

Administrative Services, President’s Cluster, and Student Success and Support Programs, College Centers
Annual Program Planning Worksheet for 2026

Program: Career Services

Current Year: 2025-2026

Last Year CPPR Completed: 2022-2023

Current Date: 3/10/2026

Cluster: Student Success and Support Programs

The Annual Program Planning Worksheet (APPW) is the process for:

- Reviewing, analyzing and assessing programs on an annual basis
- Documenting relevant program changes, trends, and plans for the upcoming year
- Identifying program needs, if any, that will become part of the program’s Resource Plan ([download from this folder](#)) (Please review the [Resource Allocation Rubric](#) when preparing the resource plan)
- Highlighting specific program accomplishments and updates since last year’s APPW

Please complete the following information. Please note that responses are not required for all elements of this document.

I. General Program Update

Describe changes and improvements to the program, such as changes to the mission, purpose or direction. Indicate any changes that have been made to address equity gaps.

Program Mission and Purpose

The mission of the Career Services (CS) office at Cuesta College is to ensure that all Cuesta students have access to meaningful career development opportunities that will lead to a clear career pathway, improved career outcomes, and lifelong career navigation skills.

The prevalence of the CS Office in higher education has grown in recent years; even just a few decades ago, many institutions did not have an office dedicated to student career development. However, as students and their families have demanded a clearer return on investment for their time and financial resources spent on higher education, schools across the country have invested in expanded access to career development resources. And with

good reason: recent data indicate that students that engage with career services, even just one service, have markedly better career outcomes than those that do not¹.

Program Changes

In response to personnel changes, the needs of new and expanding programs, and other logistical considerations, the Vice Presidents of Instruction and Student Success and Support Programs implemented a departmental and divisional reorganization affecting this area, effective July 1, 2025.

Aligned with a focus on Title 5 compliance and holistic student support, the following programs were placed under the responsibility of the SLO Dean position:

- Academic Counseling
- Career and Transfer Services, including a new Associate Director of Career and Transfer Services to support alignment with Vision 2030 and the Student Equity and Achievement program, including oversight of Work Experience.
- Admissions, Student Records, and Registration
- Outreach and the International Student Program
- Financial Aid and Veteran Services
- Disability Student Programs & Services (DSPS)
- Student Health Services

Program Updates and Direction

The Career Services (CS) office offers a variety of support and services to students that all fall into three main categories, outlined below.

Service Type	Service Names	Service Goals
Career Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interview practice• Job search support (including on-campus employment)• Resume/cover letter support• Job description comprehension	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students will demonstrate career readiness at all stages of a job search• Students will learn lifelong career self-management skills
Career Exploration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Internships• Work experience• Job shadowing• Career mentorships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students can articulate their career goals• Students will build a valuable professional network

¹ VanDerziel, S. (2022). *The value of career services*. NACE. <https://www.nacweb.org/career-development/organizational-structure/the-value-of-career-services/>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will demonstrate industry-specific skills aligned with their chosen careers • Students will deepen the connection to their majors
Career Navigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career assessment tests • Skill awareness and articulation • Usage of key career and job resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will demonstrate an awareness of their career fields and of the resources available to them to manage their career journeys

Events and Presentations

In addition to the student-facing services described above, Career Services coordinates several events and presentations. Its signature events are the two career fairs held annually, one in the fall and one in the spring. In the future, the fall event will be more focused on part time jobs, on-campus student positions, and internships, while the spring event will be a more traditional career fair, intended to connect students to local employers who represent in-demand career pathways.

In addition to these career fairs, the CS team frequently collaborates with faculty and other staff to present to students on a variety of topics, including resume and cover letter workshops, career pathway planning, interview preparation, job searching and professional portfolios, and more.

