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FACULTY ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS:

The Integration of Career Readiness Into the Curriculum

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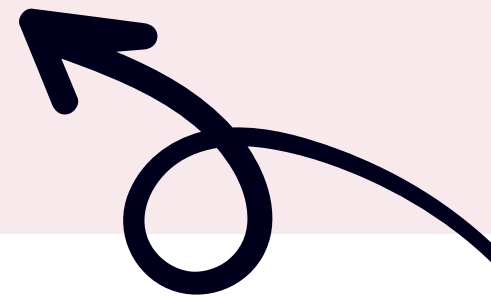
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Introduction

In fall 2023, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), in collaboration with the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) and the Society for Experiential Education (SEE), undertook research to explore faculty engagement in career preparation and development.

The survey examined the extent to which faculty engage students in career development in their courses by sharing resources, connecting students to experiential learning, and otherwise fostering students' professional development. Emphasis was placed on the learning in the classroom, as well as connections to campus resources, including career centers and experiential learning units. The survey was disseminated broadly across all three organizations; 6,880 individual faculty members responded to the survey request via email, social media, and in-person communication in virtual meetings.

We found that faculty play a distinct role in the learning and development of students in higher education, including in their career readiness and professional development.

From advising students on career-related issues to connecting students to resources on and off campus, faculty engage in career learning and development with students. At the same time, although on-campus resources—such as career centers and experiential learning units—offer significant resources to students, faculty use of such resources is sporadic.

This report highlights data from the survey that demonstrate the many ways faculty support career preparation. It also offers recommendations for how institutions of higher education and their faculty and staff can work together to support deeper engagement of faculty in the career development and, ultimately, the outcomes of students to support greater institutional effectiveness.

Overview of Findings

Faculty Providing Career Advice

Results show that faculty are often a key source for students about careers.

An overwhelming majority (92%) of faculty reported that students in their disciplinary area asked them for career advice in the past year. (See *Figure 1*.) The data are further supported by NACE's *2023 Student Survey Report* in which NACE found that 86% of students reported that they were comfortable discussing their academic program or career plans with a faculty member. Fifty-seven percent of students in that report also said they used faculty as a job-search resource.

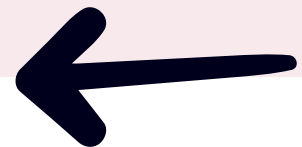
Further, the role of faculty advising students on their careers does not end on graduation day. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of faculty said that alumni from their institution reached out to them for career advice in the past year.

FIGURE 1: FACULTY AND CAREER ADVICE

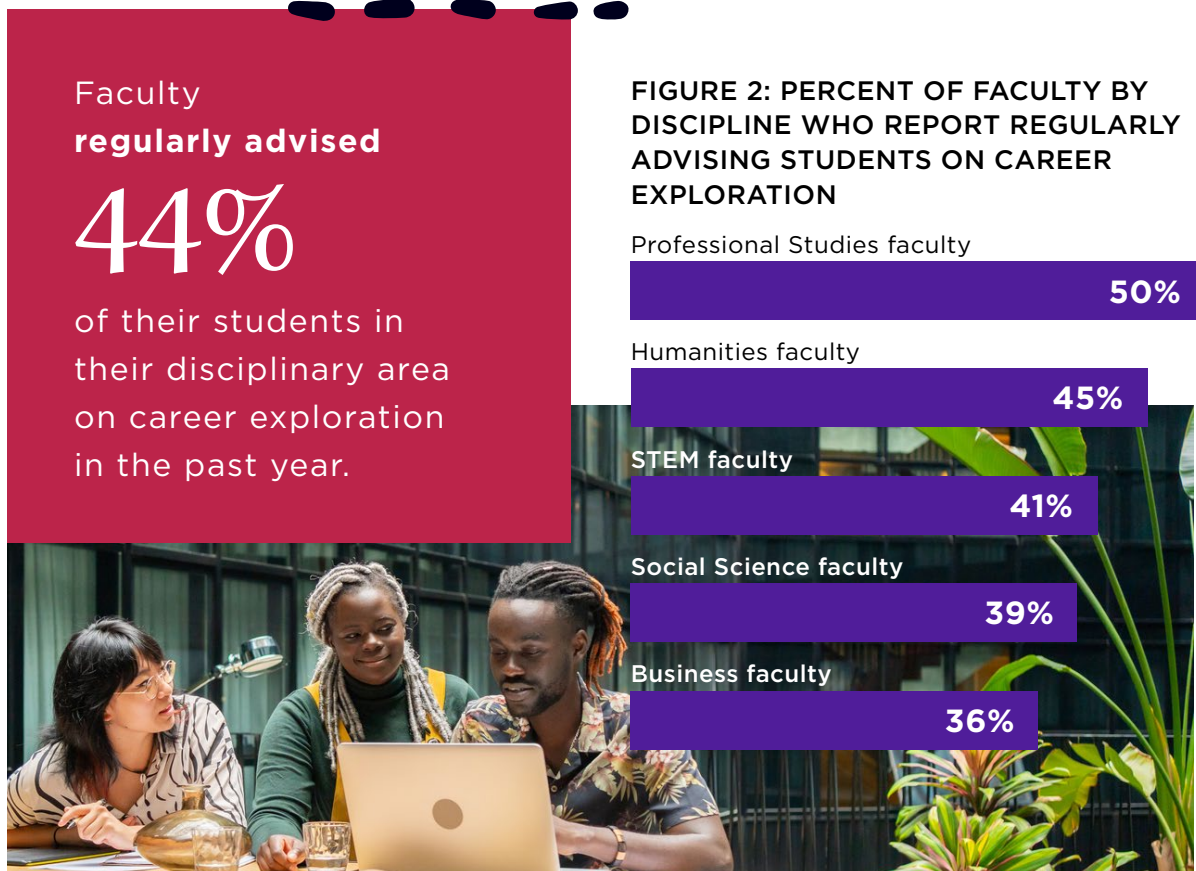
More than nine out of 10 (92%) of faculty report that **students** in their disciplinary area asked them for career advice in the past year.



More than three out of five (63%) of faculty report that **alumni** from their institution reached out to them for career advice in the past year.



Each faculty member reaches a relatively high percentage of students in regard to career advisement. On average, faculty regularly advised 44% of their students in their disciplinary area on career exploration annually. However, there are interesting disciplinary differences that emerged. For example, professional studies faculty regularly advised 50% of their students this past year, whereas STEM faculty regularly advised 41% of students. (See Figure 2.)



Looking across two- and four-year schools, faculty at four-year schools tended to advise a greater percentage of their students than faculty at two-year schools. (See Figure 3.) This may be related, in part, to the number of students at two-year schools who go on to transfer to four-year institutions before they enter their careers.

FIGURE 3: PERCENT OF FACULTY BY INSTITUTION TYPE WHO REPORT REGULARLY ADVISING STUDENTS IN CAREER EXPLORATION

Four-year Institutions



Two-year Institutions



As Figure 4 shows, more than three-quarters of faculty are comfortable advising students in their disciplinary area, but are considerably much less comfortable advising students outside of their disciplinary area.

