Transforming Experiential Learning & Career Development Final Report

Background

From July 1, 2025 through May 15, 2026 a steering committee comprised of faculty, staff and students was charged with making recommendations on how to combine the Office of Career Services and the Office of Connected Learning and how to implement a structure and programming that provides the experiential learning and career development portfolio that best serves all UW Bothell students without equity gaps and within current funding constraints.

Overview

One of the considerations throughout the committee's work has been how to achieve the desired outcomes of equitable student access to experiential learning and career development opportunities. The discovery journey for the committee repeatedly pointed to the need for incorporating these opportunities and learning into the curriculum. External reviews, peer benchmarking, stakeholder feedback and our own internal conversations consistently reinforced the need for curriculum integration. This is the only reliable way to get students the opportunities, experiences and learning that they need in support of their futures. The vision for this new organization encompasses a future where academic learning and real-world experiences are inseparable.

The committee acknowledges that there is a lot of existing good work that is being done within schools and by individual faculty members to bring experiential learning and career development to students. As part of our discovery work, we also heard the need for greater campus level support to make this work flourish. Structural barriers in the form of faculty workload, resourcing, campus siloing and supporting for external partnerships exist.

Faculty time is constrained and the perceived and real burden of this work means that broad adoption is challenging without addressing support and development needs. The RCM model is a potential inhibitor to this work, as funding opportunities are elusive. Intentional consideration is required to provide financial resourcing to support these opportunities. A lack of coordinated support to find, cultivate and support long term strategic partnerships means that the campus is not fully utilizing partnerships, individual faculty are spending time engaging and managing relationships and external partnerships struggle when there is turnover in the relationship.

The recommendations in this document aim to address some of the barriers that exist. The deliverables from the charge letter support how the new unit should be structured and aligned to support the outcome of curriculum integration and the existing needs of faculty and other campus partners in support of this work. The committee is energized by the opportunity for the future of our students and our campus community. We deeply appreciated the opportunity to be part of this work.

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Strategic Charter

Vision: We are building a future where:

- Academic learning and real-world experience are inseparable.
- Deep collaboration among faculty, staff, students, and partners creates the strongest pathways for learning and belonging.
- Every student, regardless of background, can discover how they can make a difference in their careers, lives and communities.

Mission: Create coordinated experiential learning and career development opportunities that best serve all students through an integrated academic journey; connecting them to meaningful career pathways, community engagement, and lifelong learning.

Principles

- Integrate in curricula where possible to provide broad student access.
- Continue to provide a rich ecosystem of co-curricular experiences.
- Standardize first, then optimize.
- Embed in existing systems, avoid introducing more pathways.
- Lessen the burden on faculty through partnering with schools & campus to provide support.
- Seamlessly partner across campus to overcome the challenges of our siloed campus.
- Embody the campus values with a focus on supporting reciprocal relationships through community engagement.

Strategic Goals

- Reduce barriers to experiential learning integration through faculty support, resources, development and tight connection with the schools.
- Focus on growing our external partnerships to support the demand that will be driven by curriculum integration over time.
- Deliver and support experiential learning programs that connect all students to opportunities that enrich their academic journey and serves as a bridge from college to postgraduate life.
- Create long term school specific and campus commitments to experiential learning and career development as part of an integrated academic journey for all students.
- View Strategic Charter

Recommendations

Based on external reviews, benchmarking of schools that have similar combined career/experiential learning portfolios and campus stakeholder engagement, the committee is making the following recommendations. These recommendations are grouped by categories and sorted by the amount of effort/partnership required to accomplish them.

Key Approach: Curriculum integration is the path forward whilst preserving the goodness of what already exists.

Faculty Support and Resource Recommendations

Small (Internal to unit)

- Engagement plan for each school to drive awareness of offerings, existing experiential learning work and to understand needs and opportunities.
- Create a menu of snack sized offerings that can be easily incorporated into existing courses.
- Provide support to embed experiential learning during the development phase of new curriculum planning & consult on existing courses.
- Funding pools to support faculty & students with incidental costs related to experiential learning in course work.

Medium (Requires coordination with other units)

- Create faculty advisory board that meets quarterly to support the new unit.
- Look for ways for faculty to get additional relief when building into course.

Large (Requires campus commitment and resourcing)

- Campus wide goal for schools to progress to curricula integration by degree over 5 years for both career development & experiential learning (final goal created between leadership, schools and faculty leadership and incorporate strategic plan priorities)
- Advocate for campus leadership and school governance to address ways in which the RCM funding model and faculty workloads may not incentivize experiential learning and career development curricula integration.

Faculty Development Recommendations

Small (Internal to new unit)

- Invest in Faculty Learning Communities around career/experiential learning.
- Continue with faculty development workshops that Career/OCL already provides.
- Look for ways to expand faculty facing workshops with the goal of creating community and learning.

