Academic Affairs

**Advising & Career Services, Online**

*Academic Advising & Career Development Modules*

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**End-of-Project Report**
**Project Description**

The primary goal of this project was to help increase student success by creating online academic advising and career development modules that can be used throughout Portland State University. Topics covered include: explanation of graduation requirements and University policies and procedures; information about campus resources; using PSU’s Degree Audit Reporting System; understanding the career planning process (i.e. self-assessment, major and career exploration, importance of relevant experience, career decision-making, job search strategies), and the Portland labor market.

**Project Outcomes**

- Created D2L advising modules to include explanation of graduation requirements, university policies and procedures, explanation of DARS and information about campus resources.
- Created D2L career development modules that include information on the career planning process - i.e. self-assessment, career exploration, gaining experience, major and career decision-making, job search strategies, and the Portland labor market.
- Created 19 videos in these two modules, covering advising and career topics.

**Project Lead**

- Mary Ann Barham - Director, Advising & Career Services

**Project Team**

- Becki Ingersoll - Associate Director, Advising & Career Services
- Greg Flores - Associate Director, Advising & Career Services
- Tom Curtis - Instructional Designer, Advising & Career Services
- Kenny Katz - Videographer, Advising & Career Services
- Kelly Merrill - Videographer, Advising & Career Services

**Project Sponsor(s)**

- Dan Fortmiller - Associate Vice President, Academic & Career Services, Enrollment Management & Student Affairs

**Impact of Project**

These two guides support PSU efforts to improve retention, graduation, and employment rates by changing the rote nature of some interactions with students and allowing the focus to be on the individual and unique needs of students. The guides are available to all students 24 hours per day.

These two guides support student success by increasing students’ understanding and awareness of the path to earning a degree and preparing for their future. In a time where there is increased attention on both degree completion and employment outcomes, it is essential that PSU provide students with the information and tools they need to be successful.

In presenting these guides to the University and educating staff and faculty on their use, there will be opportunities to further educate the University about the importance of these topics.

*Undergraduate Advising Guide*: The guide was launched in May 2014 and information about the guide can be found on [www.pdx.edu/advising](http://www.pdx.edu/advising). Approximately 1400 students have currently accessed the guide; 790 undecided students admitted Fall 2013-Fall 2014 have been bulk-registered and the
remainder have self-registered in D2L. It appears that to date about 800 have logged in multiple times. The College of the Arts and School of Business Administration have included a link to the guide on their advising websites; Speech and Hearing Sciences has also included a link in a resource document. We have been told that Psychology peer advisers promote it to their students and that it would be included on the syllabus for Orientation to Environmental Studies (ESM 150) course. Other than these incidences, we do not know if other units are promoting it specifically.

The link to the guide is being included in the campus-wide email campaign which goes out each term to students who have a mandatory advising hold in their first year at PSU. Large posters are displayed in the Academic & Career Services office and a display board in Smith Memorial Student Union (SMSU) and postcards promoting the modules are distributed at New Student Orientation resource fairs and in advising offices across campus. http://www.pdx.edu/advising/undergraduate-advising-guide

Career Development & Job Search Readiness Guide: The guide was launched in November 2014 and information is housed on www.pdx.edu/careers. We have reached out to the Learning Center and Diversity & Multicultural Student Services inviting them to bulk enroll students in their programs/courses and we plan to reach out to both instructors and other programs in winter term. A campus-wide email campaign will promote the guide to PSU students in December 2014 and again at the beginning of Winter 2015. Information will also be shared with faculty and academic departments during Winter 2015. The career guide will also be added to the resource section within CareerConnect, the jobs database. http://www.pdx.edu/careers/the-career-development-job-readiness-guide

Training sessions to demonstrate the Undergraduate Advising Guide to the campus advising community were held in Summer 2014. A similar training for the Career Development & Job Readiness Guide will be held in Winter 2015. Both guides will also be promoted in the parent newsletter published by New Student Orientation.

**Project Deliverables**

The key deliverables for this project included the creation of two D2L modules focusing on academic advising and graduation requirements and on career development and job readiness.

- **Undergraduate Advising Guide**: The guide is available in D2L and there is also a fully responsive HTML5 website that includes 15 individual responsive webpages, Javascript and Jquery-based animated graphics embeds, 15 audio recordings of the page content, as well as 6 videos produced and edited for the module. In addition to the site itself, a D2L help guide widget and project documentation were also created.

- **Career Development and Job Readiness Guide**: The guide is available in D2L and there is also a fully responsive HTML5 website. The site includes 21 individual responsive webpages, 18 Javascript and Jquery-based animated scenes embedded within those pages, as well as 13 videos produced and edited for the module. In addition to the site, a D2L help guide widget and project documentation were also created.

**Project Sustainability**

Advising & Career Services (ACS) is committed to maintaining the modules and associated costs for maintenance. ACS will be responsible for providing continued maintenance and updates as needed, as well as hiring resources with the expertise to maintain, if necessary.
Given the complexity of the modules and knowing that they will require a certain level of expertise to maintain, a D2L help guide widget and project documentation have been created for both of the modules to assist with ongoing maintenance post-Provost’s Challenge. The guides were also developed as stand-alone websites. Using all relative file paths and folder structures, they can be easily ported to and from any hosting environment, or any learning management system. The modules are also housed on the Enrollment Management & Student Affairs server and thus are also available to non-students and others who do not have D2L accounts (see http://sa.pdx.edu/advisingguide/ and http://sa.pdx.edu/careerguide/).

**Lessons Learned**

There was tremendous value in having a project manager who was housed externally. The project manager regularly checked in about progress being made and facilitated interactions with other units and the Provost’s Challenge administrators.

**Organization of Provost’s Challenge**

Meeting the original deadline for the project was delayed due to several unforeseen situations in team members’ personal lives. Given the other competing commitments of team members, the use of project management practices was very helpful in assuring that the project was completed in a timely manner.