FIGURE 4: FACULTY COMFORT WITH ADVISING STUDENTS INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF THEIR DISCIPLINARY AREA OR MAJOR

Any discipline/major



Own discipline/major



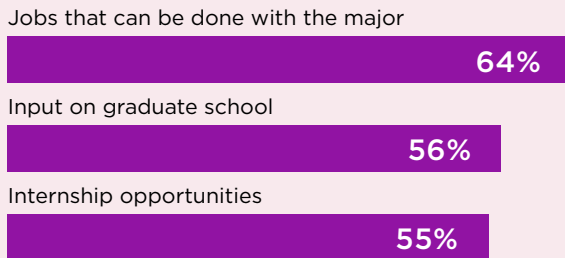
Very comfortable Somewhat comfortable Not comfortable



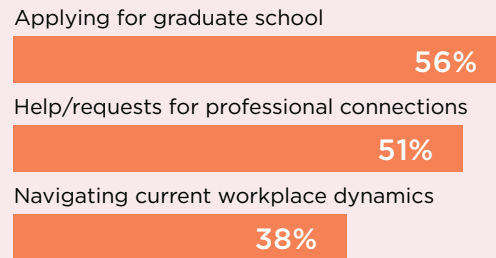
The type of career advice students and alumni request provides insights into how they view faculty members as career advisors. As Figure 5 indicates, students tend to ask faculty for more substantive advice—ideas about the types of work available to them and how to apply to graduate school, for example—than the mechanics associated with a job search, e.g., help with their resume.

FIGURE 5: TYPES OF CAREER ADVICE STUDENTS AND ALUMNI SEEK FROM FACULTY

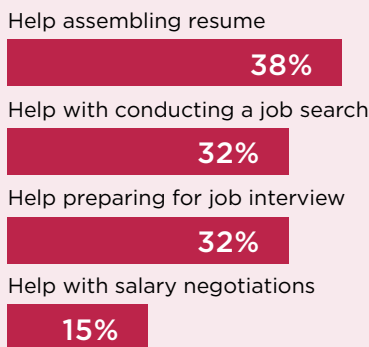
The top types of advice students ask faculty about related to career exploration



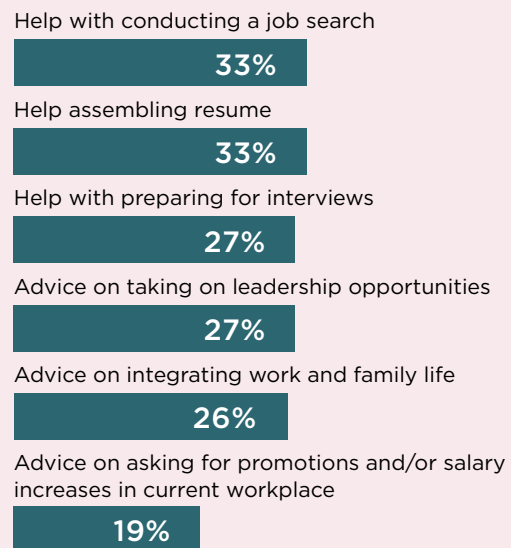
Top types of advice alumni ask faculty about related to career exploration



Least common types of advice students ask faculty about related to career exploration



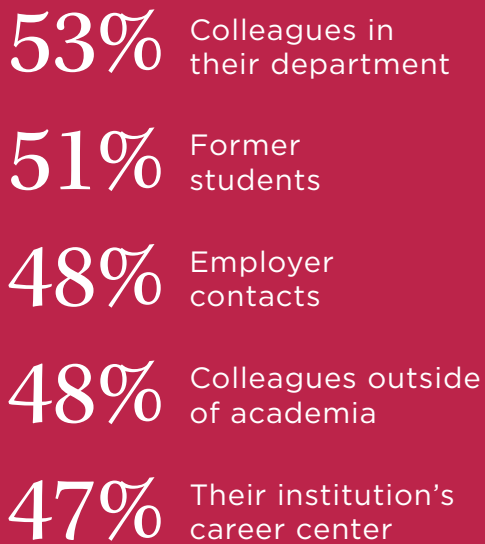
Least common types of advice alumni ask faculty about related to career exploration



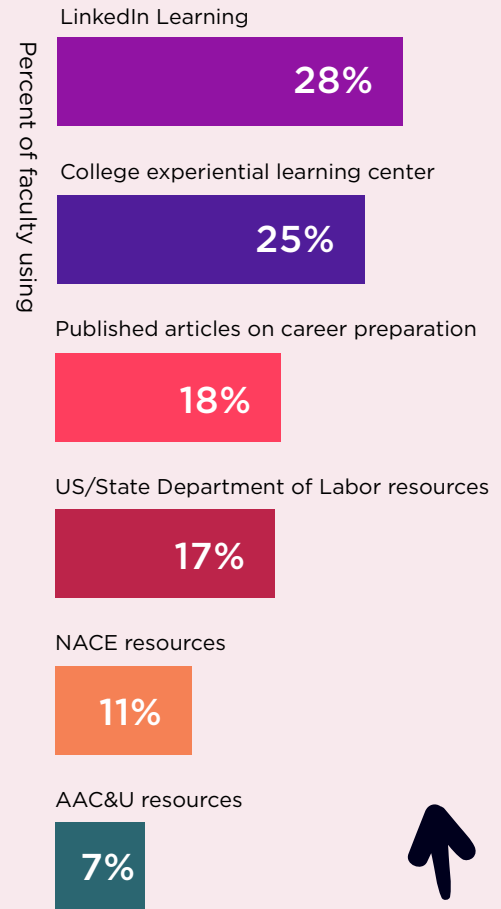
Faculty tend to draw on their own personal networks to help advise students. Specifically, the top two resources faculty draw on to advise students were colleagues in their academic dept (53%) and former students (51%). (See Figure 6.) Interestingly, both resource groups emerged from the faculty's own institution. However, fewer than half of faculty reported using their institution's career center.

While personal resources and networks were heavily used by faculty, other more institutional and external resources were much less used. (See Figure 7.)

**FIGURE 6:
TOP RESOURCES FACULTY
DRAW ON TO ADVISE STUDENTS
ON CAREER EXPLORATION**



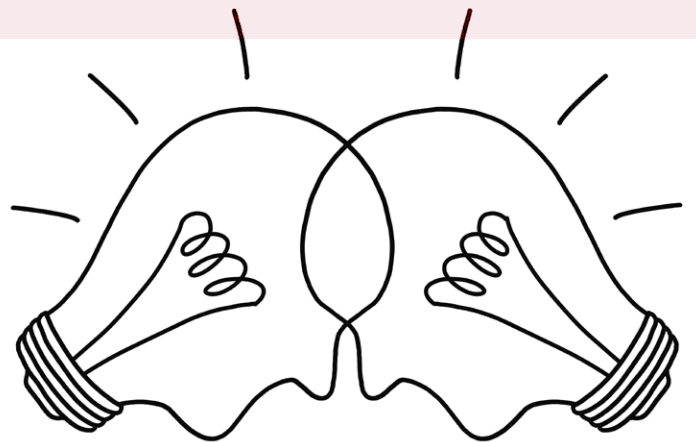
**FIGURE 7: OTHER RESOURCES
FACULTY USE TO ADVISE STUDENTS**



Many faculty members reported that there are resources they need to better serve students' career needs, namely professional development on career readiness and access to labor market information. (See *Figure 8*.)