Medium (Requires coordination with other units)

- Develop formalized structured communication channels between LTC/OFS and new unit, that is based on informing of updates/opportunities that is faculty specific.
- Look for ways to communicate faculty opportunities via existing LTC/OFS communication channels.
- Revive HIPs for FYPPs or similar cohort-based faculty development program.

Large (Requires campus commitment and resourcing)

- Annual Conference on Innovative Teaching for both Faculty & Staff. (Since the general feedback session, the Annual Leaning & Teaching Symposium was launched by LTC. The recommendation is now modified to intentional partner with LTC on the Annual Symposium to incorporate development components on the pedagogy for experiential learning and career development.)

External Partnership Recommendations

Small (Internal to new Unit)

- Build formal communication lines with Advancement, Community Engagement (CE), Government Relations, Capstone Coordinators and the schools.
- Develop partnership transition plans for relationship continuity when staff/faculty turnover occurs.

Medium (Requires coordination with other units)

- Adopt Tandem (CRM used by University Advancement) as external relations CRM.
- Work with Advancement/CE/Gov't Relations to develop a short list of key external partners that are strategically relevant to UW Bothell to advance the mission of the campus; for each, assign a relationship manager within Advancement/CE/Gov't Relations to cultivate the relationship and provide broader opportunities for engagement across campus.

Large (Requires campus commitment and resourcing)

- Work with Advancement to recruit new strategic partners interested in supporting experiential learning and career development, guided by priorities/goals of new unit and schools. Advancement would support with outreach, while new unit and schools would continue to own strategy and implementation of their programs.

Student Experience Recommendations

Small (Internal to new Unit)

- Standardize tool usage & process to provide ambient information sharing with Academic Advising, such as post advising surveys, Navigate usage.
- Create standard way to communicate program updates to internal partners.
- Create student experience roadmaps that help guide students, faculty, schools & this new unit.
- Align undergraduate programming on meta major pathways as the taxonomy.
- Website to align and integrate with key internal partners such as Academic Advising & Learning Commons.

Medium (Requires coordination with other units)

- Develop formalized structured communication channels between Academic Advising, School Advising and new unit.
- Create joint student communication plan with Academic Advising with the goal of communicating relevant and timely information to students in the most efficient way.

Large (Requires campus commitment and resourcing)

- Set five-year campus wide goal around student development of career competencies (e.g NACE) (final goal created between leadership, schools and faculty leadership and incorporate strategic plan priorities)

Charge Letter Deliverables

1. **Unit Name**: Career & Experiential Learning Center
   Home Division: Academic Affairs
   The committee had multiple discussions regarding unit name, including different ordering of "career", "experiential learning" and "center" which were also considered viable.

2. **Mission, Vision, Principles & Strategic Goals**- Strategic Charter
   Definition of Career and Self Development: (from NACE) Proactively develop oneself and one's career through continual personal and professional learning, awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses, navigation of career opportunities, and networking to build relationships within and without one's organization.
   Definition of Experiential Learning: (from Association for Experiential Education) A philosophy and methodology in which educators purposefully engage with students in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, clarify values and develop people's capacity to contribute to their communities.

3. **Anticipated program areas**. A list of program areas, grouped by service lines, can be found in this chart. As more career development and experiential learning is embedded in curriculum, we anticipate some services will need to increase, others decrease, and some will stay the same. The committee is recommending that meta majors be used as the taxonomy in evaluating existing and new cocurricular programming as service lines shift over time (see Student Experience recommendations above).

4. Leadership and reporting structure: The committee reviewed many organizational model possibilities and determined that a matrix organizational model would best support the campus, schools, faculty, partners whilst focusing on the mission, vision and strategic goals of the new organization. This model also provides internal support, learning and career opportunities for the team as staff can grow expertise, support the learning of each other and develop close school/faculty relationships and knowledge. Matrix Model.

5. **Job titles and descriptions:** After consultation with Vice Chancellor sponsors, committee worked on large areas of responsibilities for staff in new organizational structure, rather than writing detailed job descriptions. This allows unit leadership greater flexibility in translating recommendations into future state.

6. **External Partnership Plan**: See Appendix for full summary.
    a. Communication Channels: The new office should build formal communication lines with Advancement, Community Engagement, Government Relations, Capstone Coordinators, and Tri-Campus partners.
    b. Strategic Partnerships & Partnership Strategy: Advancement, CE and Govt Relations team develop a list of key external partners that are strategically relevant to UW Bothell to advance the vision and mission of the campus.
        i. These relationships would have an account manager from Advancement/CE/Govt assigned to them to cultivate the relationship & broader opportunities for the campus.
        ii. Each strategic partnership would be part of a broader external partnership strategy that is owned by Advancement/CE/Govt. Career & Experiential Learning Center engagement is the same at the program level.
        iii. This approach would allow for external partners to support the university with opportunities/experiences at scale.
    c. Concierge: For smaller partnerships, Advancement would have a formalized role with the initial recruitment of new external partners interested in supporting experiential learning.
        i. Partnership & Operations Team within the new unit would work with Advancement to set priorities/goals around recruiting new partners.
        ii. Advancement would deploy their teams, including Marketing & Communications and Alumni & Stakeholder Engagement, to recruit new partners for career and experiential learning opportunities.
        iii. The new unit would continue to own strategy and implementation of their programs, including building and strengthening relationships with partners who participate in their programs.

