

Elon University's Career Center

A look at students feelings and attitudes

Katelin Clark, Jenny Ward, Keri O'Connor, Maggie Landy



BACKGROUND

Elon's Career Center is a commodity that the university offers to provide guidance and resources to a diverse student body for the attainment of students' career-related goals. The center stresses three words, connected, caring, and expert, because the center is dedicated to connecting students with opportunities in the real world, to giving expert advice on how to follow through on goals, and to making sure that students feel comfortable throughout the entire career-related process.

Because a center like this is such a vital asset to students concerned with their future, it is important that the center provide all of the needs that students are looking for. A group of students in a Communications Research class at Elon University, as part of a project, were interested in broadening their understanding of the Elon career center, and determining how the center can better accommodate the needs of students looking for careers and internships.

FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

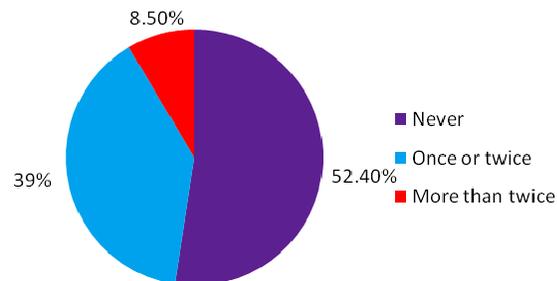
Participants expressed their concern when dealing with their resumes and cover letters. Since students receive different advice from their professors and career advisors they are unsure how to go about drafting these career elements. It is simply impossible for Elon students to know which faculty member provides the best feedback. Therefore, it is inevitable for a student's resume and cover letter to impress every professor/ employer. This is a problem because many classes require students to submit these documents for a grade. Participants agreed that in order to run a successful career center each faculty member must give similar advice.

We found that students were disappointed with the material provided to them by the career centers. They weren't disappointed with the content, but with the repetitive and unorganized way the material is presented to them.

“ I used Koury Career center last spring and my career counselor didn't help all that much she said 'you would be better off contacting friends and family [when it comes to finding an internship]'. People go in there and come out just as confused as before. ”

- Student in focus group

How Often Students Visit the Career Center



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SURVEY FINDINGS

One thing in our survey that we found interesting was what students said their overall feelings of the Career Center were. Since our focus group findings led us to believe that students were not satisfied with almost everything about the Career Center, I was surprised to see that the majority (over 50%) of participants (either having gone to the Center or not) categorized their feelings as "somewhat positive". Also, of the students who had actually been to the Career Center, 70% said they had a "somewhat positive" feeling about it.

Another thing that was interesting, was that when cross-tabulating age in school with the overall feelings of the Career Center, it seemed that there were no significant differences in feelings from a freshman to a sophomore and so on. All students seemed to feel the same way, regardless of how long they had been at Elon. The same thing happened when we cross-tabulated whether the student had been to the Career Center with their overall feelings of it. It didn't matter whether or not a student had gone to the Career Center, they both felt the same way, which was overwhelming a positive feeling.

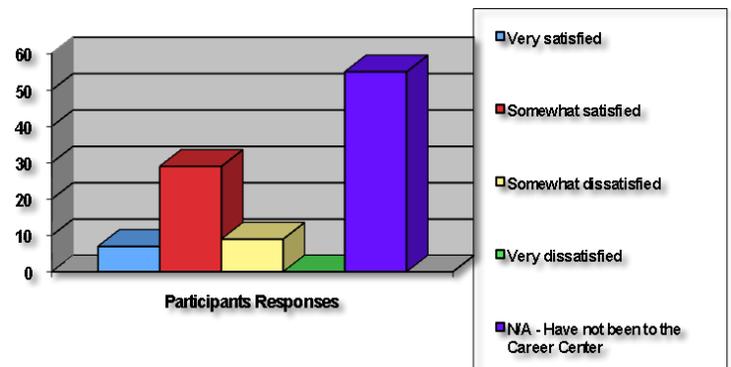
Sixty one percent of students surveyed found that what they needed help with the most was their overall search for a job or internship. These numbers are a little concerning. Forty-nine percent of students do not visit Elon's Career Center at all, yet majority of students find one of the main resources of Elon's Career Center (searching for a job or internship) the most important. This makes it difficult to find a way to gain students interests since they are not currently seeking the advice of Elon's Career Center.

IMPLICATIONS

- o **75%** of students that have visited Elon's Career Center once or twice have obtained an internship or job through the career center.
- o **25%** of students who have visited Elon's Career Center more than twice have received an internship.
- o More than **52%** of students surveyed have never visited the career center

Since such a large percentage of students obtained an internship or career through the career center students should be further encouraged to utilize Elon's Career Services.

The main thing that is implied from our survey results is that the problem doesn't lie in the overall feelings or the satisfaction of the Career Center, like we originally thought after doing our focus group study. Instead, judging by our quantitative results, the problem lies in actually getting the students to try out the Career Center at all. So, if students have good feelings about the Career Center, maybe they are just not going because it is not promoted enough on campus, or doesn't offer enough incentive to come.



“I believe they could do more to help students find a job today.”

-Student surveyed