

Student Panel & Discussion



Base Request- Career Development Specialist Position

UNIVERSITY CAREER SERVICES

FY 25-26



Base Augmentation Request FY26

University Career Services Request for Funding: Career Development Specialist Position

University Career Services (UCS) is seeking funding to fill a vacant Career Development Specialist (CDS) position, which will focus on supporting recent graduates in securing full-time employment during the critical six-month grace period post-graduation.

Currently, UCS supports enrolled students and alumni in achieving their career goals. Recent graduates can utilize Alumni Career Services within UCS for a full semester (six months) after graduation, gaining access to a wide array of resources, both online and in person, to guide their career development.

In 2022, when the CDS position became vacant, UCS made the strategic decision not to immediately backfill the role. Given the challenges posed by the Great Resignation, priority was placed on recruiting and retaining the current team. The incumbent's salary was repurposed to reclassify five Career Counselor positions to Career Development Specialists. This reclassification allowed UCS to offer competitive salaries, ensuring pay parity with college-based career offices and attracting top talent. At that time, UCS struggled to receive strong candidates for the Career Counselor 2 position, despite it having essentially the same job duties as the Senior Career Development Specialist role in the college based career centers.

Given the university's budget constraints, DSA leadership approved this approach with the understanding that the need for a CDS could be revisited, and funding sought through SFAC in the future.

With over 10,000 UH graduates each year, many students report their post-graduation plans. However, response rates tend to be low, and those without job offers often turn to UCS for assistance.

Alumni Utilization during and after grace period and alumni that pay a subscription fee to utilize UCS beyond the six month grace period.

Alumni Cougar Pathway Utilization Mid-Pandemic.

Graduation	Total Graduates	CP Utilization Post-Graduation
May-22	5,815	1,400 (24%)
May-23	6,172	1,993 (32%)
May-24	6,373	910 (14%)

Alumni Subscriptions Pre-Pandemic, subscription are alumni beyond the 6 month grace period

Subscription Year	Number of Subscribers
2018-2019	269
2019-2020	196
*2020-2021	146

*ACS was paused due to staff shortage.

Added CareerShift in 2021, an additional job source

Year	CS Utilization
2022	9,000+
2023	12,111
2024	27,058

The addition of a CDS would significantly enhance UCS’s ability to:

1. **Develop Targeted Programming:** Focus on graduating seniors who have not yet secured employment, ensuring they have access to the tools and resources necessary to land a job.
2. **Support Enrolled Students Pre-Graduation:** Help students secure internships and employment prior to graduation, which would boost their confidence and ease their transition into the workforce.
3. **Track Graduate Outcomes:** Monitor and improve employment outcomes during the six-month grace period, gathering valuable data to guide future initiatives.
4. **Enhance Collaboration with College-Based Career Centers:** College-based career centers often limit their support for recent graduates to online platforms, directing students to UCS for in-person career assistance. A dedicated CDS would help manage this increased demand by offering individualized support to graduates across all colleges.

Furthermore, the additional CDS would provide essential services during this grace period, such as resume reviews, interview preparation, and access to both online job search platforms and in-person career events. This role is critical to ensuring that recent graduates maximize their job search efforts and secure employment within a reasonable timeframe.

Filling this position will enhance UCS’s ability to provide comprehensive, campus-wide career support, ultimately improving student success and post-graduation outcomes for UH graduates.

Impact on Student Success: Career Development Specialist Role

UCS believes filling the Career Development Specialist (CDS) position will have a significant and measurable impact on student success at UH by directly addressing key areas critical to graduate outcomes: data collection, programming for graduating seniors, faculty collaboration, and reinforcing the value proposition of earning a degree. Here's how this role will benefit students:

1. Data Collection and Tracking Graduate Outcomes

One of the most critical aspects of supporting recent graduates is understanding their post-graduation outcomes. The addition of a CDS will enable University Career Services (UCS) to collect more comprehensive and accurate data on the employment status of recent graduates with a dedicated CDS, UCS will be able to:

Increase Response Rates: By proactively engaging with recent graduates during the six-month grace period, UCS can gather more robust data on employment outcomes.

Identify Gaps: By tracking which graduates are struggling to find jobs, UCS can tailor interventions to address specific barriers, such as resume building, interview skills, or industry networking.

Inform University Strategy: Collecting and analyzing this data will help the university better understand trends in graduate employability, which can be used to improve curriculum alignment with industry needs and develop more targeted career programming.

2. Return of Relevant Programming for Graduating Seniors

A key focus of the CDS will be to develop relevant programming specifically designed for graduating seniors who have not yet secured employment. This will include:

Workshops and Bootcamps: Focused on resume writing, interviewing skills, networking, and leveraging platforms like LinkedIn, with tailored content for seniors about to enter the workforce.

Industry-Specific Guidance: Programming that targets high-demand industries and emerging fields, helping students align their skill sets with market needs and preparing them for job opportunities in those areas.

Job Fairs and Networking Events: Coordinating events that connect recent graduates directly with employers who are actively hiring, ensuring graduates have opportunities to meet recruiters face-to-face.

3. Faculty Collaboration and Career Integration

A key component of improving student success involves stronger collaboration between UCS and faculty across campus. The CDS will play an important role in:

Collaborating with Faculty: Partnering with faculty to integrate career readiness into the curriculum, ensuring that students are developing job-relevant skills throughout their academic journey.

Capstone and Internship Opportunities: Working with academic departments to expand capstone projects, internships, and other experiential learning opportunities, providing students with hands-on experience that strengthens their employability.

Targeted Faculty Engagement: Engaging faculty in career development by sharing data and insights on the employment outcomes of their graduates. This collaboration will ensure that career development becomes an integrated part of the academic experience, better preparing students for life after graduation.

4. Value Proposition of Obtaining a Degree

Given the economic challenges and uncertainties that graduates face in today's job market, the value proposition of obtaining a degree has never been more important. The CDS will help recent graduates:

Translate Academic Success into Career Success: By emphasizing the practical, real-world skills gained through their academic experience, the CDS will help students articulate the value of their degree to potential employers.

Maximize Employment Outcomes: Graduates who receive tailored career support are more likely to find employment in their field of study, which enhances the overall value of their UH degree and leads to higher job satisfaction and earning potential.

Adapt to Changing Markets: The CDS will guide graduates in navigating evolving industries, including emerging job markets and digital skill demands, ensuring they remain competitive and adaptable to change.

The addition of a Career Development Specialist will have a profound impact on student success at UH by addressing the critical need for post-graduation employment support.

Benchmark data:

School with additional staff to support graduating seniors and relevant programming include The University of Texas at Austin.

FY2026 Base Augmentation Request.

UCS Base requests	Amount	Reason
Base Augmentation	\$ 72,345	Hire full time CDS staff (includes:salary\$60K + 30% fringe +6% admin)
	\$ 72,345	
Total	\$ 72,345	

Thank you for your consideration,

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