



Office of Career and Professional Development Services

#1 Plan cycle - 1
Plan cycle 2024/2025
7/1/24 - 6/30/25

Introduction

The Office of Career and Professional Development Services provides a welcoming and supportive environment that promotes the growth and development of each student by providing opportunities to increase career readiness.

Performance Objective 1 Enhance student engagement and event attendance in Career and Professional Development Services programming.

1 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark: Host a minimum of six micro programs (tabling, workshops, academic presentations) per academic year to promote services.

1.1 Data

Semester	# of Micro Programs
Fall 2024	3
Spring 2025	8

1.1.1 Analysis of Data

2024-2025:

- We hosted eleven micro-events throughout the 2024-2025 academic year. This number does not include Career Services' voluntary participation in additional tabling activities across campus. The increase in events from fall to spring reflected greater capacity and heightened interest in program delivery. As the new department director, Fall 2024 was a transitional period. Spring demonstrated improved experience and vision, which we intend to continue developing.
- The spring semester featured a greater variety of event formats, incorporating different engagement strategies and opportunities. However, it is important to ensure an equitable distribution of events across each semester.

1.1.2 Plan for Continuous Improvement

2024-2025:

- Career services will focus on strengthening collaborations and more intentionally tracking impact to effectively identify areas of need and student demand.
- Enhance the accessibility, consistency, and impact of micro career development events by aiming to hold a minimum of four events per semester.
- Monitor the campus event calendar and schedule small tabling sessions or events during peak periods of student traffic and engagement. Continue to expand partnerships with academic departments across campus to promote opportunities for workshops or presentations during class time.

2 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark: Organize two macro events per semester to facilitate student and community involvement in career-based campus events.

2.1 Data

Academic Year	# of Macro Events
2024-2025	5

2.1.1 Analysis of Data

2024-2025:

- The benchmark was exceeded by one event, with two scheduled for the fall and three for the spring. The events were designed to enhance student exposure to career pathways, employer engagement, and community partnerships. The program's strength and impact are evident, consistently attracting strong student and community engagement.
- Attendance from students and employers remained steady. However, there is potential to enhance program variety by expanding/altering the range of opportunities provided. The events can be altered to include more variety in the agenda/schedule, or we can work towards partnering with other colleges with smaller, specialized focuses.
- Planning large events that require participation from community partners requires diligent planning well in advance to secure available dates for all parties involved. Spring 2025 Career Expo nearly suffered from an overlapping event. This lesson has been applied to future planning.

2.1.2 Plan for Continuous Improvement

2024-2025:

- Expand the scope, diversity, and outreach of macro-level career-focused events to increase engagement among students and community partners, ensuring that performance metrics meet or exceed established benchmarks.
- Conduct at least two large-scale events each semester, with the possibility of adding a third event based on resource availability and emerging opportunities.
- Develop a comprehensive event calendar by August of each academic year to support strategic planning, inter-departmental coordination, and clear communication.
- Incorporate a variety of event formats and themes by introducing innovative elements, thematic variations, and collaborative partnerships to enhance engagement and effectiveness.

Performance Objective 2 Foster employer partnerships to increase on-campus resources.

1 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark: Increase the number of industries represented at recruiting events each academic year.

1.1 Data

Academic Year	# of Industries
2024-2025	40

1.1.1 Analysis of Data

2024-2025:

- There are five major recruiting events hosted by Career Services each academic year—two career fairs, two internship expos, and one teacher fair. For the 2024-2025 academic year, these events collectively hosted over 180 companies and employers, representing a total of 40 industries.
- Aside from the teacher fair, which is focused on a specific academic discipline, there is significant demand in the refinery and trade sectors in the region. However, there is an opportunity to increase employer diversity, particularly in underrepresented sectors within liberal and fine arts. The participation of 180 companies is a solid total, but additional outreach and engagement are needed to broaden the presenting organizations.
- There is also a strong retention rate of employers across several industries, including finance, refineries, trades, education, and government.

1.1.2 Plan for Continuous Improvement

2024-2025:

- Enhance industry diversity across all career-related events, with the aim of incorporating 3-4 new industries annually. Utilize Handshake, survey data, and community networks to research underrepresented industries and develop targeted outreach to employers.
- Maintain or increase the number of employers participating in events. Build connections through participation in other campus events to foster partnerships and collaborations with community organizations and colleges.
- Continue to administer post-event surveys to employers and students to identify gaps and opportunities for improvement.

2 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark: Increase the number of networking opportunities for students.

2.1 Data

Academic Year	# of Networking Opportunities
2024-2025	10

2.1.1 Analysis of Data

2024-2025:

- Fall 2024 marked a transitional period into this position. There was an increase in planning and events during the spring, resulting in a total of 10 networking opportunities for students. These included tabling, large and small-scale events, and career readiness workshops. Each event was open to students campus-wide, with limited industry-specific focus.

