from students, families, alumni, the academic community, and State, and is starting to impact matriculation decisions
Final Thoughts

The recommendations in this report are bold and far-reaching. They require substantial time, energy and resources. But, in the opinion of the Curran Consulting Group, making small changes is not an option; there are simply too many pressures on higher education to do a better job in preparing students for their lives after college.

If the University of New Hampshire implements the proposed recommendations, it would instantly become a leader among both public and private institutions. Many schools have started career initiatives, but few have done so in a way that truly integrates academics, careers and alumni. Nor are there good examples of universities where personal attention is combined with state of the art learning technology.

We also believe that the Professional Success Initiative will strengthen UNH’s value to the State of New Hampshire at a time when many states see higher education as more of a budget liability than a strategic asset. The engagement of New Hampshire employers, and alumni who live in the State, can be leveraged in multiple ways.

Finally, the benefits are to the students. UNH’s message to them is that when they enroll at UNH, they join not only a well-regarded university, they join a community that is committed to their educational and professional success for life. The proof of that will be in the numbers of faculty, staff, alumni and friends we expect to be involved with the Professional Success Initiative.

One of the key problems facing many careers offices is that students do not use their services. We believe the UNH approach will be unique in not only leveraging the entire community in assisting students, but in demanding student commitment to their own careers. Once the program has been operational for a few years, we are confident that no “demand” will be required. Students will see the value of their involvement in the enhanced results they are able to achieve.

We expect this report will be reviewed, discussed and changed—possibly dramatically—before decisions are made about how to proceed. This is good. There is enormous value in articulating the problems and the potential solutions before proceeding. And we do not minimize the challenges in moving a project of this magnitude forward. We trust that the end result will more than compensate for the time taken to implement the Professional Success Initiative in the right way.

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