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Office of the Provost

Employability: Preparing our students for their future

Spring 2014 Provost Retreat
January 10, 2014

Dr. Christine Curtis
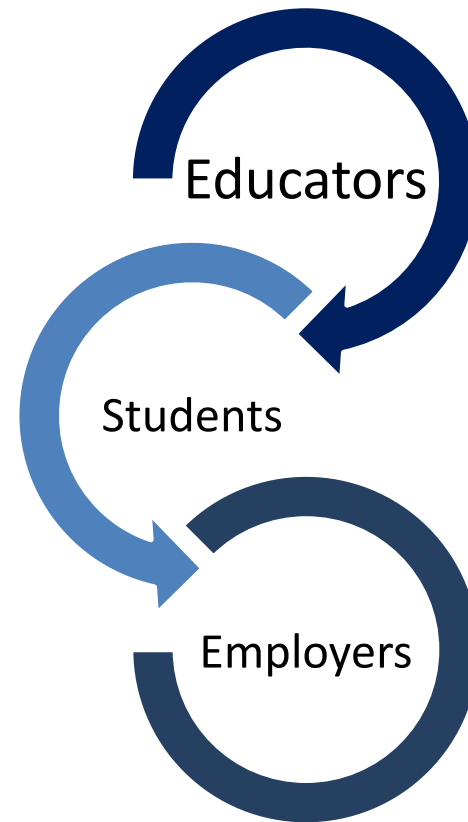
Senior Vice Provost and Director of Strategic Planning

Employability:
Preparing our Students for the Future

As educators—

What is our role?

What is our responsibility?

Educators

Students

Employers

Employability: **Key Questions**

- What role does a research university play in preparing students for a career?

- What are the responsibilities of faculty members to prepare students for gainful employment?

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Question:

Are we meeting the expectations of our constituencies?
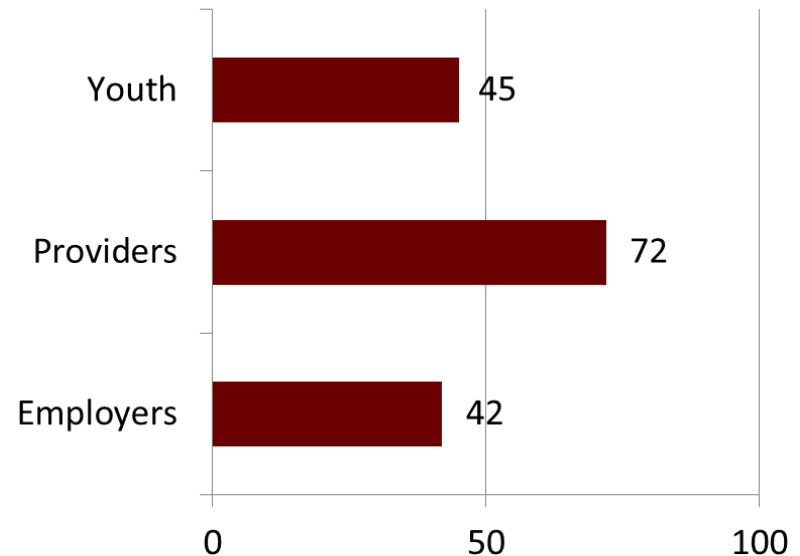
Students

Employers

Government leaders

Taxpayers

Parents

Others see us differently than we see ourselves.

% Respondents

Agreement that our graduates/new hires are adequately prepared

Education to Employment: Designing a system that works. www.mckinseyonsociety.com/education-to-employment/report/

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Skills

EMPLOYERS LOOK FOR:

- Leadership experience
- Academic major (for specific skill sets)
- GPA (usually 3.0 or above)
- Communication skills
- Analytical/quantitative skills
- Computer and technical skills
- Involvement in extracurricular activities
- School attended
- Volunteer work
- Foreign language fluency
- Study abroad
- Initiative
- Creativity

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Question: What are we currently doing at USC to prepare our graduates to be employable?