Taken together, these results point to an opportunity to increase awareness among faculty of the resources available to them, most notably those on their own campuses.

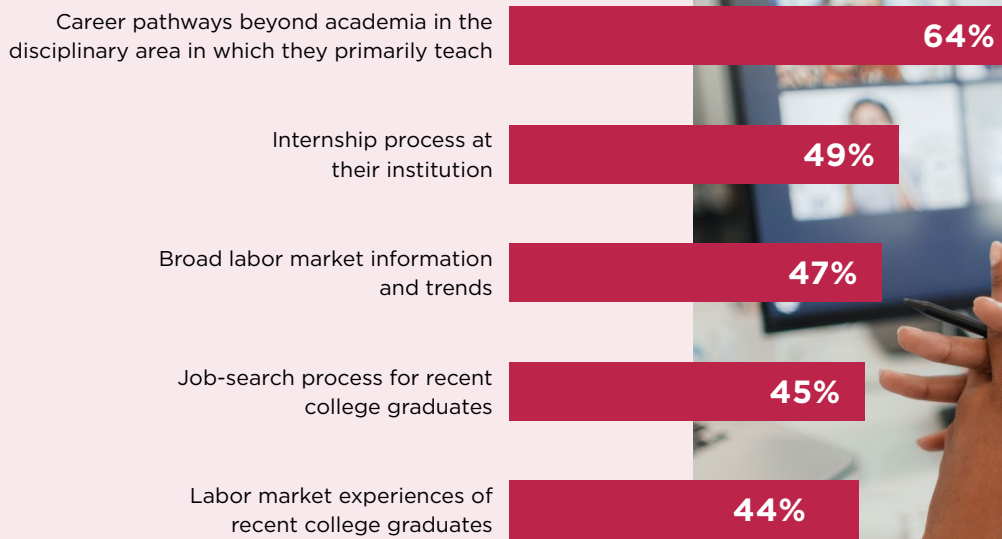
FIGURE 8: TOP 3 RESOURCES FACULTY REPORT NEEDING TO SUPPORT STUDENTS' CAREER EXPLORATION



Faculty Knowledge of Career Information

Most graduate training for faculty members does not include career advisement in their curriculum. However, despite a lack of formal training, most faculty rate their knowledge of careers as quite high; nearly two-thirds (64%) rated their knowledge of the career pathways in their disciplinary area (beyond academia) as high/very high. Nearly half (47%) rated their knowledge of broad labor market information and trends as high/very high. (See Figure 9.)

FIGURE 9: PERCENT OF FACULTY WHO RATE THEIR CAREER KNOWLEDGE AS HIGH/VERY HIGH



However, disciplinary affiliation matters here: Business and professional studies faculty rated their career knowledge higher than faculty in other disciplinary areas. For instance, more than three-quarters of business faculty rated their knowledge of the career pathways beyond academia as high/very high, while just over half of humanities faculty did. (See Figure 10.)

Similar patterns existed across the other dimensions of career knowledge we surveyed. As Figure 10 shows, overall, business and professional studies faculty rated themselves higher in terms of career knowledge. However, even within these two groups, only slightly more than half reported that their knowledge of the experiences of recent college graduates in the labor market was high/very high, and similar percentages expressed a high degree of knowledge about the internship processes at their institution, despite **research that indicates internships are a key pathway to a career**. STEM, social science, and humanities faculty all expressed lower levels of knowledge.

