



University Career Services
Division of Student Affairs



2024-2028

UCS STRATEGIC PLAN

CAREER LAUNCH:

EMPOWERING COOGS, TRANSFORMING FUTURES

**Supporting All Coogs in Becoming Career
Ready and Securing Meaningful Employment**





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UCS Team

ABOUT THE CAREER CENTER

University Career Services (UCS) at the University of Houston plays a pivotal role in supporting students and alumni on their professional journeys. With a commitment to excellence, UCS offers a wide array of programs, events, and services designed to equip individuals with essential career-building tools. These include crafting professional documents, honing interview skills, developing effective job-search strategies, preparation for advanced education and fostering a deeper understanding of how their skills align with the demands of the workforce.

At UCS, we promote personal responsibility in navigating career exploration and achieving employment goals. Our mission aligns closely with UH's Strategic Goal of achieving Top 50 status and enhancing experiential learning. By providing diverse learning opportunities, career development resources, and real-world experiences, UCS empowers students and alumni to cultivate their talents, gain valuable skills, and thrive in a competitive global landscape.

INTRODUCTION



Dear Colleagues and Partners:

After the successful implementation of two strategic plans over the past decade, I'm excited to embark on a new chapter with a refreshed team. Together, we have the opportunity to build on our previous achievements and strengthen our collaboration with faculty, campus partners, alumni, and employers to elevate University Career Services (UCS) to new heights. In the context of today's economic, political, and social challenges, it is essential that Career Services is strategically positioned to provide vision, guidance, and coordination for the next generation of talented, well-equipped graduates. Our goal is to demonstrate the critical role career services plays in shaping student success and maximizing outcomes.

A key element of the University of Houston is its diverse student body, with nearly 50% being first-generation college students. These students demonstrate remarkable resilience, strong work ethics, and perseverance as they strive to be the first in their families to graduate. In response to the unique challenges facing higher education—such as the enrollment cliff, the retirement of baby boomers, and the emergence of a workforce increasingly composed of diverse, first-generation graduates—we have engaged in thoughtful reflection and dialogue.

As noted in the 2022 external review, UCS is dedicated to student career readiness and plays a leadership role in uniting the entire campus career ecosystem in support of all students' career development. UCS is well-positioned to embrace this leadership role further, scaling our support systems beyond addressing individual needs to create a comprehensive network that empowers all students. These discussions have resulted in the creation of a new vision, mission, and belief statements aimed at elevating career services to better serve our students and meet the evolving demands of the workforce.

Aligned with the Division of Student Affairs, University Career Services remains committed to innovation, data-driven approaches, and a student-centered focus. Our work will continue to provide valuable insights into post-graduate employment, hiring trends, and deepening engagement with employers and alumni.

I look forward to our continued collaboration as we advance this important mission.

Monica D. Thompson, Ed. D
Executive Director
University Career Services

ENVISIONING THE FUTURE OF CAREER SERVICES

Our initial focus in reshaping the future of career exploration at University Career Services involves crafting new vision and mission statements collaboratively. These statements will embody our aspirations, define our collective direction, and underscore our leadership in uniting the entire campus community to support every student's career development journey. Anchored by our shared values, these statements guide our efforts and give purpose to our mission



Mission Statement:

University Career Services (UCS) provides customized resources to our constituencies through intentional programming and collaborative relationships founded on integrity. Our constituencies include students, faculty, staff, alumni, and employers. We are dedicated to advancing student career readiness and take a leadership role in uniting the entire campus career ecosystem to support comprehensive student career development. UCS is committed to expanding student support systems beyond individual needs, fulfilling our leadership role in scaling student success

Our Vision:

University Career Services will be the premier career services provider at the University of Houston, dedicated to student career readiness and leading the entire campus career ecosystem in support of all students' career development.

OUR VALUES

Values must be part of everyday communication and a standard by which team members can measure how they themselves and their management are performing.

At University Career Services we value...