The future vision is to refine and streamline events, scale those with the greatest impact, and expand virtual offerings to reach more students, including distance learners. Future changes to existing events are outlined below:

Event Name	Plan for Expansion	Intended Audience
Career Fairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase scale and access: Offer simultaneous online career fairs • Increase access: Make list of employers and jobs easily available to entire student body 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All students, including distance students • Employer partners • On-campus offices, including both services and student worker sites
Online Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase number of events and access: Offer asynchronous online events, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Resume challenge week ○ LinkedIn week ○ Handshake profile update challenge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All students, including distance learners

Classroom Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase scale and refine process: Create list of available presentations for faculty to select • Film certain frequently requested topics for easy use as assignments or in course shells 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All students, including distance learners • Faculty
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Institutional Situation and Collaboration

The Career Services (CS) program at Cuesta College is positioned within the Student Success and Support Programs cluster. The program is visible on the website and in student marketing, and it is centrally located near other student-facing offices (e.g., bookstore, Basic Needs, Student Life). While personnel have shifted as part of the July 1, 2025 reorganization, the planned physical merger of Career Services and the Transfer Center is still pending.

The CS office team collaborates frequently with both internal and external collaborators, outlined below.

Stakeholder Type	Stakeholder Name	Type of Collaboration
Internal	Student Support Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student referrals • Marketing student outcomes as a key part of the Cuesta experience • Refining student experiences, such on-campus student employment
Internal	Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student referrals • Classroom presentations • Career readiness curriculum development • Employer advisory committee support • Internship/work experience site coordination
Internal	Deans of Instruction and SSSP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding ways to embed career readiness throughout the student experience
Internal	Grants Office; Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply for and manage grants for students, events, and services
External	Employer partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment support (job postings, event coordination, student connections, etc.) • Internship coordination and support • Communicating workforce trends and concerns to academic leaders
External	Chambers of Commerce and one-stops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network, provide resources and information • Create a two-way partnership for referrals

External	Partner institutions of higher education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refine internship programs and experiences (both for student referrals and as potential internship sites)
External	Handshake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Job postings, data collection, First Destination Survey

The institutional situation, visibility, and prioritization of Career Services have room for improvement. In particular, career development is offered sporadically and unevenly across campus. Future improvements should include using the Career Services office as the center of career expertise on campus, an office that researches, creates, and curates career development resources, tools, and curricula for colleagues and offices to use, as well as offering training on these resources. This would ensure that students encounter career development concepts on campus that are consistent, current, relevant, and timely.

With student outcomes and career connected learning being such integral pieces of institutional and state goals, it is essential that the Career Services Office be institutionally centralized.

II. Data Analysis and Program-Specific Measurements

Programs are often impacted by institutional or other organizational change. Please review program-relevant institutional data sources, such as institutional enrollment trends, which along with some other relevant program data, is available on the [SLOCCCD Institutional Research website](#). Other organizational or departmental measurements may provide useful information for planning in your program; please describe those measurements and the data below.

A. Data Summary:

Describe data collection tool(s) used.

The Career Services Office collects program service data through several reporting mechanisms: Regional Equity and Recovery Partnerships (RERP), Strong Workforce reports and Handshake. The following reflects student participation captured through the aforementioned sources.

	Quarter 1*	Quarter 2	Quarter 3**	Quarter 4
Unduplicated new employers	68	115	22	227
Paid jobs posted	26,224	352	49	135
# of posted jobs	30,997	395	49	145
Posted jobs with >1 position	4,900	95	24	13
# of student applicants	315	82	49	192
On/off-campus internships	6,146	60	60	29
Employer count (Events)	74	177	60	184

Student count (Events)	315	266	391	325
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**Q1 Note:* Data for RERP reporting was originally gathered from national data sets, so the numbers for Q1 are especially large, but do not reflect entirely local data. That feature was changed in Q2.

***Q3 Note:* Career Services previously used a service called Jobspeaker to track the number of posted jobs, but it was cancelled in Q3, which affected how data was gathered as the team switched to gathering data by hand. In Q4, the team switched to gathering local data via Handshake.

Student reach increased significantly in Fall 2025 and Spring 2026, reflecting growing engagement in Career Services. ConexED data show approximately 600 appointments and 300 unduplicated students served since the start of the academic year, with mid-year projections indicating the program is on track to exceed last year’s total contacts and students served.

To support continued growth and expand access, the department is strengthening its data infrastructure. A comprehensive engagement tracker is being developed to integrate appointments, stakeholder interactions, and event participation, with staff training underway to ensure consistent use. Additional assessment efforts will evaluate student perceptions and map service touchpoints to identify opportunities to broaden reach and impact.

B. Data Interpretation:

Describe results from previous improvement efforts to the program based on institutional or departmental changes.