- There also appears to be increased interest in career and job opportunities during the latter part of the academic year, likely related to summer job and internship searches. Workshops were introduced to help students prepare for and engage with the career center in anticipation of larger job fairs. This approach will be continued in the coming year, with events scheduled each semester to address a broader range of student needs.
- Although attendance was lower for the career readiness workshops, students reported feeling less pressure to network in the relaxed setting and during ongoing discussions (e.g., workshops with ICSHRM and Literacy Council of SWLA).

2.1.2 Plan for Continuous Improvement

2024-2025:

- Incorporate industry insights into student preparation for career events such as panels, newsletters, and spotlight weeks. Emphasize resources available both on and off campus, and facilitate connections, as demonstrated last semester with ICSHRM and the Literacy Council of SWLA.
- When planning future networking opportunities, we will evaluate event logistics—including location, timing, format, and target audience—to identify what is effective and what areas may need adjustment. We will continue to utilize feedback and surveys to assess the post-event impact and outcomes. Specifically, we will monitor whether students are establishing connections and following up on opportunities presented during these events. By comparing data from previous years, we will set goals for increasing attendance and improving overall satisfaction.
- Event promotion and outreach strategies will be integrated into every improvement plan within the department. Additionally, Career Services aims to enhance visibility on campus to better promote student awareness of available opportunities, events, resources, and services.

Performance Objective 3 Cultivate relationships with the campus community to enhance career readiness.

1 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark: Conduct at least 10 one-on-one career advising sessions per semester.

1.1 Data

Semester	# of Advising Sessions
Fall 2024	14
Spring 2025	10

1.1.1 Analysis of Data

2024-2025:

- Advising sessions encompass a wide range of career development topics, including resumes and cover letters, job search strategies, career assessments, and academic and professional guidance. A higher number of sessions were conducted during the fall semester, which may suggest increased demand during that period. Conversely, there were more workshops available to students in the spring semester, potentially reducing the need for individual appointments.
- Each semester, appointment requests tended to increase in the months leading up to or during career fairs. Peak advising periods for Fall 2024 were in August and October, while for Spring 2025, they were in January and March.
- If these trends persist, the benchmark may need to be adjusted. However, with the addition of more workshops and seminars planned for the 2025-2026 academic year, student engagement and appointment volume could become more evenly distributed throughout the semester events.

1.1.2 Plan for Continuous Improvement

2024-2025:

- The online platform Handshake will be utilized to facilitate appointments and bookings whenever possible. This platform will record data related to request types, check-ins, and session frequency. Feedback forms will be distributed after each session to evaluate satisfaction and identify areas for improvement.
- A tracking spreadsheet will be developed to log session data and feedback, with a review of trends and patterns scheduled mid-semester.

- Sessions will be promoted to the student body through email, social media, and classroom announcements. Collaboration with academic staff will be pursued whenever feasible to increase awareness of resources and improve accessibility, potentially through referrals or incentives.

2 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark: Earn an average score of at least 4.0 (on a 5.0 scale) on student and employment survey.

2.1 Data

Academic Year	Response Rate	Average Score
2024-2025	14	3.75

2.1.1 Analysis of Data

2024-2025:

The benchmark was not achieved. While 14 responses were received, the response rate remains very low relative to the actual attendance figures from both employers and students. Students were provided with digital access to surveys through Handshake and Forms; although the response rate was limited, the feedback was generally more positive than that from employers. The employers' responses primarily reflected disappointment with the engagement of the student audience.

2.1.2 Plan for Continuous Improvement

2024-2025:

A leadership transition prior to the start of the fall semester may have impacted the response rate, as adjustments were underway for existing programs. Moving forward, we will analyze underlying issues and identify patterns of dissatisfaction or areas for improvement. To enhance engagement and participation, we plan to increase incentives for survey completion. Additionally, we will implement targeted improvements based on survey data, such as student preparation initiatives and employer-focused adjustments. In addition to collecting feedback after events, we will distribute surveys mid-semester and actively promote participation to improve the overall response rate.

3 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark: Increase the number of students who visit the Cowboy Closet each academic year.

3.1 Data

Academic Year	# of Visits to Cowboy Closet
2024-2025	209

3.1.1 Analysis of Data

2024-2025:

- Cowboy Closet visits include tours, events, walk-ins, and appointments; however, not all visits result in items being checked out. Students are allotted 10 items a semester. Additional items can be picked up when participating in pop-up events.
- Semester Overview:
 - Fall 2024: 104 visits, 95 checkouts, 330 items used
Peak months: September–October
Approximately 91% of visitors checked out items
 - Spring 2025: 105 visits, 77 checkouts, 376 items used
Peak month: February
Approximately 73% of visitors checked out items
- Although spring experienced lower foot traffic, the number of items used was higher. This may be attributed to increased demand for summer and job opportunities, as well as a greater need for formal and professional attire during this season and the conclusion of the academic year.
- Overall, the usage and traffic of the Cowboy Closet remain strong, particularly during months hosting career-related events.

