



Engagement & Employability

Integrating Career Development Into Academic Advising

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University of South Florida

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INTRODUCTION

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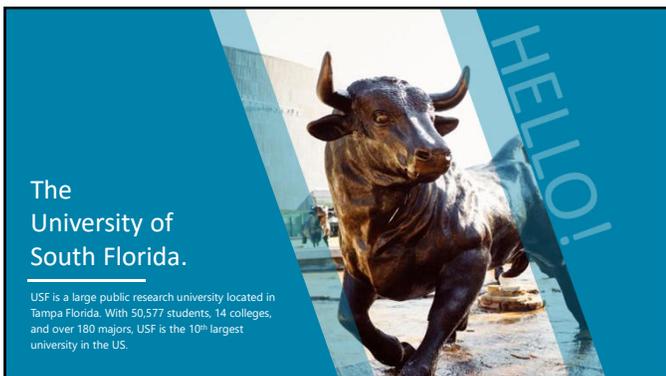
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The University of South Florida.

USF is a large public research university located in Tampa Florida. With 50,577 students, 14 colleges, and over 180 majors, USF is the 10<sup>th</sup> largest university in the US.

HELLO!

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**Decentralized**  
Advising is done in the colleges by professional advising staff who report to an Advising Director in their college and live in the departments to which they are assigned.

**Orientation - Graduation**  
Students come in at orientation, declare a major and meet the advisor for that major who will be with them until graduation.

**Advising Team**  
Team of 4, managing Communication & Mass Communication majors; Communication, Advertising, PR, Journalism & Telecommunications.

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### A Matter of the Department's Perception

*Back in 2013...*

**Major of Last Resort**  
The communication major had become a major that students transferred into after being unsuccessful in other departments; business, mass communication, education.

**Department Wanted Growth**  
Approximately 350 Communication Majors.  
No recruitment strategy.

**Performance Based Funding Begins**  
Larger portions of state appropriations being tied to meeting certain performance metrics; freshmen retention, 4-6 year graduation rates, employment after graduation.

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### SWOT Analysis

*Identify where we are, and where we want to go...*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wide availability of courses (night/online)</li> <li>Small class sizes</li> <li>Young instructors = innovative classrooms &amp; assignments</li> </ul>	<p><b>S</b></p>	<p><b>W</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small major</li> <li>Mostly taught by graduate students</li> <li>No direct career path</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working professional students</li> <li>Partnerships w/other departments.</li> </ul>	<p><b>O</b></p>	<p><b>T</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mass Communication department endowment and prestige</li> <li>Nobody knew about the program</li> </ul>

For every negative spin towards a positive and work from a position of strength. Build something new and unique instead of competing with other departments.

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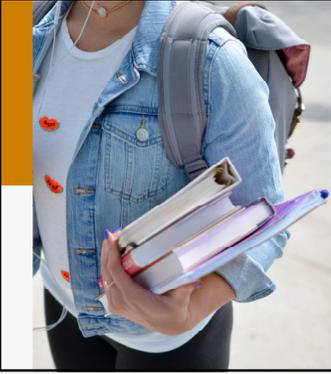
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**Don't find fault, find a remedy; anybody can complain.**

- > What is within our power to change, adjust, start, or stop doing?
- > Are we willing to experiment with process and be creative in solving current problems?
- > Could it really hurt more than doing nothing?

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**Communication Alumni**

Department wanted a list of alumni who had graduated in the last 20 years. **Couldn't access this information**, so we were challenged with finding & tracking it on our own.

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**LinkedIn Alumni Group**  
*One initiative to meet many needs...*

- Locate Our Graduates** - Wanted to create an accurate list of alumni to create an advisory board, & seek donations.
- Identify the Careers They Pursued** - What do students do with a communication degree after they graduate.
- Selling Point for New Students** - Allowed the department to compile a list of job titles for recruitment events.
- Career Exploration & Mentorship** - Current students use the group for informational interviews and to identify mentors.

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**Professional Speakers**

- Start with personal friends, colleagues, classmates
- College Alumni
- Local captains of industry

- Ask students what they want
- Highlight local pro's doing great work
- Ask local Chamber of Commerce

**On Campus Speakers**

Drive attendance by collaborating with clubs & organizations; offer speakers during their meeting times. Faculty buy-in; offering extra credit for attendance, or as an assignment.

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**Student Organizations**  
*Another pillar of student success, the peer network...*

- Workshops**  
Use club meeting times to host workshops on LinkedIn, Personal Branding, and more.
- Start Professional Clubs**  
Assist students with getting the organization up and running & finding a faculty advisor.
- Source Speakers**  
Bring in professionals from industry to club meetings to speak with students.  
TimeTree App
- Organize, Plan, Promote**  
Ensure student organizations all meet on different nights so as to not cannibalize demand. Plan around important classes.

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**Rethinking the Model**  
*Weaving career development into each phase of the student life cycle...*

**Capstone Course COM 4958**  
New required course in which students created portfolios & prepared for the job market.

**Professional Organizations**  
Partnered with professional organizations to start student chapters on campus; Ad Club, PRSSA Club, Television & Film, Toastmasters, SHRM.

**Freshmen Seminar Course**  
Communications focused First Year experience course; personal websites, resumes, LinkedIn, networking cards, & informational interviews.

