UNIVERSITY INNOVATION ALLIANCE



Is career services doing the job we need it to?



Of freshman students say their main priority for attending college is to get a good job

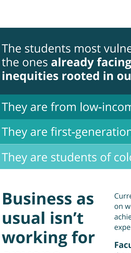
On most campuses today, career services is "literally and figuratively buried on campus."[1] Yet career services units are charged with the important responsibility of equipping students for near-future employment—the number one reason 85% of college freshmen say they're in school.[2]

The difference in priorities is hurting students who are already vulnerable.

How can your institution intentionally meet your students' career-related needs?

How can you reimagine—and realize—equity in career readiness?





Percent of business leaders who believe schools effectively prepare students for the workforce

An incredibly small number of business leaders believe schools help students meet their education-to-employment goals.

Evidence from the job hunt bears this out.



Percent of college students who secure a good job before graduation



Percent of graduates who are underemployed in their first job

The students most vulnerable to this disconnect are the ones **already facing challenges, judgments, and inequities rooted in our society.**

They are from low-income backgrounds.

They are first-generation students.

They are students of color.

Business as usual isn't working for anyone.

Currently, **students receive limited guidance** on what skills and experiences are necessary to achieve career goals and how to secure those experiences while in college.

Faculty members feel pressure to help, but they are without resources and bandwidth needed to make changes.

Employers want universities to be a primary place of recruitment, but they are **stymied by outdated approaches that don't connect them to talented students.**

Universities, too, of course want to do right by their students, but they're working within **a broken system that throws up more barriers** than it knocks down.



STUDENT BARRIERS

Career-readiness resources can feel a million miles away, both physically and culturally.

Students need help recognizing career-related skills, both those they enter school with (e.g., bilingualism and experiences from nonacademic obligations) and those they develop in class.

Social and familial capital (network and/or wealth) are often crucial to students gaining mentorship opportunities, leaving **those without that capital to go it alone.**

Students may **struggle to access experiential learning** because they are balancing classwork with family obligations and jobs, along with other challenges like securing transportation.

Career exploration is too often left to the student's personal networks and chance, which means that many students **don't have the opportunity to expand their career horizon.**

Career-readiness resources and access to employers are often **unequal across academic departments or majors.**

Follow a new model.

Career services can be something better. It can work for the entire student body, not just the small percentage who have the time, bandwidth, or encouragement to seek out guidance.

The University Innovation Alliance's Bridging the Gap from Education to Employment project brought together leaders from seven universities and their students along with employers from a diversity of disciplines. From their discussion, workgroups, and pilot programs emerged the New Model for Equitable Career Readiness. Any institution can adapt this model to position itself as a place that prepares students for the job market.

Download "**Putting College to Work for All Students: Bridging the Gap from Education to Employment Playbook Action Guide**," which offers a summary of the New Model for Equitable Career Readiness.

All content sourced from the project playbook **Bridging the Gap from Education to Employment**

[1]Nathan Hatch, president of Wake Forest, *Project Playbook*, Part VI

[2]Strada Education Network: From College to Life: Relevance and the Value of Higher Education https://go.stradaeducation.org/from-college-to-life

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