Value 1: Accountability & Quality

We take responsibility for the services we provide and are committed to delivering them with excellence. We care deeply about our work, holding ourselves accountable to the highest standards of quality and performance. By consistently providing value, we strive to earn the respect and loyalty of our students and employers.

Value 2: Collaboration and Team spirit

Individuals are encouraged to interact with all levels of the team, sharing ideas and suggestions to improve UCS's effectiveness and our contribution to student success.

Value 3: Empathy for our customers

Offer resources and services that fill real needs of students and employers that provide lasting value.

Value 4: High Team Execution

Set team goals and continuously drive ourselves to achieve them

Value 5: Individual Performance

Strive for individual commitment and performance above the standard for industry.

Value 6: Innovation and Vision

Embrace innovation and vision to build UCS by providing resources and services that are new and needed.



SEVEN STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

In support of vision and critical mission, we commit to the following strategic priorities:

1. Developing a holistic model for delivering quality career education and experiences
2. Integrating career readiness, career education and hands on experience into the student experience
3. Collecting rich, relevant data that helps inform strategy and provide foundation for compelling stories that demonstrate student success impact
4. Developing collaborative partnerships with faculty to increase career awareness and support student career success
5. Engaging employers and alumni to provide meaningful experiences, mentoring connections and industry knowledge
6. Developing intentional marketing and communication plan to reach students at UH Main, UH at Sugar Land and UH at Katy
7. Foster meaningful partnerships with student leaders and organizations to enhance career development initiatives and promote student engagement in career readiness activities





STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1:

DEVELOPING A HOLISTIC MODEL FOR DELIVERING QUALITY CAREER EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCES

University Career Services is transforming its operational focus and service delivery by adopting a holistic model that emphasizes early engagement, career exploration, and deep industry expertise. This new approach leverages technology to provide high-touch, personalized services while creating industry-focused career communities. These communities, co-led by career advisors and employer engagement professionals, highlight that a student's major does not solely define their career path—reflecting the dynamic and evolving nature of the workforce. By actively participating in these career communities, students will be empowered to take ownership of their career journeys and make informed decisions about their future.

Related Goals:

Comprehensive Staff Training:

Equip Career Services staff with best practices through professional development, workshops, conferences and industry engagement to enhance career readiness support.

Integrated Career Education Curriculum:

Develop a cohesive curriculum that merges academic learning with practical experiences, ensuring all students (residential, commuter, transfer) access essential career resources for workforce success.

Industry-Focused Career Communities:

Create collaborative career communities that connect students with industry leaders, providing tailored resources and mentorship to explore diverse career paths.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2:

INTEGRATING CAREER READINESS, EDUCATION, AND HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE INTO THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Preparing UH graduates to excel in a global community requires not only a solid education but also the practical skills needed to navigate an ever evolving and unpredictable workplace. To achieve this, our focus is on equipping students with the tools, experiences, and career education necessary for their long-term success. We recognize that this effort is a shared responsibility, and by offering training, resources, and consistent messaging to our internal and external partners, we foster a culture of career readiness. This collaborative approach ensures that the entire university community plays an active role in supporting students' post-graduation success.

Related Goals:

Integrated Career Readiness Curriculum:

Define career readiness; develop and implement a cohesive curriculum that seamlessly integrates career readiness skills and hands-on experiences into academic programs across all disciplines.

Experiential Learning Opportunities:

Expand access to experiential learning opportunities, such as internships, co-ops, and service-learning projects, ensuring all students engage in practical experiences that enhance their employability.

Career Workshops and Seminars:

Offer a series of targeted workshops and seminars focused on essential career skills, such as resume writing, interview techniques, and networking, to prepare students for successful career transitions.

Collaboration with Faculty:

Foster collaboration with faculty to incorporate career readiness initiatives into course content, host faculty open house or career café encouraging students to connect their academic learning with career goals.

