

Career Development at Notre Dame

The Meruelo Family Center for Career Development (CCD) aspires to unite the Notre Dame community to inspire and prepare every student to pursue a life of impact and purpose. We will work with campus partners to develop a scalable and trackable discernment process, grounded in design thinking principles and informed by Holy Cross tradition.

This aspiration is grounded in the reality that career development happens everywhere – in residence halls, classrooms, faculty offices, walks across campus, the fifth floor of Duncan Student Center, and many more places. Career development of Notre Dame students is everyone’s responsibility, and this work extends beyond our campus community in South Bend to our network of alumni, benefactors, and parents who can increase career-related opportunities for students. In 2025, we will launch a Career Champions Network, a formal strategy to share resources and implement integration opportunities with faculty, staff, alumni, and parents who are committed to supporting career development.

Our model is grounded in a commitment to prepare every student for lifelong career readiness by guiding them to discern, pursue, and achieve career goals that align with their values, interests, and skills. Career development at Notre Dame starts with intentional and thoughtful discernment. In order to be effective, discernment must be an iterative process that extends throughout a student’s time at Notre Dame. We recognize that not all students begin thinking about career development at the same time, and we also respect that students should be provided options and not be bound to a linear process...because career development can be anfractuious. Our strategic plan aligns with the Division of Student Affairs’ commitment to a renewed focus on reflection and discernment.

As we evolve, we are also committed to responsiveness and data-informed strategic thinking. We annually collect data through an interactive, online check-in process (with a 78% completion rate of undergraduates). We have learned, for example, that 59% of students have identified “lack of free time” as a barrier to engaging in career development activities. We also know that 49% of students are nervous about engaging in career development, and 47% do not have a clear understanding on the next step they should take to pursue their career aspirations. We recognize that traditional service delivery methods will not reach all students. We are shifting our model from a traditional “service office” approach where we are available for students who seek us out, to becoming more intentional in conducting frequent review of student engagement data to identify at-risk students and utilizing campus partners to reach these students. We will close the gap of disengaged students.

We are committed to strategic scaling. We will continue to explore collaborative approaches to expand our model around one-on-one career counseling to reach more students from every college, particularly historically underrepresented and first generation. Furthermore, we know that resources are only helpful if students can find them. Students reported that the first place they would seek career advice is the internet (32%), and 87% of students would use career development resources delivered via email. Using this insight as a guidance, we have launched email campaigns to establish best practices, and we will continue to refine our web-based content.

We have discovered that data and information sharing has been one of the most effective ways to deepen partnerships with colleagues. We have advanced relationships with faculty and leadership across academic colleges by sharing data more transparently. Along with career development engagement, we have also begun sharing insights such as:

- Healthcare, technology, and consulting are the top three career paths of interest among first year students. These three career paths are also the same for sophomores and juniors.
- Student interest in graduate and/or professional school (about one-third of students plan to attend graduate school in the future).
- Regional preferences, including top regional interest (Chicago, New York, and Boston), perspectives on starting a career in Indiana (14% would consider starting a career in South Bend), and how close to work near their hometown (only 9% of students prefer to start their career close to their hometown).

- Students' perceived skills gaps (91% of students feel confident in demonstrating critical thinking skills; while only 34% can demonstrate proficiency with diversity, equity, and inclusion; and only 49% can demonstrate proficiency with digital technology).
- Career values of first year students (63% identified "helping others/society" as "very important" whereas 12% of first years identified "risk taking" as "very important").
- Summer internships and research experiences (46% secured an internship in the summer of 2022, 7% participated in research, and 8% participated in service work).

Data sharing partnerships are being advanced with Student Affairs departments, faculty leaders across all colleges, academic advisors, Corporate Relations, the Executive Vice President's office, Economic Development, Admissions, University Relations, and many more. We have also increased our transparency with the general public by publishing of one of the most comprehensive, [interactive first destination reports](#) in higher education.

Our partnerships and resources are intentionally designed to reach more than just undergraduates. Established through a collaboration with the Graduate School and Deans, we serve many of Notre Dame's master's and PhD students (Arts and Letters, Engineering, Global Affairs, and Science) through our centralized career center model. We also provide resources for postdocs to help advance their careers. And, in the spirit of collaboration, we work closely with the staff of Mendoza Graduate Business Career Development (who share space with us in Duncan Student Center).

The comprehensive career development program we are committed to continually refining will better serve undergraduate and graduate students (with ongoing discernment at its core) and will continue to emphasize traditional career service functions, including:

- Career fairs and networking events to connect students to employers
- Connecting students to alumni and parents through specialized mentorship programs
- Developing robust, multi-event engagement opportunities for employers while on campus
- Connecting employers to faculty
- Skill development workshops (resumes, cover letters, interviews, networking)

Our centralized office and 35+ room interview center have been intentionally located in Duncan Student Center. During the day you will find employers meeting with students, faculty

and administrators using one of our ten conference rooms, students using interview rooms for virtual interviews, and students studying.

Leveraging the Notre Dame alumni and parent network is one of the most significant opportunities we will utilize to advance our vision. We have developed a unique and impactful "Regional Engagement Model" by hiring well-connected ND alumni across the country to focus attention on establishing relationships and developing specialized programs to build recruiting pipelines with employers that students have identified as "dream employers." We have staff in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Houston, and New York, and we will be expanding to Washington, DC, and Boston next. While many of our students are interested in pursuing careers in major metropolitan hubs on both coasts, we also recognize that some of the best opportunities are right here in Indiana. As we expand our Regional Engagement Model across the country, we will also develop new engagement opportunities with employers in the state.

To maximize our impact, we have established four guiding principles for our staff to focus their efforts on:

- Eliminate barriers to engagement by fostering an equitable and inclusive environment.
- Collaborate with stakeholders to support our students.
- Leverage data to inform decisions.
- Tailor programs and services to enhance engagement.

Hardworking. Determined. Kind. These are the three most commonly recurring words first-year students reported that a family member or former teacher would use to describe them. These words exemplify the students that we are charged with developing. Just as the Notre Dame student body evolves, the CCD will adapt our career development model to best meet their needs to support their aspirations... and we will do this by uniting our campus community in a shared commitment to inspire and prepare every student to pursue a life of impact and purpose.

LEARN MORE AT:

careerdevelopment.nd.edu