1) Core curriculum:
- focused on core competencies

2) USC Connect:
- integrating learning within and beyond the class

3) Capstone/Integrated Courses
- opportunity to synthesize and demonstrate integrated knowledge and growth in the major

4) Job/career related coursework

5) Minors
- like the new computing minor in 9 different tracks to complement the major and increase competitiveness

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Questions:

How do we bridge the gap between our perceptions of our students' employability and those of our students and employers?

How can we better understand the expectations, needs and demands employers have of our students?

Question:

What should we as University faculty and administrators do to encourage students to develop their employability skills?

- Work experience
- Internships
- Job/career related coursework
- Participation
- Leadership skills
- Communication skills
- Realistic expectations
- Persistence and resilience

Question:

How do we prepare our students for immediate employability and for a long, successful career?

Basically, how do we

Fill The Gap?

By the Numbers

- 44% of US bachelor's degree holders under/unemployed

- 1.5 million bachelor's degree holders under 25 under/unemployed

- $1.2 trillion total student loan debt

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May 2013 USC Graduates

- 19% unemployed and actively seeking employment

- 48.7% were employed and 26.5% were admitted to Grad/Professional School

- 1,958 of 2,983 graduates (65.6%) responded to survey

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Type of Position

Of those employed, 88.5% employed full-time

	Male	Female	TOTAL
Job is full-time	89.7%	87.5%	88.5%
Job is not full-time	10.3%	12.5%	11.5%

4-Year Degree

68% of respondents indicated that the job requires a 4-year degree

	N=915	
Job requires a 4-year degree	624	68%
Job does not require a 4-year degree	291	32%

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Employment Status of Graduates

	2013	2012
• Employed	48.7%	49.9%
• Grad/Prof School	26.5%	22.9%
• Seeking Job	19.0%	19.6%
• Applying to Grad/ Prof School	3.7%	4.3%
• Not seeking	1.3%	1.4%

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Higher Education Act of 1965

- Requires all for-profit offerings …….and non-degree vocational programs at nonprofit institutions, to show that they prepare students for "**gainful employment** in a recognized occupation."

- Final session of a negotiated rulemaking committee to draft regulations on gainful employment met on Dec.13, 2013

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Anticipated Impact

- Estimated 11,735 programs subject to the draft gainful employment regulations, 1,496 programs would fail to meet requirements, making them ineligible for federal student aid.

- Negotiated rulemaking committee did not reach unanimous agreement, USDE to propose new regulations or revise the set of regulations considered by the committee.

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USC Programs subject to HEA

- Examples include certificates in:
  - Advanced Practice Nursing
  - Higher Education Leadership
  - Counselor Education
  - Gerontology
  - Museum Management
  - Women and Gender Students

College Scorecard

- President Obama's proposal to create a federal college rating system
- Scores 5 areas
  - Costs
  - Graduation Rate
  - Loan Default Rate
  - Median Borrowing
  - Employment (only area not yet defined)
- http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/education/higher-education/college-score-card

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Employment

- U.S. Department of Education is seeking additional input regarding its proposed college rating system as of December 2013.

- In January, the department will convene a group of experts to help it choose the system's metrics and their weights. A draft plan for the system is due in the spring.

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Preparing Students to be Gainfully Employed

- Help students select majors based on understanding of interests, career paths, values and goals

- Make students aware of resume-building opportunities available in first 2 years

- Introduce informational interviewing/job shadowing/externships

- Enable participation in *multiple* internships/co-ops

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Preparing Students

- Begin job search or graduate/professional school application process *much* earlier
- Help students understand and acquire skills required by employers http://www.iftf.org/fileadmin/user_upload/images/whatwedo/IFTF_FutureWorkSkillsSummary.gif
- Build skills through complementary coursework

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Conclusion

- Issues of unemployment & underemployment are significant
- USC students are employable and performing well in the job market
- Hundreds of our students are not prepared
- Steps can be taken to address situation