**Speaker & Tour Series**  
Bringing in professionals to speak to students on campus about their work. Toured agencies, offices, and local business locations.

**Student Major Career**

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**SLS 2901**  
*Freshmen Experience with a Com Twist!*

Community Practical Work Industry Skills

This course is part freshmen experience, part acclimation to the college campus, part career exploration, part skill building, part technology playground.

[www.usfsls2901.wordpress.com](http://www.usfsls2901.wordpress.com)

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**Senior Capstone COM 4958**  
*Required majors course taken in the last semester as a portfolio course...*

**Features**

- Synthesize course knowledge**  
Bring together knowledge from all majors courses.
- Articulate Value to Employers**  
Students learn to articulate the value they bring to a position with their major and courses completed.
- Personal Branding**  
Create a website, LinkedIn, resumes, networking cards, video cover letters.
- Portfolio of Work**  
Collection of major assignments from their entire degree.
- Informational Interviews**  
Assignment to interview a professional in their industry of interest or desired career.
- LinkedIn**  
Assignment to create a profile and join the alumni group for the department and university.

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**The Old Model**  
*Let the student find their own path...*

General education, learning "how to college".

**Freshmen Year 1**

**Sophomore Year 2**  
Begin taking major's courses. Choose a path and stick with it.

**Junior Year 3**  
Get an internship or do a study abroad.

**Senior Year 4**  
Go see the career center before graduation for resume help.

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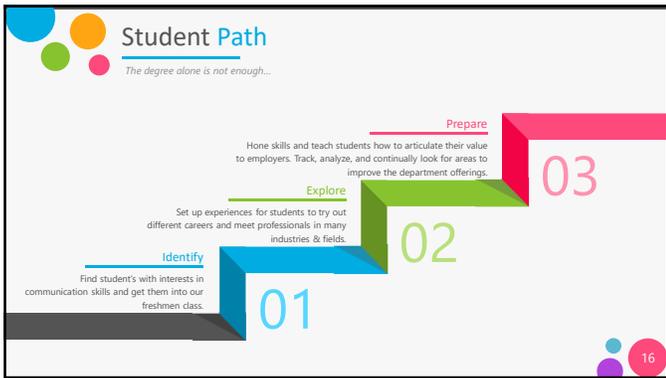
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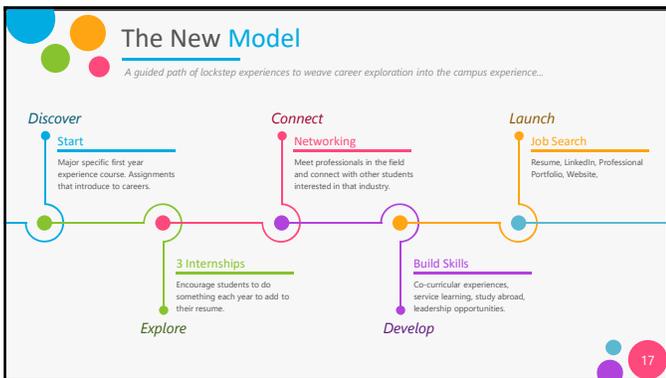
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### Why Advisors Make Great Career Coaches

*Advisors are uniquely positioned to leverage their relationship with students...*

**Know the Academic Journey**

**Already Connected to the Student.**  
Students often do not go to the career center because they don't know how helpful it can be. But if they already have a good relationship with their academic advisor they are more receptive to the advice.

Advisors know the ideal path of courses thru a major, and as such can recommend experiences that are in line with the curriculum inside the classroom. Additionally they have built in relationships with alumni and can leverage those relationships to help future classes of students get connected to careers.

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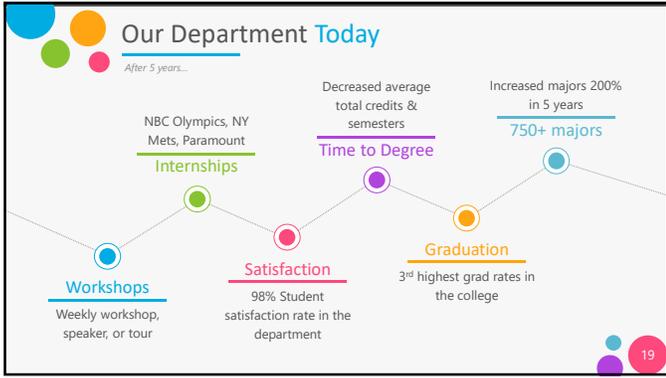
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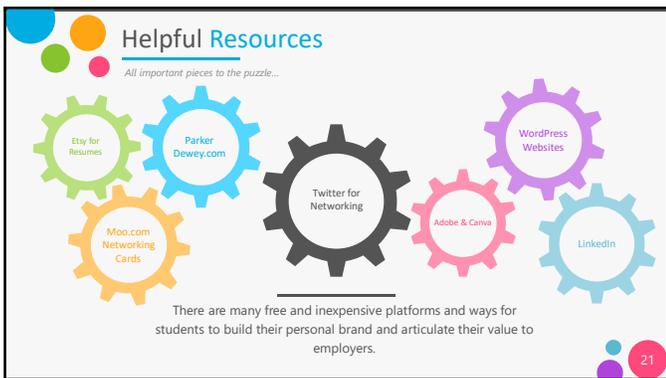
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Contact Me!

@KasandreaSerenio

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