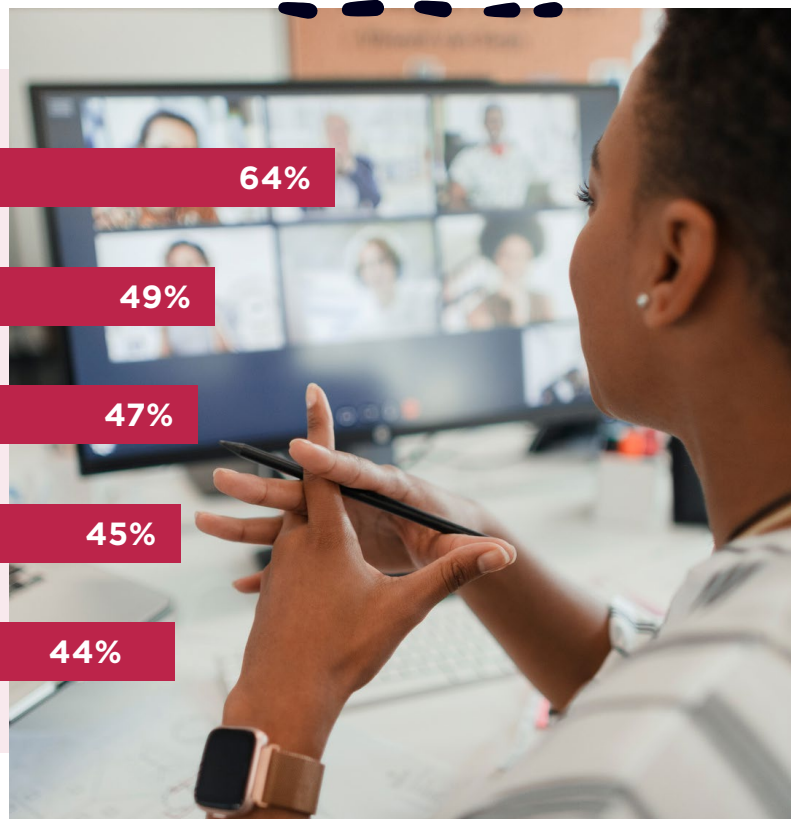
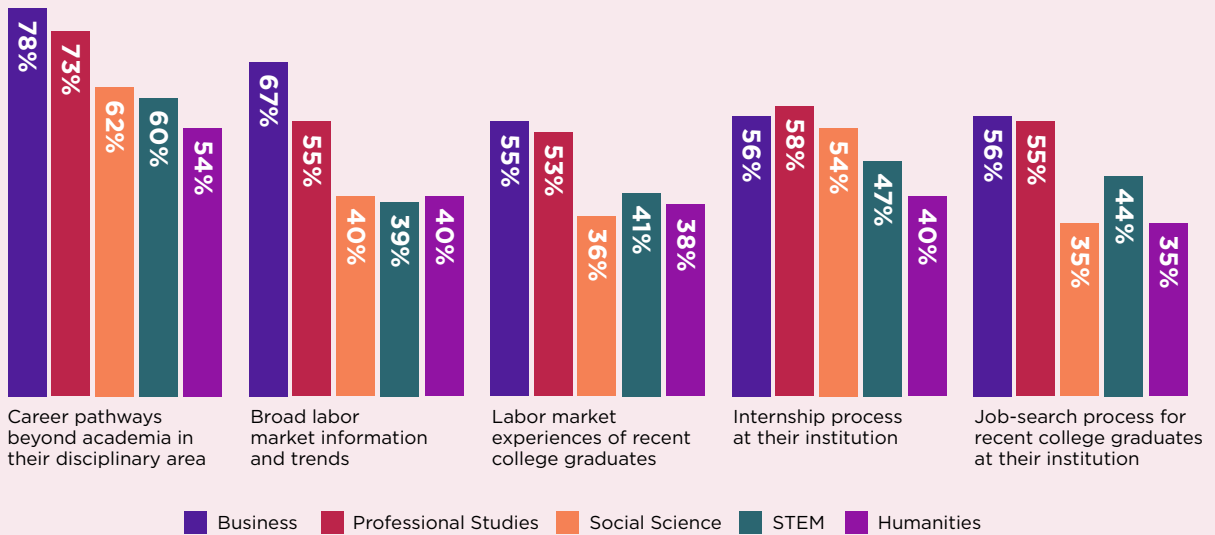
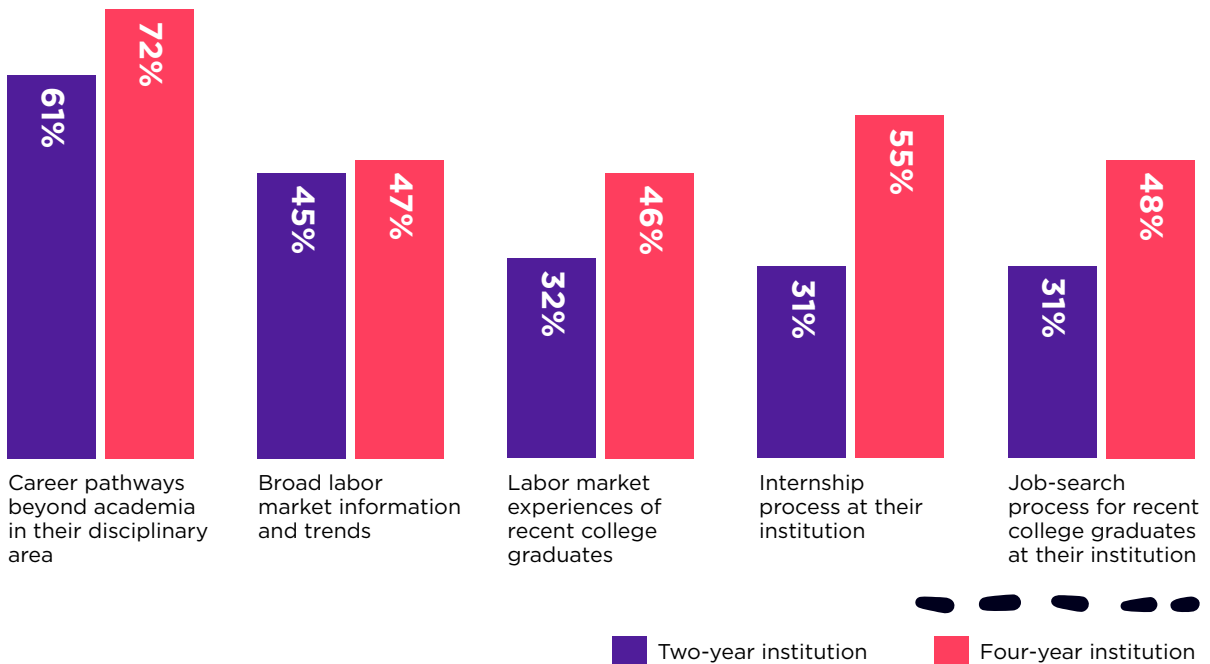


FIGURE 10: PERCENT OF FACULTY WHO RATE THEIR CAREER KNOWLEDGE AS HIGH/VERY HIGH, BY DISCIPLINE



In addition to disciplinary differences, there are some differences between two- and four-year institutions. Overall, faculty at four-year institutions rate their career knowledge higher than faculty at two-year institutions, and the gaps were relatively large. (See Figure 11.) The only area where the two groups similarly rated their knowledge as high was on broad labor market information.

FIGURE 11: PERCENT OF FACULTY WHO RATE THEIR CAREER KNOWLEDGE AS HIGH/VERY HIGH, BY TYPE OF INSTITUTION

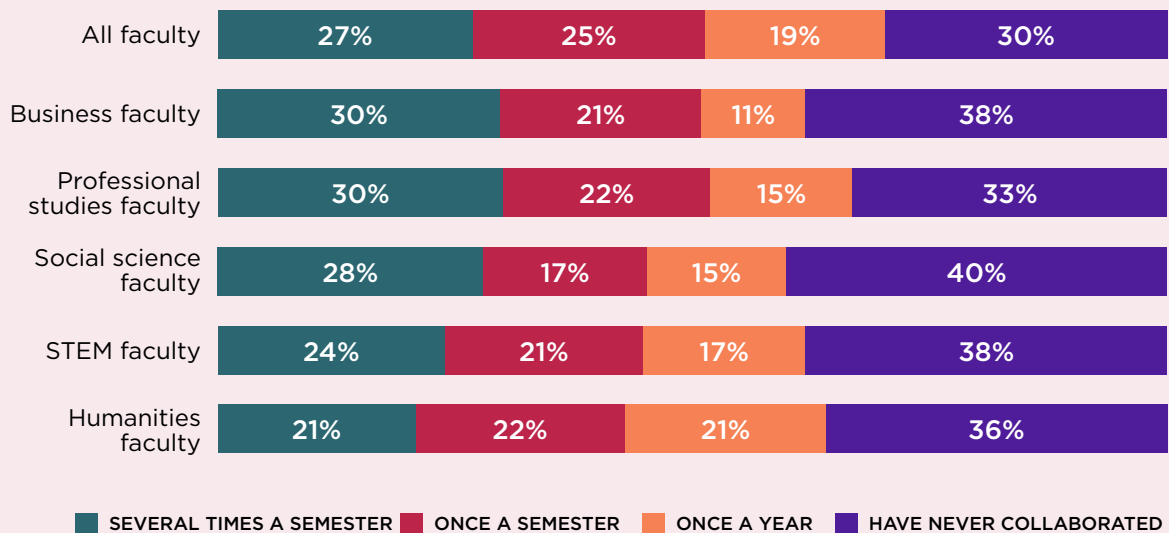


Faculty and Campus Resources

As noted earlier, less than half of faculty reported that they draw on their institutions' career center to help advise students on careers. When asked specifically about the past year, 27% of faculty collaborated several times a semester with their career center, one-quarter collaborated once a semester, and 19% collaborated once a year. (See Figure 12.)

