

## The Effectiveness of a Career Preparation Program from the Graduates' Perspective

Charles W. Bridges III

*George Herbert Walker School of Business and Technology,  
Webster University, St. Louis, Missouri, USA  
cb1505@nova.edu*

**[Abstract]** The purpose of this study was to analyze, discuss, and disseminate data pertaining to the attitudes and perceptions of graduates of a large University located in the southeastern region of the United States. Evaluating the attitudes and perceptions of graduates as to how effective the Career Services Department was in helping with their career development provided data that had not been collected by the University. The Career Services Department within the University has not researched whether or not its students perceive the programs and training material that the Office uses were effective in assisting the students in developing their career strategies. The University Career Services Department administrators have identified issues with regard to the Career Services Department methods of contacting students who may be interested in participating in the career development program.

The researcher developed a 13-item survey instrument, including test items utilized by the Career Services Department to gather data regarding the University graduates' perceptions of the effectiveness of the career preparation program offerings and methodology. The instrument is a questionnaire that was used as a survey. It was administered to college students or alumni who have participated in a career preparation program either at the University or another college or University in the geographic area.

**[Keywords]** career services; students' attitudes or perceptions; program effectiveness

Although many students struggle with career-related issues in college, comparatively few engage the career services offered by their academic institutions for help with their difficulties. In addition, there is little research on the factors influencing students' decisions to engage in counseling for career-related issues, making it difficult to develop programs to enhance the students' use of career counseling services (Ludwikowski, Vogel, & Armstrong, 2009, p. 408).

The problem at the University in this study was that the effectiveness of the Career Services Department had not been recorded nor analyzed. For purposes of this study, the University is referred to as MUC University. The perceptions of alumni regarding the assistance they received from the Career Services Department while in college were based on limited data collection. Therefore, the appropriateness of the methods currently utilized by the Department was unknown. Tien (2007) noted at times college students are not aware of the career services the University or college offers. Research has also shown that students who use career services on college campuses have difficulty making career decisions; however, when certain interventions are implemented career decision-making difficulties decline (Tien, 2007). Furthermore, Lara, Kline and Paulson (2011) found that "researchers (e.g., O'Brien & Heppner, 1996; Warnke et al., 1993) stressed the need for studies to investigate teaching methods and supervised career counseling practice as well as student learning outcomes regarding career counseling knowledge, competency, attitudes, and skills" (p. 429).

"Career centers may be able to better commit or allot their limited resources through careful consideration of specific services and technologies to be developed or enhanced, as well as completion of needs analysis allowing for student input" (Venable, 2010, p. 91). Currently the Career Services Department does not track the number of appointment the Career Services Office has with students nor does the Career Services Department track the number of attendees that participate in the various events

the Career Services Office organizes. The University has not provided the Career Services Department with the technology to make tracking the data possible. According to Venable (2010), one possible remedy to help the Career Services Department track these data was to outsource the tracking of the data. "Vendors offering career-related services are increasing and may be able to provide administrators with cost-effective options. Outsourcing should also be considered as part of the strategic planning process" (Venable, 2010, p. 92).

### **The Career Services Program**

There are four main functions of the MUC Career Services Department. These functions are: (a) résumé and cover letter preparation, (b) job searches, (c) interview training, and (d) networking skill development. The Career Services Department at MUC University assists both undergraduate and graduate students. The Career Services Office processes were discussed during several face-to-face interview sessions with the director of the Career Services Department. Students can become aware of the services and programs provided by the career advisors at MUC University in several different ways. Niles, Engels and Lenz (2009) state that career counselors must learn competencies that allow students access to and provide awareness of career services.

Some of the possible interactions with students occur when survey data are collected during specific courses at MUC University, during a career development course. Career advisors periodically teach the career development courses themselves. Student interactions also occur when a student seeks out the Career Services center on their own.

### **Career Development and Students' Perspectives**

There has been limited attention given to researching career development from the career decider's perspective (Amundson et al., 2010). However, Lara et al. (2011) researched career counseling from the students' perspective. The research question of the study was "what are the perceptions and experiences of master's-level counseling students regarding career counseling?" (p. 429). The students recruited for the study were actually studying career counseling in a higher education setting.

The following are examples of interview questions used in the research performed by Lara et al. (2011): (a) Discuss how relevant your career counseling course is to your reasons for becoming a counselor and your plans for using your counseling degree; (b) How does your training in the career counseling course fit with the rest of your career counseling course? (c) What are your perceptions regarding how career counseling fits within the field of counseling is communicated? The research study consisted of three rounds of interviews, and achieved theoretical saturation in the third round. "Theoretical saturation is the focal point at which data are both redundant and that no new categories emerge" (Lara et al., 2011, p. 432).

