

7 things you should know about...

The ODU Cyber Career Center



Rationale

Faced with an increasing student enrollment, international distance learning program, and expanding alumni population, the Old Dominion University Career Management Center (CMC) needed a way to deliver all programs and services to students and alumni regardless of time or place.

Recognizing our staffing limitations we made use of existing resources to extend career assistance from a distance, 24/7/365 LIVE!

We began with the need to transform a dated Career Information Center into a small group teaching and learning facility. The vision was more like a corporate boardroom to prepare students for the world of work. It also functions as a support center after normal hours operation.

While the CMC had the opportunity to renovate a physical space as a central location, the Cyber Career Center concept can be deployed by any career center using existing structure and technology. Our three tiered level of services employ electronic methods to:

- support the future growth of the University
- meet the needs of commuter students
- provide assistance to students at a distance
- extend career services to all Alumni

1 What is a Cyber Center?

The Cyber Career Center (CCC) serves as a central communication hub for our Cyber Career Coaches, where individual students and alumni can receive hands on assistance with career related tools and information.

The CCC is a practical reception area for on campus interviews. Computers display employer web sites so students can conduct up to the minute research. Employers can prep small groups and administer job selection tests.

The space doubles as a small group training lab for students and staff. Videoconferences are a typical event used to tap into and share expertise around the world.

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2 What are Cyber Coaches?

Cyber Career Coaches are graduate assistants from counseling and higher education programs. Each works year round as a professional coordinator in one of six college satellite offices while they are scheduled five hours per week for training and assistance in the Cyber Career Center.

Two graduate assistants are dedicated to the Cyber Center in support the Cyber Career Center Supervisor and rotating coaches. An existing faculty administrator position was rewritten to include supervision of the Cyber Center including associated marketing and liaison activities for our distance learning sites.

3 What is our approach?

Our three tiered approach extends all programs and services so students and alumni can receive the same assistance in person and/or at a distance.

1. Live, face-to-face

The Cyber Center is staffed with Coaches who are trained to provide traditional walk in services and group presentations.

2. Live, via distance

Cyber Center hours are extended each evening so Coaches can interact electronically through live chat, email, two-way videoconferencing, or phone. Coaches also offer live webinars and videostreamed presentations.

Support is available 24/7/365 by Virtual Career Assistants through our dedicated toll free number. While they are not trained to perform career advising, this triage service relays key information through immediate referrals and detailed technical assistance.

Our virtual job fairs meet the needs of students, alumni, and employers throughout Virginia.

3. Self-paced, via distance

Our Virtual Career Center offers orientations and seminars online and on-demand. Presentations are also distributed on CD. Web based access to career assistance, resources, and experience is available any time, any where.

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4 How do we do it?

By identifying off the shelf technology and services that meet specified requirements, we are able to provide a synchronous and asynchronous counterpart to all traditional services.

Traditional	Synchronous (technology)	Asynchronous
Walk-in	Instant Career Messaging (livechatnow.com)	Offline Messages Shared Email
Appointment	Videoconferencing (Sametime, 306.ibm.com/software/lotus)	Cybercoach Web Form
Phone	Virtual Assistant (mapcommunications.com)	Available 24/7/365
Resume Review	Screen Sharing (one to one, Sametime)	Audio Review (Acrobat, adobe.com)
Seminars	Webinars (one to many, Sametime)	Online, on-demand (articulate.com)
Demonstrations	Application Sharing, Push Pages (Sametime)	Tutorials (Viewlet, qarbon.com)
Guests/Events	Videostreaming (realnetworks.com)	Podcasting (itunes.odu.edu)
Reflective Papers	Wikibooks (en.wikibooks.org)	Blogs (typepad.com)

Our marketing strategy is proactive, an effort to push information electronically to the students rather than attempt to pull students physically to us. Our goal is to provide just the right information at just the right time in just the right place utilizing just the right resources to meet just the right needs.

5 What are the benefits?

By establishing means to provide equivalent assistance remotely, we introduce flexibility for both clients and staff. Our menu of methods offers new opportunities to promote interactive career management capabilities, a model sought after and duplicated within our own and similar institutions.

We continue to receive recognition and support internally and externally and serve an important foundation in the restructuring and development of our new University College.

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6 What are the challenges?

Bringing new and existing staff onboard is always a moving target. We have made a conscious effort not to front load training, working toward continuous professional development. This allows us to incorporate the same methods for just in time instruction and collaboration. Hands-on experience and ownership in the process are critical for ongoing success.

The CMC has a history of cultivating staff from students to professional careers in our own organization. This serves as testimonial to our organization, builds institutional knowledge, and enhances proficiency with practice.

If you build it, will they come? If you identify a need, bring it to them! If what you build exceeds expectations, be patient. If it helps overcome obstacles, it will be worth the wait.

7 What is the outcome?

In less than two years we have increased outreach and visibility with our client populations and collaboration with our Alumni Office and Distance Learning Sites. Our goal was exceeded in July 2006, after going 24/7/365 LIVE!

Our innovations have set precedence for future initiatives. The next step will further integrate virtual reality and faculty expertise.

Recent recognition and presentations:

- NACE Chevron Award 2007
- NACE National Conference 2006
- NACE Encore Webinar, October 2006
- NACE Time Capsule – CD archived
- SACE Conference 2006
- EACE Conference 2006
- AAEE Conference 2006
- Sloan-C International Conference on Asynchronous Learning Networks 2006



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