

**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF HOW CAREER SERVICES STAFF RESPONDS TO
STUDENTS' EMPLOYMENT SEARCH**

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ABSTRACT

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Doctor of Education

Doctoral Committee Chair: Dr. James Earl Davis

Every year thousands of college graduates seek employment. In preparing for a career, many students turn to the Office of Career Services for assistance since it is a resource that they can use in their job searches as they navigate through an increasingly tight job market. Despite the obvious importance of Career Services in higher education, not enough is known about how these offices work and how they utilize the various resources available to them in assisting graduates to find employment. The core purpose of the present study is to fill this gap in the literature.

This qualitative case study compared the activities of the Office of Career Services at two institutions of higher education (St. Peter and St. Thomas will be the names used throughout this dissertation). While both institutions are Jesuit, they differ in a number of ways that allowed meaningful comparisons about how the staff members in the Office of Career Services responded to the needs of undergraduate students in their employment searches. Data were collected through open-ended, semi-structured interviews of critical members of the staffs of both institutions. The interviews focused on how staff members provide services to their students and alumni as well as to the employers of these alumni. The study attempted to understand the formal and informal processes used by the Office of Career Services at these two universities as

a measure of the institutions' organizational culture (Tierney, 1988). In addition, the study examined how the staff of the Office of Career Services develop and maintain connections to the academic community and to local and national businesses.

The results of the study indicate that the Career Services staff members at these two universities informed students early in their academic careers of the services afforded them in preparing for their job searches. Both offices are focused on their students, but believe they are under-utilized by the students. St. Peter's has an advantage with employment opportunities for students due to its location. St. Thomas has a stronger relationship with the institution's academic community. The implications of these results for career services in general were discussed.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation is a result of my various careers in education and business that spans over forty years. I graduated many years ago with a Bachelors of Science degree in Secondary Education. I taught for two years after which I left the field education to pursuit a career in business. After more than twenty years in business my journey took me back to education, but in the post-secondary arena.

When I reentered the field of education, I decided to take courses in higher education at Temple University Harrisburg Campus. My first class was taught by Dr. Vivian Ikpa. Dr. Ikpa encouraged me to enter the doctorate program at Temple. With her guidance and support I enrolled and began my journey. She provided me the wisdom to stay focused and determined throughout my coursework and writing of my dissertation. Whenever I suggested quitting, she would listen and tell me that it was not an option. She provided me the assurance that I was capable of finishing what I started.

Dr. James Earl Davis agreed to chair my dissertation. I did not have Dr. Davis in class, yet he was willing to work with me. His expertise in higher education proved beneficial to me. He found the comparative study of Career Services an interesting topic. His ability to move me through the process cannot be measured. His actions have been incredible and greatly appreciated. Dr. Davis assisted me through this dissertation while being the interim Dean of the College of Education. He took the time to meet with me and provide guidance throughout my dissertation and defense. For this I can never truly express my gratitude and appreciation.

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The person to whom I owe my most sincere gratitude is my wife. Her unconditional love and support never allowed me to give up on this paper even though my career changes and numerous surgeries. This is not just my accomplishment, but it is our accomplishment. I am so lucky to have someone who supported me not just in this project but in life. So to my wife, I am truly grateful and appreciative for your confidence in me.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife Donna, daughter Tara, her husband Andy, son William, his wife Kelly, and my five grandchildren, Kaylee, Ashlee, Tyler, Alivia, and Gianna. Donna has always believed in me. She encourages and supports our children, grandchildren and me in whatever we do. Donna's encouragement throughout this process is immeasurable. Donna's dedication to being a lifelong learner and educator has always been an inspiration to our children and me. My children and grandchildren bring me a great deal of joy and happiness as I watch them in their pursuit of knowledge.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Every year thousands of high school graduates enter institutions of higher learning. Their parents encourage them to attend college with the hope that they will graduate and obtain meaningful employment. The belief is that with a college degree, individuals will be able to obtain a higher paying job. Anthony Carnevale, Director of Georgetown University Center on Education and Workforce, reported that workers with Bachelors' Degrees had median annual earnings of about \$55,000, while college graduates with more advanced degrees earned about \$82,022 annually (Supiano, 2011). In contrast, high school graduates who did not pursue higher education earned about \$32,000 a year. Over the course of a lifetime, these differences amount to a significant increase in earnings potential for individuals who have a college degree (Supiano, 2011).

Not only do college graduates earn more over their lifetime than people with only a high school or less education, college graduates have also traditionally had an easier time finding employment. The advantage that has come with a higher level of education, however, is no longer as true as it once was. Since 2008, the United States has experienced a decline in jobs due to what has come to be called the Great Recession. These job losses were not only in manufacturing; they also occurred in the financial and service sectors where employers were forced to reduce the number of employees in order to survive in a struggling economy. The approximately 2.6 million jobs lost in 2008 made up the highest annual losses since 1945 (Goldman, 2009). Even though the current job market is better than what it has been, there are still many employable people who

cannot find jobs or can only find jobs that do not make full use of their education and background. All of this has led institutions of higher education to begin to pay more attention to helping their graduates find work, a trend that has often meant that these institutions have begun to focus more resources on their Office of Career Services.

This increased attention to the Office of Career Services is made in light of the changing job market nationally and internationally; Doham and Wyatt (2002) projected that each year there would be more college degree holders entering the labor market than there would be college-level jobs available. The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) reported that in 2010 only 25% of job applicants were actually able to secure a position (NACE, 2012). Although the picture has improved somewhat in recent years (for example, NACE reported that in the first quarter of 2012 companies posted an average of eleven more jobs than were posted in the same period in 2011), the overall picture is still not bright. College graduates must compete with more experienced job seekers who have lost their full-time jobs. Facing record levels of unemployment, millions of college students are anxious about their job prospects. Therefore, the marketing of undergraduate students will become an even more important service that higher education institutions can provide. Trudy Steinfeld, Executive Director of New York University's Career-Development Center, realized the impact that this would have on her staff and tried to prepare them for what was going to be expected of them in regards to providing services (Kolomich, 2009). In addition to providing a critical service to their students, institutions that assist students in the pursuit of their career goals may have an advantage in recruiting students in the future. All of these conditions provide the context for the present study.

Purpose of the Study

This study attempted to understand the role of the Office of Career Services at two institutions in assisting undergraduates in their employment searches. The aim of the study was to identify the advantages and disadvantages that existed at each institution and to delineate how each institution utilized its advantages and tried to overcome its disadvantages. One of the goals of the study was to act as a form of self-assessment for each institution so that the services provided to students in their employment searches could be improved. The study explored staff interactions with students, investigated the place of the Career Services Office within their academic communities, and researched the impact of each institution's location. Overall, the goal of the study was to provide suggestions not only for the two institutions used in the study, but also to generalize these suggestions for the field so that students can receive the necessary guidance in securing employment at the conclusion of their academic careers.

Career Services in the Context of the Cost of a College Education

The chief role of the Office of Career Services is to assist students in obtaining employment upon graduation. This role has become increasingly important as the cost of higher education has risen. The Chief Executive of Sallie Mae, Al Lord, warned of a "train wreck" in the \$85 billion education financing market without urgent government intervention (Reuters, 2008). According to the National Commission on the Cost of Higher Education (1998), since the early 1980s, college tuition has increased annually at two to three times the rate of inflation. This increasing cost of a college education has meant that students are graduating with greater debt than ever before. One of the clear

implications of this increasing cost/increasing debt problem is that more than ever before it is critical that students who graduate from college have a reasonable chance of finding employment. As already mentioned, this produces a situation where the role of the Career Services Office becomes more critical than ever before. The issue, therefore, is not whether there is a need for Career Services; the issue is how to best provide these services. One of the goals of this case study of two colleges' Career Services Offices is to attempt to provide some evidence toward responding to this issue.

Research Questions

Four questions were addressed in this study:

- How do staff members in the Office of Career Services at two universities respond to the needs of undergraduate students in their employment searches?
- How does each institution take advantage of its location in assisting students in their employment searches?
- To what extent is there a connection between the staff of the Office of Career Services and the academic community of each institution?
- What is the relationship between the Office of Career Services and local and national businesses?

Definitions

The following terms are defined as part of this study:

1. Society of Jesus – a Roman Catholic order founded by St. Ignatius Loyola in 1540, which is committed to education and scholarship (“The Constitutions,” 1996).
2. Jesuit- a member of the order called the Society of Jesus and founded by St. Ignatius Loyola.
3. Jesuit College or University – institution of higher education founded and administered by the Society of Jesus; for purposes of this study, the focus will be on institutions in the United States.
4. Office of Career Services - In this study, the terms “Career Services Department” or the “Office of Career Services” will be used frequently. They will be defined as: a division of the Student Services Department that has the responsibility of assisting undergraduate students in career counseling and job searches.
5. Employment Searches – A process that individuals use to find what career opportunities exist in today’s global market.
6. Metropolitan Institution – A college or university located in a major city.
7. Director – An individual who manages the staffs’ daily activities of the Office of Career Services.

Scope of the Study

This study explored how the staff members in the Offices of Career Services at two universities that have a long history of academic achievement respond to the needs of undergraduate students in their employment searches. It also evaluated the career opportunities that students are afforded and reviewed how the two Career Services Offices assist undergraduate students in their employment searches. In learning how these staff members provide employment search assistance for students, this study learned how the staff values their work. As Blanchard noted (1998), worthwhile work, values and enthusiasm are three cornerstones that make people successful in their jobs. If the staff of the Office of Career Services possess these three qualities, they have a greater likelihood at success in assisting undergraduate students in obtaining meaningful employment.

The two Jesuit institutions studied are located in two different contexts: one being metropolitan and the other being suburban. The university located in the metropolitan area has a mission statement for its Office of Career Services that concentrates on three areas: Empowerment, Leadership and Occupational Wellness. Students are empowered and challenged to grow both personally and professionally by providing education career strategies and broad-based life planning skills, through involvement in internships, placement, and learning experiences unique to the institution. The stated mission of this institution's Office of Career Services is to nurture and develop the individual talents and values of students; challenge and prepare the students to achieve greater excellence. Occupational Wellness is introduced through participation in comprehensive services provided by the Office. This is accomplished by keeping with tradition in providing programs, counseling and technology that foster competence, values, and personal

development. The Office of Career Services provides these services to approximately all 15,000 undergraduate and graduate students who attend this university.

The university located in the suburban area has a Career Services mission that:

...strives to facilitate the process of career choice by helping students focus on a personal sense of meaning and career direction consistent with their unique talents, aspirations, and vision for living. Guided by the principles of Jesuit education and aware of the needs to impart knowledge that has immediate and long-term value, the personnel assume the roles of advisor, teacher, and mentor (Retrieved from [http://www.St. Peter's.edu/campus resources/student services/career services/about us](http://www.St.Peter's.edu/campus_resources/student_services/career_services/about_us)).

There are approximately 6,000 undergraduates and graduate students enrolled at this institution.

Because these institutions are located in different geographical areas, examinations of job opportunities for students were reviewed. This determined whether or not an advantage exists at one institution over the other in assisting students in their job searches. The relationship between students and the staff of both Offices of Career Services was examined. In addition, the relationships between the staff of the Offices of Career Services and the academic community of each institution, as well as the business community, were examined. These relationships are connected to students and the opportunities that are made available to them. In this study, the staff members of both offices were asked to describe how they examined and evaluated their roles in students' employment searches. The data were collected to understand how these staff members contribute to building relationships with both students and employers.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Through a review of the literature, this chapter explored the following: the philosophy of Jesuit education; the rising cost of higher education; the history, function and staff of Career Services; the need for technology; Career Services and Academic Department Relationships; and employment opportunities. The review of literature concludes with the conceptual framework of organizational socialization.

These frameworks were used in order to examine the contextual theories of the Office of Career Services. After the theories have been presented, interviewed data related to what is taking place at both institutions will be presented. This will allow a comparison of conceptual theories to what staff members of two universities have stated about these frameworks at their institutions.

The rising cost of Higher Education continues to raise questions by parents and politicians. On October 5, 2009, Temple University hosted a Senate hearing on college affordability. In this hearing the following information was presented: From 1995 to 2005, the average tuition and fees at private four-year colleges and universities rose 36% after adjusting for inflation (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). The cost of college is a major concern for freshman according to a survey conducted by the University of California at Los Angeles. John Pryor (2010), the director of the survey, said the effects of the economic downturn were spread across the college experience, whether the issue was how to pay for college or what majors and eventual careers to pursue.

Colleges and universities are the key source of human and intellectual capital needed to increase workforce productivity and growth. Student success no longer is measured by GPA alone. The ability of graduates to obtain meaningful employment is another factor in determining their success. Over a lifetime, an individual with a bachelor's degree will earn an average of \$2.1 million (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). Some less-selective private colleges, under particular pressure to justify their tuition, were touting new programs that all but placed students in a job (Lipka, 2008). A national survey by Eduventures found in late 2006 that students entering college considered professional preparation the most important factor in assessing the value of their college degree (Lipka, 2008). Tuition continued to rise while the economy experienced a downturn; students and parents were seeking evidence that justifies spending over one hundred- thousand dollars in order to obtain a college degree.

Private higher education has a long history of providing a quality education that focused on individual growth. A new dilemma has been created for these institutions in maintaining their mission while adding job opportunities for their graduates. Economic conditions are pushing private and public institutions to improve their Career Services Departments. One group of private institutions that has been a leader in higher education and where the dilemma of maintaining a traditional mission while acknowledging the importance of employability are Jesuit universities. As such, these institutions represent an excellent venue for the present study.

Jesuit Philosophy of Education

In reviewing the Jesuit mission for education, and the mission, goals and services provided by the Office of Career Services Departments, one must first recognize the history of Jesuit education. St. Ignatius Loyola founded the Society of Jesus in 1540. St. Ignatius Loyola's leadership influenced generations of Jesuits to shape education and transform individuals' lives for centuries. Jesuit education strives for the total formation of the individual within the academic and outside community. The Jesuit philosophy of education contains curriculum with knowledge and skills which include values, good citizenship, good leaders, concern with common good, and ability to use education for the service of faith and promotion of justice. This philosophy is interwoven in academic areas in an effort to strengthen the individual and society (Kolvenbach, 2001).

The philosophy of a Jesuit education is to educate the whole person in which there is a concerted effort not just to develop technical skills, but to develop the notion that life centrally consists of taking one's values and putting them into practice. Technical and leadership skills complemented with liberal arts or business degrees are necessary in today's global market. The challenge for Jesuit colleges and universities, therefore, is to maintain St. Ignatius Loyola's vision and mission as the foundation for their policies and curriculum, and to align this mission with the demands of finding employment for their graduates (Go Forth and Teach, 1987, p.35).

The 32nd General Congregation of the Society of Jesus (1975) made the mission of Jesuit colleges and universities a "service of faith, of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement" as written in *Go Forth and Teach* in 1987. Their mission statement reflects Ignatius Loyola's vision for individuals to attain inner freedom to make

intelligent decisions. This Jesuit philosophy is promoted and fostered in the past, present and future. A Jesuit education goes beyond traditional religion in education. The Society of Jesus is committed to “the service of faith, of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement” (Go Forth and Teach, 1987, p.13). Jesuit education has the following characteristics: is world affirming; assists in the total formation of each individual within the human community; includes a religious dimension that permeates the entire education; is an apostolic instrument; promotes dialogue between faith and culture; insists on individual care and concern for each person; emphasizes activity on the part of the student; encourages life-long openness to growth; is value oriented; encourages a realistic knowledge, love, and acceptance of self; and provides realistic knowledge of the world in which we live. Through a holistic formation, students educated in the Jesuit tradition develop habits of the mind and heart. (Go Forth and Teach, 1987, p.41).

Kolvenbach (1989), the 29th Superior General of the Society of Jesus, emphasized the mission of Jesuit higher education during a speech at Georgetown University and Georgetown Prep. He stated “We want graduates who will be leaders concerned about the society and the world in which they live, desirous of eliminating hunger and conflict in the world in which we live....” This is in direct concert with the Jesuit philosophy of developing the whole person.

Career Services Department

Literature on Career Services shows how these departments are seen as a vehicle through which students can obtain the necessary assistance in obtaining meaningful

employment. The Career Services Department attempts to give students an opportunity to prepare themselves for the job market by offering a variety of career counseling services. Each service deals with career solutions that students can use. Career Services Departments of colleges and universities offer students an opportunity to participate in seminars and career counseling services before and after they graduate. The majority of these seminars and career counseling services are designed to help students enter the workforce. These services promote the development of students. The quality of services provided to students can enable them to make choices that may lead to a more satisfying and productive career (Laanan, 1995). The staff of the Office of Career Services Department assists students in being competitive and in making effective choices in their job pursuit. Beseda (1995), Assistant Director of the Baylor Career Services Center, said, "To be competitive, we've got to provide the best possible service in matching students and graduates with firms looking to fill positions" (Baylor Business Review, p.6). Students are made aware of what employers are seeking in an employee; this will give the students a greater chance of securing a position with a company. The matching of a student's skills and abilities to the needs of the business community enhances the institution, curriculum and faculty. Lipka (2008) wrote that economic conditions, public expectations, and a heightened emphasis on student success have pushed many colleges to ramp up their career services. The tension lies in the age old question: Is college about getting an education or a job? Now more than ever students and parents say it is both.