Generally, the results were positive, in that most students' interview results showed students felt the career counseling profession was useful, and most areas of the process including the faculty, program content, and frame of reference were found beneficial to the student. The frame of reference refers to the students' familiarity with career counseling and how much they knew about the field prior to their program of study (Lara et al., 2011). Neither Lara, et al. (2011) nor Amundson et al. (2010) researched the effectiveness of a career-counseling curriculum. The current study investigated the effectiveness of the MUC career services program, and thereby aimed to fill a gap in the current career development literature.

As was discussed previously, Pope (2003) advised that much of the theory and research that provides the basis of career counseling is on the subject of career decision-making. It can thereby be assumed that the focus researchers have placed on career decision-making has contributed to the lack of literature on the student's perspective on career development.

## **Method**

### ***Theoretical Framework***

The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of the Career Counseling Program at MUC

University from the perspective of the graduates. During the researcher's review of the literature, there was an indication that a gap in the literature exists. Lara et al. (2011) explained that researchers have addressed counselors' interests and attitudes towards career counseling. Although the current study is based upon the perceptions of alumni who received career counseling, it is important to note that the career counseling process has not been heavily researched (Dagley & Salter, 2004). Amundson et al. (2010) reviewed career decisions from the perspective of those individuals making the career decisions. The current study may add to the existing body of research on career development in that currently there is limited scholarly data regarding the perceptions of the effectiveness of the Career Services provided to college students. "Current career counseling practice often continues to reflect traditional matching and information giving approaches. This reliance on traditional trait-factor approach mirrors the limited attention to the career decider's perspective in the career decision-making literature" (Amundson et al., 2010, p. 337).

### ***Participants***

According to the MUC University annual academic report (2010) 43% of students were female and 57% were male undergraduate students. In the current study of the 23 ( $n = 23$ ) total participants, 73.9% were male and 26.1% were female. The MUC University academic report (2010) also states that approximately 50% of the undergraduate students are between the ages of 25–39. Within the current study 47.8% of participants were between the ages of 25–35, which is fairly consistent with data in the entire organization. Undergraduate students between the ages of 18–24 make up approximately 33% of MUC University's student population globally (MUC University Academic Report, 2010). In the current study on 17.4% of the alumni participants were between the ages of 18–24. The MUC University Academic Report (2010) states students that are 40 years or older make up approximately 17% of the MUC University student population. Those age 35 years or older in the current study consisted of 34.8 % of total participants.

The study separated the years alumni graduated into three categories 2010, 2011, and other. Alumni that graduated in 2010 accounted for 34.8% of participants, 26.1% of participants graduated in 2011, and 39.1% of alumni were in the other category. Participants in the current study reported that 14.3% made their initial contact with Career Service Department in their freshman year, 42.9% made contact in their sophomore year, 19.0% made initial contact in their junior year, and 33.3% made contact in their last or senior year. Finally, graduates also reported that at the time of the study 56.5% were employed, 34.8% were unemployed, and 8.7 percent were retired or categorized as other.

### ***Procedures***

A correlational study with a prediction research design was used to identify the relationship between the two variables—student perception and effectiveness of career preparation. Using a correlational design allowed the researcher to test the relationship of the variables based on student perceptions. Therefore, the questions within the survey instrument related to ways in which the two variables, career preparation and student perceptions, are related.

## **Results**

The purpose of this quantitative research study was to determine the perceptions of the graduates regarding the effectiveness of the methods and practices supplied by the Career Services Department. The results data are organized first with a synopsis of demographic information on the population and sample group; next the statistical tests of data collection methodology, as well as variable measurement methods are presented. The chapter concludes with survey results and a detailed delineation of answers to each research question.

According to Creswell (2008) the validity of a research instrument ensures the individual answers provided through the instrument make sense, are meaningful, and the researcher can draw conclusions related to the research questions from the answers. The researcher tested the validity of the survey questions through the review and completion of the survey questions by various professionals in higher

education and other levels of education. All of the individuals who answered the survey questions to test the validity were college graduates as the survey was designed to capture data from the college graduate's perspective. The survey responses and the information regarding the clarity of the questions received from the small group of college graduates both indicated all within the group understood the survey questions.

