Project Summary: Career Services / Office Environment Focus Group

Project Details

Description of assessment/background: Rather than an electronic/paper survey, we wanted to do a focus group for this project in order to ask open ended questions, and generate ideas among students around the topic of improving our office space/services. The focus group setting was helpful in meeting our goals because it allowed students to voice their opinions as well as build off of each other’s ideas.

Goal of assessment: The goal of this focus group is to find out how students feel about our office environment, gather information on how they're motivated to visit our office, and solicit feedback on making our space more welcoming & inviting.

Population invited to participate (e.g., “students who attended...”): Current students (or those who graduated May 2015) who have participated in services/programming in our office: Appointments, OCR/Practice Interviews, Workshops or Information Sessions in CEC/380, and Walk-in Resume Reviews.

Number of Participants: 4 students attended the focus group, and 2 provided feedback electronically.

Summary of Key Findings (Did your assessment accomplish your assessment goal? Was the desired outcome of the program or service achieved? Describe why/why not and what was learned. Include data to support your statements.)

Our assessment goal was met through the focus group. Below is a table of responses & topics discussed during the session. Items in Blue were brought up by students. Items in Orange are comments brought up by staff which were validated by students during the focus group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question: General Perception of Career Services</th>
<th>Student Feedback &amp; Staff Suggestions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• I know it's here, but I don’t think anything of it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• I don’t know (or didn’t know before coming) what you do/offer</td>
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<td>Experience first coming into CS</td>
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<td>• We were prompt &amp; didn’t keep them waiting too long.</td>
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<td>• Confused between CS &amp; UC upstairs</td>
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<td>• Website is not very intuitive—one student tried to make an appointment and gave up.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• When they come in for help, they want it now &amp; not to wait</td>
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ASSESSMENT, EVALUATION & RESEARCH ● STUDENT AFFAIRS
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| In what ways could we improve our space? | • “Triage” resources... computer for making appointments, starting resume, perusing job postings.  
• Pens/worksheets for starting resumes/cover letters  
• Box of cards with sample interview questions |
| --- | --- |
| Tech | • It’s nice, but feels like they can’t touch anything... have more “stuff” on the walls & in the waiting area.  
(employer swag, student guides, reading materials)  
• Find the balance between Professional and Fun.  
• Better signage “Come on in!” “Take one!” |
| Employer branding | • Looks good, but don’t know what the companies do...  
• Don’t tie their message to $$. Make the message be more developmental, “you want a good career, we can show you how to start.”  
• Swag bin |
| What makes it difficult for you to use Career Services more? | • Time.  
• Intimidating & don’t know where to start. |
| Where would you most likely seek out our resources? | • SSB.  
• Put direct links on department websites to schedule appointments.  
• Better distinguish advisors on campus (academic v. career) |
| In what ways do you feel connected to your Career Coach? | • It feels like they care. Everyone is nice. They remember my name/major.  
• Credentials help (“I used to work in HR”) |
| Suggestions to increase engagement | • More posters & welcoming space  
• More companies leading/co-presenting workshops  
• Food for the networking workshop (to practice)  
• Blurb in Appt scheduler to promote workshops  
• “This week in CS” on TVs within department & Liaison offices  
• A-frames, branded with Career Services |

**Actions Taken/Planned based on the findings from this assessment:** After discussing results among our staff, the following are immediate actions we have taken or plan to take before the fall 2015 semester:

- Add Employer “swag bin” in the waiting area to connect students to our employer sponsors in a more meaningful way.
- Add “triage” resources (i.e. resume handouts, practice interview questions) to the front lobby for students to have while they wait for an appointment.
- Add a computer station in the lobby.
- Improve/Increase signage in the building and across campus (i.e. utilize A-Frames more, brand the office rather than individual events)
- Change our webpage to be more intuitive (i.e. fewer landing pages, easier navigation)

**Alignment**

Student Affairs Key Activity: [still in process]

**Departmental Key Activity:** Student Interactions.

*Departmental goal this project addresses:* *by better understanding student’s experience with our office, we will be able to improve & increase their interactions with us.*

**Departmental Key Activity:** Employer Engagement.

*Departmental goal this project addresses:* *We had asked students their thoughts on the employer marketing in our space. Their suggestions will help us increase the effectiveness of employer’s messaging to students in our front lobby space.*