

The college-to-career experience: an emergent measure of student success

To deliver an undergraduate education that is both innovative and relevant, our institutions are engaging students in the process of creating knowledge, including meaningful assessment, evaluation and outcomes; encouraging a rich student experience; supporting traditional and emerging literacies; and cultivating cultural competencies, citizenship and a global perspective. On our campuses, we are seeing a continuing focus on student success and, increasingly, an emphasis on rethinking success in terms of the college-to-career experience. Today, examination and discussion of, and reflection on, the college-to-career experience pervades the popular and professional discourse about the value of higher education. The college-to-career transition is, without question, an emergent measure of student success. We suggest that this has important implications for our libraries and specifically for service design and delivery.

Today's undergraduates are concerned with career exploration, career opportunities and career readiness. They are asking questions. What are the highest paying jobs for college graduates? What careers pay well? What careers will have the most job openings? Undergraduates are also concerned with educational paths to both in-demand careers[1] and to employment. Career services' professionals are aware that, with so many possible career opportunities, the education, experience and skills required vary considerably from job to job. They advise undergraduates that it is best to have a general understanding of the type of position they are interested in to correctly identify their educational path. For undergraduates this raises additional questions – what major is the best to get a job? What can I do with a bachelor's degree in [fill in the blank]?

As today's undergraduates begin or continue their college-to-career journey, they will have many opportunities to connect with academic libraries, library professionals and staff. For job-hunting students, connecting with library resources and services can help with career exploration, finding information about job and industry outlook, resume development and interview preparation. The library's role in information literacy instruction and support of both traditional and emerging literacies, including financial literacy, will help students develop the knowledge, skills and abilities they need to successfully transition from college to career. We know that these skills and abilities enable students to be lifelong learners and prepare them to be responsible global citizens. These skills and abilities also contribute to their workforce readiness and position them to secure desirable jobs and competitive salaries.

Returning to student success, most of our institutions have defined what student success means to them based on their mission and student goals. Once defined, most of our institutions have developed a policy, policies and/or metrics to measure progress. Retention rates, graduation rates, time to completion, academic performance and tracking educational goals are examples of the most commonly seen metrics to measure student success. However, student success is defined and measured on our campuses, most of us can easily tick off examples of our libraries' contributions to student academic success. Given our evolving conception and assessment of student success, and the emergence of the college-to-career transition as a measure of student success, we need to think deeply and critically about our libraries' contributions to the



college-to-career experience. We invite readers to drive discussions at their institutions and work about how their libraries' resources, services and spaces contribute to the college-to-career experience.

Editorial

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1. <https://thebestschools.org/careers/in-demand-jobs-requiring-undergraduate-degree/>