Laanan (1995) stated that colleges serve as the primary link to a career. By collaborating with employers, colleges have an effective role as the facilitators in the school-to-work process. Cohen (1996) reported that career education began growing at a

rate greater than liberal arts enrollments in the 1960's and continued to do so for fifty years. Cohen (1996) also stated that the more education one receives, the greater the chances of obtaining a good job. If the focus is narrowly on job skills, then career education will fail. Education has multiple purposes for individuals, citizenship, careers, and equality.

Thousands of high school graduates enter college each year with the hope of receiving a quality education that will lead to a satisfying career. These students seek answers to their career issues. The parents, who have encouraged a college education, also have the hope that upon graduation their children will find a successful career. The belief is that a college degree will entitle students to a better paying job. Economists from the Office of Occupational Statistics and Employment Projections reported that workers with Bachelors' Degrees had median annual earnings of about \$67,766, while college graduates with more advanced degrees earned about \$82,022 annually (Dohm & Wyatt, 2002). In contrast, high school graduates who did not pursue higher education earned about \$38,837 a year. Over the course of a lifetime, these differences amount to a significant increase in earnings potential for individuals who have a college degree (Dohm & Wyatt, 2002). In 2008 the economy took a downward turn. Seniors graduating had a poor job market to enter. Kolowich (2009) reported in a survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers that there was a common downturn of the number of companies participating in campus job fairs. Competition for jobs was stiffer than it ever had been.

McBride and Muffo (1994) reported that undergraduate students, in determining their career goals, were doing much more research in regards to job searches than had

been done in prior years. They explained the role of Career Services Departments and how these departments continued to grow because they provided a link between the institution, students, and businesses.

Gardner (2009) stated that seniors cannot delay preparing for their transition from college to the job market. Students more than ever have to be focused, directed and connected. The question remains: Where can students go for assistance in their job searches? According to McBride (2008), a survey conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (2007 Graduating Student Survey) found that jobs secured through Career Services Departments are superior to those obtained by any other sources. Graduates who obtained their jobs through Career Services Departments started employment sooner and had fewer turnovers in their careers.

History of Career Services

Since the beginning of higher education, a mission of the institution, whether explicit or implicit, has been to assist students in the preparation of entering a profession (Herr et al., 1993). Career Services had its beginning in the late 1800's in Europe and in the early 1900's in the United States (Herr, Rayman, & Garis, 1993). In early higher education, this activity was born by professors (Rudolph, 1990). Professors would speak on behalf of students to individuals who could offer employment to the students. This process from study to work was a type of "placement" on the part of faculty members.

During the 1920's and 1930's the teaching profession began to grow and a need for assisting teachers in their employment searches was recognized by teaching institutions (Endicott, 1937). The establishment of a university department charged with

placing students after graduation did not occur until the late nineteenth century. Yale University opened an office for placing students in 1919 (Teal & Herrick, 1962). Other institutions such as Harvard and John Hopkins began to offer students assistance in finding employment (Geisler, 2002).

Placement offices typically emerged on college and university campuses as entities separate from counseling centers (Herr et al., 1993). These placement offices were seen as the organization that dealt more with business and employment than places where students sought counseling. After World War II, the demands for employees by business, industry, and government and the great number of veterans made job counseling, training and placement tremendous tasks (Teal & Herrick, 1962). The period of growth resulted in the majority of colleges creating a college placement department. Before World War II, fifty businesses were recruiting on college campuses; after World War II over six hundred businesses were involved, and by 1960, over two thousand businesses and government agencies were involved in nationwide recruiting efforts (Lansner, 1967). Stevens in 1965 recognized a change in philosophy from an employment service toward a more multifunctional “educational process of the total college” (Stevens, 1985, p.233). During the late 1960’s, college recruiting was curtailed due to the student demonstrations that were taking place on campuses. Career Services realized that the term “placement” did not reflect their new mission. Powell and Kirts (1980) described the field as transforming to the “changing needs of students.” They believed the term placement was “vague, misleading, restrictive and implies selection of a job for graduate” (p.5). The thinking at this time was that finding jobs was not the responsibility of Career Services. This change of providing services and resources aided

students in learning how to explore and obtain employment themselves rather than being placed in a position. In making this transition, the college Career Services Office became a more integral part of the educational mission of the college.

In the early 1970's, a renewal occurred in college recruiting; employers were typically interviewing twenty applicants for each opening (McEneaney, 1973). The students of this era were becoming more goal-oriented and were aware of the importance of self-assessment. Career theory transitioned from a Trait/Factor theory to a more humanistic emphasis on counseling and application of student developmental theory (Rentz & Saddlemire, 1988). The placement statistic was important but it was no longer the main goal.

Career Services Offices on college and university campuses were flourishing by mid-1980's. Rayman (1993) noted that the Reagan administration fostered optimism with an increase in spending which fueled the economy. This spending created more jobs for college graduates, which in turn brought significance and importance back to the Office of Career Services. The slow but steady evolution that had been taking place from a job placement emphasis (the 1950's and 1960's), to a career planning and counseling emphasis (the 1970's and 1980's"), was now retreating to the earlier models of "placement" (Casella, 1990).

Casella (1990) attempted to define the role of the Career Services' function and the professionals who do the work of the Career Services Department by describing the services delivered. In the article, "Career Networking—The Newest Career Center Paradigm" Casella made the case for the evolving paradigm—"the model of the way we perceive ourselves and exercise our profession" (p.33)—from Placement during the

1940's and 1950's, through Planning in the 1970's and 1980's, and into Networking in the 1990's. Today, this paradigm includes Social Networking and Global Networking.

During the 1990's the economy took a downturn which resulted in companies downsizing their employees. Recent college graduates were competing with experienced college graduates for jobs. On-campus recruiting numbers for colleges and universities dropped and career planning became the focus of the Office of Career Services. Early career planning became essential and collaboration between academic advising and career development was needed to enact this "early" intervention strategy (Rayman, 1993).

Rayman (1993) stated,

"The college placement office has evolved from a single-purpose administrative unit offering a narrow function of placement services to a comprehensive services center providing a complex array of career services to multiple constituent groups. The trend is inescapably toward greater size, increasing centralization, and a broader, more comprehensive mission" (p.1).

This was supported by Freeman (1994) who indicated that career centers should use innovation and imagination when modifying outdated systems/services to meet current realities. The staff members of the Office of Career Services have created centers of professional development. These centers are concerned with preparing students for life after graduation. By preparing students for post-graduate life, students will have the skills set necessary for a very competitive job market.

The student body has become more diverse in colleges and universities according to Workforce 2000. Non-traditional students, disabled students, and other special populations provided new challenges to the Office of Career Services in the 1990's. Also, the increase of first-generation college students meant that this group might "have

limited knowledge and experience dealing with the professional job search subculture and often need different, if not additional career development assistance” (Rayman, 1993, p. 6). The staff of the Office of Career Services needed to develop initiatives to help these types of students to be competitive with their peers who have a family history and experience in higher education.

The increase of services and the ever changing job market required the Office of Career Services to provide more comprehensive programs to meet the students’ needs. This combined with the realization that a “career is not simply a job but rather a sequence of jobs held over the course of a lifetime,” (Rayman, 1993, p. 7). The initiation of these programs required earlier engagement by students. It was believed that having students participate earlier with the services offered by the Office of Career Services would result in a more effective career development plan for students.

Career Services Function

Students and faculty often consider “Career Services” a place where students go during their final semester in college in order to be “placed” in the world of work (Rayman, 1993). Students, parents, and legislators increasingly are concerned about an institution’s ability to assist students in becoming successful members of society (Engelland, Workman & Singh, 2000). There is an apparent need for Career Services Departments to be a reliable market resource dealing with the employment goals of students and the hiring needs of employers. Each service that is offered has a specific domain related to the vocational goal: career therapy; career counseling; career education; vocational guidance; occupational placement and position coaching. These

domains provide the staff of Career Services the guidelines for delivering services (Luzzo, 2000).

An example of the changing role of Career Services is provided by Adams (1994) who performed a self-assessment of Central Michigan University's Career Services Department. The assessment revealed that students, faculty and employers did not realize all the services that the university's department offered. Students who used the Career Services Department were satisfied with the treatment they received, and said they would recommend it to their friends. Faculty did not believe that the staff members of the Career Services were the "best" people to make contacts for information in regards to academic or job opportunities. His literature frequently mentioned many functions of the Career Services Department but failed to show how these services were marketed to the students. Adams (1994) reported that four themes were evident from the faculty responses: 1) a need for more information; 2) a desire on the part of the faculty to establish a better relationship with the center; 3) several suggestions for specific services; and 4) an awareness of and appreciation for the center. These four themes suggest that a gap existed between the mission of the center and its actual function.

Career Services Departments can offer career counseling, career fairs, co-ops, internships, resume writing and interviewing skills. Through these services, Career Services professionals convey to students that career development is a lifelong process (Rayman, 1999). Engelland, Workman and Singh (2000) collected data from undergraduate students and Career Services administrators from three Midwestern universities and found that underclassmen tend to use Career Services Departments for

career counseling and part-time job listings, while upperclassmen use Career Services Departments for resume and on-site interview services.

The Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) for Student Services/Development Programs published a document entitled *Standards and Guidelines in 1986* (Council for the Advancement of Standards, 1986). The guidelines for Career Services are as follows:

Mission: Career planning is a developmental process that must be fostered during the entire period of a student's involvement with the institution. The primary purpose of career planning and placement must be to aid students in developing, evaluating, and effectively initiating and implementing career plans.

Program: Career planning and placement services must offer the following programs:

Career counseling that assists the students at any time to:

1. analyze interests, aptitudes, abilities, previous work experience;
2. obtain occupational information;
3. make reasoned, well-informed career choices;
4. set short-range and long-range goals.

Placement counseling and referral, which assists the student to:

1. clarify objectives and establish goals;
2. explore the full range of life and work possibilities;
3. prepare for the job search or further study;
4. present oneself effectively as a candidate for employment;
5. make the transition from education to the world of work.

Student employment, including part-time, vocational, and experiential education.

Organization and Administration: Career planning should be integrated with placement. Career planning and placement may be offered by either a separate student unit or another institutional unit such as a counseling center or academic department.

Human Resources: Professional staff members must be skilled in career planning, placement, and counseling and must have the ability to function effectively with students, faculty, administrators, and employers.

Funding: Funds should be provided for adequate career/employment information and for preparation and maintenance of student placement credentials.

Facilities: Space for at least the following is recommended: reception area, staff offices. A private office for the unit head, interview and counseling room.

Campus and Community Relations: The career planning and placement service must develop campus and community relationship. (pp. 6-7)

These standards and guidelines suggest that the modern Career Services Department is an organization that is an integral part of Student Services, as well as the various academic departments. Integration between these standards and guidelines needs to be in place if the institution is going to meet the needs of students and employers.

In measuring student engagement, as well as other critical factors, institutions of higher education assess student outcomes and institutional performance (Kuh, 2005). The Directors of Career Services measure the engagement of students in order to evaluate the services being offered and their benefits.

In 2009, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) Board of Directors approved *The Professional Standards for College and University Career Services* (Retrieved from [http://www.nacweb.org/knowledge/career services](http://www.nacweb.org/knowledge/career%20services)). The standards which include essential services were written to reflect the responsibilities for the Offices of Career Services. Each Office of Career Services must support the mission of its institution. The mission should enhance the student learning outcomes and student development. The NACE Handbook for *The Professional Standards for College and University Career Services* stated, "The purpose of career services is to assist students in evaluating and implementing career, education, and employment decisions and plans.

Career services must consider the needs of all students of the institution when designing their program” (Retrieved from http://www.nacweb.org/knowledge/career_services).

The Professional Standards for College and University Career Services clearly states that career services must be defined, designed, and implemented in collaboration with academic divisions, departments and individual faculty members and other constituencies of the institution. This means that the staff of the Career Services must have a relationship with the academic community as well as the business community.

Career Services Staff

An article was included in the *Journal of Career Planning & Employment* (1999, Spring) which reported the results of a survey of Career Services departments. The survey focused on facilities, finances and staffing. Some information received from this survey highlighted the make-up of the staff of Career Services Departments:

Most Career Services Directors and professional staff fall into the 35 to 49 age group. The vast majority are white. Some Career Services Departments are comparable in size to closets; others are palatial by comparison. Nearly a quarter of them indicated that they had no interview rooms; they used other offices or conference rooms on campus as needed. Currently, more than 60 percent of the directors of Career Services and more than 86 percent of the professional staff members who work with them are women. Almost half of the respondents (48.6 %) indicated that their budgets had not changed from the previous year, 1997. (pp. 41-42)

This information shows how the Career Services Departments are staffed in colleges and universities. Staff members of the Office of Career Services dedicate 60 % of their time to counseling and programming functions, with the rest of their time divided among more traditional placement activities (Rayman, 1999). The majority of a staff's time is spent in career counseling rather than actually trying to find jobs for students.

College and university Career Centers commonly report to either the Vice President of Student Affairs or the Provost. The typical organizational structure of career centers is either centralized, with services in one office, or decentralized with services specialized or focused to specific student populations. According to *The Professional Standards for College and University Career Services*, “Institutions must appoint and empower a leader or leadership team to manage career services. Evidence of appropriate structure should include policies and procedures, written job descriptions, and regular performance reviews for all employees” (Retrieved from http://www.nacweb.org/knowledge/career_services).

Technology

Advanced technology, heightened international competition, and a volatile market economy contribute to an ever-changing workforce in America. Laanan (1995) challenged undergraduate students to facilitate a smooth transition from school to work. Laanan (1995) believed that educational institutions must respond directly to connecting their students to work. Herr and Cramer (1988) suggested that a comprehensive Career Services Department should provide the following services:

1. Provide assistance in the selection of a major field of study.
2. Provide assistance in self-assessment and self-analysis.
3. Provide assistance in understanding the world of work.
4. Provide assistance in improving decision-making skills.
5. Meet the needs of both the businesses and students.
6. Provide the students access to the world of work (p.297).

Technology must assist the Career Services Department staff in providing these six components, but not at the expense of the personal touch. If Career Services personnel are going to be able to provide such services, they must operate under a new

paradigm that allows for all six components to exist. While today's students are part of the information age, which enables them to gather data, the importance of guidance is becoming more evident. Technology, its use and misuse, will continue to have a significant impact on the destiny of career services, but in the end, career professionals must realize that the "medium is not the message,"; there is more to Career Services than technology (Rayman, 1999).

The continuous advancement of technology makes the delivery of a wide variety of student services more possible than ever (Venalbe, 2010). In 2009, when the Board of NACE wrote *The Professional Standards for College and University Career Services*, they addressed the need for technology as a tool that can be used for staff and students in obtaining employment. The standards stated, "Career Services staff must be well-informed about the array of career-based technological applications that are in current use" (Retrieved from [http://www.nacweb.org/knowledge/career services](http://www.nacweb.org/knowledge/career%20services)).

The staff of the Office of Career Services is concerned with the integration of technology, because they fear it will reduce their interaction with students (Venable, 2010). The right mix of technology and human contact becomes the challenge. Venable states, "Training and support are important to ensure the success and use of the technologies that are ultimately chosen" (2010, p.94).

Transition to Work

The responsibility of guiding students to find employment should not be placed solely on the staff of Career Services. An effort must be made on the part of the student. Freeman (1994) stated that the new message of Career Services Departments should state that

career success is a personal responsibility. Employment opportunities are the students' responsibility; students must take an active role in finding a job. Freeman (1994) emphasized that many Career Services Departments assume that students, faculty and businesses need only to hear about the services in order to value them. This assumption can only have merit if everyone agrees on what constitutes value. The lack of accountability for Career Services Departments is not mentioned in the standards and guidelines or by any of the authors. Career Services Departments can better service the needs of students, faculty and the business community if accountability is in place. The Board of NACE in writing *The Professional Standards for College and University Career Services* stated, "Career services must work collaboratively and be held accountable" (Retrieved from http://www.naceweb.org/knowledge/career_services).

Comprehensive Career Services Departments now focus on the multiple services they offer versus just focusing on job placement. Job placement is one area in which accountability would be easy to trace. Many of the other areas of service are much more difficult to assess. This does not suggest that career counseling is any less important than job placement. The institutions that assist students in the pursuit of their career goals will have an advantage in the recruiting of students.

Career Services and Academic Departments' Relationships

Preissler (1994) set out to define the purpose of Career Services in a small liberal arts college. He found that in order for the Career Services Department to be recognized on campus by students, faculty, and administration as being successful, the services offered needed to relate to the mission statement of the college. A linking of the mission

statement of the Career Services Department and the college must be parallel in demonstrating how the students are supported.