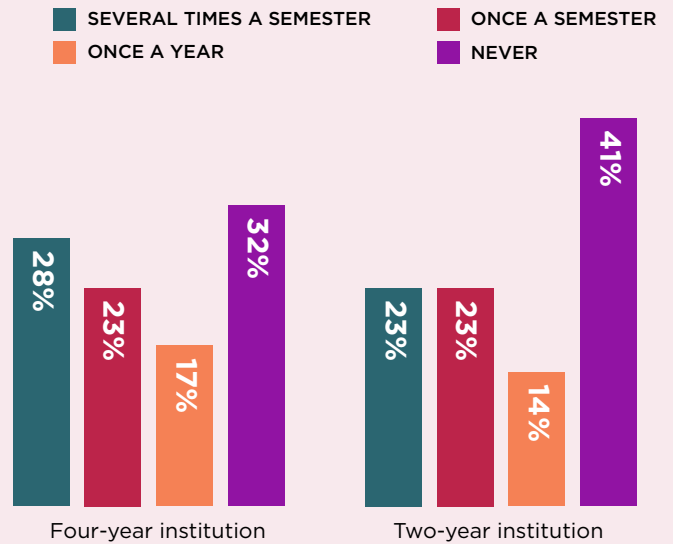
We found discipline differences in how often they collaborate with career centers. Business and professional studies faculty tend to collaborate the most, and STEM and humanities faculty the least.

FIGURE 12: FREQUENCY OF COLLABORATION WITH THE CAREER CENTER



Further, we found that faculty at four-year institutions tend to collaborate with career centers more than faculty at two-year intuitions. (See *Figure 13.*)

FIGURE 13: FREQUENCY OF COLLABORATION WITH THE CAREER CENTER, BY TYPE OF INSTITUTION



Interestingly, when faculty collaborate with the career center, they see the value, and the more they collaborate, the greater the value: Nearly 90% of those who collaborate several times a semester are confident that the career center is meeting student needs, and 63% are extremely/very confident.

Faculty collaborate with their career centers in several different ways. By far the most prevalent way that faculty collaborate is to refer students to the career center, with 70% citing this. The fluctuates by discipline, with 84% of business faculty and 82% of social science faculty referring students to the career center compared with 68% of STEM faculty, 65% of professional studies faculty, and 65% of humanities faculty. (See *Figure 14.*)

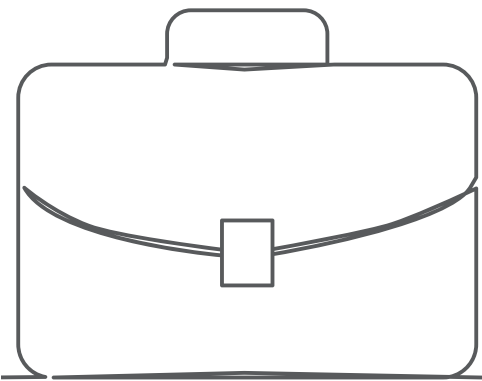
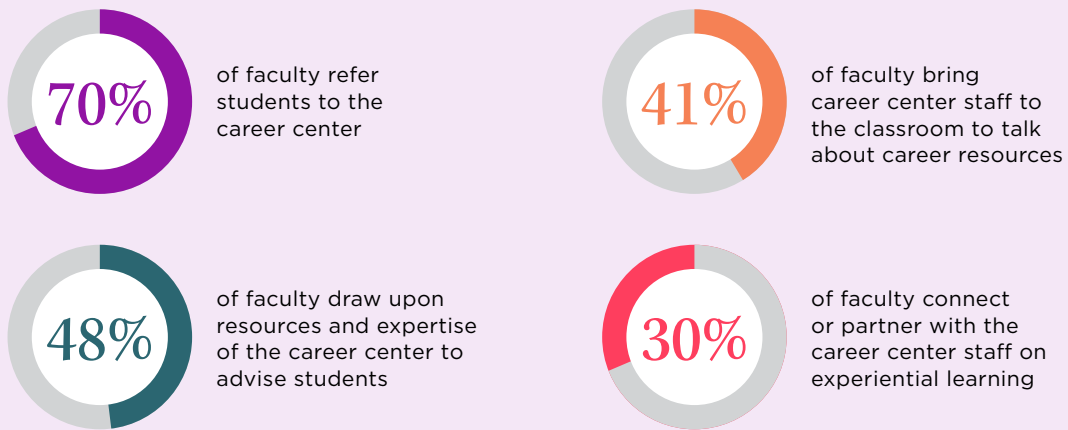
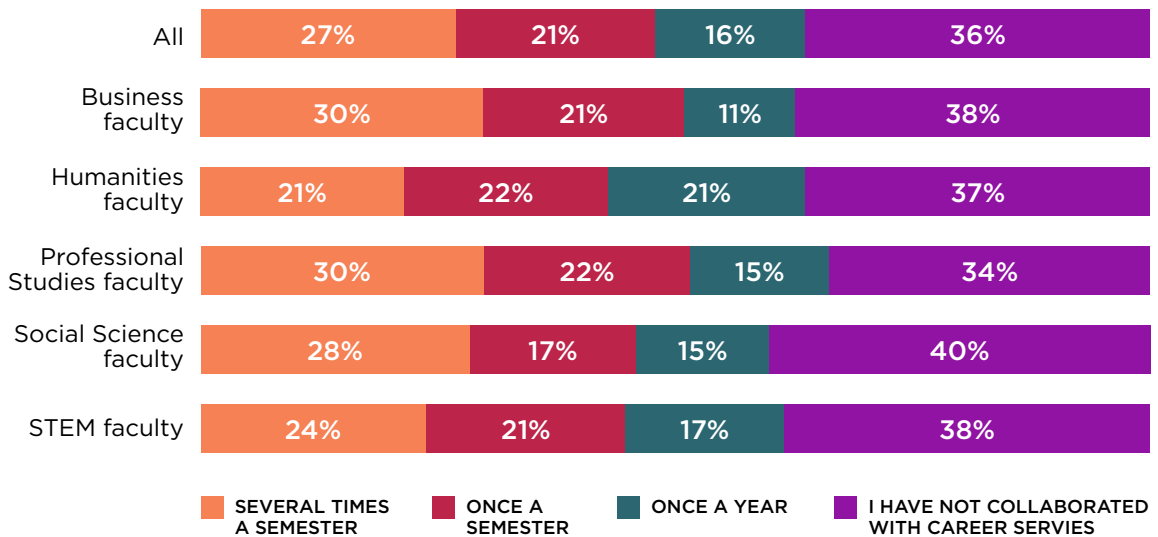


FIGURE 14: TOP WAYS FACULTY COLLABORATE WITH THE CAREER CENTER



Unfortunately, the sporadic collaboration repeats with the campus experiential learning center, with 27% of faculty reporting they collaborated several times a semester, 21% once a semester, and 16% once a year. Again, collaboration varies by discipline. (See Figure 15.)

FIGURE 15: FREQUENCY OF COLLABORATION WITH THE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CENTER



Career Services, STEM, and Student Outcomes

A joint research study conducted by NACE and Break Through Tech found that **use of career services had a positive effect on those pursuing STEM-related careers**, but especially among women pursuing STEM-related careers.

For example, among STEM-focused women, those who used the career center for assistance with internships averaged 1.75 job offers, compared with an average of 1.36 job offers among those who did not use the career center. **Download the full report.**



Careers in the Classroom

The vast majority of faculty—80%—reported that they integrate career readiness and career information into their classes, and the majority align their course assignments with career readiness competencies to help students identify the skills they are acquiring. (See *Figure 16*.)