7. **Space Plan**: a space assessment of the UW1 first floor is about to begin and findings will not be available in time for inclusion in the committee's work. Key space needs for the unit include work station space for all employees, private space for 1:1 conversations, space for peer advising appointments, storage space and access to event space. Given the recommended organizational structure, the entire team should be located together (rather than in multiple spaces).

8. **Operating Budget**. While the charge letter originally stipulated a budget that would be 80% salary/benefits and 20% operating expenses, the current budget for both units currently has

higher amounts dedicated to salary/benefits. In the short-term, we're recommending that the current allocation to staff salary/benefits remains the same, so as not to have an impact on current staff or headcount.

FY27 Budget	Career	OCL	Combined	Notes
Staff Salary and Benefits	677,053	793,589	1,470,642	12 FTE combined
Student Employees	159,781	49,000	208,781	Career's funded via SAF
Professional Development	12,000	9,000	21,000	
Office Supplies	2,000	3,000	5,000	
Programming/Events	2,500	5,000	7,500	
Facilities & Equipment	2,500	0	2,500	
Technology	35,000	600	35,600	
Memberships	1,500	2,750	4,250	
Printing	2,000	6,000	8,000	
Total Budget	894,334	868,939	1,763,273	

9. **Faculty Development and support plan**: Faculty Resources and Faculty Development Recommendations.

10. **MOAs and other Agreements**: many of the committee's recommendations involve formalizing communication channels with partnerships offices and schools and creating annual engagement plans with these units. Documenting these partnerships could involve formal MOA's between departments, including with:
    a. FYPP and Schools
    b. LTC/OFS
    c. Advancement

11. **Assessment plan**: the two most important measures of success are:
    a. The amount of career development and experiential learning opportunities integrated into courses
    b. Students' progression towards career development competencies, as outlined in recommended campus goals

    For both, we're recommending campus-wide goals, by department, with a five-year timeline.

12. **Advisory structure**: The committee recommends an advisory structure for the new unit comprised of representation from each school, and Dr. Wadiya Udell from the Office of Faculty Success, Dr. Cinnamon Hillyard from the Office of Student Academic Success, and Dr. Emily Christian from Enrollment Management & Student Affairs. This advisory group should meet quarterly to review progress to plan and provide guidance to the unit.

13. **Data management plan**: The committee is recommending that the new unit adopt University Advancement's CRM, Tandem, as their back-end CRM. This would not replace some of the front-facing platforms used by the team (like Navigate, Handshake, etc) but would allow for a consistent way to track engagement of external partners across campus/UW.

14. **Communicating to campus and external partners**. See Faculty Development, External Partnerships, and Student Experience recommendations above. Committee is recommending utilizing existing communication channels that stakeholders are used to engaging with rather than build new standalone channels, where possible. This could include existing LTC/OFS communication channels (for faculty-specific communications), joint student communication plan with Academic Advising (for student-facing information), and existing external communication newsletters (for partners).

15. **Communications plan for launch**: With the recommendation to house the department within Academic Affairs, marketing support for communication to campus regarding the launch of the new department will be provided by Academic Affairs' Finance & Operations team.

16. **Unresolved items**: We have three recommendations that would require campus-wide commitments to address. The committee is in consensus that these recommendations are critical for the success of the new unit, but we are listing them again here as they require further work with school governance and campus leadership to address:
    a. Campus wide goal for schools to progress to curricula integration by degree over 5 years for both career development & experiential learning (final goal created between leadership, schools and faculty leadership and incorporate strategic plan priorities)
    b. Advocate for campus leadership and school governance to address ways in which the RCM funding model and faculty workloads may not incentivize experiential learning and career development curricula integration.
    c. Set five-year campus wide goal around student development of career competencies (e.g NACE). (final goal created between leadership, schools and faculty leadership and incorporate strategic plan priorities)

Additional item from Mid-Year Report: “This [external partnership] approach involves these three offices – Advancement, Community Engagement, and Government Relations – coming together to jointly build strategy for campus-wide relationships. While outside of scope for the committee, we’re flagging that campus leadership may want to consider how best to organize and formalize how these offices work together – as well as with the many individuals and teams that do external-facing work on campus.

Appendix

Charge Letter
Mid-Year Report
Committee Meeting Summary
Offices and Individuals Engaged and Consulted
Campus Feedback on Initial Recommendations
External Partnership - Summary
External Partnership Approaches
Faculty Partnership Findings
Partner Office Findings
External Benchmarking
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    - Additional Conversations with Peer Institutions
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