### Survey Results

The survey was designed by the researcher and consisted of 13 questions. The survey design was modeled after research conducted by Davis and Davis (2007). The survey questions could be answered by selecting one of six responses on a Likert scale. The survey was administered through [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com) and participants were given the following instructions. For each survey question the rating scale measured 1 as most effective and 6 as least effective. Based upon the result of 85% of the areas measured rating less than 3, it can be determined that 85% of the areas measured were perceived effective by participants. Survey Questions 2 and 12 each had rating averages of (3.52). Survey Question 2 rated virtual career fairs, and Survey Question 12 measured career assessments. A rating average equal to 3 is perceived effectiveness; a rating average higher than 3 was categorized as "somewhat effective." Thus, it can be determined both virtual career fairs and career assessments are rated closer to somewhat effective than effective. It could also be stated that only 15% of the areas measured had a rating average closer to somewhat effective. Based on the each of these areas having a rating average equal to or less than 3, it can be determined that each of these areas is perceived as effective by participants.

Therefore, the following functions or services of the Career Services Department were perceived as effective: (a) résumé preparation, (b) corporate databases, (c) electronic communication, (d) overall technology usage, (e) networking strategies, (f) services awareness, (g) counselor response, (h) campus career fairs, (i), and (j) "soft skill development." Creswell (2008) stated a sample size of  $n = 30$  is appropriate for a correlation study and  $n = 350$  is appropriate for a survey study. Due to a smaller sample size the inferences as to the general population of MUC University are difficult to measure.

Table 1

*Descriptive Statistics for Perceived Impact of MUC Career Services (95% CI)*

Item	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>	
Résumé Preparation	23	2.43	1.20	1.92	2.95
Overall Technology Effectiveness	22	2.68	1.32	2.10	3.27
Electronic Communications	23	2.74	1.60	2.05	3.43
Job Search Information	23	2.78	1.76	2.02	3.54
Interviewing Strategies	23	2.83	1.72	2.08	3.57
Networking Strategies	23	2.87	1.39	2.27	3.47
Corporate Databases	23	2.91	1.68	2.19	3.64
Campus Career Fairs	22	2.86	1.52	2.19	3.54
"Soft Skill" Development	22	2.91	1.57	2.21	3.61
Career Assessment Effectiveness	21	3.52	1.81	2.70	4.35
Virtual Career Fairs	23	3.52	1.76	2.76	4.28

*Note:* CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit. The greater value of the item's mean is the lower level of perceived effectiveness. Tabulated values indicate survey results based on total respondents ( $N =$ ).

There were five research questions for the current study. The questions were derived from examining the career development literature; interviews with the Director of Career Services at MUC University and determining what factors would both benefit the MUC University Career Services department and add to the literature on the topic. The research questions were. 1) How do graduates perceive the Career Services provided by MUC University have impacted their careers either positively or negatively? 2) How

effective were the technology methods used by the Career Services at MUC University as measured by the survey instrument and focus groups? 3) How effective were the communication methods used by the Career Services at MUC University as measured by the survey instrument and focus groups? 4) What is the relationship between student perceptions of the Career Services at MUC University and the effectiveness of the career counseling services students received? 5) What factors contributed to alumni seeking or not seeking career guidance from the MUC Career Services Department?

**Research Question 1** was explored through descriptive statistics for selected questionnaire items. Each item was rated on a scale of 1 through 6, where a response of 1 represented the most extremely positive response (e.g., extremely effective), and a response of 6 represented the most extremely negative response (e.g., ineffective).

Results were sorted from the most positive overall response to the most negative. Résumé preparation ( $M = 2.43$ ,  $SD = 1.20$ ) and overall technology effectiveness ( $M = 2.68$ ,  $SD = 1.32$ ) were rated as the most positive aspects of students' MUC Career Services experience, both falling between the categories of very useful/very effective and useful/effective. On the other hand, career assessment usefulness ( $M = 3.52$ ,  $SD = 1.81$ ) and virtual career fairs ( $M = 3.52$ ,  $SD = 1.76$ ) were provided with the lowest responses, falling between useful/relevant and somewhat useful/somewhat relevant.

The data collection method for the current project consisted of one-on-one interviews in addition to the quantitative survey data collected. A sub group of the sample  $n = 23$  was systematically selected to answer 10 interview questions. The subgroup of interviewees consisted of  $n = 6$  participants. Each of the six interviewees indicated the résumé assistance MUC Career Services provided made a positive impact on their career development. Some interviewees explained that career counselors impacted their career development through emotional support.