3.1.2 Plan for Continuous Improvement

2024-2025:

- Continue to improve the promotion and visibility of this resource for students. Increase outreach through faculty collaborations, student organizations, and campus advertising channels.
- Plan additional open house tours and events, particularly at the beginning of the semester, to raise awareness. Incorporate themed pop-up events and display racks.
- Gather and leverage student testimonials to highlight the accessibility, quality, and diversity of items available in the closet.
- Implement a digital sign-in system to replace the current paper tracking method. Send follow-up communications to assess the impact and gather insights on reasons for non-use, to enhance offerings. Continue collecting and utilizing student testimonials to promote the closet’s accessibility and the variety of items available.

Performance Objective 4 Expand external corporate sponsorship support for Career and Professional Development Services.

1 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark: Retain at least \$10,000 in current external corporate sponsorships and obtain an additional \$5,000 in new external corporate sponsorships per fiscal year.

Prior to 2022-2023, the benchmark was to raise at least \$10,000 in external corporate sponsorships each academic year.

1.1 Data

Academic Year	Amount Raised
2021-2022*	\$15,500

*Career and Professional Development Services also raised \$3,500 in funds specifically earmarked for the Cowboy Closet initiative and received an earmark of \$20,000 (targeted for student career development initiatives) from a Citgo Petroleum gift to the University. The \$15,500 amount raised noted above is exclusively for corporate sponsorships related to Career Expo and related activities.

Academic Year	Retained Sponsorships		New Sponsorships	
	#	\$	#	\$
2022-2023	1	\$10,000	1	\$10,000
2023-2024	6	\$6,000	6	\$3,600
2024-2025	8	\$7,200	6	\$3,600

1.1.1 Analysis of Data

2021-2022:

Career and Professional Development Services exceeded its benchmark for year one corporate sponsorship funding by \$5,500. Employer partners appear to be enthusiastic about their return to campus-based employment recruiting and career development outreach efforts. Lingering COVID-19 labor shortages and population shifts due to lack of affordable housing in the region following hurricane impacts between 2020 and 2021 continue to result in increased employment opportunities across the SWLA region and further into key metropolitan centers in Louisiana and Texas.

Fall and Spring Career Expo events were at full capacity and employers continue to solicit assistance with recruiting new employees from among the McNeese student and alumni population as evidenced by increases in employer registrations and job postings on the McNeese Handshake job posting system.

The outlook for 2022-2023 is not quite as optimistic given the rise of inflation, rising fuel prices, and continuing supply chain problems associated with COVID-19 and other factors. With an economic recession potentially unfolding, it is possible employer partners will be less generous with corporate sponsor dollars in the next 12 months.

2022-2023:

One corporate sponsor was retained, and the same sponsor made a \$10,000 donation to Career and Professional Development Services. The manager of CPDS separated from the University in October 2022, and a new manager assumed duties in that same month. The new director is becoming acquainted with key stakeholders in business and industry and establishing working relationships with them, an essential ingredient for increasing corporate sponsorships.

2023-2024:

The sponsorship goal was missed by \$400. During this period, 6 new sponsors were secured, totaling \$3,600. 6 sponsors were retained, accounting for \$6,000 in sponsorship revenue.

2024-2025:

The benchmark was partially met, with a total sponsorship revenue reaching \$10,800. Of this, \$7,200 came from 8 retained sponsors, while 6 new sponsors contributed \$3,600. Overall, the total number of sponsors increased by 2 compared to the previous year. Retained is defined by any company that sponsored during either semester of the previous year.

1.1.2 Plan for Continuous Improvement

2021-2022:

Career and Professional Development Services will seek to maintain at least \$15,000 in corporate sponsorship funding for the forthcoming 2022-2023 academic year. The objective is to retain at least \$10,000 in current sponsorship dollars and obtain an additional \$5,000 in new sponsorship dollars.

2022-2023:

Retain the goal to increase corporate sponsorships to \$15,000 in 2023-2024 by retaining at least \$10,000 and adding \$5000 in new support.

2023-2024:

2024-2025:

Enhance sponsorship retention efforts through increased relationship management with partners. Implement check-ins, tailor and promote sponsorship benefits, and initiate renewal discussions early on in the semester/year. To increase new sponsorships, implement targeted outreach incentives, compelling benefit packages, and make use of networking and referrals. Keep marketing promotions current and active.