

# ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES, PRESIDENT'S CLUSTER, AND STUDENT SUCCESS AND SUPPORT PROGRAMS, COLLEGE CENTERS ANNUAL PROGRAM PLANNING WORKSHEET FOR 2021

**Program:** Career Connections **Planning Year:** 2022 **Last Year CPPR Completed:** 2018-2019

**Unit:** Community Programs **Cluster:** Research, Grants and Community Engagement

**Please complete the following information. Please note that responses are not required for all elements of this document.**

## I. GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

- A. Describe changes to program mission, if applicable.
  
- B. Describe any changes in primary relationships, internal and external, to the District.
  
- C. List any changes to program service, including changes and improvements, since last year, if applicable.
  
- D. List changes to program in the last year in reference to relevant statutory authority/program regulation and related compliance issues, if any.

## II. ANNUAL PROGRAM SUPPORT OF DISTRICT'S MISSION STATEMENT, INSTITUTIONAL GOALS, INSTITUTIONAL OBJECTIVES, AND/OR INSTITUTIONAL LEARNING OUTCOMES

- A. Provide updates, if any, in how your program addresses or helps to achieve the District's Mission Statement in the last year.

In January of 2019 Career Connections performed a review and assessment of its structure, services and processes and identified a number of initiatives to take to improve the overall scope and effectiveness of the services and resources offered to Cuesta students in the area of work and career readiness and placement. The program review was facilitated by an outside consultant, Erick Briggs of Network Kinecton and confirmed the effectiveness of the existing staffing and overall program structure of work readiness and placement/internship services. The main outcome and benefit of the review and consultation was to learn about best practices for outreaching to students

and employers, and tracking placements in a more structured fashion, which is helping staff to effectively support students achieve their immediate and long-term career goals. Specifically, the review led to improving many of the forms and processes used in delivering Career Connections services. When the department went to 100% remote delivery in March of 2020, our primary focus was making these forms accessible through our website, which inspired another update of the content of the forms and development of an Internship Inquiry form, with questions more specific to internship development that aligns with academic course content.

The Employment Services Coordinator continues to be the student-facing individual focused on helping students achieve their career goals with job searching techniques (including job search, resume writing and interview preparation), job placement through federal and state-funded work study programs, and coordinating with local employers/agencies to provide work-study and internship opportunities and placements, which helps both the community and students learn skills in the real-world setting. The Employment Services Coordinator also coordinates the annual job fair and other employer information panels aimed at connecting students and employers on campus.

The Job Developer focuses on outreaching to local employers to identify work opportunities for students and aligning opportunities with coursework. The Job Developer also presents work opportunities to specific classrooms and assists with connecting students to structured internships through the Cooperative Work Experience program. This position has enhanced college capacity to help students in the Career Technical Education (CTE) programs find work experience and employment opportunities as well as better track and report these placements.

As part of the program review Career Connections developed and began implementing a survey (in CTE classes initially) that assesses students' career search and readiness needs so that Career Connections staff can better assist them with moving forward in their respective career paths. The job developer was also tasked with providing information on industry needs back to departments so that CTE programs may have additional information on the latest trends in the field, therefore, helping certificated students to be more marketable and advance in the workforce.

In September 2018 Career Connections started the Cougar Career Closet, a donation-based gently used clothing closet of professional clothing for students. Donations of gently used and clean professional clothing has been steadily coming in and clothing is available for free to any currently registered students in need of professional attire for job interviews or first day of work. We anticipate this service reducing barriers to employment for any student in need and have served over 170 students since it's implementation, with an average of 5 students using the closet per week when classes are in session.

- B. Provide updates, if any, to how your program addresses or helps to achieve the District's Institutional Goals and Objectives, and/or operational planning initiatives in the last year.

**Institutional Goal 1: San Luis Obispo County Community College District will increase the rates of completion for degrees, certificates, transfer-readiness overall for all students.**

Career Connections continues to help students with gaining access to student-friendly jobs and entry-level jobs, which helps students who need to earn an income while they complete their respective degrees and education goals. Our Job Developer's focus on placement in internships and part-time opportunities in the CTE programs helps students gain hands-on experience in the industry that they have chosen to study so they will be able to connect their studies to real world experiences and see what a completion of their degree or certificate will do for them. Since most employers desire students that are close to the end, or further along in their degree or certificate program, students interested in placement will be motivated to complete the program in order to have access to internship opportunities. We also alert students to earning potential associated with the completion of certificates and degrees in comparison to no degree or certificates so as to encourage them to complete their education and training programs. The data collected by the Department of Labor shows that program completion represents higher pay for community college graduates.