The data presented above reflects a period of transition and infrastructure improvement in the Career Services Office with some observable growth in student and employer engagement. Quarter 1 reporting relied on national datasets, limiting localized insight for planning. Quarter 2 improved local data collection, while Quarter 3 reflects a temporary dip due to the discontinuation of Jobspeaker and a shift to manual tracking. By Quarter 4, implementation of Handshake restored consistent local reporting and demonstrated observable recovery and growth.

In analyzing the data, adequate infrastructure directly influences growth; consistent, integrated tracking (Handshake and a comprehensive engagement system) is critical for accurate assessment and scalable expansion. Employer engagement is strengthening, particularly in Quarter 4, and strategic cultivation of these partnerships can expand job and internship pipelines.

Events remain a high-impact engagement strategy, with stable student participation even during system transitions. At the same time, increasing student application rates, refining

experiential learning tracking, and scaling outreach, particularly to disproportionately impacted groups, represent key opportunities to broaden access and deepen impact.

Mid-year appointment data (approximately 600 appointments and 300 unduplicated students served) indicate increasing demand, with projections showing the program on track to exceed last year's total contacts. Employer engagement rebounded significantly in Q4, with 227 new employers and 184 employer event participants. Student event attendance remained consistently strong across quarters, demonstrating sustained interest in career-connected programming.

Identify areas, if any, that may need improvement for program quality and growth.

To increase access to and engagement with Career Services, while also strengthening data tracking and program assessment, the department will continue refining its use of technology platforms and career resources. Strategies to scale are outlined below:

- **Scaling services:** Efforts are already underway to create resource toolkits for students, faculty, and employers. These toolkits will help the career team scale their efforts by making the most requested programs and services easily available to key stakeholders in a self-service format. In addition, the staff will create a library of how-to videos instructing students on how to use these tools and providing career guidance and advice.
- **Data tracking:** The team will track all engagement with the office by all stakeholders, relying on ConexED for student data and manually tracking engagement with alumni, community members, employers, faculty, and staff, as well as engagement with students during events.
- **Improving on-campus employment:** One of the best ways a campus can support career readiness is by employing them. The Career Services team has begun collaborating with key internal stakeholders to refine and simplify the student employment process, hopefully increasing office participation in the on-campus employment process and growing the body of student workers.
- **Refining the internship process:** A goal in the coming year will be to streamline the internship and work experience process, centralizing a list of potential internship sites, engaging faculty as internship mentors and encouraging students to participate, and increasing employer engagement in the internship program. A future goal is to find sources of funding for paid internships.
- **Expanding Experiential Learning:** One of the most impactful experiences that students can engage in is some kind of experiential learning, such as an internship, work experience, apprenticeship, or something similar that allows students to apply classroom theory to a real-world situation. Participation in these experiences

at Cuesta has been dropping in recent years, and particular attention needs to be paid to these programs to grow these opportunities for students.

- **Creating a Career Champion Program:** The Career Champion model is being adopted by many colleges and universities in the U.S. This model acknowledges that students are having career discussions with many other people on campus than just career center staff, and it leans into the idea of a “career ecosystem.” The Career Champion Program would train faculty, staff, and administration on the concepts of career development and prepare them to have meaningful and accurate discussions about career readiness with their students. Importantly, this program is not intended to change anyone’s job description, but rather to equip them to perform their existing jobs more easily.
- **Embedded Career Readiness:** By far one of the best ways to ensure that all students encounter career readiness at some point in their time at Cuesta is to embed such material into the academic experience. “First-year orientation, a first-year seminar or required career class, the declaration process for a major or minor, capstone courses, and academic advising meetings are only a few examples of places where sophisticated embedding is already happening.”² By embedding career readiness education and milestones into the student experience, all students will engage with this material and leave Cuesta better prepared for their career pathways.

Recommend any changes and updates to program based on the analysis above.
For elements that require funding, complete the Resource Plan Worksheet ([download from this folder](#)) and review the [Resource Allocation Rubric](#).

Additional human capital is needed to close the current service gap. The department recommends adding a University Transfer and Career Services Specialist position to expand applied and experiential learning and increase student reach. With a current student-to-staff ratio of approximately 4,500:1, existing capacity limits the ability to deliver equitable, high-impact services at scale. Recent federal regulations requiring “adequate career services” elevate this need as both a strategic and compliance priority. Additional staffing will strengthen employer partnerships, stabilize operations, and align services with institutional expectations.

