

L&S Career Initiative in Review

2013-14

ADMINISTRATION

- Set vision, identified problem, designed 5 initial key deliverables/interventions, and outlined measurable outcomes for the Career Initiative.
- Brought on consultant David DeLong in January to lead a retreat of 40 faculty, staff, and students from across the College to build urgency, enlist participation, and shape guiding principles.
- Appointed and hired key staff members to lead project implementation, including:
 - Rebekah Paré, Assistant Dean and Director
 - Leslie Kohlberg, Assistant Director for Career Development, and,
 - David Nelson, Director of Alumni Professional Networks and Career Resources.
- Set work priorities for the CI Leadership Team in addressing the five deliverables.
- Established strong collaborative partnerships with the L&S Office of Advancement, L&S Career Services, and the University of Wisconsin Foundation and Alumni Association, which included a new professional position under a joint appointment to the CI and WAA.
- *In process*: identifying and spreading best practices in career readiness activities developed by departments across the College of Letters & Science.

OVERVIEW OF DELIVERABLES (See page 3 for progress by deliverable)

1. **Deliver data on alumni career trends by major to key stakeholders:** Conduct two post-graduation surveys of alumni 1 and 8-10 years out of college, and supply advising units and departments with major-specific reports that can be shared with students and their parents.
2. **Sophomore year academic and career planning course:** Offer a one-credit course that teaches students about strategic academic planning, exploration of interests and values, skills development, career exploration, and job search strategies.
3. **Build alumni networks:** Coordinated by the Director of Alumni Professional Networks (WAA/L&S position), develop strategies to connect alumni back to departments and connect students to alumni. A special emphasis will include developing department LinkedIn pages and identifying alumni for participation in sophomore course and other career development activities.
4. **Define transferable skills learned in majors, certificates, and courses:** Work with the L&S academic associate deans and department chairs to improve the articulation and communication of transferable and employable skills learned in majors, certificates, and courses.
5. **Increase access to quality career advising:** Increase access to quality career advising by employing advisors (Field Specialists) deployed in departments or logical department groups. In addition to advising, these Specialists will help build employer and alumni networks, develop student programming, track labor market trends, engage faculty and departments, and teach a section of the sophomore year career course.

FINANCES

- In support of the Career Initiative, Chancellor Blank funded L&S alumni surveys.
- We are working hard to secure the resources to achieve the CI deliverables. We continue to be inspired by the generosity of our alumni and their excitement for this initiative!

BENCHMARKING

Gather baseline information to assess whether the L&S Career Initiative has achieved its outcomes in the next five years:

- Piloted a college-specific survey of exiting seniors in collaboration with the office of Academic Planning and Institutional Research. We will conduct baseline and subsequent surveys of students' participation in career activities over their college career and learn about their post-graduation plans. Baseline data analysis and reporting will take place in summer 2014.
- Conducted a survey of departments to inventory career readiness activities, alumni and employer engagement. Data analysis and reporting will take place in summer 2014.
- Data gathered from the alumni surveys will also serve as a benchmarking tool

COMMUNICATIONS

- Delivered bi-weekly internal email communications with progress updates
- Dean Scholz and members of the Career Initiative leadership team introduced the initiative to many college and campus partners and committees
- Dean Scholz shared his vision for the Career Initiative in many visits to alumni across the country and encouraged alumni to get involved. Alumni are already contacting us to learn more!
- A customized column, "From the Dean's Desk," highlighted and invited alumni and donor participation in the Career Initiative, and was included in the Economics and English print alumni newsletters, reaching the homes of roughly 20,000 alumni.
- *In process:*
 - The third edition of the L&S annual report, *The Liberal Arts Advantage* features the L&S Career Initiative and will include an overview of the CI with complementary student and alumni profiles. The report will be mailed Labor Day weekend to college donors and parents of all declared L&S majors, and will include information an advertisement for the career course and residential learning community. Copies will be also be delivered across campus and to L&S units.
 - We are creating a website for the Career Initiative for June 2014.
 - The CI is developing a communications strategy for the 2014-15 academic year.
 - We are creating plans to market the sophomore career course and residential learning community.

SUMMER GOALS

1. Conduct data analysis and produce reports for the department inventory and APIR/L&S-add on survey
2. Finalize alumni survey instruments, send surveys to ~8,500 alumni, and collect responses
3. Hire a summer graduate project assistant and a full-time sophomore year experience coordinator to assist with course development, student recruitment, and instructor training
4. Revise sophomore academic and career seminar syllabus to accommodate 400 students for spring 2015, develop a teaching plan, and prepare new course proposal for the L&S Curriculum Committee
5. Develop Phase I of the Career Initiative website
6. Produce three video vignettes of alumni sharing their experience and professional wisdom to be used in a digital library accessible to students and for content in the sophomore course
7. Complete the marketing strategy for sophomore career course and residential learning community, and begin implementation
8. Distribute the L&S annual report, *The Liberal Arts Advantage*.
9. Conduct environmental scan of alumni engagement activities across L&S, and begin making a strategic alumni engagement plan
10. Identify "bright spots" in undergraduate career readiness across L&S, and create a mechanism to showcase them in fall



Alumni Surveys

- Identified "best practices" in alumni surveys from across the country
- In process: designing surveys and sampling process with UW Survey Center
- Now in process: hiring a graduate assist to conduct data analysis and compare L&S data with national educational statistics
- Surveys to be sent in late June
- Reports to be issued to L&S Administration and departments mid-fall



Sophomore Career Course

- In process: creating 3-5 minute alumni vignettes
- In process: collaborating with Housing to create first sophomore residential learning community built around course
- In process: faculty assembling to discuss strategies for moving course online
- Course proposal to Curriculum Committee in September
- Spring 2015: course offered to 400 students
- Fall 2015: course offered to 800 students & residential learning community opens



Build Alumni Networks

- Aligned plans with WAA
- Hired a joint WAA/CI director of alumni professional networks
- Surveyed & interviewed department faculty/staff regarding LinkedIn and alumni engagement activities
- In process: use LinkedIn to create robust alumni networks
- In process: conducting an environmental scan to identify alumni activity across the college



Define Transferable Skills Learned in Academics

- In process: identifying "best practices" for articulating marketable skills learned in courses and majors
- In process: identifying faculty who have had success in demonstrating the application of academic skills to the workplace



Increase Career Advising

- Conducted Career Development Facilitation trainings for advisors of first- and second-year students
- Incorporated a career advising module into L&S Advisor Training & Development Program
- Benchmarked career services offices at peer institutions to identify trends and opportunities
- In process: increasing enrollment in the L&S internship course
- Research on advising models to begin in summer 2014

L&S Career Initiative – Deliverables