Hirsch (1996) showed that economics, more than anything else, determines education in America. Therefore it is not surprising that Reardon (1996) felt that a linking of the mission statement of the Career Services Department and the institution was essential if students were going to receive the support and services the college has to provide. Both the institution and the Career Services Department have to be aware of the trends in the world of work if the mission is going to be applicable to students. An institution or Career Services Department that does not stay abreast with the world of work is failing both the students and business community. From the literature, it became apparent that Career Services Departments must strengthen their identity on the campus.

Research by Chesler (1995), McBride and Muffo (1994), and Woodyard (1994) dealt mainly with counseling undergraduate students in their job searches. No references were made between counseling and curriculum of the various institutions by any of the authors. The Career Services Departments act independently of the institutions instead of jointly with them. Higher education curricula should bridge the skill gap from college to the workforce if education is going to be the key to a successful career. Career Services Departments have a responsibility to communicate with the academic side of the institution in an effort to ensure that instruction and learning are of the highest quality.

Freeman (1994) suggested that Career Services Departments can help faculty members in several ways:

1. Motivating students to a higher level of achievement;
2. Providing information about the broader implications or transferable essence of classroom material;
3. Providing real-world resources to enrich classroom experiences;

4. Providing students with ideas about how they could utilize class assignments to attain career and academic goals;
5. Providing team-building skills to facilitate group projects. (p. 144)

Career Services Departments that are affiliated with the academic process are more likely to survive in the future (Chesler, 1995). Administrators in higher education continue to scrutinize all budgetary areas; it is important that Career Services Departments become more involved in the academic process. With expenses rising, the importance of each department is questioned.

Student Services is often one of the areas that experiences budget reduction. A Career Center must have adequate funding to support the many facets of its mission. This includes resources to support staff salaries, office equipment, phone and postage costs, printing and media costs, and institutional memberships in professional organizations (Herr et al., 1993). It is critical to assess the sources of funding. It becomes very important that each department justifies its existence as well as its contributions to the students and institutions. The exchange of information between academics and Career Services can help to foster the quality of instruction and learning that takes place at the university or college. This link of information should be seen as adding to the academic process and not just as a service that could be eliminated. Career Services must be creative in how they approach the academic side by making suggestions and recommendations.

According to Freeman (1994) value is a relationship not a quality. In an effort to have a true working relationship, there must be dialogue that consists of sharing information. Freeman recommended that Career Services personnel should be actively involved in academics. Students need to be able to connect what they learn in the

classroom and apply it to the world of work. The inability to connect education to work is one of the reasons people criticize education. In preparing students for the workforce, students need to understand the rationale behind what they are learning. College professors who can provide students with information connecting what they are learning in the classroom to the workplace can make learning more meaningful.

The collaboration between the Career Services Department and the faculty is an essential element of the department. The faculty knows or understands little about services available as Adams (1994) reported on the self-assessment of Central Michigan University's Career Services Department. Preissler (1994) recommended that Career Services staff must join the academic field by offering credit courses. These courses would be a compliment to the students' major field of study. Through student evaluations, the faculty and administration could gain a better understanding of the services offered by the Career Services staff.

Employment Opportunities

In September 2008, the nation's labor market changed at an accelerated rate with the collapse of Lehman Brothers (Fogg, 2009). With this collapse, a high unemployment rate transpired due to downsizing of companies throughout the United States. Koncz (2013) wrote that the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) Job Outlook 2013 Spring Preview survey found that the nation's employers were planning to hire 2.1 % more new college graduates that year than the previous year. Overall, however, employers expected their college hiring levels to remain relatively flat,

according a 2013 report from the National Association of Colleges and Employers (Koncz, 2013).

This turn in the economy meant fewer jobs for college graduates. College graduates in 2013 were sharing the same experiences that college graduates experienced in the recession of mid 1970's, early 1980's and 1990's. The unemployment rate rose to a steady 8.2% according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS, 2012). An unemployment rate of over 8% has a negative impact on starting salaries.

The United States Department of Labor, in May of 2012 reported that the economy added far fewer jobs than it had in previous months (www. TheTimes-Tribune.com. June 2, 2012). The decline in jobs forced many Career Services Departments to become creative in assisting students in their job searches. Institutions were looking at ways to strengthen student engagement in the Office of Career Services. Students who utilized the resources were better able to find internships and ultimately were better able to find permanent employment.

Organizational Socialization

Institutions of Higher Education use student engagement as one of the measures in which students participate in educational practices. Student engagement is a “domain of constructs that measures both the time and energy students devote to educationally purposeful activities and how students perceive different facets of the institutional environment that facilitate and support their learning” (Gonyea, 2006, p.2).

In determining the relationship between engagement and outcomes, Astin (1985, p.6) argued that “the effectiveness of any educational policy or practice is directly related

to the capacity of that policy or practice to increase student involvement.” The Offices of Career Services use this information to design and implement procedures that can benefit students. This is in concert with *The Professional Standards for College and University Career Services* written by the NACE Board.

Student engagement is viewed as part of the organizational socialization of an institution of higher education which enables a fuller understanding of the culture of the institution. Tierney defined socialization by asking, “What do we need to know to survive/excel in the organization?” (1988, p.8). The culture of the institution can be found in the activities in the organization, and socialization is the process in which individuals acquire, perform and understand those activities for which they are responsible. Trowler and Knight (1998) stated that research that is focused on the issue of organizational socialization in higher education is important for a number of reasons: a need for reappraisal and development; benefits for staff and students; to create a more hospitable environment for students and staff.

Tierney addressed this perspective when he stated that “the modernist task of socialization is for the recruit to learn the culture. If the purpose of socialization is assimilation, then those who do not learn the correct way to assimilate will have failed” (Tierney 1997, pp.4-5). In this tradition an analysis can extract the social interaction between students, staff, academics and employers. In utilizing this method Tierney defined socialization as “a give-and-take where individuals make sense of an organization through their own unique background and the current contexts in which the organization resides” (p 6).

Socialization becomes part of student engagement in exploring the programs, services and initiatives aimed at the student. The basis is building and maintaining an environment that promotes educational purpose for student behavior. This philosophy is explored in a study by Kuh, Schuh, and Whitt (1991) that sheds light on fourteen institutions that have been able to create these types of atmospheres and environments. These institutions work independently of each other. The goals may be different, but they all remain focused on their mission, size, location and student characteristics. In spite of their differences, three common themes were present. They included: 1) a coherent and transparent philosophy that sets expectations for student behavior and guides the creation and implementation of campus policies and procedures; 2) the presence of a campus culture embracing student participation and loyalty; 3) faculty and staff commitment to student learning that values out-of-class learning experiences.

Institutions of higher education whose missions drive the expectations for student outcomes in the classroom as well as outside the classroom are evolving institutions. This implementation of socialization begins with the recruitment process as students receive information about the expectations of the institution. It continues during orientation activities that inform the students about the school's mission. The idea is to improve student engagement at the institution which includes the Office of Career Services.

The work by Chickering and Gamson (1987) identified seven engagement factors that influence the quality of students' educational experiences, five of them addressing faculty behaviors and characteristics. Other researchers (Astin, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzine, 1991) supported the positive effects faculty contact has on student learning.

This research examined the role that the academic community plays at two institutions with the Office of Career Services. The activities of engagement may vary by departments at each institution. The impact is relevant for this study in determining if the students benefit from an academic community being involved with the Office of Career Services at these two institutions.

Summary

In summary, the literature on the philosophy of Jesuit education contained knowledge and skills which included value, good citizenship, good leaders, and promotion of justice. This philosophy is shared with twenty-eight Jesuit institutions in the United States and is important in viewing how the Office of Career Services operates at each institution.

This review of the literature found that the main focus of Career Services Departments should not only be job placement, but also should include career counseling. The *Standards and Guidelines in 1986* (Council for Advancement of Standards, 1986) stated that the primary mission of Career Services was to aid students in developing, evaluating, and effectively initiating and implementing career plans. Additional research stated that students were not aware of all the services that a university's department offered. While students spend time at the Career Services Department when they are in search of information about a career, the information may come in the form of counseling or job search preparation. It is not as intense as suggested by the *Standards and Guidelines in 1986*.

Accountability allows for consistent and objective data to be gathered and interpreted in an effort to determine the effectiveness of Career Services Departments. Accountability is necessary in order for students to benefit from the services they require. Existing research does not adequately address this area. Other research stressed that there must be a connection from school to work. If colleges and universities are not tracking their students, then how can they know whether or not they are doing a good job in educating them? The same is true for Career Services Departments in tracking job placement of students. All the counseling and special services mean little if students are deficient in the skill of seeking a career. An administrative method of accountability, which requires the support of significant numbers that validate the services of the Career Services Department, must be introduced.

One other area discussed throughout much of the research was the role of Career Services in academics at colleges and universities. Career Services Departments must relate to the mission of each college and university. Research stressed the significance of linking Career Services Departments to academics. One study at a Midwestern University revealed that faculty knew little about the services available from the Career Services Department. This showed there was a lack of communication between the academic programs and Career Services. To be successful the staff of the Office of Career Services should work in collaboration with faculty and administration in marketing their services to students as stated by the NACE Board.

In order to meet the demands of an ever changing economy, the staff of Career Services Departments must continue to develop new ways to meet the needs of students and employers by providing quality service. The goal of this study was to develop an

understanding of the importance of the role of the staff of the Career Services Department and the impact that they have on students, academics and employers. Hopefully, this study will encourage institutions of higher learning to evaluate their effectiveness in assisting students in their job searches.

The review of student engagement is used in the development of services and initiatives that Career Services staff provide students. Student engagement begins at orientation and needs to continue throughout the students' educational career. In this case study the research reviewed and explored how staff members in the Office of Career Services at two universities responded to the needs of undergraduate students in their job searches. In evaluating these needs the staff responded by describing programs offered and student engagement in these programs. This study also examined academic involvement at both institutions. The staff of the Office of Career Services discussed their connection to the various academic communities of each institution and to local and national businesses. This information enables the staff to continue or change the services that are being offered to students.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Introduction

This chapter presents the methods and procedures used in the study. The chapter is organized to include the following sections: research questions, research design and rationale, site selection, participants in the study, role of the researcher, data collection procedures, and data analysis procedures. This multi-site qualitative case study explores and presents an understanding of Career Services Departments and how they assist students in their employment search.

To achieve the goal of the study, a qualitative approach was selected as the appropriate method. In general, qualitative research seeks to dissect a phenomenon to further examine its component parts in an attempt to uncover how these components interact to form the phenomenon under study (Merriam, 2001). In this study I served as the interviewer and objective observer. I had no stake in the results or personal involvement with any of the participants.

The primary qualitative methodology employed was that of the case study. Case study design offers a strong match with the goals of this study. Yin described the case study methodology as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2009, p.18). The goal was to understand the factors that contribute to college students obtaining a job and the role that career services staff play in that achievement.

Research Design and Rationale

A qualitative case study methodology (Merriam, 2001) was used in this study to gain richer understanding of the contribution of Career Service Departments to students and academics at both institutions of higher education. The focus of this case study was to assess and explore the methods in which two Jesuit institutions provide career services for their undergraduate students. Through the process of interviews and observations, I collected data that were intended to give an accurate account of the activities of the career services' staff. This type of design allows the participants to express their thoughts and feelings in their own words. Adler and Clark (2003) stated that in using a descriptive study, a researcher describes groups, activities, situations, and events, with a focus on structure, attitudes, or behavior.

The predominant form of data collection was personal interviews. This approach of data collection worked well with the design of this case study. I was able to gain a better understanding of how the staff collaborate with students and employers. The case study began with a letter and a telephone call to the Director of Career Services at both universities to identify the time for interviews and the personnel to be interviewed. The six staff members of Saint Thomas University requested a meeting to discuss what was expected of them. After the meeting three staff members refused to participate. These members did not feel comfortable answering questions about their role and that of their supervisor. The staff of Saint Peter's University did not request a meeting. St. Peter's Office of Career Services consisted of ten staff positions, but at the time of this research, four of the positions were not occupied and three staff members did not agree to participate. These staff members were new to their positions and felt they could provide

little to the research. Three staff members from each institution agreed to participate and were asked to sign a consent form prior to being interviewed.

I was able to study each participant of the departments to observe what actually takes place. I responded to spontaneous issues that arose during the interviews that contributed to this case study. In addition, I was attentive to the participants during the interviews knowing when to be silent, to probe more deeply, or to keep the interview moving. Strong communication skills were crucial, particularly the ability to establish rapport, empathize with the respondents, have good questioning skills, and listen intently (Merriam, 2001).

In this study, I focused on participants' responses during the interview. The responses resulted in descriptive details from the various participants' perspectives (Merriam, 2001). This case study was designed in a qualitative method allowing me to compare and contrast the answers provided by the staff members and to develop key themes that emerged.

These responses demonstrated how the staff members of the Office of Career Services at both Jesuit universities perceived the services they provide and the way in which these services were used by undergraduates. The extent of the relationship between the Office of Career Services and academia was determined by the responses given during the interview process. In addition to the taped interviews, field notes and observation of the activity within the office were used for data collection.

Site Selection

At the time of this study, there are twenty-eight Jesuit colleges and universities in the United States; of these I chose St. Peter's University and St. Thomas University for this study. These two universities share a similar philosophy and mission and connect with the core mission of Jesuit education. The mission statement of both universities was displayed in each Office of Career Services.

St. Peter's mission statement is as follows:

Our work is consistent and inspired by the University's Jesuit mission to foster in all its students life-long habits of careful observation, critical thinking, creativity, moral reflection and articulation expression. Our staff engages and challenges St. Peter's students to grow personally by providing career education resources, internship and career opportunities, and life planning skills that concentrate on the values, interests, needs and concerns of the whole person in each of our students (Retrieved from [http://www.St. Peter's.edu/campus resources/student services/career services/about us](http://www.St.Peter's.edu/campus/resources/student%20services/career%20services/about%20us)).

St. Thomas's mission states:

The St. Thomas Office of Career Services strives to facilitate the process of career choice by helping students and alumni focus on a personal sense of meaning and career direction consistent with their unique talents, aspirations, and vision for living.

Guided by the principles of Jesuit education and aware of the need to impart knowledge that has immediate and long-term value, our personnel assume the roles of advisor, teacher, and mentor (Retrieved from [http://www.St.Thomas.edu/studentLife/studentaffairs /career/mission](http://www.St.Thomas.edu/studentLife/studentaffairs/career/mission)).

Both universities are located in the northeastern section of the United States with accessibility to New York City and other metropolitan areas. Each of the Jesuit institutions has made remarkable progress since the 1980's. Both universities have shown growth and an increase in enrollment, retention, academic offerings and facilities. Even as tuition costs have continued to increase, these two institutions with similar mission statements have continued to grow. Their major difference is that St. Peter's

University is located in a large metropolitan area and St. Thomas University is in a suburban area. The large metropolitan location may be considered an advantage to the staff of the Office of Career Services in helping students find employment. However, a large metropolitan area may be considered a deterrent for students in making a college selection. On the other hand, a suburban area may be a deterrent to the Office of Career Services staff members in helping students find employment, yet considered an advantage in making a college decision. Descriptive data on the two institutions are presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Descriptive Data on the Two Jesuit Universities

	St. Peter's University	St. Thomas University
Undergraduate Enrollment	8,325	3,942
% Male Students	43%	45%
% Female Students	57%	55%
Full Instructors	744	290
Tenured Faculty	416	193
Students Enrolled in Business	2,058	811
Students Enrolled in Arts & Science	3,613	1667
Students Enrolled in Professional Studies	289	1,301
Students Enrolled in Continuing Studies	2,765	1,854

St. Peter's University has several locations throughout the metropolitan area and St. Thomas University is located in a suburban area. Both universities' missions are committed to providing a liberal arts education and strong professional and pre-professional programs in the context of St. Ignatius Loyola's education principles, especially in the care and development of the whole person.

These two universities were chosen because of a personal association with both institutions: a relative's experience during 1996-2000 from St. Peter University; and my own experience from St. Thomas University as an undergraduate and graduate student.

What I experienced at St. Thomas University as a student was different from what I observed happening now. No one from the Office of Career Services ever spoke with students or made us aware of any of their services. If the Office of Career Services even existed during my time at St. Thomas, I was unaware of it.

In 1996, the Dean of Student Services at St. Peter's University played a major role in the football recruiting efforts for a relative, and four years later the job opportunities provided by the Office of Career Services led to my relative's gainful employment. At this institution, the Office of Career Services' role in recruiting efforts of new students was very important. It helped to assure parents that their sons and daughters were going to be able to find employment at the conclusion of their education.

The Career Services staff's perspective of their roles is not simply their recounting of daily events, but their perspective on the actual performance of the department. Understanding what the staff does helps them interpret the way those tasks influence their behavior with students. Does the staff consult with Deans in assisting students in their job searches? This reflects whether or not a relationship exists between the staff of the Career Services and academic programs and the personnel.

Merriam (2001) stated that a qualitative study is concerned with the process, not just the outcome, of the study. However, by reviewing the process, outcomes were observed. I observed the staff at both Jesuit institutions to learn about their perspectives on how they understood their effectiveness.