² Podany, J. (2024, November 9). *The 4 foundations of the career ecosystem era*. The Career Leadership Collective. <https://www.careerleadershipcollective.com/post/the-4-foundations-of-the-career-ecosystem-era>

III. Annual Program Outcomes (ASOS and SSOS), Assessment and Improvements

Your program has established either Administrative Service Outcomes or Student Service Outcomes. Those outcomes are assessed and tracked in the Course or Program Assessment Summary. Review CPAS documents for ASO or SSO assessment results for program outcomes.

A. Current Program Outcomes:

In prior reporting cycles, Career Services Student Service Outcomes were not established. In the last APPW, the department set broad goals to:

- Increase student knowledge and competency in job search skills; and
- Increase knowledge and competency in workplace standards and experience

A student survey was planned through Handshake to assess progress on the goals outlined above; however, extended Handshake integration timelines into Fall 2026 delayed implementation and data tracking. In Fall 2026, the department established strategic goals and prioritized full Handshake integration to support this effort.

This section reports on progress toward 2025–2026 Career Services strategic goals, which were established in Fall 2025 and are aligned with the SSSP divisional goals, the Educational Master Plan (EMP) and Vision 2030 framework.

2025-26 Student Services Outcomes, SSSP Strategic Goals & Educational Master Plan Metrics

Goal 1: Strengthen Student Outcomes		
Objective	Proposed Activity/Action	Result
1.1 Case Management <i>Expand case management to increase institutional student engagement strategies by enhancing student support programs.</i>	The department will fully and consistently leverage ConexED referrals to connect students to resources and supports.	In progress. Career Services will define procedures and protocols for using ConexED. As of the spring term, a user guide has been developed. Appointment data and cohort tracking features are currently being utilized, with further refinement needed to improve consistency and effectiveness.
	Career Services will work with campus departments to raise awareness about referrals and assess them annually for efficacy and functionality.	In progress. Career Services is reviewing referral reasons and guides and providing reminders to campus partners, as appropriate.
	Career Services will develop service category frameworks and reason codes (aligned with SWP) for streamlined reporting in ConexED that will be used	Complete. Career Services developed a service category framework and reason codes aligned with Vision Aligned Reporting metrics (e.g., SWP).

	to formatively evaluate and refine services and effectiveness.	As of the fall term, all Career Services contacts are recorded and coded in ConexED.
1.2 Non-traditional Enrollment <i>Increase enrollment of non-traditional students through program development and targeted outreach efforts.</i>	Career Services will collaborate with Outreach/Admissions, and other campus departments to support events like Educate, Cougar Welcome Days, Promise Day, Orientation, etc.	In progress. Career Services will engage internal partners to ensure the department is included as a key participant in campus events. The department has already participated in multiple events this year (e.g., Promise Day, Counselor Summit, Educate, etc.)
1.6 Eliminate Barriers <i>Eliminate institutional barriers to student success by reviewing and updating campus processes.</i>	Career Services will increase the number of students using the Handshake Job Board and the number of local jobs posted to the platform.	In progress. Career Services will post all on-campus jobs to Handshake to increase student visibility and engagement and will implement profile activation challenges to identify and address participation barriers.
Goal 2: Refine and Expand Educational Pathways		
2.1 Expand Career Education <i>Reinforce and expand career education pathways through a culture of inquiry.</i>	Career Services will increase the number of in-demand job placements in students' field of study, that pay a living wage or have the potential to lead to a full-time role that pays a living wage with additional education and/or experience.	In progress. Increase community employer participation in posting in-demand jobs on Handshake and boost student profile activation. This work has not yet begun; a Handshake profile activation challenge is planned to drive student engagement.
2.2 Guided Pathways <i>Integrate Guided Pathways as a completion strategy.</i>	Career Services will increase the number of students who receive information about their pathway in the local labor market.	In progress. Career Services will make labor market information available campus-wide and present findings to campus partners (e.g., BW Report, website updates, etc.).
	Career Services will increase the number of students producing resumes aligned with industry norms.	In progress. Career Services is developing easily accessible online resume guides, worksheets, and lessons. Materials are currently being built out, with completion targeted by the end of March 2026.
	Career Services will increase the number of students placed in work-based learning opportunities.	In progress. Career Services will collaborate with WEXP faculty to review processes and student placements. As of the spring term, this is currently in progress.
2.4 Partnerships <i>Leverage partnerships to advance the diverse</i>	Career Services will develop and implement an annual programmatic plan that outlines internal and external	In progress. Career Services will develop a centralized events calendar and use Asana to coordinate and

