

February 21, 2019

Jaye Padgett, Vice Provost for Student Success
Office of the Chancellor

Re: Student Careers after Graduation

Dear Jaye,

Thank you for meeting with the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) along with Career Center Director Silverthorne to discuss how to improve career prospects for our students after they graduate from UCSC. The ability of our students to pursue fulfilling careers after graduation is an important measure of the success of the education we provide them.

It is true that salaries are only one way to assess whether students are successful in their careers; students may deliberately choose to work in organizations and fields that do not pay the highest salaries, but may have high job satisfaction. Also, students may be in graduate school a few years after graduation. But even with these caveats, the statistics [published](#) by the Office of the President are a salutary reminder of where we stand: two years after graduation, our students' median salaries are near the lowest among all campuses in the UC system (not counting UC Merced) in three of the five disciplinary categories. Ten years after graduation, this is true for *four* out of the five disciplinary categories. Changing this situation is imperative.

Median annual earnings two years after graduation¹

	UC Davis	UCSB	UC Irvine	UC Riverside	UCSC
Arts & Hum	33276	32185	29912	26320	25581
Engg & CS	66334	67665	63364	57619	65388
Life Sci	39016	35835	31927	31437	32772
Phys Sci	44771	45908	41371	37895	38859
Soc Sci	38902	37180	37924	31330	29887

Median annual earnings ten years after graduation

	UC Davis	UCSB	UC Irvine	UC Riverside	UCSC
Arts & Hum	61322	57450	53939	49604	50359
Engg & CS	107357	110287	100764	95395	113828
Life Sci	74782	73232	74204	68478	63904
Phys Sci	74899	77801	74579	67922	73815

¹ Professional schools and other disciplines that do not exist at UC Santa Cruz have been excluded. Only students who only obtained an undergraduate degree are shown. Red = lowest among the five campuses shown; orange = second from the bottom.

Soc Sci	73486	66956	67453	57216	55300
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Apart from our meeting with you, CEP has reviewed the materials you provided us and has had a post-consultation discussion. Our recommendations are given below:

A. Recommendations for the central administration

1. Our most important observation is that the **Career Center is understaffed at the ‘ground’ level**; we have 6 staff providing career development and coaching compared to 9 at UC Santa Barbara (UCSB). In addition, these 6 staff provide pre-law and pre-health coaching. At UCSB, this support is also provided by the College of Letters and Science. Our employer relations team has 4 staff, compared to UCSB, which has 6.

A related observation is that the **salaries of these staff are anomalously low, even by UCSC standards**. Starting salaries for UCSC Career Center career coaches are comparable to those for departmental advisors² despite the fact that the Career Center requires a master’s degree in counseling, student affairs or a related field (or equivalent experience or training), while departments require a bachelor’s degree. Recently, the pre-health coach at the Career Center was hired by one of the departments with, as far as we can ascertain, at least a 20% salary increase. As a result, there is high employee turnover at the Career Center. We realize that *all* staff salaries are low at UCSC, but the Career Center seems unusually bad.

According to data provided by the Career Center, nineteen companies conducted on campus interviews at UCSC last year, compared to *sixty-nine* at UCSB. Even accounting for the fact that UCSB has 50% more staff at this level, this is an unacceptable disparity. Santa Barbara is as far from any large city as we are; if anything, proximity to Silicon Valley should make our situation better than theirs. We recommend that the central administration offer to provide increased staffing and better salaries at the Career Center, but seek a plan by which on-campus interviews will be increased, and expect **accountability from the Career Center** in this regard.

2. We believe that the dearth of coaching staff and employer relations staff is a more serious problem facing the Career Center than the lack of an Associate Vice-Chancellor (AVC), the position that is currently under recruitment. While we understand that this new position may bring benefits, there should be **clear and measurable expectations** so that in a few years’ time we can ascertain if this growth at the management level was the correct decision.

We note that the report from Ceperley Consulting which made the case for an AVC (or Assistant Vice-Provost) level position also argued for *three* director level positions in the Career Center. We fear that this is an example where one consequence of growth in

² Based on discussions with the Career Center Director and other staff, as well as job listings at UCSC Staff Human Resources

administration is even more ‘supporting’ growth. We strongly recommend that any additional resources available for the Career Center be used to improve staffing and salaries at the ground-level.

3. As with the rest of the campus, space is in extremely short supply at the Career Center. There will soon be no dedicated rooms for companies conducting job interviews; one conference room can be used when available. By comparison, UCSB has five dedicated interview rooms. It is impossible to create space where there is none, but we recommend that the central administration look into providing interview **space at the Scotts Valley Center and Silicon Valley Center**. This might have the added benefit of attracting more companies, who are reluctant to come all the way to Santa Cruz.

The Ceperley Report also provided detailed recommendations for how the existing space at the Career Center could be reconfigured to have a greater impact. This is outside our expertise, but we certainly agree that, if possible, it would be desirable to create a more professional and welcoming environment that would make a better impression on prospective employers and would engage students.

4. As discussed in greater detail in Item B.4 below, internships are an important area of career services that need strengthening. We request the central administration — through University Relations — to try to raise funds so that undergraduates can afford to take up unpaid internships during the summer.