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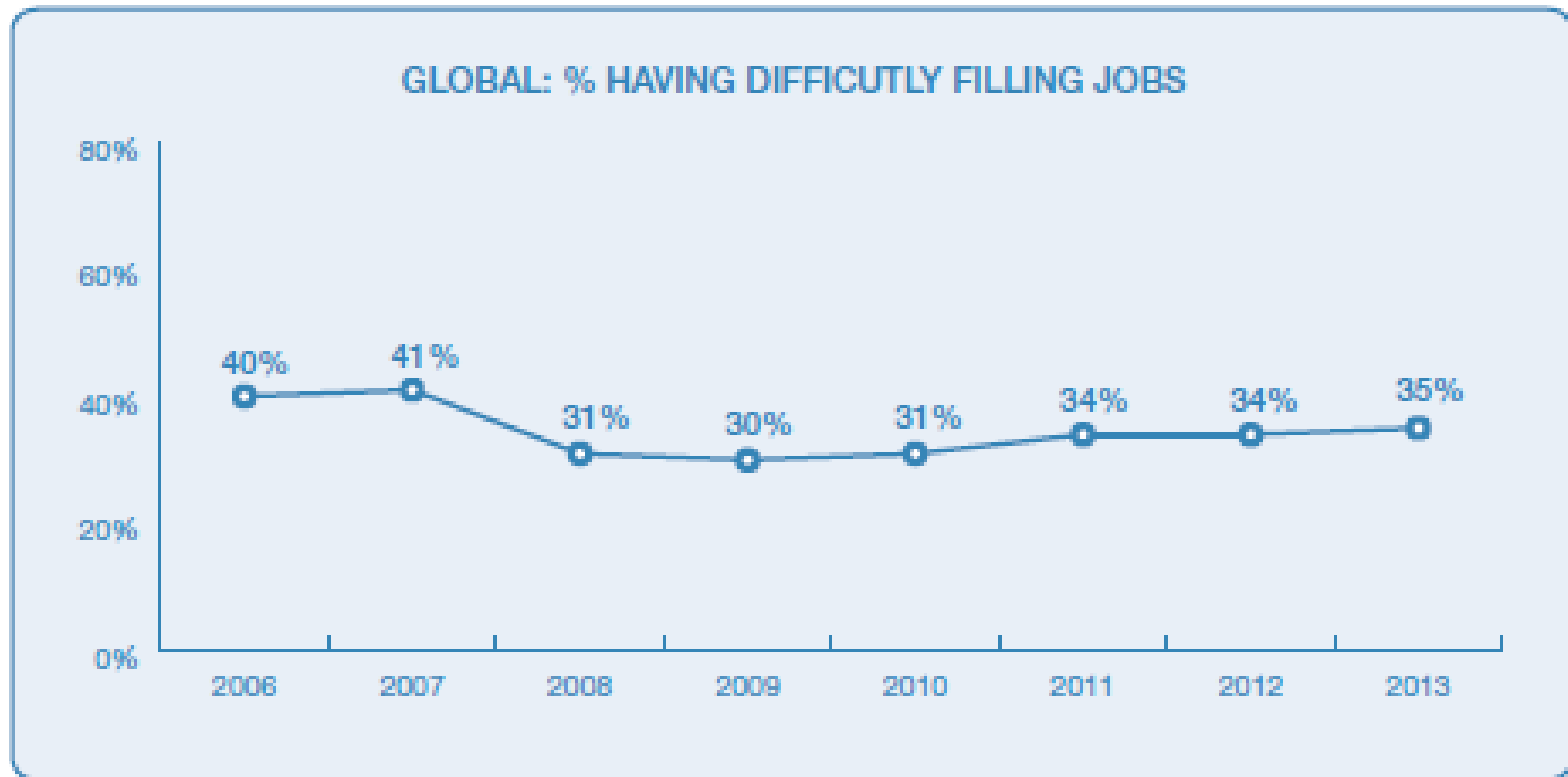
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Employability Plenary Session

Squirrels, Gamecocks and the Ivory Tower

Robert E. Ployhart
Darla Moore School of Business

Provost's Retreat
January 10, 2014

The Employability Gap is a Problem…

GLOBAL: % HAVING DIFFICUTLY FILLING JOBS

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The Employability Gap is a Problem…