<i>and evolving needs of our students.</i>	collaborations to reduce duplication and maximize success.	execute collaborations. As of spring term, Asana is being leveraged, though not all events and projects have been fully integrated.
	Career Services will pilot monthly workshops (Work Exp., Internship Opportunities, etc. to increase awareness and students' knowledge base of resources and supports available to increase their engagement and retention.	In progress. Career Services will plan and market workshops, reserve space, and hire and train a student ambassador to support implementation. This work has not yet begun, and the student ambassador position has not yet been filled.
	Career Services will increase engagement in services by 20-25 percentage points annually.	In progress. Career Services will scale services and strengthen internal partnerships with campus stakeholders to enhance student experience and increase referrals. Supporting tools are being developed and office protocols are being refined. Mid-year data indicate the program is on track to surpass last year's total contacts and unduplicated students served by the end of the current cycle.
	Career Services will establish or augment 2 community-based partnerships that yield internship opportunities for students aligned with workforce needs (BW Research Proposal)	In progress. Career Services will identify and strengthen partnerships with aligned community partners. As of the spring term, organizations identified through BW research have been invited to participate in the Spring 2026 Career Fair.
Goal 3: Foster a Culture that Values Individuals, Innovation, Effectiveness and Efficiency		
3.2 Communication Strategies <i>Utilize proven communication strategies to promote campus-wide understanding and awareness.</i>	Career Services will implement student-centered social media campaigns and establish baseline annual growth targets.	In progress. Career Services will leverage student ambassadors to create engaging social media campaigns.
3.4 I.D.E.A.A. Integration <i>Integrate the principles of I.D.E.A.A. in campus training, communications, processes, and policies.</i>	Career Services will develop guides and student-facing materials that are ADA compliant and inclusive of LOTE.	In progress. Career Services will review all materials for ADA compliance, including Languages Other Than English (LOTE). All existing and newly developed materials are currently under review.

B. Describe your program assessment:

To date, data tracking within Career Services has been decentralized and inconsistently implemented across the team, highlighting the need for more standardized and coordinated practices.

To strengthen data integrity and program assessment, Career Services is prioritizing consistent use of ConexED for appointment and referral tracking, deeper alignment with the Cougar Compass framework, and standardized data practices across the team. An updated, comprehensive engagement tracker is currently being developed to consolidate one-on-one appointments, stakeholder engagement, event participation, and related activities, with staff training underway to ensure consistent implementation.

As of the fall term, Career Services evaluates progress toward measurable objectives in its Student Service Outcomes (SSOs) and SSSP strategic goals, which are aligned with the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Vision 2030 and the college's Educational Master Plan. Progress toward these goals is outlined above, and the department is responsible for all required compliance reporting, including fiscal, grant-funded, VAR and other state reports.

To ensure transparency and accountability, the department holds biweekly check-ins with the Dean and monthly department meetings to review progress toward goals. Annual strategic planning retreats and monthly divisional meetings support ongoing assessment and identify areas for improvement.

C. Describe any results from improvement efforts arising from ASO or SSO assessment in the last year:

As noted in the Current Program Outcomes section, Career Services previously had no established Student Service Outcomes. During this cycle, the department developed 2025–2026 strategic goals aligned with SSSP divisional priorities, the Educational Master Plan, and the Vision 2030 framework. In collaboration with other areas under the Dean's oversight, the department is building comprehensive systems to consistently categorize, track, and analyze data, shifting from a compliance-driven approach to one focused on formative evaluation and continuous improvement.

To support implementation of the SSSP Case Management Model, Cuesta Connect was adopted as the central platform for documenting referrals and contacts. This included developing Vision Aligned Reporting (VAR) reason code crosswalks to ensure consistent and accurate reporting. As of fall 2026, all departmental contacts are tracked in Cuesta Connect in alignment with VAR expectations, with continued refinement underway.