One interviewee stated: "Also they helped with the emotional side of things, the confidence in discussing how to talk during the interview. I was coached on what to say what not to say during the interviews as well. I networked with family and friends and was prepared when something in my career field was presented I was ready to approach it." During the one-on-one interviews the technology used with the MUC Career Services Department was discussed in 4 of the 6 interview sessions. Several interviewees expressed frustration with the lack of modernization, non-user-friendly nature, and lack of pertinent job search information on the Career Services website for job searching.

The third research question asked, "How effective were the communication methods used by the Career Services at MUC University as measured by the survey instrument and focus groups?" The independent  $t$  test requires that the dependent variable (overall perceived effectiveness) be normally distributed for the two samples (the employed and unemployed groups). Normality can be tested through a formal test, such as the Shapiro-Wilk test. For this test, a non-significant result ( $p > .05$ ) is desired. This assumption was met. For the employed group, the result was not significant:  $W(13) = 0.92$ ,  $p = .21$ . Additionally, for the unemployed group,  $W(8) = 0.85$ ,  $p = .09$ , which was also not significant. The  $t$  test was deemed acceptable to proceed as planned.

There was no statistically significant difference,  $t(19) = 1.21$ ,  $p = .24$ , in the mean overall perception of MUC's Career Services Office between those who were currently employed and those who were currently unemployed at the time of the survey. It is important to note that the currently unemployed students felt the services to be more useful ( $M = 2.34$ ,  $SD = 1.41$ ) than did the currently employed students ( $M = 3.06$ ,  $SD = 1.27$ ). However, again, this difference was not statistically significant, but demonstrated that currently employed students found the services to be useful, while the unemployed students rated services closer toward being very useful. The test did indicate a moderate amount of practical significance, as Cohen's  $d = .56$ .

**Note:** practical significance and statistical significance are two different concepts. Statistical significance refers to the differences between numbers as compared to a larger distribution; practical significance, while still calculated numerically, is more of a proxy for the ability of a statistical calculation to explain the meaning in a relationship between two variables. Cohen's (1988) definition

states that .20 is a small effect, .50 is a medium effect, and .80 is a large effect. When both groups were combined, students gave the services an overall rating a mean of 2.86, with a standard deviation of 1.30.

There were no statistical analytics that could provide data regarding Research Question 5 which asked, "What factors contributed to alumni seeking or not seeking career guidance from the MUC Career Services Department?" Each of the interviewees  $n = 6$  was asked to describe the factors that contributed to them seeking guidance from MUC Career Services. Based on responses from the other research questions the researcher was able to determine what factors deterred the alumni from seeking service whether in a specific area, or at a point in time. Several of the interviewees discussed with the researcher that career counselors informed them of the Career Services Department during career development courses. Other interviewees mentioned that word of mouth or simply being on campus and seeing the career services office prompted them to visit the office. Some interviewees cited specific family issues that motivated them to seek career guidance from MUC Career Services. The following qualitative responses were interviewees perceptions of the various components of career services offered.

Interviewee 1 stated: "My wife was pregnant during my last semester at MUC and I needed to start working. I needed help with job searches; also I needed help with résumé building. I did have a résumé but it was pretty 'shoddy.'"

Interviewee 2 expressed: "Once I knew that I would be making a career change, I decided because I was forced to start thinking about my long-term goals, I began to look online at the career services web based tool, for goal setting. I was surprised that there was more information on career development and companies than I expected."

Interviewee 3 discussed looking for non-traditional methods of job searching: "I wanted more opportunities, I figured the companies that were involved with MUC would be a good way to network. It was a good opportunity to find corporations and contacts that I could not find through traditional career searches (career builder)."

Interviewee 4 made mention of changing careers: "I was active in the Navy Reserves, I was hoping to turn the Navy job into a career, I was interested in becoming an officer, as an information specialist. I was a petty officer at the point I spoke the career services office. About halfway through the Navy career I decided against pursuing it. I was actively pursuing a job and a career and asking for advice, and I wanted to find work prior to me graduating, I was proactive in searching for my career information. I went to them".

According to the MUC University website, the University partners with various employers to assist its students and alumni find careers. The interviewee that discussed companies that were "involved" with MUC was referring to this partnership. It is clear that there are a variety of factors that motivated alumni to seek career guidance. These factors range from wanting a diverse set of career searching outlets, to career changes, to needing a venue to network with companies already in partnership with MUC University. What are not as evident are the factors that prevented alumni from seeking career guidance. According to Fouad et al. (2006), it not unusual for college students to have high levels of stress when deciding to seek career guidance and often do not use the career guidance available. There is also evidence that a major challenge for career counselors is getting college students who need career guidance to come in for assistance (Ludwikowski et al., 2009).