Participants in the Study

This study focused on the staff members of the Office of Career Services at St. Peter's University and St. Thomas University. At St. Peter's University, three members of the staff were newly hired and felt they did not have enough knowledge of the Office of Career Services to participate. At St. Thomas University, three staff members expressed concern about sharing information. I felt that those who refused to participate were not comfortable speaking about their superiors. A total of six staff members were interviewed and all interviews were recorded. Each member was interviewed once; none were interviewed twice. The staff members were furnished a copy of their interview transcripts and afforded an opportunity to make corrections. Each staff member was asked for any student evaluations or satisfaction questionnaires. Staff members reported that student evaluations were not conducted at either university. Each Director requested approval from his or her supervisor. Permission was granted and each Director of the Office of Career Services agreed to participate in the study. One Director requested that a pseudonym be used to conceal the identity of the institution. I agreed to this request with the Director. Specifically, I requested permission to conduct interviews and collect any relevant data. Some of the data collected included some of the material that staff members distribute to students. Confidentiality was guaranteed to the participants of this study. Participants were encouraged to fully describe their answers and provide any material that supported their descriptions. The data collected for this study were in the form of semi-structured personal interviews. The staff of the office of Career Services at St. Peter University is comprised of a Director, Assistant Director of Career Services/Experiential Education, and an Assistant Director. At St. Thomas University's

staff consists of a Director, Assistant Director of Information Resources Specialist, and an Administrative Assistant.

The staff members from each of the universities who participated in this study had experience in the Office of Career Services that qualified them to answer the questions. It is my belief that all six members were open and honest with their responses.

Ethical Considerations

The following steps were taken to address for ethical considerations:

1. I explained the rights of confidentiality and participation; extreme care was taken to inform all participants that the research was based on confidentiality. To minimize this issue, all participants were assured that precautions were taken to remove any identifying features from quotations or tape recordings to disguise them in the report. All participants were informed of their rights as research participants and emphasis was made that no disadvantages or penalties for not participating in the study were given. I assured participants and educational colleagues involved in the study that all documents were stored in a securely locked cabinet and were available only through me unless the participants gave written consent to release the data.
2. Research objectives were clearly articulated; this study was associated with low risk of harm and discomfort, which supported the efforts of this study. Although this study was limited to two Jesuit universities, participants were informed about its contribution to parents, students and the academic community.

This was research involving human subjects; it was important for me to consider the potential negative impact this research might have had on any of the subjects participating in the study. In this case, I assumed that the study did not impose any harm.

The Temple University Institutional Review Board (IRB) ensured that I complied with all federal and state regulatory requirements throughout this process, while safeguarding the rights and welfare of the participants of this study. I complied with all IRB requirements of obtaining approval and conducting the study. Consent form each subject was obtained before the interviews began.

The Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis (Merriam, 2001). I interviewed the staff of the Office of Career Services at both universities. The interviews conducted supplied me with the information necessary to answer the following research questions:

- How do staff members in the Office of Career Services at two universities respond to the needs of undergraduate students in their employment searches?
- How does each institution take advantage of its location in assisting students in their employment searches?
- To what extent is there a connection between the staff of the Office of Career Services and the academic community of each institution?
- What is the relationship between the Office of Career Services and the local and national businesses?

During the interviews, I observed the participants' gestures and body language. Participant observation is a major means of collecting data in case study research (Merriam 2001, p.102). It was important for me to take accurate notes throughout the interviewing process. After each interview, I allotted time to analyze the activity and interaction that took place between students and staff of both offices.

Data Collection Procedures

The members of each Office of Career Services staff were interviewed by me using the Interview Protocol (Appendix A). All interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. I collected documents that the staff distributes to students and used observation of staff interaction with students, office activities and evaluations during the interviews as the method of data collection.

The interviews were conducted individually, with each interview lasting approximately sixty minutes. Each staff member answered the same series of open-ended questions. These questions were designed to address the research questions. The same questions were used in a similar pilot study performed at a different institution. This study was conducted as partial requirement for a graduate course, Case Study Research Approaches (EA 670). All participants were ensured anonymity and confidentiality. Six staff members were interviewed and asked to answer thirty-six prepared semi-structured questions Interview Protocol (Appendix A). The participants were sent a copy of the questions in advance of their scheduled interview. Subsequent questions generated conversations that attempted to define how these staff members perceived their roles in assisting undergraduates in their job searches. All interviews were recorded in a digital

format and stored on a tape-recorder for reliable storage. It was not necessary to conduct subsequent interviews in order to obtain clarification of prior statements.

Interview questions examined how staff members in the Office of Career Services at two universities respond to the needs of undergraduate students in their employment searches. Questions also determined whether or not the staff of the Career Services of one institution thought that they had an advantage over the other in assisting students obtaining employment opportunities, and if so what the advantages were.

Questions also explored whether staff members interact with the academic departments of the institution and revealed if a relationship exists between academics and career services. A relationship with the academic community is important to Career Services in knowing that students are properly prepared to enter the workforce. In addition, the relationship between the Office of Career Services and local and national businesses were examined. Importance was placed on knowing what personnel characteristics and knowledge are required for employees in an ever-changing global market.

Data Analysis Procedures

Upon completion of the interview transcription, key words and phrases were examined to develop common trends. Data collection and analysis is a simultaneous activity in qualitative research. Analysis begins with the first interview; the first observation (Merriam 2001). The interviews of the staff of the Career Services were transcribed from tape-recorded to hard copy for analysis. Once the transcription was completed, I read the interviews and began to code the data into themes. Interpretations

of data collected were used throughout the study. I used interviews, observation, and documents to establish validity to the study. Merriam (2001) noted that interviews, and observation is a method researchers use to confirm the emerging findings. I mapped out several categories that emerged from recurring responses, language used, and thoughts from the interviews. These categories were segmented into themes which responded to the research questions.

Methods of Verification

Qualitative research is determined by its trustworthiness, meaning the inquirer's ability to convince his or her audience that the findings are worth considering (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Four areas that need to be addressed according to Lincoln and Guba to determine trustworthiness are: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility provides confidence that findings are accurate and truthful. Transferability is the ability to apply the findings to other contexts outside the study. Dependability allows the study to be replicated with similar findings. Confirmability indicates that the findings of a study are determined by the participants and not influenced by my bias or other interests. In assuring that these four areas were upheld, each interview was audio taped and professionally transcribed. Member check was a second technique used to establish credibility. By using direct quotations from the interview transcripts of the staff, certain conclusions were drawn. Maxwell (1992) stated that conclusions are developed from the data that are obtained during interviews. The staff of the office of Career Services gave information and descriptions that were used in this study.

In reviewing the findings of this study, I used quotations from the interview transcripts, observations and documents given by the staff members. Merriam's (2001) internal validity strategies were used to strengthen the validity of the data and ensure their conclusions. The Offices of Career Services were units of analysis in the analysis process.

Coding of data constantly checks interpretations with multiple data sources to confirm the emerging findings: (1) collection of data was achieved in this study by using multiple sources of data and multiple methods, i.e., audio recorded interviews for verbatim transcripts, observations, and documents to collect data and, (2) by using the member check method throughout data collection and analysis (Merriam, (2001).

Member checks were conducted with the staff of the Career Services to review the findings of the study and determine whether or not the results were plausible (Merriam, 2001). These internal validity checks determined how the mission of Career Services influences the staff's daily activities. After being interviewed, all participant were sent full transcripts electronically with a message requesting them to approve the transcriptions.

Member checks with each participant helped clarify any misinterpretations on my part. It provided the opportunity for the participants to evaluate their efforts and review their responses. Participants at the same site were able to comment on each other's accounts or the accounts from a different location. This helped validate or refute the data that were given. This step was particularly important, as any misinterpretation could have resulted in inaccurate interpretations of the data.

Through various techniques of analysis, the documents were assessed to strengthen the reliability of the findings using the investigator's position, researcher's explanation of the study to the participants, reasons for selecting subjects, the role of the researcher, multiple methods of data collection, i.e., interviews, and observations used to strengthen the reliability process of the findings (Adler & Clark, 2003).

Initial interviews began in February 2011, and lasted approximately one hour, with no follow-up interviews. Interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the staff members and were conducted at their offices. All interviews were completed by the first week of April. The transcription took three weeks to be completed and returned to me. I listened to all tapes and thoroughly read all transcripts for accuracy and analysis of interviews. Facial expressions and gestures were noted. The use of a tape recorder did not preclude me from taking notes, which also enhanced the accuracy in the experiences of the participants. Data analysis began immediately. All data obtained were cross-referenced with the main research questions and analyzed to reflect how the staff assists undergraduates in their job searches, whether one institution has an advantage over the other in obtaining employment opportunities, and the staff's relationship with the academic community as well as the business community.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The stimulus for this study was to investigate the role of staff in the Office of Career Services at two universities in assisting undergraduate students in their job searches. Two Jesuit universities were selected to participate in this study, because they share the same educational philosophy. Three staff members at each university's Office of Career Services agreed to be interviewed. A qualitative research method was used in which one-on-one, semi-structured interviews which I conducted reviewed and explored how staff members in the Office of Career Services at two universities respond to the needs of undergraduate students in their employment searches. This case study also determined whether or not the staff of one institution has an advantage over the other in assisting students obtaining employment opportunities and identified these advantages. In addition, the staff of the Office of Career Services explained their connection to the academic community of each institution and to local and national businesses.

These two universities have established an Office of Career Services; however, the focus of these departments varied from one institution to the other. In this investigation, four questions were addressed. Since the staff of the Office of Career Services works closely with students and potential employers, their role was the focal point. Therefore, the four research questions were:

- How do staff members in the Office of Career Services at two universities respond to the needs of undergraduate students in their employment searches?

- How does each institution take advantage of its location in assisting students in their employment searches?
- To what extent is there a connection between the staff of the Office of Career Services and the academic community of each institution?
- What is the relationship between the Office of Career Services and local and national businesses?

The framework for this study design and data analysis fell into five areas: (1) assistance to students; (2) location; (3) relationship between career services staff and academic community; (4) relationship between career services and business community; and (5) assessment of the policies and practices of Career Services staff members.

These themes were utilized in this chapter to organize the findings and present the information provided by the six staff members who were interviewed. This chapter begins with a brief description of each staff member using a pseudonym. Following the descriptions, the findings are presented site by site and comparisons and contrasts are listed at the end of the chapter.

Staff

St. Peter's University

Anna is in her mid-thirties and is the Director of Career Services at St. Peter's University. She had been in the position for just one year at the time of this study. Anna oversees two campuses and a staff of seven people. She came to St. Peter's after working as an Assistant Director of Career Services at an Ivy League university. Many changes took place since she arrived in her new position. One of the major changes was that there

had been a turnover of fifty percent of staff. According to Anna, “Several of the staff did not want to continue to work for me, so we have a lot of new hires, which is fantastic.”

Anna is changing the culture but not the mission. She joked that she is “turning the Titanic. You know, like, when they saw the glacier, they turned and turned and turned the ship and then it just turned slowly because we serve 14,000 students and we have a small staff. The staff members that are here receive people so there are a lot of changes that need to be made and getting more attention from administration to allocate resources in our direction, but the staff is amazing.”

Anna explained, “The student tide has changed a lot, too. We have great student engagement so we still have a lot to do actually, and I am making a lot of changes over the next few months.” An evaluation of the services that are provided is now in process. “All of these services and all these programs we did this year and so it’s a lot. We have a lot of hit and miss with students. We are creating a four-year model basically so that there are touch points every year and we working with the academic departments on that evaluation” Anna added. Anna knew additional changes were needed. She felt that the mission of the Office of Career Services “wasn’t in line with the Academic Mission.”

She said, “We actually have a pretty lengthy mission, but it really comes down to one thing, because we built it parallel to the academic mission of the university, which is new for our office. That was something that we changed recently, to do a better job of partnering with academics departments, but, really, the mission of the office is to work on the whole person – pure personalis—to cultivate the personal and professional development, the leadership of the whole person and how it relates to their career. That’s the bottom line. We need to have a commitment to excellence, both in how we serve the students and alumni, recruiters that come into our office, and, also how we train students and educate students to be leaders in the workforce when they leave.”

Anna’s position as Director includes supervising offices on two campuses; her duties include “everything from overseeing all the programming and counseling to

strategic planning, budgeting, and alumni relations, fundraising. Anything that needs to be done to make the office successful and to serve students pretty much falls under my umbrella,” Anna added.

Anna is involved in counseling and meeting with leaders at both campuses. She explained, “That means student leaders or academic departments or whatever it may be, if I hear concerns I meet with the staff to come up with a plan to implement a solution.”

Other changes Anna described include the opportunity to implement new ways of servicing the students, and her ability to hire and promote the most qualified person in key positions. Anna feels that she now has the right people in position to make changes. She is optimistic and expects good things in her department. She is proud of the fact that she had been invited to make a presentation to the Board of Trustees that signifies the importance of the Office of Career Services to the university. Anna believes that “getting more attention from administration would result in additional allocation of resources.”

Sam is the Assistant Director of Career Services/Experiential Education at St. Peter’s University. Sam is the first Director of Experiential Education. He has been with the university since the 1980’s and is in his late fifties. He served as Dean of Students for more than half of his tenure at the institution. Sam started his career at St. Peter’s as the Director of Career Services before becoming the Dean of Students. Sam had a close relationship with the previous President of the University. The new President requested that he return to the Office of Career Services as a liaison between the academic community and Career Services since this relationship was in need of repair. Sam stated, “The reason they asked me to come back was because the relationship between the office at the time and the academic folks wasn’t very....basically none.” Sam feels that he has

“a world class relationship with the faculty on the academic side of the aisle.” Sam has been repairing the relationship between the two staffs through collaboration, particularly centered on an internship program for students. By managing the internship program, he has the opportunity to meet with academic departments and employers. Sam has a wealth of background knowledge about the university that Anna relies on in her leadership role. Sam was very open in regard to the last director who was no longer with the university. He had ideas that “were counterintuitive to a Jesuit University.” Sam had to return to the department for “damage control.”

Sam is proud of his relationship with Anna. He said, “The working relationship is very good and, actually, Anna and I are giving a presentation to the St. Peter’s College Council of Deans Departments about the Office of Career Services.” Sam criticized the prior administration of the Office of Career Services in saying, “The former Director thought it was the students’ responsibility to come see the Career Services. My contention is that students who are writing checks to the university are entering into a contract, that it’s okay for me to contact them first.”

Sam focused on being the staff member who had the most experience at St. Peter’s. His answers always had an historical perspective to them such as, “When I first got here thirty-eight years ago, I think we had one interdisciplinary program on the academic side. We must have between forty or fifty.”

The third member from St. Peter’s University is Donna. Donna is the Assistant Director of Career Services at the satellite campus and is in her late twenties. She began her career at St. Peter’s and was a Career Counselor who met with students on a daily basis. After three years, Donna was promoted to Assistant Director. She balances her

career counseling with program development and employer relations while managing the satellite campus. She enjoys working with students and employers. Donna advises students majoring in Liberal Arts, Communication and Media, which are the areas of study offered at the satellite campus. This differs from the main campus where students concentrate more in Professional Studies.

In responding to several of the interview questions, she often said, “I would probably have to defer you to Anna.” She was careful not to say anything that was negative or could be misinterpreted. Donna did say, “I’m a huge proponent of internships, networking, you know, being proactive in your search, a younger age, speaking to your contacts, broadening your network—I think those concepts are more on the radar of students today.” This is how she views the role of a career counselor today from one in the past.

Assistance to Students

St. Peter’s University

According to Donna, Assistant Director of Career Services, the mission of the Office of Career Services is “to meet with every student and try to bridge the gap between what is being learned in the classroom and what is happening inside the world of work, and we want to facilitate that process and make sure that each student finds a position or a role in their area of interest.” She feels her main role is counseling; however, she provides the same services, which are formatted to meet the needs of students, at the satellite campus.

Donna noted that their office is very “client-centered,” addresses needs of the students and includes a follow-up with each student. Donna supported the notion that their office is client-centered by stating, “Primarily, my focus is to meet with students—to have them come in and ask them, ‘How can I help you today?’ Whether that’s to talk about their resume, or their interview, or general career development, career assessment – it’s really whatever their needs are. That’s the main role for me. It’s the counseling.”

At St. Peter’s University, students are asked how they heard about the Office of Career Services. Donna said that usually she gets one of two responses, “My roommate came and met with you and really enjoyed meeting with you, so I came.” or “A professor mentioned that I should be using and maximizing the resources at St. Peter’s.” She believes “word-of-mouth” outweighs all other marketing materials. The marketing tools presently in use are in need of change, so the staff is in the process of developing new materials. They are developing new social media such as Facebook in the hope that this avenue will reach a broader base of students.

Donna added, “In addition to that, there is a lot of program development. We will come up with various different workshops, professional development workshops, seminars, and, you know, was that we could reach out to more students well. Those are probable the two main focus.”