**Institutional Goal 2: San Luis Obispo County Community College District will increase student access to higher education.**

Career Connections staff assists students in obtaining a job, which is critical for most students attending Cuesta to be able to afford attending college at all. Staff also works to establish internships, work experience, work-study and other employment opportunities that encourage long-term career pathways skills for students directly related to their courses of study. Our staff participated in the writing of and will be providing ongoing assistance with two grants that are tied to internship placements and funding for the GIS Certificate program and the Title V Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions grant. This year, the programs that the Job Developer has focused on creating short-term internships for are in Agricultural Business, Automotive, Architecture, Business, Engineering, Computer Information Systems, Human Services, Criminal Justice, Nutrition, and Welding Technology. These hands-on experiences often encourage students to pursue continued education because many local entry-level jobs require a four-year degree or industry related certification (within CTE programs).

**Institutional Goal 3: San Luis Obispo County Community College District will develop and sustain collaborative projects and partnerships with the community's educational institutions, civic organizations, businesses, and industries.**

Career Connections continues to meet with local employers about current and future employment needs while providing opportunities for students to incorporate internships, work experience, work-study and other employment opportunities into their current course of study. We consider many local area employers to be our partners in developing a strong and highly skilled workforce. Career Connections hosts an advisory committee made up of employers from a variety of industry sectors including hospitality, retail sales, media, Department of Rehabilitation and Workforce Development agencies.

The campus moving to a distance learning and remote service delivery in March of 2020 changed the types of activities Career Connections could organize and participate in during the academic year. Instead of assisting with Cougar Welcome Day events and Job Fairs, Career Connections staff collaborated with other campus departments and faculty to bring our services and workforce information to the students that focused on opportunities connected to coursework. This included recruiting job shadow sites for Agricultural Business Job Shadow Day in January 2020, organizing workshops for students in Nuclear Maintenance Program to assist students in obtaining a paid internship at Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant, and providing current employment data emphasizing the importance of degree or certificate completion in the current job market. The Employment Services Coordinator also maintains and updates the Employment Trainer Partnership List in coordination with the local Workforce Development Board and participates on the Workforce Development Taskforce Committee for the SLO County Economic Vitality Corporation, a collaboration of businesses, employers, government agencies and educational institutions.

The Job Developer is focused on developing a pipeline to employment opportunities between CTE students and employers/ businesses and is placing the emphasis on building employer relations, in particular with businesses that will employ Cuesta College students as they reach the end of their programs. The Job Developer is also staying connected and current on relevant industries and required skills in San Luis Obispo County and then bringing that industry information back to departments on campus. The Job Developer is a member of multiple committees relating to workforce development, e.g. Employment Development Department, Department for Rehabilitation, and the job development committee, and attends many CTE advisory committee meetings representing career services for students. The job developer worked with several departments to create opportunities for students. This including Human Services Department where opportunities were developed with employers within the social work industry. Relationships were developed or

strengthened with PathPoint, Los Osos Cares, CAPSLO, Cuesta College Health Center, Long Term Care Ombudsman. In Automotive/Autobody we have developed relationships with Sunset Honda and their affiliated companies, West Coast Automotive, Los Osos Auto body and B &B Auto Body. We have placed a few students in those locations. In our culinary department we have placed five students with a new hotel and restaurant called Hotel Cerro. Four of the students were referred to us by Restorative Partners and were reentry students.

All internships are directly related to coursework and many require that the students be near completion of their degree in order to qualify for internships.