B. Recommendations for the Career Center

1. There is a general perception that the Career Center does not play a significant role in the minds of advising staff and faculty. The Ceperley Report advocates **regular contact between Career Center staff and advisors** in colleges and departments. This would be a good idea, as would contact between the Career Center and departmental chairs, at the divisional level. Within the university, students discuss their academic programs with advising staff and faculty; research by the Advising Task Force found that even for career advice, they are more likely to consult faculty (and family) than the Career Center. It is important that the Career Center should be something that faculty and staff are mindful of.
2. In particular, we note the wide disparity between how students in different divisions use Career Center services. In the **Arts and the Humanities**, the percentage of students that participate in Career Center fairs is 11% and 15% respectively, compared to 23% and 28% in the Physical and Biological Sciences and Social Sciences, and a remarkable 67% in the School of Engineering. The feeling among the faculty is that the Career Center fairs are primarily aimed at students in the School of Engineering, while the Career Center believes that students in other divisions *do* have the opportunity to pursue management tracks with companies such as Enterprise and Target that come to UCSC, but are dissuaded from doing so by the faculty. Either of these problems would benefit from greater interaction between the Career Center and departments and divisions. We note that only 35% of students in the Humanities seek to pursue a career that is directly related to their major; connecting

students and faculty to alumni mentors and helping students understand how they can prepare themselves to enter tech and other fields they may not already have considered will be very useful.

3. Increasing the **availability of internships** is also important for our students' career prospects. The Ceperley Report mentions that at UC Davis, which does remarkably well on the tables earlier in this letter, the Career *and Internship* Center is well connected with internship partners in the academic units. This example should be studied and, if possible, emulated. Especially in the Arts where 72% of the students hope to pursue a career directly related to their major, but more generally in all disciplines, CEP encourages the Career Center to work with the faculty to expand internship opportunities and prepare students to apply for and obtain them. Additionally, a number of campus units offer some facilitation of internships and the Career Center might also interface productively with these programs/offerings.
4. One of the points made to us by Career Center Director Silverthorne was that our students lack career readiness confidence. We have recommended to her that the Career Center look into the possibility of organizing **one or two colloquia per year by alumni** who have done well in their careers, especially if they were first generation students or from underrepresented groups to serve as an inspiration to our 41% first generation students. An online library of such talks would also be useful. More broadly, the Career Center should try to engage with students as early as possible while they are at UCSC, to inform them how to plan their academic program; at the time they are nearing graduation, the possibilities are limited.

We would also request the Career Center to look into the possibility of alumni mentors allowing student mentees to work with them for a week during the winter break as a kind of **mini-internship**. This should be accompanied by the Career Center providing full services to alumni for a period — perhaps two years — after they graduate, so that alumni feel even greater engagement with the Career Center and the campus.

The Career Advice Network is a valuable resource offered by the Career Center, connecting students to alumni, but it is not widely known.

5. The Career Center **website would benefit from a redesign**. At present, it is not very inviting or transparent; the Career Center does a lot, but it is not immediately obvious from the website.

CEP is also prepared to **link the General Catalog to webpages for professional careers**, either within the catalog or on the Career Center website, that would inform our students how they should plan their undergraduate career and the level for which they have to aim, if they wish to go into careers in law, health, technical fields outside engineering, etc. We are talking to some members of the faculty about this, and will also seek the assistance of the Career Center.

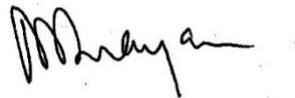
C. Recommendations for the faculty

These are recommendations that CEP can, along with you, communicate to the faculty at the beginning of the spring term.

1. Departmental faculty create the curricula for our academic programs. In designing these curricula, it is desirable that they should be aware of what is most important for the future employability of their students.³ Faculty generally do not have much experience in working outside universities, but this is something where they could work productively with their alumni. Alumni could also be invited to participate in events organized by departments during Alumni Week, when they could interact with students.⁴
2. Departmental faculty, the Academic Senate, and students should be aware of the NACE competencies and consider how they fit into our curricula. In some cases, they match our general education requirements, while in other cases, they could be integrated into the courses that satisfy major requirements.
3. Some departments *do* have faculty members who are deeply engaged in, or are willing to be engaged in, providing career advice to students. Divisions should, where possible, look into providing course relief for such faculty members.

It is clear that improving the career prospects of our students is something that requires the combined efforts of all parties: the central administration, the Career Center, alumni, faculty in departments, and the Academic Senate. CEP is prepared to participate in whatever way is effective in this important endeavor.

Sincerely,



Onuttom Narayan, Chair
Committee on Educational Policy

cc: Marlene Tromp, Campus Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor
Richard Hughey, Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education
Barbara Silverthorne, Director, Career Center
Shayna Kent, Senior Director of Alumni Engagement, University Relations
Bruce Schumm, Chair, Committee on Planning and Budget

³ Where departments expect a substantial fraction of their students to go to graduate school, they should examine their curricula to see if their students are best prepared to succeed in the admission process for graduate school in their discipline.

⁴ Greater engagement with their alumni could help the development efforts of departments.