

Preparing Students for the Workforce

Six Co-curricular Opportunities for Experiential Learning


There are a range of opportunities during students' time on campus to develop the skills employers are looking for, and many of them occur outside of the classroom, through various student affairs programs and initiatives.

The strategies below empower students to leverage campus involvement to achieve their post-graduate goals. This is accomplished by changing perceptions about the value of co-curricular programming, and providing guidance on how to clearly articulate that value to prospective employers.

Student Timeline



"Skill Seeker" Branding Campaign

 A campus-wide branding campaign linking various campus involvement opportunities to the high-demand skills they provide, primarily through a flyer that lists the key skills employers look for and opportunities on campus to develop each one.


Where does it reach students? Throughout their campus experience: at orientation, in first-year experience courses, in advising appointments, and in the student activities office.

Units involved

- First-year experience
- Campus recreation
- Student activities
- Assessment committees

Workforce preparation Educates students about co-curricular opportunities for learning and professional development.

Peer Involvement Advisors

 A program that hires student workers to serve as peer advisors, helping less-involved, more introverted students navigate the range of campus involvement opportunities and reflect on their goals and interests in selecting them.


Where does it reach students? Through walk-in appointments at offices in the student center and the freshman residence halls. As a next step, institutions can require it of students as part of the first-year experience sequence.

Units involved

- Student life
- First-year experience

Workforce preparation Encourages goal-oriented selection of campus involvement opportunities.

Skill-Focused Campus Job Opportunities

 An initiative to incorporate learning outcomes, and development of specific skills into the job descriptions of student employees.


Where does it reach students? This initiative has the potential to reach all student employees—a large pool of students on most campuses. It helps them to understand how they will learn and grow as an employee on campus, and be better able to talk about the value of that experience afterward.

Units involved

- Any office with student employees
- Assessment committees
- Career center

Workforce preparation Incorporates the development of high-demand employer skills—written communication, teamwork, and problem solving—into student employment positions.

Embedded Professional Development Conversations

 A requirement for supervisors (who are provided with support resources) to have two conversations per semester with their employees, helping them reflect on what they're learning in their positions and connect it to their academic and professional goals.


Where does it reach students? This practice has the potential to reach all student employees in a personalized way, helping them think through—with individualized support—what they're learning, why it's important, and how to apply it to their future goals.

Units involved

- Any office with student employees
- Assessment committees

Workforce preparation Prompts student recognition of the transferrable skills they've developed and prepares them for full-time employment.

Market-Your-Experience Guides

 A series of flyers specific to various involvement opportunities (e.g., student organizations, Greek life, study abroad) highlighting the skills developed through the experience, why they're important to employers, and how best to communicate them on a resume.


Where does it reach students? The flyers are available to students online and in the career center. They can be used in career counseling appointments, as well as by the office of student activities to market the opportunities.

Units involved

- Student life
- Career center
- Greek life
- Residence life

Workforce preparation Provides sample language and skills for students to include on their resumes.

Co-curricular Capstone

 A series of workshops for graduating student leaders to help them prepare for the transition at graduation, with a primary focus on leveraging their campus involvement and leadership experiences in the job search.

Where does it reach students? The capstone's mid-semester, spring timing provides just-in-time support as students prepare to graduate and need the most guidance in articulating the value of their college experience to prospective employers.

Units involved

- Student life
- Residence life
- Campus activities
- Student government

Workforce preparation Improves students' abilities to articulate the value of their leadership experiences and builds confidence for employer interactions.