FIGURE 16: TOP WAYS FACULTY INTEGRATE CAREER READINESS/CAREER INFORMATION INTO THEIR COURSES

58%

Align course assignments with career readiness skills and competencies to help students identify/translate skills

55%

Align course outcomes with career readiness skills and competencies to help students identify/translate skills

52%

Bring in guest speakers from professional and career fields

39%

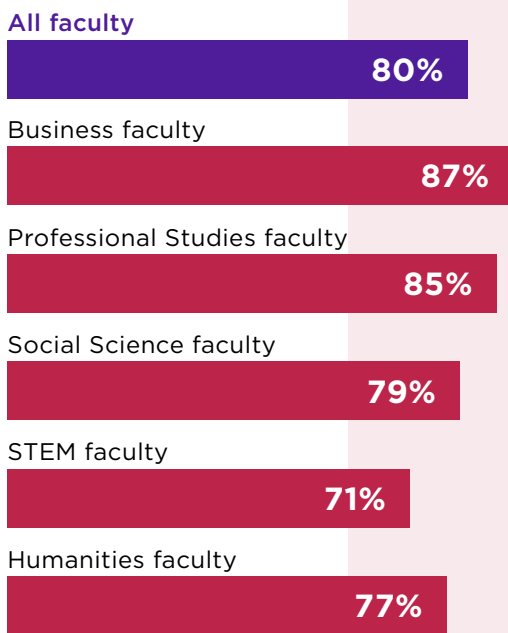
Have students complete a career-related project

38%

Career-related reflection to an assignment

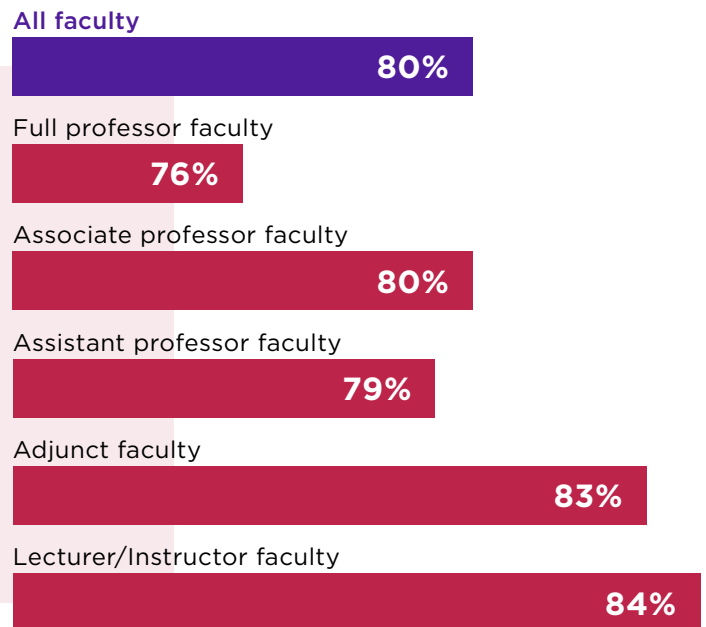
Integration fluctuates, however, depending on discipline—for example, 87% of business faculty said they have integrated careers into their curriculum compared to 71% of STEM faculty—and by faculty rank, with the percentage reporting this increasing as their rank decreases. (See Figures 17 and 18.)

FIGURE 17: PERCENT OF FACULTY, BY DISCIPLINE, WHO REPORT INTEGRATING CAREER READINESS/CAREER INFORMATION INTO THEIR COURSES



The vast majority of faculty report they integrate career readiness and career information into their classes.

FIGURE 18: PERCENT OF FACULTY, BY RANK, WHO REPORT INTEGRATING CAREER READINESS/CAREER INFORMATION INTO THEIR COURSES



Adjunct and lecturer/instructor faculty integrate career readiness and career information into the classroom slightly more than other faculty.

Among faculty who do not integrate careers into the classroom, time appears to be the biggest factor, but more than one-third cited lack of expertise as a barrier. (See Figure 19.)

FIGURE 19: MAIN REASONS FACULTY HAVE NOT INTEGRATED CAREER READINESS/ CAREER INFORMATION INTO THE CLASSROOM

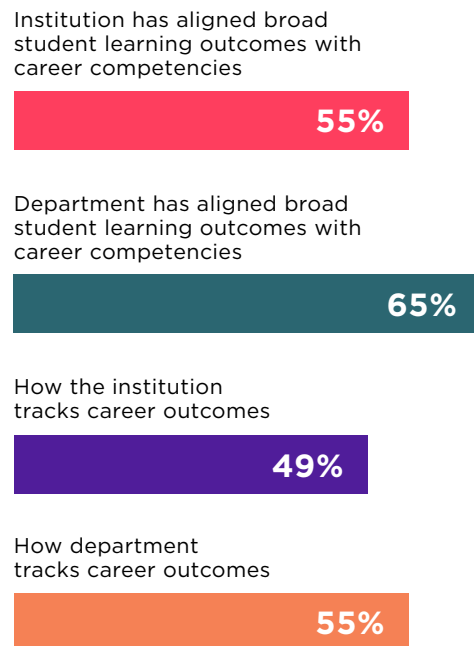


Integration of Career Readiness Competencies

Three-quarters of schools taking part in NACE's 2023 career services benchmark survey indicated they were implementing career readiness competencies in their college, campus, or university, and 43% of these implementation efforts were found at the department level.

Similarly, this faculty survey found that competency integration was occurring in colleges, although not all faculty were aware. More than half of faculty reported that their institution has aligned broad student outcomes with competencies, and nearly two-thirds reported that their department has aligned broad student outcomes with competencies.

FIGURE 20: PERCENT OF FACULTY AWARE OF COMPETENCY INTEGRATION





The level at which faculty are aware of institutional and departmental competency integration correlates to their engagement with career readiness: Almost 60% of faculty who say their intuition has aligned competencies have integrated careers into the classroom. Almost 70% of faculty who say their department has aligned competencies have integrated careers into the classroom.

Faculty awareness also bears on their engagement with campus resources: Among those who aware their institution has aligned competencies with student outcomes, nearly 80% have collaborated with the career center, while more than 40% who are unsure about institutional alignment have collaborated. Faculty's level of engagement, in turn, correlates to the value they place on campus resources, with 85% expressing confidence in the career center's ability to meet their students' needs.

