

Best Practices in Career Services

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Graduate employment outcomes continue to be a major indicator of a career college's success. Students, parents, accreditors and policy makers all look to the placement rates of a school and/or its programs to determine if its career training meets the needs of both graduates and the employment community. As institutions consider how to continuously improve graduate employment outcomes, four key factors come to mind:

1. **A Different Career Services Mindset**

Rather than thinking of career services as a separate department, or the "back-end" of a process for preparing students to enter the workforce, career services needs to be rethought of as a systemic set of strategically designed interventions woven into the very fabric of the institution. How might the function of career services be a more significant part of the admissions process? How are career services operations supported by an institution throughout the entire student life cycle? What opportunities exist to expand and improve upon what is already being done?

2. **Job Market Capacity**

Institutions can improve graduate employment outcomes by ensuring that enrollment management plans fully consider job market capacity. Schools must ask themselves how many students they will enroll in concert with competitors offering the same programs, how many graduates the competing schools are sending into the job market, and whether the local market can absorb the number of graduates that the schools are producing.

3. **Institutional Capacity**

The institutional capacity to serve students and alumni influences employment outcomes just as the market capacity to employ graduates. Institutions must be able to provide adequate student and graduate support services to facilitate transition from college to the workforce.

4. **Heightened Competition in the Job Market**

The 21st century economy is drastically different than previous economies. Employers have changed the way they recruit. They have more options in a global talent pool thus increasing competition in the job market and requiring students to improve the way they market themselves. Career services practitioners need to acquire new knowledge and skills to keep up with the pace of change and to provide the best possible service to the students they serve. With the speed at which things change, skills become outdated quickly.

Recently, the Association of Private Sector Colleges and Universities (**APSCU**) released a set of **Best Practices for Career Services and Placement** to help institutions in their role of connecting students' education and training to their career goals. APSCU's exemplary document, based on the experience of

seasoned professionals, promotes those best practices that have provided successful graduate employment outcomes, hence benefiting graduates, employers and institutions alike. This publication is freely available on APSCU's website at www.apscu.org.

In alignment with APSCU's published best practices document, MaxKnowledge is now offering an online training course that provides specific and practical "how-to" strategies for career education professionals seeking to understand and apply the institutional practices that maximize graduate employment outcomes. **CS201 - Institutional Best Practices to Maximize Graduate Employment Outcomes** challenges participants to examine the interdependent relationship among institutional infrastructure, student career-readiness, and graduate employment rates. If you are interested in learning more about this course, please visit your association Online Training Center or contact Robert Starks Jr., MaxKnowledge Vice President of Learning Initiatives at roberts@maxknowledge.com.

Dr. Moghadam is the founder and CEO of MaxKnowledge, the leading employee training company for the career college sector of higher education. He has over 25 years of experience in career education, serving in many capacities including professor, director of education, academic dean, director of student affairs, campus director, college president and owner. Moghadam earned his PhD in Engineering from the University of Cambridge at the age of 22. He is a recognized leader in career education and has been selected as a Top Innovator by the Career College Central magazine. Moghadam can be reached at amirm@maxknowledge.com.