**Institutional Goal 4: San Luis Obispo County Community College District will integrate and improve facilities and technology to support student learning and the innovations needed to serve its diverse communities**

Career Connections integrates the use of technology into the delivery of employment and internship services to Cuesta students, however this is an area of improvement in terms of providing up-to-date and modern platform to interact and engage with students. In July of 2020 Cuesta College joined the region in launching Jobspeaker, which is an integrated system that links work skills to curriculum for students, provides engaging and accessible interactions with employers and allows Career Connections to better capture student use information so we can offer relevant direct support services, including job recommendations based on the student's course of study and career goals. The job developer is currently working on outreach to increase the number of employers currently registered. To adapt to virtual services delivery, Career Connections staff transitioned surveys to JotForm and then Dynamic Form inquiry intakes for students to easily connect with staff about career services. This has streamlined our ability to respond to student inquiries. The job developer along with the Career Connections secretary are also currently working to streamline the internship process by creating all forms into Dynamic Form templates. Putting the forms in an electronic form will allow for easier and faster internship placements

Classroom visits transitioned to collaborating with faculty and other departments on focused workshops. In collaboration in with several departments across campus both the employment services coordinator and the job developer participated in creating an Entrepreneurial Summit Workshop for 37 students facing barriers to traditional employment or interested in starting their own business. Staff have presented workshops to the ENGAGE cohort of STEM students to discuss resume and interview skills, internship opportunities and recruited employers for mock interviews. The department collaborates with the Counseling to present monthly Career Pathway workshops on specific majors and industries associated with them to both identify

students who are seeking employment and provide follow up services that will help them reach their goals and meet their needs, and provide meaningful current job market information to students who are within specific majors. The Job Developer has also focused on addressing equity issues in committees such as the Dream Team in collaboration with the Monarch Center and the Latinx Leadership Network.

**Institutional Goal 5: San Luis Obispo County Community College District will build a sustainable and stable fiscal base.**

Career Connections staff helps build a sustainable and stable fiscal base by assisting students find jobs, which they need to afford to attend college. Career Connections also provides career readiness and placement services that link students in academic programs with local career-oriented opportunities. As the link between academic studies and employment opportunities is both strengthened at the college and acknowledged in the community, the appeal of pursuing a certificate or degree from Cuesta grows. Career Connections is also taking specific initiatives to recruit new students and promote enrollment, including a project to outreach and provide specialized services to re-entry students (formerly incarcerated), while also identifying work opportunities with local employers that will accommodate and support re-entry students. During 2020-2021, Career Connections has been providing the foundation for placement for services for students being served by the Title V Grant. This grant provides funding for five placements per year for 5 years, each with a new employer, for low-income and Hispanic students. Career Connections has also provided placement services and support for the GIS Grant, which provides funding for five paid internships per year. Each paid internship opportunity provides income and critical real-world experience for students that leads to higher income potential for students while providing local business and organizations an opportunity to train the future workforce.

**III. ANNUAL MEASUREMENTS, ANALYSIS AND IMPROVEMENTS**

Programs are often impacted by institutional or other organizational change. Please review program-relevant institutional data sources, such as institutional enrollment trends, which along with some other relevant program data, is available on the [SLOCCCD Institutional Research website](#). Other organizational or departmental measurements may provide useful information for planning in your program; please describe those measurements and the data below.

**A. Data Summary:**

- Describe data collection tool(s) used.

Sign-in tally sheet, SARS sign in, jobs database records, student surveys, intake forms submitted through the website, workshop attendance, staff records, and intake forms

that were developed to assist with identifying and tracking student needs when seeking Career Connections services. In-person services ended in March of 2020 so many of our data collections tools had to be adapted to the virtual environment, which proved challenging but gave us the opportunity to develop a more robust website.

- Include updates to program data results from the previous year, if any.

In 2019-2020 668 students were surveyed during in-class visits. In March Cuesta College moved to Distance Learning in response to COVID 19 guidelines and we found that surveys did not “work” the same way in the new learning environment. Career Connections began to provide workshops for classes specifically designed for industries associated with coursework, including an Internship Application and Interview workshop for 12 students in Nuclear Maintenance Program hoping to obtain a summer internship at Diablo Canyon, Ag Job Shadow Day preparation for 10 students participating in Ag Job Shadow Day at the end of January, Medical Assistant Job Interview Prep for 21 students, Entrepreneurial Summit Workshop for 37 students, ENGAGE Resume and Interview Prep and Internship workshops for 24 ENGAGE students and ongoing monthly Guided Pathway/ Career Exploration workshops in collaboration with the counseling department with varying attendance. Despite the switch in delivery and ongoing pandemic, Career Connections staff placed 82 students in internships (paid and unpaid) that were developed by staff.