Plans also include collecting stronger qualitative and access-point data—such as student perceptions of career support and where students engage with services—to identify gaps and inform ongoing improvement.

- D. Recommend changes and updates to program based on assessment of program outcomes. For elements that require funding, complete the Resource Plan Worksheet ([download from this folder](#)) and review the [Resource Allocation Rubric](#).

Given the need to attain greater reach for all Cuesta students, a recommended change is to prioritize a University Transfer and Career Services Specialist position, specifically someone who would focus on tracking and expanding applied and experiential learning on campus in addition to delivering standard career services information and material.

While national benchmarks vary, student-to-career staff ratios often approach 2,000:1; at Cuesta, the ratio is approximately 4,500:1. This significantly limits the team’s ability to provide equitable, high-impact services at scale.

Although efforts are underway to expand access through online toolkits and to build a broader campus “career ecosystem,” the current staffing model constrains the department’s ability to scale services while meeting day-to-day student demand. The high ratio also raises concerns related to staff sustainability and compliance with recent federal administrative capability regulations requiring institutions to provide “adequate career services,” including appropriate staffing levels.

Additional personnel are necessary to stabilize the program, ensure regulatory alignment, strengthen employer and campus partnerships, and deliver career services at a level commensurate with institutional and community expectations.

IV. Anticipated Service Challenges/Changes

Provide a brief description of challenges or changes anticipated in the next year and any needs that have emerged consequently.

Suggested Elements:

A. Regulatory changes

In 2025, the U.S. Department of Education approved 34 CFR 668.16(q), which requires institutions to provide “adequate career services to their students” as a condition of maintaining access to federal financial aid funding. To determine this, the following data points are considered:

- The share of students enrolled in programs designed to prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation;

- The number and distribution of career services staff;
- The career services the institution has promised to its students; and
- The presence of institutional partnerships with recruiters and employers who regularly hire graduates of the institution.

This regulatory change elevates Career Services from a student support function to a compliance and institutional priority, with shared implications for other areas under the Dean’s oversight and a need for increased cross-departmental collaboration.

B. Internal and external organizational changes

Internally, the merger of Career and Transfer Services will strengthen alignment among career exploration, transfer planning, and workforce preparation. Externally, the department now joins Admissions, Student Records and Registration, Academic Counseling, DSPS, Student Health Services, and Financial Aid under one Dean, increasing coordination across student-facing areas. Career and Transfer Services will actively participate in cross-departmental and strategic planning efforts to ensure alignment with divisional priorities and shared student success goals.

C. Student and staff demographic changes

The department is advancing Educational Master Plan and Student Equity Plan goals by embedding equity-focused inquiry into its practices. This includes disaggregating data by race/ethnicity, gender, first-generation status, and economic need to identify gaps and inform targeted strategies.

In an age of rapidly shifting workforce trends and difficult job markets, higher education remains an important avenue to better career outcomes for students. The career outcomes for students who not only interact with the Career Services office but also have some kind of work-based learning experience, in particular an internship, are notable. In some cases, internship experience can cut the rate of underemployment for college graduates in half.

However, as a recent survey conducted by the Burning Glass Institute and the Strada Institute notes, “college is not a guarantee of labor market success”³. Many factors need to come together to ensure that college graduates find economic and career success, but

³ *Talent disrupted: Underemployment, college graduates, and the way forward.* (2024). Burning Glass Institute and Strada Institute for the Future of Work.

one strategy in particular stands out as a key support, and that is ensuring that “all students have access to quality coaching and work-based learning”⁴.

Currently, all students do not have that access. Particularly affected populations include students of color, first generation students, undocumented students, and online students⁵. These barriers have a variety of causes, including students being unaware of career opportunities and services, having competing external pressures and priorities, a lack of recognition of career related skills, etc. Institutionally, faculty are often unaware of what career guidance resources, if any, are available. Also, they may struggle to access applied learning opportunities.

To address these realities, the department is advancing Educational Master Plan and Student Equity Plan goals by embedding equity-focused inquiry into its practices. This includes disaggregating data by race/ethnicity, gender, first-generation status, and economic need to identify gaps and inform targeted strategies.