Student Engagement Programs:

Launch programs designed to engage students in career exploration and professional development activities, creating a supportive environment for their career journey.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3:

COLLECTING MEANINGFUL DATA TO INFORM STRATEGY AND SHOWCASE STUDENT SUCCESS

Preparing successful, world-ready graduates is a shared institutional goal. Our objective is to weave the story of career success into every facet of campus life while gaining a deeper understanding of the impact of the Career Center's programs. By developing a comprehensive plan to collect and share relevant data, we can highlight the success of our career development initiatives and empower the entire university community. This approach enables us to set collaborative goals, strengthen campus partnerships, and drive data-informed decision-making that supports student success

Related Goals:

Comprehensive Data Collection Plan:

Develop and implement a comprehensive data collection plan to gather relevant metrics on student engagement, career outcomes, and program effectiveness.

Data Analysis for Insights

Utilize data analytics to identify student needs, industry trends and insights that inform strategic decisions and enhance the effectiveness of career services initiatives.

Showcasing Student Success Stories:

Create a framework for showcasing student success stories through various platforms, demonstrating the impact of career services on students' career readiness and outcomes.

Collaborative Data Sharing:

Establish partnerships with academic departments and campus stakeholders to facilitate the sharing of data and insights, fostering a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement.

Regular Reporting and Feedback:

Implement a regular reporting system to communicate findings to stakeholders, allowing for ongoing feedback and adjustments to programs based on data-driven insights



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4:

DEVELOPING COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH FACULTY AND CAMPUS PARTNERS TO INCREASE CAREER AWARENESS AND SUPPORT STUDENT SUCCESS

Strengthening collaborative partnerships with faculty and campus partners is key to enhancing career awareness and fostering student success. By working together, we can integrate career readiness into academic and co-curricular experiences, ensuring students are well-prepared for the workforce. These partnerships enable us to promote career resources, share expertise, and create opportunities for students to explore career pathways early on. Through a united effort, we aim to build a campus-wide culture that prioritizes career development and equips students to achieve their post-graduation goals.

Related Goals:

Cross-Departmental Collaboration:

Establish cross-departmental partnerships with faculty to integrate career awareness into the curriculum, ensuring students understand the relevance of their studies to their future careers.

Joint Career Development Programs:

Develop and implement joint career development programs with campus partners that provide students with comprehensive resources and opportunities to enhance their career readiness.

Faculty Training Workshops:

Offer training workshops for faculty on the importance of career readiness, equipping them with strategies to incorporate career discussions and resources into their courses.

Campus-Wide Career Events:

Organize campus-wide events in collaboration with faculty and partners to raise awareness about career opportunities and resources available to students, fostering a culture of career exploration.

Feedback Mechanisms for Improvement:

Create feedback mechanisms to gather insights from faculty and campus partners, ensuring that collaborative efforts are effective and continuously improved to meet student needs.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5:

ENGAGING EMPLOYERS, ALUMNI AND CORPORATE PARTNERS TO PROVIDE MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCES, MENTORING, AND INDUSTRY KNOWLEDGE

Employers and alumni are critical partners in delivering immersive, real-world experiences that prepare students for success beyond the classroom. They offer valuable experiential learning opportunities, industry insights, and essential connections to the professional communities where our students and alumni live and work. By cultivating strategic, mutually beneficial partnerships with these stakeholders, we can create and deliver transformative career experiences that equip students with the skills, knowledge, and networks needed to thrive in their careers.

Related Goals:

Mentor Framework Development:

Establish a structured Mentor Framework that connects students with alumni and industry professionals to provide guidance, support, and networking opportunities.

Enhance Employer Branding:

Implement strategies to enhance the employer brand within the university community, showcasing the value and opportunities available to students through partnerships.

Employer Internship Consultations:

Offer tailored consultations for employers to optimize their internship programs, ensuring they provide meaningful experiences that align with student career readiness and development.