Donna strongly believes that students benefit by using the Career Services resources the university has to offer. “Students, when they come to me, they don’t even have a resume, so we provide them with a template, we walk them through the process, continue to meet with them, and what’s really nice about working at St. Peter’s is that it’s

such a nice, small, tight-knit community – that there is really that continuity and that ongoing rapport with students.”

Donna said that once she meets with students, she can “walk them through the process and continue to meet with them.” She believes in order to truly benefit from what is being offered from the Office of Career Services, students need to be fully engaged in the job-search process.

Donna also said, “I love meeting with students one-on-one. I really do think it’s a privilege to continue to meet with students.” She added, “What’s nice for me is, when I go to the cafeteria, I know the faces. I know the students. They know me, which is really nice, and I do feel that, you know, we are here to support them and, you know, just help them take the next step.” Donna believes knowing students and having them familiar with her makes for a better working relationship. She revealed that her interest in students is a privilege. “They don’t just come in once and then you never see them again. They stay in touch. They let you know when they get jobs and when they get internships, which is really nice and feels rewarding, because you actually see tangible progress, and you know you’re helping them get to where they want to go and reach their goals.” She described that meeting with students is a “very big focus for her and a very big part of her work.”

She also stated that the Office of Career Services is the bridge from the academic environment to a career. Donna stated that program development is a major area of focus, and the staff of St. Peter’s continues to offer various workshops, professional development sessions, seminars, and ways to reach out to more students as well. In answering questions, Donna’s responses tended to center on providing customer service.

When asked about recruiting job openings for students, Donna shared that St. Peter's has an Employer Relations Manager whose primary focus is to continue to meet with different companies. She added, "We have an online job database where literally thousands of opportunities are housed for the students and alumni."

Anna spoke about the importance of getting students involved early with the Office of Career Services. She feels that it needs to start with orientation. Anna stated that during orientation, "We are trying to get, actually more involved because we want to plant a seed, so that they start thinking of their careers in their freshman year because, regardless of your major, you have to have that in the back of your mind."

St. Peter's Office of Career Service in the past did not take part in orientation. Anna explained, "We struggled with orientation in the past. We had an open house which students didn't come to basically because they would have to walk across campus to come here, and we are not priority, and then the other thing we did is, like, just setting up tables. Anna added, "I will get an audience where I can speak to 100 % of the freshman, and we need that audience and to get 100 % of the freshman thinking about their position."

In the recruiting of prospective students the staff takes an active role by making presentations and setting up tables at each open house. The presentation centers on what you can expect from the Office of Career Services, placement numbers, and how to make the most of the office. Anna stated that parents want to know, "Is my kid going to have a job at the end, and are you going to help them get an internship so they can get a job?"

When asked about the effectiveness of the Office of Career Services, Anna, stated,

"What was done in the past wasn't completely effective. Students would be notified of a career opportunity, but only a few responded. We do a lot through

email. That's what had been done before I came, and St. Peter's in general, sends a lot of emails, so that means the students don't read any of them basically. So we have shifted already in one area and that's an outreach piece so, for example, we have a great opportunity with AOL and there aren't many applicants online, so my staff informed me that we only have twelve applications. So, what would have happened in the past is we would have just sent an email blast out to all students, which they probably wouldn't read."

Instead, she depends on Student Leaders for the School of Business and Student Government to disseminate information. Anna said, "I reach out to them directly about the opportunities and ask them to disseminate it. They do read the emails from each other." She also reaches out to Resident Advisors, because students will read an email from their RA's before they will read an email from her office. Anna stated, "Someone else from my office reaches out to the faculty, because they listen to faculty." Anna remarked, "Instead of just sending an email blast to everyone, we are honing into specific populations."

The shifting to a more online presence is aimed toward more engagement from students. This began with redesigning the website. Anna stated, "When we did the analytics on the website, the students would come and spend about a minute on the website and not go past the first two pages. They didn't go any deeper into the website. So we have redesigned the website so that it's more user-friendly. It has a lot of media content, so instead of having a lot of text about how to be successful in an interview, we have a video about interviewing that we worked with a recruiter on." By redesigning the website, it will be more user-friendly and hopefully used more often by students.

At St. Peter's, students are encouraged to use Social Media; however, Anna spoke about Facebook and Twitter by adding, "We are going to be making students aware of the pitfalls of Social Media, because students make a lot of mistakes in Social Media, and it

skews their perception of professional etiquette, so things that would be common sense to someone is not necessarily common sense to the students. Social Media is extremely informal. So we need to work with students on professional etiquette.” In this way, Social Media is an advantage and not a detriment.

In addition, Anna found that alumni and employers have a lot of respect for LinkedIn and find it to be a great resource. Anna stated, “LinkedIn has really taken off, and it’s a great way to network.” Online resources are enabling students to market themselves globally. Anna added that the resources used are critiqued by feedback from employers.

When speaking of students, Anna stressed that they would come into the Office of Career Services for answers to specific questions, but they weren’t taking advantage of all the services that are offered. She emphasized, “Students need assistance with networking and finding the right opportunities. There are always students who can create a great resume, but are bad interviewers. So those students need the networking piece as well as the interviewing, and then there are students that don’t really know how to do any of it effectively. Our staff needs to walk them through the entire process from Day 1, creating their first resume, critiquing it, coming up and making it strategic.” This guidance is the strength of the Office of Career Services at St. Peter’s.

As a new service, St. Peter’s created a database of experts in various areas to assist students. If a student is interested in communication or new media, he/she knows the staff might not know all the nuances that go into creating a resume for these areas. Anna said, “Yes, I will meet with students. So I do the basic critiques on the resume. I tell them, ‘Now we’re ready to make this resume competitive. I’m connecting you with

this expert in the industry you're interested in.” This will give students of St. Peter's an advantage in applying for a position in these types of organizations.

Anna believes that the “tide is turning” because the staff is working with academic departments in reaching out to students “by developing a new four-year plan so that all students have ‘touch points’ each semester, and we engage them early.” It is important that students participate early and often with staff of Office of Career Services. Students can no longer wait until their last semester to truly benefit from the Office of Career Services. Throughout Anna's interview it was noted that her major goal was to improve how the students at St. Peter's take advantage of the services that are offered in her department.

It was clear that Anna had been charged with improving the overall perspectives of the Office of Career Services. Her reference to “turning the tide” is an example of this. As noted in the field notes, Anna was very enthusiastic but openly critical of her predecessor. When speaking about the Office of Career Services under her leadership from that of her predecessor, she stated, “It is as different as ‘night and day’.”

When asked to provide a breakdown of students per class like freshman, sophomores, juniors and seniors Anna said, “I don't have that number, actually, for two reasons: the main reason being that the tracking system isn't efficient. Now, what I do have is, like, the preliminary data from the seniors. The seniors' usage was in the low 40 percent where those students self-selected saying, “Yes, I used Career Services.” It was in the low 40's of seniors, which is not a number that I'm comfortable with, to be honest.”

According to Anna, “The system that we’re using is not built to do a lot of tracking of students through the entire process, which is extremely frustrating to me because I want to be able to see, when a student comes into my office for me to meet with them, I want to be able to see, you know. I want to take five minutes and see everything they’ve done so that I can pick up right where they left off and move forward. What we have to do now is have a conversation with the student first and figure out where they are and go forward.”

Anna knows having current information will benefit the students and staff. Her belief is to have the right platform. “When a student walks through the door, the first thing they will do is scan their ID’s and they are logged into the system, and they choose what they’re here for then the counselor that they meet with will have that profile up, put in notes about their conversation, so that every single interaction with a student is tracked. The information has to be volunteered by the student or the employer as far as the opportunities they have taken. So, that’s going to take more of a culture change. This will take a little bit longer than just implementing the new tracking system. ”

In responding to the question, “Does one academic program use your service more than another?” Anna answered that the School of Business uses the services of the Office of Career Services more than any other academic program. She felt the first reason was “a student that enrolls in Business School is automatically more focused on their career before they ever get to campus.” Secondly, the culture in the Business School is very different from Liberal Arts studies. “Early on the Business School starts drilling into the student’s head the need to be cognizant of their career and what they are going to after the four years,” Anna said.

The third reason is based on the fact that business majors have more defined career paths. Anna stated, “It’s a pretty logical transition into what they are going to be doing and, so, they know when to come to Career Services.” This is different for the Liberal Arts School in which career paths are less defined. According to Anna, “Sometimes even the word “career” makes them very nervous. So it’s going to fall back on the four-year plan mentioned earlier, involving them earlier to help them understand how to leverage your Liberal Arts degree.” Anna stated that the Business students use the Office of Career Services most frequently.

Sam, Assistant Director of Career Services/Experiential Education, feels, “The responsibility of the Career Services Office is to engage all of the students – not enough of them get here now, and we’ve got to get more of them to show up on the doorstep. That’s the challenge right now, the first challenge. The second is utilization of technology must be leveraged properly...we can lever ...we leverage paraprofessional assistance.”

Sam explained, “We are expanding the Graduate Internship Program that I am going to supervise interns, and we are expanding what we call our St. Peter’s Career Ambassador Program, which is a pure education program.” The growth in internships is the key component of St. Peter’s Office of Career Services.

Sam believes that the staff of the Office of Career Services must reach out to students. He believes, “It’s not the student’s responsibility to come to us. When they write the check for the year, we enter into a contract that it’s okay for me to contact them first.” He said that the prior administration of the Office of Career Services felt that it was the student’s responsibility. Sam does not agree with that thought process. Sam said

the prior administration “had ideas that were counterintuitive to be at a Jesuit University, but it was still interesting ideas.”

Sam believes that the mission of the Office of Career Services is “to serve the students’ needs in the transition and, I guess, the whole transformation from the world of education to the world of work. This mission works directly to the mission of the University.” He feels that his many years of service allow him to truly appreciate the importance of the Office of Career Services.

Sam stressed, “It begins with how the staff addresses the students.” He approaches students by helping them identify their self-awareness. He explained, “All of us get some sort of self-awareness, career awareness—whatever assessment you need.” After identifying this, students need to develop a marketing plan. Sam said that students need to “learn how to network and things like that.” Once students learn how to market and network themselves, then they must learn how to interview. The key to interviewing is that students need to be prepared to make a presentation and answer questions. Sam emphasized, “Students need to make a presentation in an interview setting as opposed to being held hostage by the questions.” He continues to interact with students and asks them, “Where are you, and how do you assess yourself?”

Sam is a strong supporter of the Office of Career Services as a career education that connects disciplines at St. Peter’s, “where we have a Liberal Arts education – the ancient Liberal Arts and the core curriculum is oozing for interconnectedness and interdisciplinary work.” In Sam’s opinion, Career Education is the last Social Science. He added, “It’s a connecting social science designed to connect.” For example, Sam explained, “Students don’t have the luxury of not paying attention to what goes on in the

world of work while they are here for four years.” Sam believes that in today’s world, things happen and change too quickly. The conversation between the staff of the Office of Career Services and students connects them to what is going on in the world. Sam feels that students benefit from the Office of Career Services by “getting a richer understanding of themselves—that we would get to know them and challenge them in a way that they would, you know, look inward first and then, at the same time, that they would have a sense that we are here, as I said earlier, as a connecting group. We are here to have them, sort of, get an understanding of what particularly they are learning in this core curriculum.”

The core curriculum responds to the world of work. Sam described that “core curriculum connects and develops relationship like trust, integrity, and they will be solid relationships and the others will just fall by the wayside.”

In order to assist students in seeking employment, St. Peter’s has several Career Fairs annually. In the fall, there are two fairs, a general career fair that covers all disciplines and an Accounting and Finance Career Fair. The Accounting and Finance Fair is based upon the recruiting cycle for most accounting firms and banks and is usually held in late September or early October. In the spring, there is another general career fair and a small career fair for educators that focuses on the Graduate School of Education.

The staff at St. Peter’s conducts various professional development workshops and seminars in order to reach students. The staff members believe that internship opportunities provided for students through the Office of Career Services give students at St. Peter’s advantage. Anna said, “It’s great for our students to be able to get fall and

spring internships.” This gives them an advantage over competing with students nationwide in the summer months.

Location

St. Peter’s University

At St. Peter’s University the Director of the Office of Career Services spends time with prospective companies to promote students. Anna said in meeting with employers that she is attempting to get to the bottom line which is, “Here is why our candidates are great.” Anna schedules appointments with employers to encourage them to post job opportunities or provide students internships. Due to the economic downturn, the lack of job opportunities led to a significant increase of companies offering internships. Most of these internships are unpaid, but are a great experience for students. In some cases students can earn college credit as long as the company is for-profit. Anna reported that The Department of Labor has determined that completing an internship at a nonprofit organization cannot result in any type of payment, which includes college credit. She explained, “If a for-profit company offers student internships, students must either earn academic credits or receive payment.” Anna added that many companies who provide internships use it as a recruiting tool, because they often may make the intern an offer for employment after graduation.

Anna believes a lot of employers go to St. Peter’s University because of its location in a large metropolitan area, which is the home for many corporate headquarters. These corporations, even in the midst of a downward economy, are seeking interns. Students often can obtain fall or spring internships. St. Peter’s students compete with

students from many prestigious universities and colleges throughout the area. The competition increases in summer when students nationwide are vying to obtain internships in large metropolitan areas. Anna added that many employers call to say, “Can you get me interns from St. Peter’s?” Even though these employers have no connection to the institution, close proximity to the university offers them the opportunity for obtaining interns.

Anna noted that the “vast majority of students want to start their careers in a large metropolitan area, and because of that, many of them choose St. Peter’s for that specific reason. Students want to work for the top-tier banks and the top-tier accounting firms; these firms exist in this area.” She added, “The most difficult part of the transition is educating the students on taking advantage of good opportunities and not just the first opportunity they get.”

St. Peter’s location affords the opportunity for the institution to hold several “Career Views” which are conducted for employers. Students are taken to the heart of the business section of the city to visit an employer, tour of the company, and submit a resume. If a candidate seems to be a “good fit,” the company will contact the student. Companies such as Kenneth Cole participate in this program.

Donna said, “The Career View Program is where we take a group of students to an actual field site, and it’s a networking opportunity for them.” Students become acquainted with corporate culture and learn a great deal about a specific company. The staff believes that this is a crucial way to market St. Peter’s students. Donna is a huge proponent of internships, networking, being proactive in the job search, and students’

broadening their network. She feels “these qualities are more on the radar of students today.”

Employers also are asked to visit campus and conduct workshops on diversity in the workplace, networking and resume writing. “If we can get a recruiter to come in and conduct a workshop, students are more likely to listen to the presenters than to the staff. It’s a great way for recruiters to engage students and get to know students, so they can make better recruiting decisions,” stated Anna. She feels that this process allows the employers to “cherry pick” their students, adding that it is “a great recruiting practice.”

Sam explained, “Students in our Business School come to St. Peter’s so they can be close to Wall Street. Our area has indigenous large companies ... Washington, Baltimore, or maybe even Boston wouldn’t have as much pull and play.” The staff feels strongly that their proximity to a large city gives them accessibility to the world’s largest corporate offices. They use these corporate offices as a resource and provide opportunities for the students of St. Peter’s.

Academic Relationship

St. Peter’s University

The Office of Career Services plays a vital role in working with students in their job searches, but it also needs to play an equal role with the academic community at each institution. The academic community (faculty, deans and administration) need to create energy both inside and outside the classroom. Students need to be able to apply what they are taught in the classroom to real world situations. With healthy connections between the Office of Career Services and the academic community, students benefit.

The history of the value that is placed on the Office of Career Services has not been positive at St. Peter's University. Anna said, "In the past, there had not been a whole lot of value placed on it, especially with the economic decline. Now we are getting a lot more attention, which is fantastic." She added that the Academic Deans are starting to give more attention to the office and its services due to the staff and her working closely with them to gain attention. They are building partnerships that did not exist in the past. This partnership began with a four-year plan, so that all students have "touch points" each semester and are engaged with the Office of Career Services early in their academic careers. According to Anna, "Academic Deans are definitely giving us a lot of attention." Anna meets periodically with the Deans of all the schools that interact with the Office of Career Services. In addition to each school having a touch point within the Office of Career Services, the staff work with Faculty Advisors and, from time to time, are asked to visit classes for career advising sessions.

When speaking about the administration Anna said, "Higher attention given by the administration translates into money. That's very good because our operating budget is pretty small, but this year we have gotten a lot of concessions." Money is being used to give offices a "facelift." This facelift is a result of the feedback that was received from recruiters who visited them on campus. Anna said, "They want it to feel like a corporate environment, and ours obviously does not."

Anna has been invited to present to the Faculty Council, which allows her to address the entire faculty and explain the services that the Office of Career Services provides. In addition, she tells them what students need from the faculty and when faculty should send students to the office for assistance.

The School of Business has a consultant who has been hired to focus on careers in that area. Staff members who address professional development for Business students have a voice in the School of Business meetings.

Anna said, “Our commitment to excellence is about how we are going to serve students. We are no longer going to be ‘middle-of-the-road,’ good enough.” This commitment needs to be at every level from students, staff, faculty and administration. She recently went to the Dean of St. Peter’s University to pitch an idea for a Professional Development Seminar required for sophomores. She is hoping that this will begin a dialogue between students and the Office of Career Development.