TOP THREE REASONS EMPLOYERS HAVE DIFFICULTY FILLING JOBS

1 **34%** Lack of technical competencies (hard skills)
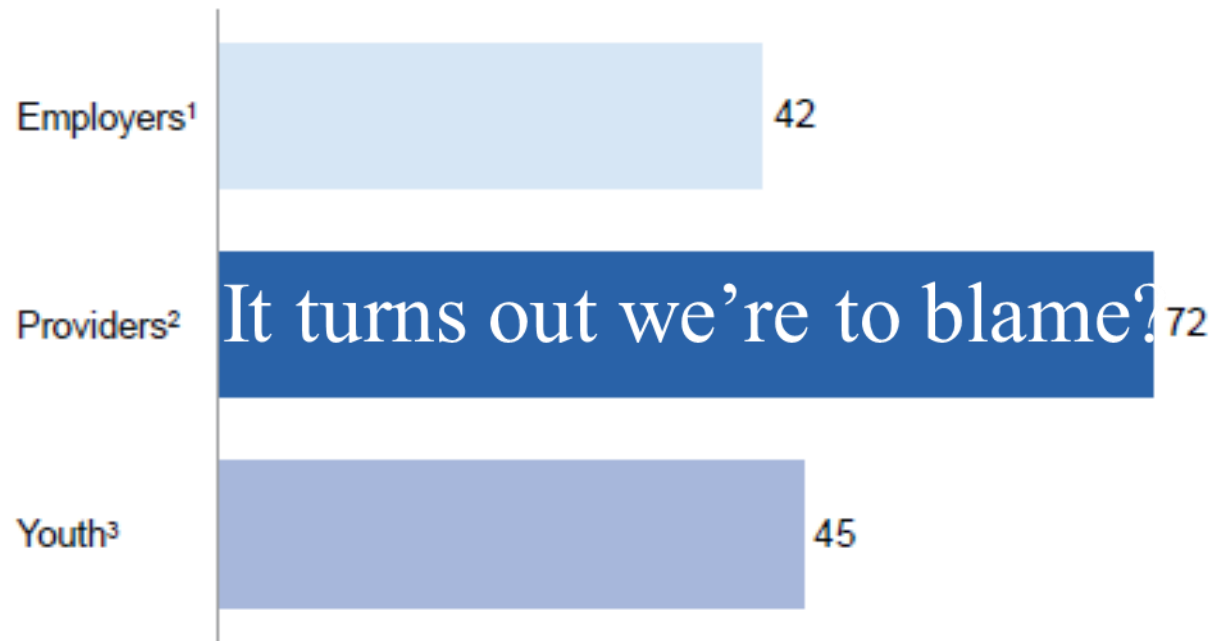
2 **32%** Lack of available applicants/no applicants

3 **24%** Lack of experience

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The Employability Gap is a Problem…

Agreement that graduates/new hires are adequately prepared

% of respondents

Employers[1] — 42

Providers[2] — It turns out we're to blame? 72

Youth[3] — 45

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What is the Gap?

Employer

Candidate

What is the Gap?

Employer

- Depth

- Specialization
  - Hard skills
  - Job experience

Candidate

- Breadth

- Generalization
  - Base knowledge
  - Varied experience

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Can We Narrow the Gap?