The alumni interviewed discussed factors that need to be improved within MUC University's Career Service program such as website content, counselor response times, and a broader range of career opportunities. However, throughout the course of the interviews no alumni mentioned times when despite a need for services that they did not seek help. The only interview that had an element of a student being deterred from seeking service was when a participant mentioned she had a bad experience at a career fair. The study participant indicated that during the career fair there seemed to be an overwhelming amount of sales positions available. The lack of opportunities in her field (human resources) caused discouragement. Despite this experience the interviewee expressed to the researcher that she would attend another career fair with the expectation of more diversity in career options.

### **Results Summary**

Major highlights or themes found within the data were: (a) 85% of the career services measured were perceived effective, (b) only 15% of the career services measured had a somewhat effective rating average, (c) every interviewee described résumé preparation as impactful or effective, (d) nearly 75% of interviewees felt the career service website could be improved, and (e) unemployed alumni perceived the career services more useful than employed alumni. It is important to note the somewhat effective rating was not the highest level of ineffectiveness.

### **Discussion**

The survey results reported that the majority of the career services analyzed in this study were perceived to be effective. Twelve areas of the Career Services Department were covered within this analysis. Some areas researched dealt with the career services specifically, and others with how the counselors communicated with students. Of the career services studied, 85% were effective from the alumni's perspective. Only 15% of the career services had a rating average of somewhat effective. The survey also indicated that two participants skipped the question asking the level of perceived relevance of the career assessments.

During the one-on-one interviews, the overall perceptions of participants projected a general sense that alumni felt the Career Services Department methods were effective. Some participants discussed the emotional aspect of how their career counseling process developed. Specifically one interviewee described the career counselor motivating him and giving him the confidence needed to approach the job search process and potential employers. This same interviewee also stated simply being on campus, and visiting the Career Services office in person aided in him developing the confidence he described.

Generally, graduates' perceptions regarding how the Career Services at MUC impacted them were expressed as positive throughout the data in the current project. The survey data suggested that graduates believed the various components of the Career Services program were beneficial. More specifically, the survey data reported that of the 11 career services areas reviewed ( $M = 2.43$ ,  $SD = 1.20$ ), résumé preparation had the lowest mean. As discussed previously each of the interviewees ( $n = 6$ ) expressed a high level of satisfaction with the résumé assistance provided.

No interviewees mentioned the social networking or text messages that MUC Career Services utilizes. The survey questions did not ask participants to rate the effectiveness of individual forms of technologies. However the perceived overall technology effectiveness ( $M = 2.68$ ,  $SD = 1.32$ ) was rated in the effective range. This result is somewhat contradictory to the information expressed by the group of interviewees ( $n = 6$ ). Although the entire group of interviewees did not express concerns over the website, those individuals that stated this aspect of the technology provided by the Career Services Department could be improved were adamant. Both the soft skill development ( $M = 2.91$ ,  $SD = 1.57$ ) and timeliness of personnel response ( $M = 2.65$ ,  $SD = 1.53$ ) statistical data suggest the graduates perceived this area as effective. However one interviewee stated, "the turnaround time for them to respond took forever, at times I would send an email and it took 2 weeks to a month for them to respond."

Another interviewee said, "Their career office did send emails but having a more direct contact would have improved my experience, even if it was only periodical contact. It would have been more impactful to follow up on the emails I received once I got them." The survey data reflect that 85% of the career services measured were perceived effective. In order to best provide statistical analysis, the unemployed ( $M = 2.34$ ,  $SD = 1.41$ ) and employed groups ( $M = 3.06$ ,  $SD = 1.27$ ) were used to compare results between groups and conduct an inferential statistical test. Although statistical significance was not found, the data reflecting participants perceiving 85% of the career services as effective suggest there is a strong relationship between the career counseling and perceived effectiveness. While this response is positive the exceptions in the data further point to the need for: one on one counseling, matching of cultural aspects between counselors and students, more attention to variety of career choices.

### **Practical Implications**

The practical implications of the research results for the MUC University career counselors as well as

within other organizations, deal with the specific functions and practice of career counseling. The eleven areas within the Career Services Department that were reviewed were as follows: (a) résumé preparation, (b) corporate databases, (c) electronic communication, (d) overall technology usage, (e) networking strategies, (f) services awareness, (g) counselor response, (h) campus career fairs, (i) “soft skills,” (j) virtual career fairs, and (k) career assessments.