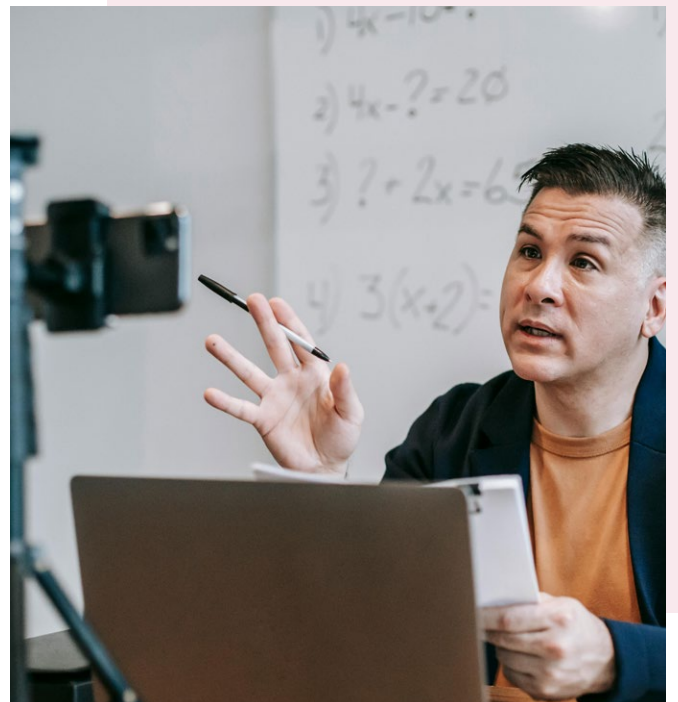
The connection between level of awareness and engagement also can be seen in faculty responses to questions about outcomes tracking. Slightly less than half (49%) of faculty are aware of ways that student outcomes are being tracked at their institutions, and 55% are aware of how their department tracks outcomes. When faculty are aware of how their institution tracks outcomes, they are more likely to integrate career readiness competencies into the curriculum. Eighty-five percent of faculty who are aware of how their institution tracks outcomes integrate careers into their classes compared with 74% of faculty who do not know how their colleges track outcomes.

Implications and Recommendations for Practice

Faculty members play a distinct and important role in the career-related learning and development of students in higher education, serving as a key resource for students by advising students on careers and helping them in their professional development. Consequently, it is important to identify and leverage opportunities to support faculty in deepening this practice as it contributes to institutional effectiveness.

The following recommendations suggest pathways to enhance student learning related to career preparation and development for higher education administrators, faculty, and career/experiential learning professionals. It was clear from our research that there is a disconnect between the career readiness work that is occurring in classrooms and the resources and support that can be provided by the larger college community; this includes campus career centers and experiential learning centers, which house staff who can provide career learning and development expertise across disciplines. Therefore, central to these recommendations is that the silos that exist in higher education are impeding the full integration and awareness of careers in the classroom and, in turn, student career outcomes.

While we have sets of recommendations for each stakeholder group in higher education, there must be collaboration across these groups for this work to be successful. Further, there must be space, resources, capacity-building programs, and top-to-bottom commitment for facilitating collaborative work and dismantling the siloed structures. Clearly, there is a key role that college presidents, chief academic officers, and other higher education administrators can play in creating this changed environment.



Recommendations for Higher Education Administrators



- Raise awareness across the college community, including among faculty, of the institution's commitment to integrating competencies institution-wide to increase institutional effectiveness, and provide details about how integration relates to student outcomes and how outcomes are tracked.
- Provide faculty with educational/professional development opportunities to support the integration of careers and career competencies into the curriculum.
- Incentivize faculty to embed careers into their curriculum with such offerings as enhanced educational development programs, course release, summer salary/stipends, and inclusion in promotion and tenure review.
- Develop and support a learning community and/or communities of practice among faculty and career/experiential learning professionals to foster shared learning, relationships, and cross-collaboration.
- Collect and share data with faculty across disciplines to demonstrate the connections between use of career center/experiential learning center resources and students' career outcomes.

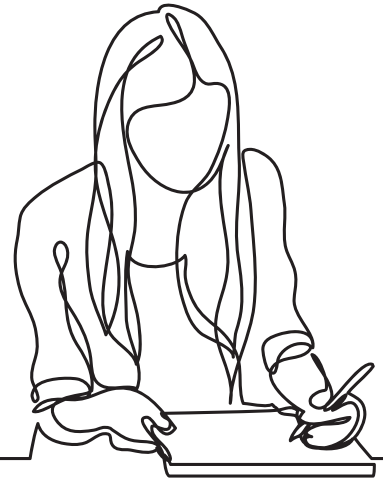
Recommendations for Faculty

- Connect with the campus career center and experiential learning units for updated resources, including teaching and learning resources to integrate career preparation into courses, general career preparation materials, and labor market information. In addition, the campus career center and experiential learning units can provide connections to community-based and pre-professional experiences.
- Collaborate with professionals in the campus career center and experiential learning units to bring them into classes to speak about career preparation.
- Develop experiential learning opportunities, e.g., community-based learning, internship, project-based learning, global immersion experiences, undergraduate research, and so forth, aligned with **good and ethical practice**.
- Align learning outcomes of courses and/or experiential learning programs with **career readiness competencies**.



Recommendations for Career/ Experiential Learning Professionals

- Provide faculty with professional development opportunities to support their career advising and resource sharing through trainings, workshops, online resources, and other offerings.
- Develop faculty toolkits for career advising across disciplines to build faculty capacity as they support students in career preparation.
- Support faculty to align learning outcomes of courses and/or experiential learning experiences with career competencies by providing language, examples, and resources.



Working Together for Institutional Effectiveness

Student learning and career preparation provide a common focus for higher education administrators, faculty, and staff. Faculty and career/experiential learning professionals play significant roles in career readiness and student success. Through strategic and intentional collaboration and by connecting student learning and career outcomes in and out of the classroom, all parties can contribute to the career success of their students, which reflects directly on the institution and its success. Leveraging the relationship faculty have with students and connecting faculty to career centers and experiential learning units is a means to strengthen and enhance institutional effectiveness.



Appendix

Sample Demographics

FIGURE 21: GENDER

	N	Percent
Men	2,050	39.6%
Women	2,733	52.8%
Non-binary	33	0.6%
Prefer not to respond	361	7.0%
Total	5,177	100%

FIGURE 22: RACE

	N	Percent
Asian	175	3.4%
Black	262	5.1%
Hispanic (not white)	133	2.6%
Multi-racial	83	1.6%
Indigenous American or Native Alaskan	52	1.0%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	28	0.5%
White	3,922	76.1%
A race/ethnicity not listed here	56	1.1%
Prefer not to respond	445	8.6%
Total	5,156	100%

FIGURE 23: FACULTY RANK

	N	Percent
Full professor or higher	1,188	23.3%
Associate professor	1,242	24.4%
Assistant professor	999	19.6%
Lecturer / instructor	838	16.5%
Adjunct professor	600	11.8%
Other	226	4.4%
Total	5,093	100%

FIGURE 24: TENURE STATUS

	N	Percent
Tenured professor	2,138	42.7%
Tenure-track professor	1,212	24.2%
Not tenure eligible	1,657	33.1%
Total	5,007	100%

FIGURE 25: DISCIPLINE AREA

	N	Percent
Business	547	10.8%
Humanities	1,179	23.2%
Professional Studies	1,373	27.0%
Social Science	523	10.3%
STEM	1,128	22.2%
Other	335	6.6%
Total	5,085	100%

**FIGURE 26:
SCHOOL TYPE-DEGREE**

	N	Percent
Associate degree Institution	311	10.0%
Bachelor, Master Doctorate degree Institution	2,785	90.0%
Total	3,096	100%