- Focus on generalizable soft skills
  - Leadership
  - Written and oral communication
  - Public speaking/presentation skills
  - Teamwork/collaboration
  - Social skills/emotional intelligence
  - Cultural agility/flexibility
  - Problem solving/critical thinking
  - Self-management
- Others?
  - Personal finance?
  - Work ethic?
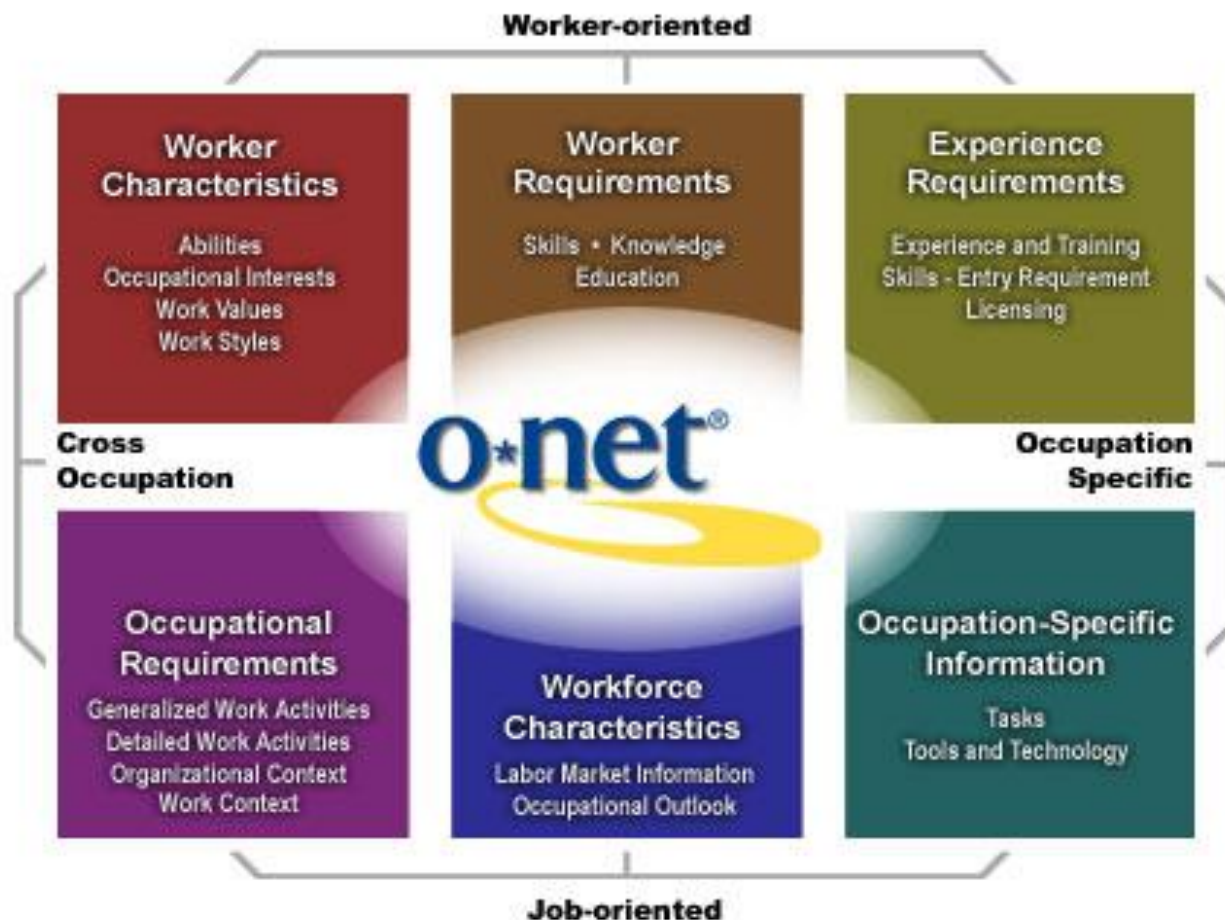 - Initiative?
  - Technological skills?

Can We Narrow the Gap?

- Identify key skill gaps (as appropriate)

- Discuss and emphasize skills in class (as appropriate)

- Set reasonable expectations for students

- Engage recent graduates or alumni to share experiences that reinforce skills

- Develop online communities

- Simulations and action learning

- "Whenever you can, count"

Can We Narrow the Gap?

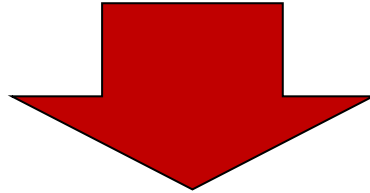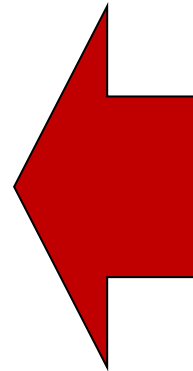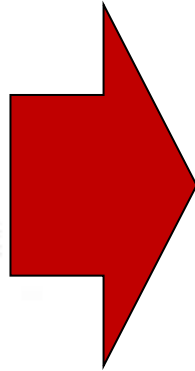- O*NET (http://www.onetonline.org/)

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Can We Narrow the Gap?