In Donna’s role, she works with students in the Liberal Arts and Communications schools. In working with faculty, the involvement is centered on internships and career development. Donna said, “I would love to continue to develop those relationships, because I do feel that students would benefit.” She believes that the office is “on the radar,” but there definitely are opportunities to improve the relationship. Donna added, “Strong relationships exist with certain professors who have internships as a part of their programs. They work closely with us to talk about the productiveness of the internships. I would say it definitely varies, but it is quite strong with many faculty members that are interested in career development specifically.”

Sam feels that during good economic times, the Office of Career Services didn’t do enough in marketing themselves to students. Students used Monster and other social networks to find jobs and internships were handled by the faculty. Sam said, “It’s a totally different product today because of the bad economy.” With Anna, Sam is trying to improve the relationship between the Office of Career Services and the faculty.

Sam stated that the administration places a high value on the Office of Career Services. The President's mantra is, "To make the university the best St. Peter's can actually be ---make us as competitive as we can be." In his strategic plan, he promises to enhance the Office of Career Services. The President has assembled a task force of Academic Deans, members of Student Affairs, and members of the staff of the Office of Career Services to ensure that what is needed for the students is done. Sam defined it this way, "I mean, if you are doing a good job and nobody knows that you are here, you are not doing a good job."

Sam explained that St. Peter's President "actually put together a task force of Academic Deans and folks from Student Affairs before I became a member of Career Services. Members of the Board of Trustees are on the committee as well." Sam emphasized the importance of the relationship between academics and the Office of Career Service.

Sam spoke freely about his opinion for the need for academics and Career Services to have a partnership. He said, "Students don't have the luxury of not paying attention to what goes on in the world of work while they are here for four years. Their older brothers and sisters had that luxury. Things didn't change that rapidly. Now things change." He believes that today's students "are the people who are doing the changing." Sam contributes this change to the fact that today's students "control the technology." These changes in technology are having an impact on every aspect of life. This is why academics and careers need to be in a partnership in order to keep up with the changes.

Business Community

St. Peter's University

St. Peter's University has a well-developed relationship with businesses. It starts with Career Views, which is an opportunity for students to visit businesses and submit resumes. Career Views is a program where students are taken to a corporate headquarters for an information session, are given a tour through the company, and are able to submit their resumes.

The Office of Career Services at St. Peter's conducts its own Job Fair at which more than eighty employers attend. In addition, businesses are invited to campus to participate in workshops such as "Diversity Networking." Anna invites businesses to speak to students on some type of diversity issue in the workplace, which benefits the students as well as the businesses.

In speaking about tracking the number of businesses that use their office, Anna said, "We do a decent job of just tracking utilization of businesses. We track how many people come to campus to recruit. We track how many jobs they post, how many internships. We have great analytics on utilization." Anna feels there is a need to strengthen their relationship with businesses and stated, "We don't have information on the relationship with management, so we can do a better job meeting the recruiters...of the recruiters' needs so that's what we're working on." Anna believes that the more recruiters interact with students, the better prepared the students are for the recruiting process. When students are well prepared, they will make a positive impression on the recruiters. Then as Anna said, "They can cherry pick their students."

When asked if St. Peter's had an Employer Advisory Board, Anna said it does not. She has it on her "wish list." One of the concerns with an Advisory Board is that employers might think they have the ability to recommend changes which Anna does not have the power to accomplish. Anna said, "I don't want to give the impression that I have any kind of control over students' academic preparation."

Anna said, "When we speak about local employers, we need to remember we have several large metropolitan areas nearby." She has long-term goals which entail cultivating more opportunities for students nationally. Students come to St. Peter's from all over the country. According to Anna, "They want to be in a large city, and they want to work in a large city. We are lucky. We have the city right here." St. Peter's relies on its academic reputation, quality of students, alumni and the proximity to a large city as advantages with businesses.

Sam said, "LinkedIn is certainly a professional operation with the structure; the way it's set up gives you an opportunity to give yourself a professional presentation. These social networks are not going away and need to be part of the Office of Career Services." Sam cautions students to be mindful of what they put on the web. When Sam speaks to students he tells them, "Listen. You all interact with the web. You give stuff to the web. I don't give anything to the web. I go and take. I go and look for stuff." He wants them to be careful of what they share and understand that it will have an impact them for a lifetime.

When asked if St. Peter's had an Employer Advisory Board, Sam responded, "We don't. I'm sure we would get some employer involved, but that's more Anna's work than for me." When asked the same question, Donna simply responded, "No."

Evaluation

St. Peter's University

Researching the organizational socialization of an institution enables a fuller understanding of the culture of the institution. By understanding the culture, the staff can better examine and evaluate their duties. Trowler and Knight (1998) stated that there is a need for reappraisal and development which benefits staff and students and creates a positive environment. In this study, having each of the staff members describe their role allowed me to understand, evaluate and compare the two universities.

At St. Peter's University, Department Chairs have never consulted with the Office of Career Services. For example, the School of Business added a professional development component to their curriculum without notifying Career Services. Sam believes that, due to his many years of service, some Department Chairs will ask his opinion. However, Department Chairs do not normally consult with the staff of Career Services on a regular basis.

In evaluating the services offered Sam said, "Students are sent surveys and we survey them on a regular basis about utilization and things of that nature. A lot...no." He did not feel the need for a formal student evaluation. Sam ended his thoughts with, "That's one of those things that I have enough work, so I don't ask for that one, too."

In regards to evaluation, Donna said, "We do have 'Counselor Evaluation Reports' and 'Program Evaluation Reports' and we evaluate workshops and events. So we do try to have data."

In addressing how well students are doing after graduation, Anna said, "Deans are in the same pickle as us in figuring out what's really happening with graduates, because that all comes down to the Senior Survey which we are trying to revamp." Anna stated

that, at that point, the information was anecdotal. The staff was meeting to design a four-year program to track what is happening with students.

St. Peter's Office of Career Services evaluates programs from students' perceptions immediately following an event. Anna said, "We have never packaged our office and sold it to them or told them exactly what they should expect from us."

There had not been an evaluation of staff performance in the past. Anna said, "We have our mission, and we are going to set up the four-year program." Once that is in place, staff will be able to set goals and be held accountable to those goals. Anna concluded the interview with, "Career Services, in general, is that we don't have the luxury of moving slow anymore. We are in higher education, but we have to behave like a corporation, and so that comes with obvious challenges."

Staff

St. Thomas University

Amy, who is in her mid-forties, is the Director of Career Services at St. Thomas University. She has been with St. Thomas since the mid 1980's and has been the Director for six years. Amy established the department goals, objectives, and assessment measures. She acts as the Chief Finance Officer. In addition, she establishes office policies and procedures, prepares reports and collects and analyzes the data. Throughout the interview, Amy began her answers with "I" in describing the various functions of the Office of Career Services. Amy stated that the "Office of Career Services serves as a process to help students and alumni focus on a personal sense of meaning and career directions consistent with their unique talents."

Amy serves on several of the institution's committees. She presents to the Board of Trustees yearly and feels that not many Directors have access to the Board of Trustees. Amy attends the President's Business Council at the Pierre Hotel in New York every year which is one of the university's biggest fundraising events.

John is the Assistant Director of Information Resources Specialist for the Office of Career Services at St. Thomas University. He is an alumnus of the university, is in his mid-fifties and graduated in the late 1970's. John was fortunate to begin his tenure as a Career Counselor and has been promoted to Assistant Director. He has witnessed many changes, both internal and external, at the university. His major area of responsibility is to monitor students in their job searches. John still participates as a Career Counselor and facilitates workshops. Because of his length of service, John has a rapport with the administration and academic community. John and Amy both said that they are guided by the principles of a Jesuit education. John said, "We are aware of the need to impart knowledge that has both immediate and long-term value for students and alumni."

Mary is the Administrative Assistant. She has been in her position for three years. Mary is in her late twenties. After graduation she began her career in the Office of Career Services. She maintains the College Central Network, which is a record of the posting of employers, job openings, and internships. She defined herself as the person students can "go to" with any type of question. She participates in information sessions for new students. She also graduated from St. Thomas University, earning her graduate degree while working at the Office of Career Services. She understands the importance of Career Services as a student and as an employee. Mary's responses to the questions were different from those of Amy and John. When Mary was asked questions such as

“What value is placed on the Career Services Department by faculty, students, and administration?” she responded with, “It depends on who you’re talking to.” This response had a negative implication.

Assistance to Students

St. Thomas University

At St. Thomas University, the Office of Career Services staff begins the process of working with students by participating in Open Houses and Summer Orientations. John, Assistant Director of Information Resources Specialist, stated, “We offer a lot of information for the students and their parents. We tell them who we are, where we are, and what we do. We also tell them that it’s time to get started with working with us.”

John believes that students benefit from the services offered by the Office of Career Services at St. Thomas University “not just in their career development, but their personal development.” He spends the majority of his time in individual counseling, career counseling and sessions with students. These skills are necessary in order to be successful in today’s global market. He added, “Personnel here in the office, me included, assume the roles of advisor, teacher, and mentor.” This is in concert with the Jesuit tradition which is to strive for personal excellence and to be the best a person can be. He stated, “Career development is a part of the overall development we strive for in working with each of the students. We talk about not just their career development, but their personal development.” John acknowledged that the staff of the Office of Career Services at St. Thomas University is “guided by the principles of a Jesuit education and are aware of the need to impart knowledge that has both immediate and long-term value

for students and alumni.” He added “Our Jesuit tradition is to really strive, you know, for excellence and be the best that they can be, but we do it in small.”

John believes it is the student’s responsibility to come to the Office of Career Services and equally important “for students to have a series of appointments with the counselor that they’re working with. It’s really important that they keep me in the loop... We just encourage the students to continue to update us as they continue on in their search.” John added that “the Office of Career Services offers the ability of choosing a career by assisting our students and alumni to focus on their personal sense of meaning and career direction consistent with their unique talents, aspiration, and vision, you know for a living.”

Amy, the Office of Career Services Director, has duties which include teaching a Freshman Seminar that all freshmen are required to take. She emphasized that they conduct “numerous events which include networking events, etiquette events, and an employment fair.” She believes that the most important aspect of the department is the “one-on-one advising and counseling of students.” She added, “Depending upon what they need, we meet them where they are.” In Amy’s opinion, the students benefit from the Office of Career Services “because we develop the soft skills that are not developed in the classroom – the communication skills, the interviewing skills, the proper way to present yourself, coming up with a budget, figuring out cost of living from one city to another, marketing themselves, plus the individual care.” Amy said that if you interview any student that had an appointment with the Office of Career Services “they would feel that they were valued.”

Amy also spoke about the Jesuit mission stating that the Office of Career Services “strives to facilitate the process of career choice by helping students and alumni focus on personal sense of meaning...guided by the principles of Jesuit education and aware of the need to impart knowledge that has immediate and long-term value.” She spoke about how the staff revisits “our mission every three years just to keep it current with the University’s mission.”

Amy believes, “Students have various starting points, so each student needs to be treated individually. Staff supports them academically and emotionally. Many students are scared and need help developing their soft skills.” Amy tells students, “You can be Einstein, but if you can’t sell yourself, market yourself, work in groups, work in teams, and write a resume, it’s tough in this world.”

Amy spoke about how students are very different. St. Thomas attracts a certain type of student. According to Amy, “They are hard-working, they value their educations, but when I first started, it was mostly first-generation college students and that has changed a great deal, and, because of the cost of education now, we are getting a lot of students from much more affluent regions and their expectations are very different from students 15 years ago.” That in addition, one service that St. Thomas provides that Amy feels most schools don’t is alumni can use their services for free for lifetime. Amy said, “A lot of universities, once a student is graduated they are charged \$50 or something to use the services.”

Amy said her office has a Recruiting Manager who works closely with companies who post job openings with the university. “Often we have a lot of return customers, but we are always looking for new opportunities,” Amy said. She stated that St. Thomas has

a strong alumni base that is very loyal to the school. In her opinion, employers don't have the luxury of being able to send out recruiters for a whole day; more and more is being done electronically or through Skype. Amy spoke about the strong Allied Health program, as well as the strong pre-med program at St. Thomas. Students enrolled in these programs are not high users of the services of the Office of Career Services. Amy said, "Students in these programs usually find employment from their programs."

St. Thomas's Office of Career Services is a member of the "Northeast Employment Consortium." This consortium is comprised of six area colleges who have joined together to conduct an annual Employment Fair. This fair has replaced having individual job fairs on their campuses. Amy reported, "Employment fairs are really going away in our area. They are not the way employers are doing business." The consortium has enabled businesses to focus on one event rather than attending several. One fair frees up recruiting staff from area businesses.

John added that a Student Marketing Committee promotes the Employment Fair by conducting a carnival to encourage fellow students to participate in the event. They sponsor events like "Walton Brownie Night" where they distribute desserts and business cards of employees who will be attending the fair. Besides the annual Employment Fair, the office also promotes separate events for Law, Graduate, and Medical School students. John also stated that the Office of Career Services staff periodically sets up tables with employment information in the Student Center.

The Student Marketing Committee and the Student Work Staff encourage the Office of Career Services to use Social Media such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter; even though the first reaction was that it was "too far out of the mainstream." John said,

“We have learned very quickly that this is where students go, so we strongly encourage their use, especially LinkedIn, because that’s become the professional version.” John sees Social Media as a very cheap way to market services. John said, “It doesn’t cost you anything and we have, literally, maybe 600 or 700 of our students who are attached to our Facebook, alone.”

When John speaks with students, he tells them that they need to use every tool available in their job search. He is often asked, “What’s the best way to do this?” John’s response is, “There is no one best way. You want to use everything that’s at your disposal, and we try to do the same ourselves.”

In addition, John stated he is responsible for doing outreach in the form of presentations to classes when invited. The majority of his time is spent on “individual career counseling appointments.” As John said, the “transition from college to work comes quickly.” John believes, “It important for to students to become engaged with the Office of Career Services early in their college career.” John estimated that the staff makes an appearance “at over sixty-five freshman seminar classes and we literally put ourselves in front of thousands of freshman to tell them who we are, where we are, what we do, and then it’s time to get started with working with us.”

Once the students begin school, the staff is involved with Freshman Seminars. Students need to know and understand what the Office of Career Services can provide them. Mary, the Director’s Assistant, stated that when she was in college, she “never knew there was a Career Services Office, and that was bad.” She added, “We try to make ourselves professional, yet friendly and approachable, and let students know that

they don't need to be one hundred percent prepared when they walk in our door." The responsibility of the staff is to prepare them.

Mary's responsibilities include working with students who are planning to continue their education, sending students' files to medical schools, and coordinating the Law, Graduate and Medical School Fair held in the fall semester. Mary maintains the College Central Network which lists "all job postings, internships, for students and alumni." Students are introduced to the College Central Network during their first visit to the Office of Career Services. Mary explained, "Once they come in for their appointment, the counselor can go through a series of what we have to offer, we always refer students to College Central Network. Students have access to the entire system and search it any way they want."

When speaking of serving students, Mary said, "We try to make ourselves professional, yet friendly and approachable, and let them know that they don't need to be hundred percent prepared when they walk in our door. That's our job."

Location

St. Thomas University

St. Thomas does not have the luxury of being located close to a large metropolitan area. The university primarily depends on the use of College Central Network, which is a simple database. The database allows the staff to track a company's job postings and follow up with them. John explained that companies register on-line. Once that has happened, one staff member will dispense information to that company to make sure employers fully realize all of the help and services that can accessed through this system.

John said, “It’s a one-stop place where employers can register to begin a relationship with the Office of Career Services.” He added, “If you are a local employer, we do whatever we can to know you.”

The staff does a lot of networking with local employers, but the goal is to encourage them to register their organization with College Central Network. John believes that, besides technology, the “good, old-fashioned face to face” will never go away. Once the job is posted, the staff makes students aware of what is available for them. Every student also registers and creates an account with College Central Network. Students are asked to post their resumes, so employers are able to review the resumes and, hopefully, find a match. John stated that, in addition to undergraduates, alumni are allowed to use College Central Network. They also can post resumes and search for job opportunities. He added that the College Central Network is a system where everyone has equal and quick access to jobs.

John indicated that the “Big Four” accounting firms continue to recruit accounting students from St. Thomas University. Students are encouraged to try to acquire an internship at these companies; most of them occur in the summer, which makes them more difficult to secure. Job opportunities have been drastically reduced since 2008, especially in suburban areas.

Mary believes that students who are from the surrounding communities have a desire to stay local. She said, “If they are local to begin with, they will stay local, with only a handful going to large cities.” Mary stated that “on-campus recruitment has dropped especially for our Business students,” which has hurt students in their ability to obtain internships.

Amy said, “Students are encouraged to cast a wider net, to realize that the first job in which they start might not be the one in which they receive a gold watch for forty-years of service.” Amy also stated, “On-campus recruiting has definitely suffered. We are not in a major metropolitan area, so I definitely think St. Thomas’s geographic location is a disadvantage in terms of on-campus recruiting.” Companies are using Skype or doing telephone interviews to decide whether or not they want to meet with a student.

