ASSESSING STUDENT EMPLOYMENT IN LIBRARIES FOR CRITICAL THINKING & CAREER READINESS

Library Assessment Conference 2022
BACKGROUND AND INSPIRATION

- **ROI:** Over $1 million was spent on student wages in UO Libraries (ARL 2019)
  - *Is there a return on this “investment” besides completed work tasks?*
- **HIPs:** Library student employment as a High Impact Practice
  - *Mitola et al. (2018), Rinto et. al (2019), and others.*
- **Student Success:** +2% graduation rate in student employees across campus including the Libraries (UO Institutional Research)
  - *Library employment has a positive impact on student success -- but what are we actually doing that might account for this?*
- **Career Readiness:** 90% of employers are “more likely” to hire a graduate with work-study or college employment experience (AAC&U 2021)
- **Library Alumni:** Reframing library students employees as “library alumni”
  - *How does the library employment experience inform their success, learning, and growth?*
  - *How do we articulate and continue to develop this ongoing relationship?*
RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING & CONTEXT:  WHAT WE DID...

• ENGAGED WITH LIBRARY HR AND STUDENT SUPERVISORS IN THE UO LIBRARIES
• ENGAGED WITH THE UO CAMPUS COMMUNITY OF STUDENT SUPERVISORS

THE CAMPUS WAS INTERESTED IN NACE: NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND THEIR CAREER READINESS COMPETENCIES.

Career Readiness Competencies
There are eight career readiness competencies, each of which can be demonstrated in a variety of ways.

- Leadership
- Professionalism
- Teamwork
- Technology
- Equity & Inclusion
- Critical Thinking
- Communication
- Career & Self-Development
POTENTIAL ASSESSMENT AREAS FOR STUDENT EMPLOYEES

Student Employment Development Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hire</th>
<th>Training</th>
<th>On-the-Job Experience</th>
<th>Student Success</th>
<th>Career Readiness</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation artifacts:</td>
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<td>Definition of learning:</td>
<td>NACE Career Readiness Competencies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Job descriptions</td>
<td>Training curriculum</td>
<td>Employee evaluations</td>
<td>Our students will graduate... having had a positive experience, and will be well educated, socially responsible and career ready.”</td>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Applicant demographics</td>
<td>Training rates</td>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>Measures:</td>
<td>Career &amp; Self Development</td>
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<td>Resume</td>
<td>Quality of completion of job tasks</td>
<td>Work products</td>
<td>• GPA</td>
<td>Communication</td>
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<td>Resume rubric</td>
<td>Pre/Post Evaluations</td>
<td>Student reflections</td>
<td>• Retention rates</td>
<td>Equity &amp; Inclusion</td>
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<td>Interview rubric</td>
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<td>Surveys</td>
<td>• Graduation rates</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
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<td>Onboarding self-evaluation</td>
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<td>Tasks Inventory</td>
<td>• “Positive experience”</td>
<td>Professionalism</td>
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ASSESSMENT PROJECT:
SURVEY & RESUME ANALYSIS (WINTER 2022)

Please rank these workplace skills or competencies in order of importance to the ACADEMIC MAJOR you previously shared on this survey, with "1" being the most important.

(Hover over the terms below to see definitions)

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Surveyed library student employees current (N=22) and former (N=8). Also included current library student supervisors (N=3).

Survey asked respondents to:
- Rank NACE competencies by importance to self, major, future/current career
- Give library employment example for each NACE competency in own words
- Self-report confidence in each NACE competency currently/before employment
- Did they receive training on NACE competency and/or learn while on the job.
- Supervisor survey had similar questions but more focused on their student employee expectations/observations regarding NACE competencies.
ASSESSMENT PROJECT: SURVEY & RESUME ANALYSIS (WINTER 2022)

29 RESUMES GATHERED

22 current and 7 former student employees

DEDOOSE CODING

Codes checked for descriptive words such as “research” or “analyze” associated with either the NACE critical thinking competency or the AACU critical thinking skills rubric.

CODE ANALYSIS

Codes were sorted by association either with work before UO employment or work associated with UO employment, to determine a delta of new critical thinking skills added due to UO library employment.
CAREER READINESS SURVEY METHODOLOGY

FORMER LIBRARY STUDENT EMPLOYEES (N=8)
Survey: Rate NACE skills by importance to academic major, career, confidence, and self. Were they trained on NACE skills and examples.
Resume Review: Use rubric to identify learned career skills.

CURRENT LIBRARY STUDENT EMPLOYEES (N=22)
Survey: Rate NACE skills by importance to academic major, career, confidence, and self. Were they trained on NACE skills and examples.
Resume Review: Use rubric to identify incoming and learned skills.

SUPERVISORS OF LIBRARY STUDENTS (N=3)
Survey: Rating of NACE skills for student employees and examples. Confidence in student employees NACE skills. Training Supervisors received on NACE skills.
99% of employers consider critical thinking an essential skill (NACE 2020)

95% of employers value critical thinking as somewhat/very important (AAC&U 2021)

Critical thinking is one of the AAC&U Value rubric topics.
**KEY SURVEY FINDINGS**

**STUDENT VS EMPLOYER VALUES**

59% of current students list critical thinking as one of their Top 3 skills needed for their future career.

Employers value this skill at 95-99% (AAC&U & NACE)

**STUDENT SELF-EVALUATION**

77% of current students have high confidence in their critical thinking skill level

Only 60% of employers ranked current graduates proficient in critical thinking (NACE 2020)

**TRAINING GAP**

64% of current students were unsure or did not receive training on critical thinking

100% of student supervisors surveyed (N=3) indicated they did not receive training on critical thinking.
RESUME ANALYSIS FINDINGS

- 73% of current student resumes and 83% of former student resumes analyzed included language related to critical thinking associated with the libraries experiences (e.g. research, analyze, etc).

- An average of 2.5 critical thinking descriptors associated with libraries experience were added to students resumes.
Practical Implications

**GAP BETWEEN STUDENT EXPECTATIONS OF NEEDED CAREER SKILLS AND EMPLOYER EXPECTATIONS**

*Potential interventions:* Continued assessment and student education.

**STUDENTS MIGHT BE OVER-ESTIMATING THEIR CRITICAL THINKING SKILL LEVEL**

*Potential interventions:* Continued assessment and student education.

**STUDENTS RESUMES INDICATE CRITICAL THINKING WORK AT LIBRARIES**

*Potential interventions:* Identify tasks and articulate how they support critical thinking.

**STUDENTS REPORT NO SPECIFIC CRITICAL THINKING TRAINING**

*Potential interventions:* Create formal training program with critical thinking as learning outcome.

**SUPERVISORS NEED TRAINING AND SUPPORT FOR DEVELOPING & ASSESSING CAREER READINESS**

*Potential interventions:* Collaborate with Library HR on supervisor training programs.
Library HR and Student Supervisors are willing collaborators but often short on time. Do heavy lifting for them if you can.

Dataset indicated that the library student employment experience is a fertile assessment/research area for student success and career impact.

Researchers move on for “student library employees” as subject. Library Assessment might need to fill up the gap.
NACE: https://www.naceweb.org/

What is Career Readiness? - National Association of Colleges & Employers  
https://www.naceweb.org/career-readiness/competencies/career-readiness-defined/


How College Contributes to Workforce Sucess - AAC&U Employers  
https://www.aacu.org/2021-report-employer-views-higher-education

AACU Value Rubric, Critical Thinking


Full list of Citations & Resources: https://bit.ly/3Tfbdwe
QUESTIONS?

Contact: rick.stoddart@gmail.com