**FIGURE 27:
SCHOOL TYPE-PUBLIC/PRIVATE**

	N	Percent
Private	1,395	45.0%
Public	1,707	55.0%
Total	3,102	100%

Methods

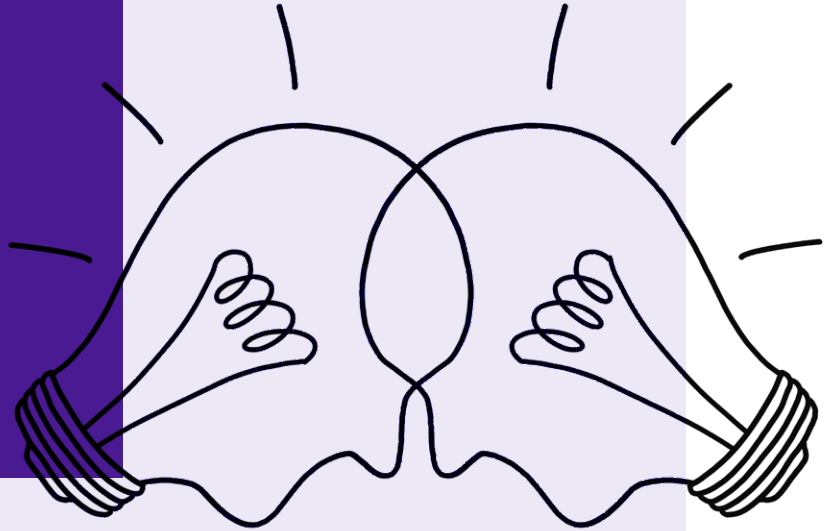
NACE, AAC&U, and SEE collaborated to develop the survey to better understand the experiences of faculty in helping students prepare for career success. After pre-testing the survey, all three organizations deployed the survey into the field. This included 1) emailing the survey to members of the organizations; 2) posting the survey on LinkedIn and other social media sites; and 3) encouraging individuals to share the survey with others. The survey was in the field from October 18 to December 31, 2023. After cleaning the data, there were 6,880 usable responses.

To conduct the analysis, the disciplinary areas were recoded into larger categories. Below is a table that details each of the categories.



Original Category	N	Recode
Business (incl. accounting, marketing, finance, etc.)	547	Business
Area, ethnicity, cultural, and gender studies	71	Humanities
Art/Art History	103	Humanities
Creative and Performing Arts	148	Humanities
English/Literature	233	Humanities
Foreign Languages	74	Humanities
History	135	Humanities
Humanities	70	Humanities
Liberal Arts	182	Humanities
Linguistics	75	Humanities
Philosophy	42	Humanities
Religion	46	Humanities

Original Category	N	Recode
Architecture	117	Professional Studies
Communication	214	Professional Studies
Construction Trades	31	Professional Studies
Education/Special Education	227	Professional Studies
Health Sciences (incl. nursing, pre-med, OT, PT, communication disorders, etc.)	364	Professional Studies
Journalism	31	Professional Studies
Law	54	Professional Studies
Leisure and Recreational Activities	47	Professional Studies
Library Sciences	60	Professional Studies
Military Sciences	20	Professional Studies
Parks and Recreation	18	Professional Studies
Protective Services/Criminal Justice/ Homeland Security	39	Professional Studies
Public Policy/Public Administration	30	Professional Studies
Social Work	68	Professional Studies
Transportation	53	Professional Studies
Psychology & Counseling	253	Social Sciences
Social Sciences (incl. economics, anthropology, sociology, political science, geography, int'l relations, etc)	270	Social Sciences
Agriculture	71	STEM
Biology and biological sciences	350	STEM
Computer and Information Sciences	168	STEM
Engineering (incl. civil, mechanical, electrical, precision, etc.)	107	STEM
Math	166	STEM
Natural Resources & Conservation	51	STEM
Physical Sciences	215	STEM
Multi-disciplinary Studies	63	Other
Other	272	Other
Total	5,085	



Researchers

Mary Gatta, Ph.D., is the director of research and policy at the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), where she leads research on the employment of the college educated, and forecasts hiring and trends in the job market; tracks starting salaries, recruiting and hiring practices, and student attitudes and outcomes; and identifies best practices and benchmarks. She has more than 20 years of teaching, research, and advocacy experience working on issues of career education and workforce development in colleges and nonprofit associations.

Prior to joining NACE, Dr. Gatta served as an associate professor of sociology at City University of New York-Guttman and faculty director of the Ethnographies of Work program. In addition, she was the research director at the Rutgers University Center for Women and Work and a senior scholar at Wider Opportunities for Women in Washington D.C. She has written numerous books, articles, and policy papers on education and work. Dr. Gatta also served on NJ Governor Phil Murphy's Labor and Workforce Development Transition Team. She holds a bachelor's degree in social science from Providence College and a master's degree and doctorate in sociology from Rutgers University.



Ashley Finley, Ph.D., is the vice president for research and senior advisor to the President at the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). She was previously associate vice president for academic affairs and founding dean of the Dominican Experience at Dominican University of California and national evaluator for Bringing Theory to Practice.

Currently, Dr. Finley oversees AAC&U's research agenda through the coordination of projects and reports on pressing issues in higher education. She also advises on strategic initiatives to support member campuses. Dr. Finley's campus engagements focus on aligning learning outcomes, vocational exploration, and assessment with students' holistic development and equity goals. Her publications include *The Career-Ready Graduate: What Employers Say About the Difference College Makes*; *A Comprehensive Approach to Assessment of High-Impact Practices*; and *The Effects of Community-Based and Civic Engagement in Higher Education: What We Know and the Questions that Remain*. Dr. Finley received a bachelor's degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and a master's and Ph.D., both in sociology, from the University of Iowa.

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About the National Association of Colleges and Employers

Established in 1956, the [National Association of Colleges and Employers](#) (NACE) is the only professional association in the United States that connects 12,600 college career services professionals, nearly 4,000 early career talent acquisition professionals, and nearly 400 business solution providers that serve this community. NACE is the premier source of market research on [career readiness](#), the employment of recent college graduates, and the college-to-career transition. NACE forecasts hiring and trends in the job market; tracks salaries, recruiting and hiring practices, and student attitudes and outcomes; and identifies best practices and benchmarks.



About the American Association of Colleges and Universities

The [American Association of Colleges and Universities](#) (AAC&U) is a global membership organization dedicated to advancing the vitality and democratic purposes of undergraduate liberal education. Through its programs and events, publications and research, public advocacy and campus-based projects, AAC&U serves as a catalyst and facilitator for innovations that improve educational quality and equity and that support the success of all students.



About the Society for Experiential Education

Founded in 1971, the [Society for Experiential Education](#) (SEE) is the premier, nonprofit membership organization composed of a global community of researchers, practitioners, and thought leaders who are committed to the establishment of effective methods of experiential education as fundamental to the development of the knowledge, skills and attitudes that empower learners and promote the common good. SEE sustains a great variety of experiential learning opportunities, such as internships, micro-experiences, service learning, global experience, and more. The Society's vision is to expand the perspectives shared and voices heard throughout our growing profession so that they are representative of the practitioners and students in the field of experiential education.