D. Community economic changes – workforce demands

In response to regional workforce shifts, Career Services is strengthening its role as a bridge between students, academic programs, and industry demand. The merger of Career and Transfer Services will better align career exploration, transfer planning, and workforce preparation. Using First Destination Survey data, Handshake integration, and regional labor market analysis conducted with BW Research and the Grants Office, Career Services is aligning efforts across four priority industry clusters and supporting expansion of work-based learning in high-demand fields.

To address gaps in student awareness of regional opportunities, Career Services will collaborate with faculty and community partners to develop clearer, Area of Study–aligned career pathways and expand internships and employer engagement to better connect education to employment outcomes.

E. Role of technology for information, service delivery and data retrieval

The department leverages a range of technology platforms and web-based tools to support student access, career development, and data-informed decision-making. ConexED supports student data tracking, appointment scheduling, referrals, and case and cohort management, enabling students to directly connect with key support services.

⁴ *Talent disrupted: Underemployment, college graduates, and the way forward.* (2024). Burning Glass Institute and Strada Institute for the Future of Work.

⁵ Flaherty, C. (2023). *Key differences in student satisfaction with career centers.* Inside Higher Ed. <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/student-success/life-after-college/2023/12/07/survey-career-center-satisfaction-differs-race>

Handshake serves as the primary job and event platform, helping students secure local and on-campus employment, engage with employers, participate in career events, and complete first-destination surveys. Lightcast provides labor market data that informs strategic planning and ensures academic programs and career guidance align with workforce trends. In addition, the department utilizes free resources such as O*Net, the Occupational Outlook Handbook, NACE research, and the National Student Clearinghouse to expand access to career exploration tools and scale services efficiently.

F. Providing service to multiple off-campus sites

The department continues to serve multiple locations, providing extensive services at the San Luis Obispo (SLO) and North County (NC) campuses. Full expansion of services at the South County site will require additional staffing and operational support.

G. Anticipated staffing changes/retirements

N/A

V. Overall Budget Implications

Provide a brief description of the immediate budget request(s) made in your Resource Plan ([download from this folder](#)) (after having reviewed the [Resource Allocation Rubric](#)). These elements will be reflected in the District planning and budget process.

Elements:

A. Personnel

University Transfer and Career Services Specialist (\$85,198): to expand access and impact for all Cuesta students, the department proposes adding a University Transfer and Career Services Specialist focused on applied and experiential learning while delivering core career and transfer services. This position will identify and expand internships, work experience, undergraduate research, and other experiential pathways; assess gaps; and develop strategies to scale equitable access. The role will also strengthen transfer planning, application support, and coordination with CSU/UC partners.

This position advances district and college priorities by increasing access to high-impact career and transfer services, strengthening Associate Degree for Transfer completion and CSU/UC transfer rates, supporting guided pathways, eliminating equity gaps in degree and transfer attainment, and promoting successful student outcomes aligned with ACCJC standards, the Educational Master Plan, and institutional learning outcomes.

B. Equipment/furniture (other than technology)

N/A

C. Technology

N/A

D. Facilities

N/A

Signature Page

List the names and titles of managers, faculty, and classified staff who contributed to the annual planning and program review process.

Christopher Mutshnick, Dean, Student Success & Support Programs

Name Position

Annie Chartrand, Associate Director, Career & Transfer Services

Name Position

Gabriella Melton, Department Assistant, Career & Transfer Services

Name Position

Tyler Wilson, Employment Services Coordinator, Career & Transfer Services

Name Position

Name Position

Student Success and Support Programs, College Centers and Administrative Services Programs: Managers completing this process must sign. All full-time director(s), managers, faculty and/or classified staff in the program must sign this form.

Christopher Mutshnick, Dean, Student Success & Support Programs

Name Title Signature  Date 03/10/2026
Christopher Mutshnick (Mar 10, 2026 11:07:45 PDT)

Annie Chartrand, Associate Director, Career & Transfer Services

Name Title Signature  Date 03/10/2026
Annie Chartrand (Mar 10, 2026 11:03:54 PDT)

Gabriella Melton, Department Assistant, Career & Transfer Services

Name Title Signature  Date 03/10/2026

Tyler Wilson, Employment Services Coordinator, Career & Transfer Services

Name Title Signature  Date 03/10/2026