Amy acknowledged, “In a metropolitan area, companies can go to one of the local universities and not travel to a suburban area.” This was not the case in 2000, when major companies were willing to participate in on-campus events. Amy does not believe that companies will return to recruiting on St. Thomas’s campus any time in the near future.

National firms, as well as local firms, seek students from St. Thomas University, but as Amy stated, “That is not a very deep pool, quite frankly. This is why students are encouraged to ‘cast a wider net’ in their job searches.” The Office of Career Services at St. Thomas University tracks graduates according to geographical placement by state, 44% of graduates stay in Pennsylvania; 18% are in New Jersey; 8% are in New York; 3% are in North Carolina, Florida, and Maryland; and 21% are in other states. Students enrolled in the Allied Health Program have a stronger possibility of remaining in the local area due to the number of health care opportunities available to them. In responding to location, Amy agreed that not being in a major metropolitan area is a disadvantage.

Academic Relationship

St. Thomas University

At St. Thomas University, the staff of the Office of Career Services perceives that they are valued by the academic community. Amy addressed this relationship by speaking about the modern facilities, computer space, and competent staff. Amy said, “You can look around our facilities; we have extremely modern and nice facilities.” She feels that speaks volumes about the value the institution’s administration places on the office. Amy said, “I feel we are highly respected and highly valued not only by faculty, but also by the administration and the students as well.”

Amy stated that in a short period of time, the faculty requested one hundred thirty-two presentations by the staff of College Services. Fifty-three presentations were in the College of Arts and Science; twenty-six were in the College of Professional Studies; twenty-seven were in the School of Management; eight were in the Graduate School; and eighteen programs were applicable to the whole student body. Amy added that all new faculty members are invited to have lunch with her and talk about the services her office provides.

When recruiters, such as the “Big Four” accounting firms, visit campus, faculty is invited to have lunch with the staff and recruiters. During these lunches, curriculum and distribution of credits are discussed at length. Often recruiters make a suggestion such as, “Please let your Computer Science Department know these students need to know more about X,Y, and Z. We then pass this information along to the departments.”

Amy appointed a liaison between her office and each academic program. This enables the two sides to share information. She is very proud of the fact that Deans know

they can call her and ask for a member of her staff to sit on a steering committee. As well, Deans notify Career Services when they are changing curriculum or proposing new curriculum. Amy said, “We are pretty involved with our Deans and interact with them quite frequently. Their world is different from our world in the way decisions are made but what happens in the classroom is really important, and what happens in the end is critical.” This is extremely important for students who are paying a considerable amount of money for a college education. Amy stated, “Students have got to graduate with the skills that will get them a good job.”

Mary’s opinion, in regards to the relationship between the Office of Career Services and the academic community, differs a little from Amy’s perspective. Mary said, “Some just think of us as another department in Student Affairs, and there are some connotations that go with that.” When speaking about the administration Mary said, “I think they are starting to notice a little bit more about what we do and are beginning to value what we do with our students in trying to get them best prepared for employment.”

Mary added, “We know when students leave here, they have all the education they need and also have those soft skills to go with it.” Mary feels that faculty in Accounting, Business, Marketing, Education, and Counseling and Human Services are more involved with the Office of Career Services than other departments. She believes that the relationship that exists between the Office of Career Services and the academic community is through individualized efforts.

John said, “We feel well-respected by all of our constituents.” He believes that if constituents were not pleased, the office would be made aware of it immediately. Some of the faculty reaches out to the staff to cover classes. John stated, “If a Dean has a

question, there's a person in our office assigned to be their contact person." John believes that with the complete understanding of a program, a direct line of communication can exist.

John explained that each year a number of St. Thomas's academic departments undergo what they call "Program Reviews." These reviews assess the vitality, usefulness, and needs of the program. The program then reaches out to the Office of Career Services for a five-year report on placements of students. John said, "The academic sides are looking for a way to gauge the tracking of their students." This is enhanced with the liaison system that Amy has devised. John added, "It has been very well embraced by the schools, the deans and their faculties."

John said that Deans from various departments conduct business differently. For example "I'm associated with the Dean of our Library and he doesn't need or feel the need to have me at every one of the Dean Conference meetings. This is different from others Deans who have staff members at their meetings on regular basis."

Business Community

St. Thomas University

Most of the recruiting that is taking place at St. Thomas University is from a pool of local companies which Amy acknowledged is not very deep. Amy said, "We do try to reach out and generate business." They depend on their alumni for assistance, and they rely on their Alumni Chapters in New York City, Philadelphia and Washington to

generate job opportunities for students and use the College Central Network database to track companies' postings.

When asked if St. Thomas had an Employer Advisory Board, Amy said it did not. She proposed it, and her boss warned her to be careful of what she was asking. He said, "Just know what you are going after. Be sure you know what you are trying to accomplish. Don't just do it because it looks good and you meet once a semester. You know, just know what you're going after." As Amy continued to speak about the Advisory Board she added, "If I felt we needed an Advisory Board, my boss would support me." Amy did say that her office collaborates with the Chamber of Commerce locally. She said, "We know a lot of people, and we are constantly reaching out to our community."

In speaking about the relationship with the Chamber of Commerce, John said, "Our relationship with the Chamber is, for the most part informal...informally professional. Attendance at their functions... we don't have, like, you know, set or regular meetings with them." John's impression of involvement with the Chamber seemed to be more distant than collaborated. He also said, "We do work with the Great Valley Technology Alliance. It's an economic development group here. We participate in their entrepreneurship program and help market employment opportunities for their members."

St. Thomas University collaborates with five other institutions in the area to conduct one large Career Fair. Together with the other institutions, they are able to attract a large number of employers from across the country. In addition, staff members are invited to attend the Women's Networking Luncheon. John attends the annual

Pennsylvania Association of Colleges and Employers Conference. John said, “We still do an awful lot of networking with local employers, and our alumni.” John believes that building relationships one-on-one will never go away.

Evaluation

St. Thomas University

In evaluating curriculum, a few academic Department Chairs at St. Thomas University consult with the staff of the Office of Career Services. For example, the Accounting faculty meets with recruiters and staff for lunch. The topics of discussion are usually curriculum, credit hours and the CPA test requirements.

One question addressed whether or not Deans solicit information to evaluate how well graduates of their programs are doing. According to Amy, “We are pretty involved with our Deans and interact with them quite frequently.” This relationship has grown with the institution of the liaison program. One member of the Office of Career Services is assigned to each academic department. The liaison program creates a more fluid way to communicate between the two offices. John spoke about departments reaching out to the office for placement numbers. John said, “Departments are looking for information to gauge the tracking of their students.”

The way decisions are made in the academic community is different from the way decisions are made in the Office of Career Services. Amy said, “In this climate, and because of the cost of education, these students have to graduate with good jobs or matriculate to excellent graduate schools. Students know that what happens in the classroom is really important, and what happens in the end is critical.”

St. Thomas's Office of Career Services has a peer review by the Council for Advancement of Standards and Higher Education every five years. Each year the Director writes an assessment plan and an annual report. Staff members have an assessment component in their goals and objectives for the upcoming year. Amy said, "We are expected to adjust what's working well, to tweak it if necessary. If it's not working well, make a change."

The work in the office is evaluated by the productivity of the staff. Amy's philosophy is focused on the leader. She said, "If they are not working at least as hard as their hardest-working team member, then they are setting a very poor example." She assesses her performance on how happy the staff is.

In addressing formal evaluations of students' experiences, Amy said, "The University's Research Department conducts a Senior Survey every year. Students are asked questions about their experience with Career Services, if they had an experience. We have never had any alarming information come back that we had to change what we're doing."

Mary said, "I don't think we really evaluate a whole office. I know each individualized program is evaluated." The tools used to evaluate programs are surveys and questionnaires. John said, "We have not completed regular customer satisfaction services in the recent past." He added that they rely on student feedback from programs that are offered. He agreed that performance appraisals are based on the goals and objectives of the individual staff members who establish these goals and objectives for themselves.

Summary of Results

In this case study, the primary research question was, “How do staff members in the Office of Career Services at two universities respond to the needs of undergraduate students in their employment searches?” The research shows that the two universities are very similar in the services that are provided to undergraduate students in this area. The staff members of each Office of Career Services focus on career counseling for students. It is the one-on-one contact with students that produce the best results. Students are in need of the soft skills which are communication, interviewing, presentation and marketing of themselves. The Office of Career Services at each institution is client-centered on undergraduate students.

In exploring the services provided to students, the staff from each institution described what occurs in the office on an average day. Staff members at both universities stated that daily activities center around their undergraduate students. They focus on counseling students, and counseling sessions involve resume writing, career exploration, and career assessment. Each staff provides workshops, seminars, and classroom visitations, as well as scheduling interviews for students. Staff members at both institutions agree that the building of relationships with students is the key to success. In addition, every staff member who contributed to this study enjoys meeting with students. Each feels that recruitment is crucial, yet these two universities handle the recruitment process differently.

This study’s research also responded to the question, “How does each institution take advantage of their location in assisting students in their employment searches?” The research shows that both institutions have experienced a decrease in job opportunities for

graduating students due to the declining economy. St. Peter's University, which is located in a large metropolitan area, has witnessed a significant increase in companies offering internships, since the city is the home of many corporate headquarters. Due to St. Peter's location, students can obtain an internship either in the fall or spring; students do not have to wait until the summer. St. Thomas University has suffered a decrease in on-campus recruiting which limits the number of opportunities to meet with potential employers. The university must rely heavily on its alumni and on the College Central Network database for job opportunities for their students.

The third research question was, "Is there a connection between the staff of the Office of Career Services and the academic community of each institution?" The relationship with the academic community is stronger at St. Thomas University than it is at St. Peter's University. Each member of the Office of Career Services staff at St. Thomas University is assigned to be a liaison to one of the academic programs. They are involved with the academic Deans and interact with them. St. Peter's does not share the same relationship with the academic community; however, the new director is attempting to meet with the Deans and forge a relationship.

For example, Donna feels they have a lot of support within the departments and they collaborate well with other members of Student Affairs. Her statement, "Other divisions do try to highlight and market our services," appeared to be an attempt to be politically correct. The use of the word "try" leaves one to wonder if members of the academic community feel strongly about the Office of Career Services.

The final research question was, "What is the relationship between the Office of Career Services and local and national businesses?" The two institutions have one staff

member dedicated to recruiting companies to list job opportunities for their students. The Office of Career Services Department at St. Thomas University relies on the College Central Network database. They reach out to their alumni in the larger metropolitan areas by soliciting job opportunities. Each institution works closely with local businesses. The major difference is that St. Peter's has corporate headquarters from which to solicit job opportunities due to its location in a large metropolitan area. Students at both institutions are advised to cast a wider net in seeking employment. The more flexible the students are in their job searches, the more job opportunities are going to be made available.

In determining if relationships exist with national and local businesses both universities have a Recruiting Manager. The Recruiting Manager is the staff member who contacts companies seeking job opportunities for their students. The use of technology and social networks allows both institutions access to national companies, and these companies can have access to students. Each institution has a Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn account and websites.

The evaluations that each institution use in assessing performance begin with the number of students who visit their offices. Both Directors spoke about the number of students who use their services. At St. Peter's, they have not successfully tracked the number of students who utilize the services offered, but have emphasized more student engagement in the four-year plan. At St. Thomas University, the percentages of students in each class who utilize services of the Office of Career Services were defined: "36% Seniors; 20% Juniors; 6% Sophomores; 4% Freshmen; and active alumni of 33%." Evaluation consists of staff productivity and feedback from students rather than actual

placements for assessing the department. Each university tracks students after graduation in a different format and depends heavily on responses to student surveys. This is not the best way to track students. These surveys are limited because of the lack of student participation.

Weaknesses are evident in the evaluation of the departments. If the evaluation process does not include placement outcomes, for example the number of graduates who gain successful employment through the assistance of the Office of Career Services, it becomes difficult to disseminate information on the benefits of the services offered to undergraduates.

In researching these questions, it is evident that undergraduate students at both universities are encouraged to develop the soft skills they need in order to obtain employment in today's job market. The Office of Career Services needs the support of the academic and business communities in order to best serve their students. There needs to be one central office that can provide services to students and assist them in obtaining job opportunities. It is equally important that the business community has a central point of contact where they can post jobs and furnish feedback in regards to student knowledge and skills. This feedback needs to be shared with the appropriate academic programs. The staff of the Office of Career Services is a bridge between students, the academic community and the business community with each of them benefitting from the other.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

This case study explored the perceptions of the staff of the Office of Career Services at two universities about the impact of their services on students in their employment search. Both universities have a long history of academic achievement but are not faced with growing need to evaluate the ability of their graduates to find employment. This case study also determined whether or not the staff at one institution has an advantage over the other in assisting students obtaining employment opportunities and identified any additional advantages that one institution has as compared to the other. In addition, the staff of the Office of Career Services explained their connection to the academic community at each institution and to local and national businesses. In this chapter, a brief summary of the study, including research methods and various findings, is provided. Following the summary is a discussion of the findings as they relate to published literature and a conclusion as it relates to the research.

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this case study was to explore how staff members in the Office of Career Services at two universities respond to the needs of undergraduate students in their employment searches. In this investigation, four questions were addressed. Since the Office of Career Services staff works closely with students and potential employers, their role is to be the focal point for both parties. Therefore, the four research questions were:

- How do staff members in the Office of Career Services at two universities respond to the needs of undergraduate students in their employment searches?
- How does each institution take advantage of its location in assisting students in their employment searches?
- To what extent is there a connection between the staff of the Office of Career Services and the academic community of each institution?
- What is the relationship between the Office of Career Services and local and national businesses?

Literature showed how Career Services Departments are seen as a vehicle through which students can obtain the necessary assistance in securing a high-paying job. The Career Services Department attempts to bridge the gap from academics to work by offering a variety of career counseling services. Each service deals with career solutions that students can use. These departments offer students an opportunity to participate in seminars and counseling services before and after they graduate; the majority of these seminars and counseling services are designed to help students enter the workforce. Quality services can provide students choices that may lead to a more satisfying and productive career. The staff members of the Office of Career Services Department assist students by showing them how to be competitive and how to make effective choices in their job pursuits. Beseda (1995), Assistant Director of the Baylor Career Services Center, said, "To be competitive, we've got to provide the best possible service in matching students and graduates with firms looking to fill positions" (p. 6). Students are made aware of what employers are seeking in an employee; this will give the students a

greater chance of securing a position with a company. The matching of a student's skills and abilities to the needs of the business community enhances the institution, curriculum and faculty. Lipka (2008) wrote that economic conditions, public expectations, and a heightened emphasis on student success have pushed many colleges to ramp up their career services. The tension lies in the age old question: Is college about getting an education or a job? Now more than ever students and parents say it is both.

This case study examined two Jesuit institutions, St. Peter's University and St. Thomas University, with similar philosophies in order to explore the methods in which these institutions provide career services for their undergraduate students. It also described what the staff members of the Office of Career Services had to say about each of their roles. I employed qualitative case study methodology (Merriam, 2001) to gain a richer understanding.

In addition, this case study explored the methods in which these two Jesuit institutions provide career services for their undergraduate students. Through the process of interviews, data were collected that gave an accurate account of the activities of the staff members of each Office of Career Services. The six staff members who were interviewed gave information and descriptions that were used in this study. The information the staff of Career Services shared during the interview addressed how the staff assists undergraduates in their job searches, whether one institution has an advantage over the other in obtaining employment opportunities, and the staff's relationship with the academic community as well as the business community.

Through various techniques of analysis and verification, my notes were assessed to strengthen the reliability of the findings: investigator's position, researcher's

explanation of the study to the participants, reasons for selecting subjects, the role of the researcher, and multiple methods of data collection, i.e., interviews, documents and observations used to strengthen the findings. Adler and Clark (2003) state that in using a descriptive study, a researcher describes groups, activities, situations, events, with a focus on structure, attitudes, or behavior.

One must understand that the philosophy of a Jesuit education is to educate the whole person in which there is a concerted effort not just to develop technical skills, but to develop the notion that life centrally consists of taking one's values and putting them into practice. Technical and leadership skills complemented with liberal arts or business degrees are necessary in today's global market. St. Ignatius Loyola's vision and mission continues to be the foundation for Jesuit universities. The Jesuit philosophy of education contains curriculum with knowledge and skills which include values, good citizenship, good leaders, concern with common goods, and ability to use education for the service of faith and promotion of justice. This philosophy is interwoven in academic areas in an effort to strengthen the individual and society.

The mission statements of the Office of Career Services at these two universities reflect an opportunity for students to secure employment that is consistent with the students' interest, values and the ability to make life decisions.

Amy from St. Thomas University stated, "Vision for living, guided by the principles of Jesuit education and awareness of the need to impart knowledge, has immediate and long-term value." When asked about St. Peter's mission, Anna said, "The mission of the office is to work on the whole person...to cultivate the personal and professional development, the leadership of the whole person and how it relates to their

career.” The statements from both Directors show that each Office of Career Services reflects the Jesuit vision. In reviewing the mission statements of both Career Services offices, a better understanding is gained from the importance that is placed on how the staff responds to the needs of undergraduate students in their job searches.