Career Connections staff also worked to update our department website to align with ADA compliance and to help assist students and employers seeking our services better access staff. We added resources for students who may have been impacted from the pandemic including links to EDD services and resources for students with disabilities, Veterans, Undocumented Students, Single Caregiver Households and Re-Entry Students (previously referred to as Formerly Incarcerated). We also developed a YouTube channel to upload Employer Spotlights, interviews with local employers telling their story and sharing employment opportunities for students.

Employer Services: Career Connections maintains an Advisory Board that is open to local businesses and industries, and organizations. The committee meets once in the fall of each academic year.

Career Connections is a mandated partner to the Workforce Development Board and AJCC of San Luis Obispo County, and works closely with Eckerd Connects to provide a variety of opportunities to students and the community. The ETPL is updated annually to insure our programs are accessible for clients of the AJCC using WIOA funding. Career Connections staff also meets regularly with a Job Developer Committee, made up of job developers from multiple agencies like Department of Rehabilitation, EDD, and local regional centers to discuss job market needs and issues.

B. Data Interpretation:

- Describe results from previous improvement efforts to the program based on institutional or departmental changes.

Career Connections has highlighted these program improvement efforts:

**-Develop a more dynamic process for linking job-seeking students with local job opportunities.** Career Connections staff received training to update the Cuesta website, which is a central resource is making the link more dynamic, updates have been made to the website to increase the information available to students. Cuesta College joined the South County Region of Colleges in implementing Jobspeaker in July of 2020. Jobspeaker has proven to be a very accessible and easy to use job platform for students and employers, and allows Career Connections staff to be actively involved in recommending jobs to students using the platforms and tracking placements from the interview to the job offer. Included with Jobspeaker is access to LinkedIn Learning, and Career Connections has been working to curate content in English and Spanish for students. LinkedIn Learning has a database of thousands of professional development and job seeking videos that are industry specific. Currently we have 180 students active on Jobspeaker and 188 active jobs. 2,123 employers are registered on the platform. We are actively assisting with 16 applications through Jobspeaker.

**-Establish more formal and structured forms and processes to implement and track services provided to students, employers and department/faculty,** including in particular a survey to identify the services desired by students in the area of job search and placement. In Fall 2018 and Spring 2019 many forms and processes were revised (or created) and implemented including the student survey, and then adapted to jotforms/ Dynamic Forms for the website when we went to Distance Learning in 2020. A formalized internship template has also been developed and implemented to assist with linking educational courses of study to skill sets that help students qualify for internships.

**-Identify more work experience/internship and career-oriented opportunities.** The new Job Developer position has increased the ability to address this need. Approximately 70 internship/paid work experience opportunities have been developed and placed by the Job Developer. We currently have more opportunities than students who are willing to take them and those jobs are not included in the above number.

- Identify areas if any that may need improvement for program quality and growth.

These goals were listed last year and still are in a developmental stage due to the pandemic:

--The objective of developing a more dynamic process for linking job-seeking students with



local job opportunities was prioritized in Spring 2020, with, as noted above, strategies such as postings on the Career Connections website, notifications to faculty in areas related to the position, and email blasts and other means to connect with students. This area continues to be an issue as we find that many students are not pursuing major related employment.

--Developing a system for faculty to make referrals for students who are looking for internships or other course of study/ career related opportunities will assist Career Connections to continue to identify and assist students looking for employment opportunities and help faculty to be aware of internship/ work opportunities available to students within their specialty.

--Identify better and for delivering, assessing and tracking outcomes of Career Connections services. An on-line job platform with more functions for students and employers, and for tracking, would assist the quality and effectiveness of connecting students with local employers. This is in progress and we will re-evaluate this goal after Jobspeaker has been implemented and we assess where students and employers still need support. A tracking sheet has been developed to track students who have completed surveys, met with Career Connections staff with placement outcomes noted. This is a shared document that has been very helpful for Career Connections staff.

--The Job Developer has found that it is often difficult to obtain critical information from employers for the Internship Template regarding Job Description and skills. One solution would be for the Job Developer to have a laptop available for employer meetings so that templates can be completed during employer meetings and there would not be a delay in promoting the opportunity to students.