Expand Partnerships:

Partner with on-campus departments, faculty, and colleges to identify key industries and employers that will support the career development and success of UH students.

Corporate Sponsorship for Student Success:

Cultivate corporate sponsorships to support student success initiatives, providing resources and funding for career development programs, internships, and experiential learning opportunities.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 6:

DEVELOPING INTENTIONAL MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION PLAN TO REACH STUDENTS AT UH MAIN, UH AT SUGAR LAND AND UH AT KATY.

To ensure all University of Houston students, regardless of campus location, are informed and engaged, we are committed to developing a targeted marketing and communication strategy. This plan will deliver tailored messages and resources to students at UH Main, UH at Sugar Land, and UH at Katy, ensuring consistent access to career services and opportunities. By leveraging multiple communication channels and customizing outreach efforts, we aim to increase awareness of career development resources, promote events, and support students across all campuses in their career readiness and success

Related Goals:

Explore Communication Platforms:

Investigate and implement diverse platforms and tools, including the Navigate and Campus ESP platforms, to enhance communication with students across all campuses.

Brand Marketing for UCS:

Develop and execute a comprehensive marketing strategy to promote the University Career Services (UCS) brand to both students and employers.

Strategic Communication Initiatives:

Establish a targeted communication plan that effectively engages students and employers, ensuring clarity and consistency in messaging.

Enhance Social Media Presence:

Strengthen UCS's social media presence by creating engaging content that connects with students and showcases career resources.

Virtual Engagement and Taglines:

Develop compelling virtual initiatives and taglines that resonate with students and employers, enhancing the UCS brand identity.

Signature Events Promotion:

Plan and promote signature events that foster connections between students and employers, reinforcing career readiness and opportunities.

Career Success Outcomes:

Share current student and alumni Student Success Stories each semester with a purpose to promote career exploration, creative career planning, and a professional network across diverse industries that highlights what's next/where are they now.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 7:

COLLABORATE WITH STUDENT LEADERS.

Foster meaningful partnerships with student leaders and organizations to enhance career development initiatives and promote student engagement in career readiness activities.

Related Goals:

Engage Student Leaders:

Actively engage student leaders and organizations to foster a collaborative environment that prioritizes career development and student success.

Industry Partnership Identification:

Work with on-campus partners, faculty, and colleges to identify key industries and employers that align with the career aspirations of UH students, facilitating targeted career development opportunities.

Networking Events with Campus Partners:

Organize networking events in collaboration with campus partners to connect students with industry professionals, fostering meaningful relationships that support career readiness.

Student Leadership Engagement:

Actively engage student leaders to co-create career-focused events and initiatives that resonate with the student body, ensuring alignment with their interests and career aspirations.

Peer Mentorship Programs:

Develop peer mentorship programs that leverage student leaders to provide guidance and support to their peers, fostering a sense of community and enhancing career exploration opportunities.

Feedback Mechanisms:

Establish regular communication channels with student leaders to gather insights and feedback on career services, ensuring that offerings are relevant and effective in meeting student needs.

Collaborative Workshops:

Partner with student organizations to design and deliver workshops that address key career readiness skills, promoting attendance and participation through student-led initiatives.

Showcasing Student Success:

Create platforms for student leaders to share their career journeys and successes, inspiring their peers and highlighting the impact of career services on student outcomes.



CAREER LAUNCH: EMPOWERING COOGS, TRANSFORMING FUTURES

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

UCS TEAM 2024:

- Leadership: Monica D. Thompson, Priyanka Raut, Cynthia Olmedo, Arrianna O'Quin, Torrence Douglas
- Career Development Specialist: Bina Benavides, Olivia Hayes, McKell Peidl, Toia Polk, Kamah Wilson
- Employer Development and Relations: Madison Brown

The purpose of the new strategic plan is to contribute and align with the [UH Strategic Plan](#) and the [Division of Student Affairs Strategic Plan](#)



University Career Services
Division of Student Affairs

GET IN TOUCH

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