Both universities are located in the eastern part of the United States with accessibility to large metropolitan areas. While St. Peter’s University is located in a large metropolitan area, St. Thomas University is accessible to large metropolitan areas. The staff of St. Peter’s strongly feels that being located in a large city provides access to the world’s largest corporate offices. They use these corporate offices as a resource to provide opportunities for the students of St. Peter’s.

Each of the Jesuit institutions in this study has made remarkable growth in enrollment, academic programs and facilities since 1980. This multi-site qualitative study explored and gained an understanding of Career Services Departments and how the staff perceives the benefits to students and academic and business communities.

In this study, three limitations were identified. First was that findings were delimited due to the limited scope of this study. The staff members at each of the two institutions self-reported answers to interview questions in the data collection. Second, St. Thomas University is located in the suburban area. The unemployment rate of the area is higher than the national rate; job opportunities are limited. St. Peter’s University is located in a large city with several satellite campuses. Major corporations are located in this large metropolitan area which gives St. Peter’s a significant advantage over St. Thomas University. The advantage is in a higher number of job opportunities and business relationships. Third, several staff members from St. Thomas University did not

agree to participate in the study. St. Peter's University had three members who did not participate in the study because they were new to their positions.

Parents encourage their sons or daughters to attend and graduate college. The belief is that a college degree, individuals will be able to obtain higher paying jobs. The cost of earning a higher education degree has risen dramatically since the 1990's. Students who earned their Bachelor's Degrees in 2010 and borrowed money to help finance their educations, graduated with an estimated average debt of \$25,250 in student loans (Supiano, 2011). Tuition costs can well exceed \$140,000 in four years. The effectiveness and essentiality of the Office of Career Services must demonstrate how it benefits students, academics and businesses. The chief benefit that staff members describe is in the assistance they provide students in learning soft skills, interviewing techniques, and how to present themselves to employers.

The two universities' staff members understand that in order to provide services, it is necessary for the staff to market themselves to students early in their academic careers. They begin the process of introducing the Office of Career Services to students at events like Preview Day and Orientation and continue the process with Freshman Seminars. The hope is to engage students early and often with the services which are provided.

Staff members at both universities schedule their daily activities to meet the needs of undergraduate students. The focus of the staff members of each Office of Career Services is on career counseling for students. Since students have different needs, each student is treated individually. The key to success is how the staff addresses students in

identifying their self-awareness. This is needed in order to develop a marketing plan for each student.

The staff members of each Office of Career Services agree that the building of relationships with students is the key in the assistance they provide. Students need to be fully engaged in the process if they are going to be successful and gain employment. By assisting students in their job searches, the staff is in concert with the Jesuit tradition, which is to strive for excellence and for individuals to be the best they can be.

One of the differences between these two universities is that St. Peter's University's staff has a larger number of businesses with which to deal. In a poor economy with fewer job offerings, St. Peter's has witnessed an increase in the number of companies who offer more opportunities for student internships. These internships often can lead to job offers. Students at St. Peter's have accessibility to these internships all year. On the other hand St. Thomas University's staff noted that companies are hesitant to send recruiters to their campus due to the downward economy. Therefore they rely on companies posting job openings on the College Central Network database for their students. In order to obtain internships, students must apply for those in summer which are more competitive.

St. Peter's staff is fortunate in having the ability for companies to send representatives on campus to conduct workshops on diversity in the workplace, networking, and resume writing. This is a great opportunity for students to interface with corporate staff members and gain valuable experience from them. It allows the corporations to "cherry pick" students. The staff feels strongly that their proximity to a large city is a positive for their students.

The Office of Career Services does not play an equal role with the academic community at both institutions. At St. Thomas University, one staff member is assigned to serve as a liaison to each of the academic programs at the school. This enhanced communication between the staff of Career Services and the academic community enables a more fluid flow of information. Deans notify the Office of Career Services when they are changing curriculum or proposing new curriculum. The staff shares information from employers with the academic community. The staff believes this line of communication is a benefit to students.

A difference is evident in how the Career Services Department is viewed in each institution. At St. Peter's University there had not been a great deal of value placed on the Office of Career Services; however, with the change in the economy, the staff noticed a shift in attitude from the academic community. The former Dean of Students was hired to become the Assistant Director of Career Services/Experiential Education, where he focuses on career education, career counseling, program development and internships. Since he had a relationship with the academic community from his former position as Dean of Students, he is rapidly repairing the relationship and collaboration with faculty and deans. The staff and members of the academic community realize that a partnership with each other will benefit both the students and the institution.

The relationship between the Office of Career Services and the business community is important in order to generate leads for students. The institutions in this study are involved in local business communities and organizations. They each have a Recruiting Manager whose responsibility is to contact businesses and build relationships. As previously stated, St. Peter's has an advantage in that area. Its location in a

metropolitan area allows for a program called “Career Views.” This allows staff to arrange visits to corporate headquarters for students. In addition, businesses are invited to campus to participate in a variety of workshops for students. St. Thomas University does not have access to the number of corporate headquarters as does St. Peter’s University. St. Thomas University depends on alumni, technology and social networks to access job opportunities.

The research in this case study revealed that evaluations at each site centered on immediate feedback from student surveys of programs and the number of students who visit each office. The Directors of the Office of Career Services of both institutions evaluate the productivity of staff on the number of students who are counseled and the number of workshops held. St. Thomas University conducted a survey after graduation which resulted in a less than seventy-five percent response rate. Of those who responded, less than fifty-two percent of the graduates were gainfully employed. The staff was extremely proud of these numbers. At St. Peter’s, the number of graduates who were employed was forty percent. St. Peter’s staff is engaged in designing a four-year program to track students in their careers post-graduation.

Limitations

The findings may be influenced by the limited scope of this study. The researcher used self-reported answers to interview questions in order to collect data. In this study two institutions were used because of their similar education philosophy and mission. The two institutions have shown growth in enrollment, academic offering and resources. They both have the same philosophy of education and are committed to providing a

liberal arts education and strong professional and pre-professional programs in the context of Ignatius educational principles, especially in the care and development of the whole person. However, there is a contrast in their location and size.

Discussion

The literature on Career Services shows that these departments are vehicles through which students can obtain employment. St. Thomas University and St. Peter's University have followed the traditional model of Career Services. Herr and Cramer (1988) suggested that a comprehensive Career Services Department should provide the following services:

1. Provide assistance in the selection of a major field of study.
2. Provide assistance in self-assessment and self-analysis.
3. Provide assistance in understanding the world of work.
4. Provide assistance in improving decision-making skills.
5. Meet the needs of both the businesses and students.
6. Provide the students access to the world of work.

Today, it is more important to go beyond the traditional model of Career Services and truly analyze student outcomes. Staff members of the Office of Career Services need to be able to answer questions such as: Are graduates obtaining high paying jobs? Is a college graduate's earning potential still higher than those who do not earn a degree? To be able to answer these questions, the staff of Career Services has to design a better way of tracking students after graduation. This process needs to begin before students graduate. Staff members must monitor students' employment status. In the past Career Services depended on a labor market that had a need for a highly educated workforce. At one time there may have been twenty applicants for each opening; during poor economic

times there may be one thousand applicants for one opening. There is an apparent need for Career Services Departments to be a reliable resource for students and employers.

Freeman (1994) emphasized that Career Services Departments assume that students, faculty and businesses need only to hear about the services provided in order to value them. This assumption can no longer have merit. The lack of accountability is not an option. Students achieving employment will give these institutions that accountability, only if the universities develop a system to track it. It is not that career counseling or any of the other services provided are less important, but with the continuing rising cost of higher education, being able to report an accurate number of students successfully gaining employment provides a rationale for the cost.

Both St. Thomas University and St. Peter's University have a Recruiter Manager for recruiting job opportunities. However, neither of these institutions has someone who monitors student placement. They rely on students' responses to a post-graduation survey. At St. Peter's, the survey is not even sent from the Office of Career Services; it is sent by the Institutional Effectiveness Department. The Office of Career Services at each institution must do a better job of tracking graduates, in order to know if what they are doing is correct. Counseling sessions and workshops mean little if students are deficient in the skills necessary for ever-changing labor market. The pure measure of the effect of a college experience is determined four years after graduation (Astin, 1993). These institutions need a better tool to track their students after graduation.

Recommendations

Practice and Policy

Two areas that institutions of higher education should consider for improvement are in their policies regarding outcomes for student placements and the practices taking place in the Office of Career Services. The staff members of each Office of Career Services should develop an assessment plan that includes outcomes. The only direct measurement that either institution uses is attendance at workshops or number of students who meet with counselors. There must be more accountability than just the number of students who use their services. Some questions that should be considered are: How did students benefit from the services offered? How many students are actually gaining employment after graduation? How many are actually employed in their field of study? The answers to these questions would help to justify the importance of the Career Services Department to students.

An improved communication plan between the staff and students should be implemented. The communication plan could benefit the Development Office as well. If students are satisfied with the education and services they received while in college, they are more likely to donate to the university after graduation. In addition, this communication plan would allow for a continuous method of data collection in order to assess and identify areas of improvement. Career Services Directors could be more proactive in providing services to students and would have an advantage over those who do not.

A tracking system that compares students who use the Office of Career Services with students who do not could demonstrate the effectiveness of the staff. These data

could be used in the marketing material for each university. This method is used by proprietary schools in recruiting and reporting outcomes to the Department of Education for Financial Aid.

Future Research

Future research should focus on student perspectives on the quality of services they receive from the Office of Career Services. This case study only examined the staff perspective and did not survey the students at either university. It is important to survey students in evaluating services.

A second study could compare the Office of Career Services of private and public institutions of higher education answering the same research questions. This study could be beneficial to students and parents when selecting a college or university.

A third study could evaluate whether or not classroom instruction is meeting workforce needs. Businesses could be surveyed and asked whether or not colleges and universities are preparing students to be productive in the workplace. This could validate what is taking place in the classroom. Information obtained in this study could benefit students, the academic community and businesses.

The implications of this study for university administrators begins with a cost benefit analysis of the Office of Career Services. With the rising cost of higher education, administrators need to know which services are needed and which can be reduced. In order to make a sound decision, it is important to consider many aspects. The administrators should evaluate which services have a significant impact on students.

The present assessment process focuses on the number of students who use the services as opposed to the outcome which is student employment. The administration consequently needs data on outcomes in evaluating the Office of Career Services. This information could inform them on whether or not students are prepared to enter the global workforce.

Conclusion

What emerged from this study is that the success of the Office of Career Services centered on the relationships with students, the academic community and the business community. These relationships have challenges at both institutions. Several conclusions have been derived from this study.

First, the staff members of the Office of Career Services at these two Jesuit universities provide career counseling and a variety of workshops and other services that assist their undergraduate students in their job searches. There is evidence that undergraduate students are informed early in their academic careers of the services that are afforded them in preparing for their job searches. The focus is on the students. The staff members agree that the building of relationships is the key to success. It is the one-on-one contact with students that produces the best results. Students need to develop the soft skills necessary to market themselves to employers. The challenge that each staff has is student utilization.

Second, one institution does have an advantage over the other in assisting students obtaining employment opportunities. The research shows that St. Peter's University has an advantage over St. Thomas University because of its location and access to corporate

headquarters and financial giants of the world. Recruiters can visit St. Peter's with relative ease. This is not the case for recruiters traveling to a suburban area for St. Thomas University.

Staff members at both universities noticed a significant decline in job opportunities for their students. Due to an unhealthy economic climate, companies have been downsizing at a rapid rate resulting in fewer jobs for college graduates. Also, the staff members of each Office of Career Services have seen an increase in the number of internships that are available for students. Corporations are looking for students who are knowledgeable enough to perform work in their offices which allows students to gain valuable work experience. St. Peter's students can obtain an internship either in the fall, spring or summer from companies in a large city. St. Thomas University is located in a much smaller area and does not have the large pool of companies from which to draw. Students at St. Thomas's usually wait until the summer to obtain an internship in a metropolitan area. This gives students at St. Peter's an advantage for internships. In addition, St. Peter's uses metropolitan businesses for an opportunity to take students on tours of their facilities. During these tours, students often submit resumes for consideration in the future.

Third, there is a stronger relationship between the academic community and the staff of the Office of Career Services at St. Thomas University. Each member of the office is assigned as a liaison to one of the academic programs. Staff members interact with the Deans from various departments. They solicit feedback from recruiters and meet with the faculty of each department to discuss what was reported in regards to student knowledge and skills. This feedback needs to be shared with the appropriate academic

programs in order to evaluate whether or not what is taking place in the classroom is current with the needs of today's businesses.

The relationships that exist at St. Thomas University could be attributed to the fact that the staff of the Office of Career Services have been together for more than ten years. However, St. Peter's staff is in the process of improving their relationship with the academic community. The Director is in her second year, and the office has experienced turnover of staff during her first year. With new staff in place and a new commitment towards building a relationship with the academic community, St. Peter's is headed in the right direction. There can no longer be a gap between theory and practice. The staff of the Office of Career Services is a bridge between students, academic community and business community with each of them benefitting from the other.

Fourth, each office has a relationship with local and national businesses. In addition, each office has experienced a decline in job postings over the years. It was necessary to pursue alternative ways of securing job opportunities for students; it began with establishing a Recruiter Manager. This person is a salesperson whose responsibility includes contacting businesses about the services and students at each institution. At St. Thomas University the recruiter spends a great deal of time reaching out to alumni in the larger metropolitan areas in soliciting job opportunities for students. Companies are asked to post openings on the College Central Network database for students. Students are told to check the database and submit resumes.

In this study, staff members of the Office of Career Services were very aware of their roles as Career Counselors. To gain more insight to the services that are offered, the staff members are engaged in a marketing plan that begins as soon as the students start

their higher education careers. This strategy has changed considerably over the years. The importance of the Office of Career Services is essential to the continuous growth at both institutions. The staff at each university should continue to search for new ways to meet the growing demands of quality service. The Offices of Career Services that are meeting these demands will be successful.

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APPENDIX
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

The following questions will guide the focus of the semi-structured interviews and will be used to gather interview data on the role of the Career Services in assisting undergraduate students in their job searches.

Interview Questions Matrix

How do staff members in the Office of Career Services at two universities respond to the needs of undergraduate students in their employment searches?	How does each institution take advantage of its location in assisting students in their employment searches?	To what extent is there a connection between the staff of the Office of Career Services and the academic community of each institution?	What is the relationship between the Office of Career Services and the local and national businesses?
Questions: 1-9; 11; 15; 17-19	Questions: 32-35	Questions: 9-10; 20-23; 26-27	Questions: 12-14; 16; 27-31
Evaluation Questions: 24-25; 36			

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE STAFF OF CAREER SERVICES:

1. What is the mission of the Office of Career Services?
2. Describe your responsibilities at the Office of Career Services.
3. Describe an average day at the Office of Career Services.
4. What value is placed on the Career Services Department by faculty, students and administration?
5. How do you address undergraduate students who are seeking careers? How do you market/engage students?
6. Explain how undergraduate students benefit from the Office of Career Services.
7. Explain how you track students in their job searches.
8. Explain how you track students' placement rates after graduation.
9. Explain if one academic program uses your services more than another. Why?
10. To what extent do you interact with the academic community of the university?
11. What do you do to recruit job openings?
12. Are career fairs conducted on campus? If so, how often are they conducted? If not, why not?
13. To what extent you track the number of businesses that use your department?
14. What programs are sponsored by Career Services for the students and business community?

15. Has your role in Career Services changed during your employment at the university? If so, how?
16. How do you market students to businesses?
17. To what extent do you encourage students to use websites such as LinkedIn and Twitter?
18. To what extent do you post jobs on your website for students and alumni?
19. What is the break percentage of students per class (Freshmen, Sophomore, Junior, and Senior) that use your services?
20. Are you involved in the recruiting and/or orientation programs for students? If so, how?
21. Students from which majors or departments within the university use Career Services the most? Which use it the least?
22. In evaluating curriculum, do Department Chairs consult with any members of the Office Career Services?
23. To what extent do Deans meet with any representative from Career Services to evaluate the success of graduates from their programs?
24. How often do you evaluate your services?
25. What criteria do you use in evaluating your work performance?
26. To what extent does faculty provide information to Career Services in an effort to assist students entering the workforce?
27. To what extent do you have an Employee/Faculty Advisory Board?

28. What types of relationships exist between you and various organizations in the community?
29. When you consultant with employers, do you receive feedback on whether or not your academic programs are current?
30. How many businesses use your services?
31. Are the businesses that use your services national or local firms?
32. During the recent recession have you experienced a decline in the number of job opportunities for students?
33. What barriers have you experienced during the recession?
34. To what extent do your students stay in this geographical area or relocate?
35. Have you experienced a change in where students find jobs? If so, how?
36. To what extent do students and alumni evaluate your services?