- Recommend any changes and updates to program based on the analysis above. For elements that require funding, complete the [Resource Plan](#) Worksheets.

#### **IV. ANNUAL PROGRAM OUTCOMES (ASOS AND SSOS), ASSESSMENT AND IMPROVEMENTS**

Your program has established either Administrative Service Outcomes or Student Service Outcomes. Those outcomes are assessed and tracked in the Course or Program Assessment Summary. Review CPAS documents for ASO or SSO assessment results for program outcomes.

- A. Describe any results from improvement efforts arising from ASO or SSO assessment in the last year.

- B. Recommend changes and updates to program based on assessment of program outcomes. For elements that require funding, complete the [Resource Plan](#) Worksheets and review the Resource Allocation Rubric.

**V. ANTICIPATED SERVICE CHALLENGES/CHANGES**

Provide a brief description of challenges or changes anticipated in the next year and any needs that have emerged as a consequence.

**Suggested Elements:**

- A. Regulatory changes- The directions from the Chancellor’s Office Strong Workforce initiative continue to drive the efforts of the Career Connections. A focus has been on developing internships with local employers, connecting with CTE programs and faculty to link current students with internships and employment opportunities in their field, and generally preparing students for the workplace.
- B. Internal and external organizational changes- Aligning Career Connections with Instruction within Cuesta and with the Regional South Central Consortium facilitates the efforts of the programs- Employment Services, Internships, Work Experience/PDS- to partner with CTE and non-CTE academic faculty and students. Career Connections strongly supports continuing the current alignment within Instruction.
- C. Student and staff demographic changes  
The impact of the Covid pandemic on the services of Career Connections was considerable.
- D. Community economic changes – workforce demands were also severely impacted by the Covid pandemic. Not only was it affected by the lack of “student friendly” jobs, students themselves were hesitant to look for jobs where there was a risk of exposure to Covid.
- E. Role of technology for information, service delivery and data retrieval  
The addition of the Jobspeaker job search and career services platform as a resource for Career Connections has strengthened the scope and quality of
- F. Providing service to multiple off-campus sites  
Career Connections started providing services to students and the community remotely in a daily drop-in session, which has made services accessible to all Cuesta students regardless of location in the county. An aspect of remote services will be maintained even after the Covid restrictions are lifted in order to maintain access to all students.
- G. Anticipated staffing changes/retirements  
  
Work Experience functions under the umbrella of Career Connections. Sharese McGee, Coordinator of Work Experience, will be resigning from the Coordinator position with her last day being 5/21/21. The Work Experience shares the coordinator with the CMC program. These programs are unrelated. The resignation of the current Coordinator provides the opportunity to re-organize the positions and allow CMC to have a

coordinator that is not shared with another program. Work Experience lacks a Faculty Lead to oversee and implement the academic component of the program. Establishing a (specialized) Faculty Lead position would eliminate the need for a Coordinator of Work Experience. The Secretary position in Career Connections provides support for the ongoing operations of the Work Experience program. PDS-Professional Development Studies courses also functions under the umbrella of Career Connections. Both PDS and Work Experience could be integrated under a Career Connections Faculty Lead.

## **VI. OVERALL BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

Provide a brief description of the immediate budget request(s) made in your [Resource Plan](#). These elements will be reflected in the District planning and budget process.

### **Elements:**

#### **A. Personnel**

As noted above, a Career Connections Faculty Lead position is proposed to oversee the academic components of Work Experience as well as regular Faculty Lead duties for the PDS program. The position is proposed at 12 hrs per week for 22 weeks per semester (44 weeks per year).

#### **B. Equipment/furniture (other than technology)**

C. Technology-The Jobspeaker platform, which was adopted by the region as the employment services platform has an annual fee of \$20,000 which will need to be funded.

D. Facilities- We love the location for Career Connections!

## SIGNATURE PAGE

Director(s), Manager(s), and/or Staff Associated with the Program

**Student Success and Support Programs, College Centers and Administrative Services Programs: All full-time director(s), managers, faculty and/or classified staff in the program must sign this form.**

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Division Chair/Director Name	Signature	Date
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