- Consider new employment models

The traditional employment model is a funnel

HELP WANTED

HELP WANTED

Active & passive job candidates

HELP WANTED

We *Can* Narrow the Gap

Employability Plenary Session: Professional Master's Degrees

Anna Scheyett, PhD

Dean, College of Social Work

Provost's Retreat

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Professional Master's Degrees (PMD)

- Designed to prepare students for applied practice in their chosen field—for employment

- Infusion of our best research and knowledge into the practice world

- An important source of tuition for a university

- Declining enrollment at USC

For employability within the PMD

- We need to:
  - Teach students the content and skills needed for work in their profession
  - Socialize them to the profession
  - Evaluate them to ensure competency
  - Help them find employment
  - Instill a desire for lifelong learning

Requirements for a PMD Resulting in Employability

- Pulse of the labor market

- Advanced professional skills

- Readiness for current employability within a profession

- Readiness for ongoing employability within a profession

Implications and Challenges to be Addressed Intentionally…

Labor Market

- Balancing growth of a program with labor demands in a field—preventing glut

- Balancing teaching for current labor needs versus "skating to where the puck is going to be"

- Balancing the scholar and practitioner—faculty with varying levels of connection to the current profession and job market
  - Do we really know what is needed and "out there"?

Advanced Professional Skills

- Often returning for PMD for professional advancement, so have many nontraditional students
  - Pedagogy that is effective for traditional and nontraditional students
  - Flexible and creative structures
  - Financial support for students

Current Employability

- Balancing the tension between theory and practice
- Students should be able to "hit the ground running"
  - To ground curriculum in current demand MUST partner with external professionals
  - Applied skills, meaning internship or practical partners
    - Issues of control and quality

Current Employability

- Curriculum considerations
  - Competency-based: the challenge of measurement
  - Must be nimble and able to respond to new findings, new policies, new practices
  - Balance core requirements and curriculum flexibility
    - Accrediting body versus market demands

Current Employability

- How do we differentiate our PMDs and our students—how do we compete for them, and how do they compete for employment after graduation?
  - Niche/specialization
  - Unique experiences
  - Structural programmatic differences

Ongoing Employability

- Balancing teaching for today and teaching for tomorrow
  - NOT an advanced technical college
  - Critical thinking skills
  - Leadership skills
  - Soft/relational skills
  - Program evaluation and self-evaluation
  - Instilling principle of lifelong learning

Ongoing Employability

- Balancing needs of students and needs of alumni
    - Continuing education
    - Affordable certificate programs
    - Linking alumni and students in meaningful ways for mentoring and employee recruitment

Conclusions

- True employability with a PMD requires
  - Acknowledgement that PMDs are labor and resource intensive
  - Careful and intentional crafting of program
  - Balance of theory and skills
  - Strong and ongoing relationships with professional community
  - Continuous quality improvement in relationship with the profession

Preparing Our Students for Their Future

Questions for All Groups

1) What role does a research university play in preparing students for a career?

2) What are the responsibilities of faculty members to prepare students for gainful employment upon graduation and throughout their careers?

Preparing Our Students for Their Future
Set 1

3) What are the employability skills the University should encourage students to develop?

4) How can colleges, departments, and faculty increase employer participation in the educational process?

5) Should we build a community of engaged faculty, staff, and employers to discuss and solve employability gaps?

6) What kinds of partnerships with professional organizations/agencies do Universities need to ensure the quality of learning in a professional master's degree? What are the characteristics of a good partnership?

Preparing Our Students for Their Future
Set 2

3) How can faculty members assist students in developing soft skills or technical skills to increase employability?

4) How can we better understand the expectations, needs, demands employers have of our students at the undergraduate, masters, and doctoral levels, and how do manage their expectations?

5) What type of support should the colleges give units, faculty, and staff to increase the employability of their students?

6) How can faculty members balance research and scholarship demands with the need to understand the skills and competencies needed in the professional employment world?

Preparing Our Students for Their Future
Set 3

3) What role does the student have in becoming workplace ready?

4) How can recent graduates and alumni be engaged to assist in reducing employability gaps?

5) Should employers become (more) involved in sharing their career experiences with students and giving input into curriculum development?

6) How can programs increase enrollment in professional masters degrees without risking overtaxing the job market?