Virtual career fairs and career assessment were the only two career services functions that were rated closer to somewhat effective than to effective. Both of these services were provided as online components of career services, perhaps the lack of direct contact with career counselors impacted the level of perceived effectiveness. Perhaps online career services are generally not as effective as the personal one to one conversations concerning career development. Additional research must be conducted in order to interpret why alumni perceived certain functions as effective and vice versa.

The interviewee that expressed gratitude for his career counselor who made an emotional connection provided information consistent with the research of Schultheiss (2007). Traditionally career counseling consisted of a series of steps including personal inquiry and rational decision-making. However, an emergence of ideas in career counseling is occurring, where career counselors are more aware of the levels of emotion and decision complexity (Schultheiss, 2007). The same interviewee, who explained that the career counseling process was motivating and emotionally positive, also said his wife was pregnant. Duffy and Dik (2009) posit that there are often external factors such as need, family issues, or service motivations that greatly impact career choices. The implication within the context of this individual student is that career counselors must be aware of external and emotional topics expressed by the student.

Based on the researcher’s extensive search for scholarly peer-reviewed articles, books, and other materials within the career development literature, the current study is unique in that it provides a quantitative analysis of college graduates’ perceived effectiveness of a Career Services Department. It is the researcher’s assessment that the current project extends current research related to the topic of investigating the attitudes and perceptions of college students with regard to career development as with each of the following studies—Amundson et al., 2006; Davis and Davis (2007); Lara et al., 2011; Ludwikowski et al., 2009; Reddan and Rachule (2012); and Sibson (2011).

### **Limitations of Study**

The researcher requested that the population be expanded to include the 2012 graduates. The Director of Career Services was currently conducting survey tests with 2012 target population and denied the request. Due to the factors involved in relation to the sample size, it is not known how including the 2012 graduates would have impacted the study. If the 2012 graduates were included in the study, it is more likely responses would have increased and more detailed responses would have been presented.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

There is a need to address the reasons why individuals do not seek career counseling (Ludwikowski et al., 2009). The literature within the career-counseling topic has not adequately addressed career decision concerns from the decider’s perspective (Amundson et al., 2006). More specifically, the scholarly literature on the topic of the effectiveness of University Career Services Centers suggests students believe there is a lack of career support (Ayranci & Oge, 2011). The current research study was designed to provide data regarding the effectiveness of services and programs on the MUC University campus from the alumni’s perspective.

Both Ludwikowski et al. (2009) and Fouad et al. (2006) cite one major challenge in the career guidance profession is that career counselors often struggle with getting college students who need the career assistance to come into the career guidance office. “Little is known about what prevents the majority of individuals who are experiencing career problems from pursuing treatment. Some factors, such as perceptions of stigma have been shown to be an important barrier to seeking help for personal counseling” (Ludwikowski et al., 2009, p. 408). Future researchers seeking information on the effectiveness of career centers or factors that prevent college students from seeking guidance would be investigating an area with which career-counseling scholars and practitioners have difficulty.

Ludwikowski et al. (2009) also explains that despite the need to identify factors that develop attitudes toward seeking career guidance “current research on career-related issues has largely focused on individuals who have already made the decision to seek counseling” (p. 408).

Another practical implication of the interviewee that stated that lack of diversity within MUC Career Services affected his experience is that MUC’s Career Services Department may not be as sensitive to multicultural competencies as necessary. As was previously discussed Arthur and McMahon (2005) noted several cultural variables that are essential to the career counseling process including: age, gender, race and ability. According to Vespia et al. (2010), the authors state that “counseling that ignores the cultural context of clients, which may include inappropriate assessment, risk being irrelevant, or worse, harmful to clients” (p.55).

Therefore, the researcher would recommend future researchers investigate whether students or alumni find value in being matched with career counselors with similar backgrounds. The extent of the backgrounds matching could be determined by the career-counseling client and could include work experience, age, ethnicity, and gender of the career counselor that is matched with a client. It should be noted that there are diversity challenges that managers within career centers would need to be aware of in that hiring a diverse staff would mean a hiring decision may include a demographic component.

A major factor in the means of gaining an understanding of the level of effectiveness within career development is missing. This factor is student or client perception. How does a career services office determine the effectiveness of the level of service it provides without asking the individual to which the service is provided? This principle has been demonstrated various business and political disciplines. Within these sectors, in order for the group or organization to determine how the organization is performing in certain areas. Often times a survey is administered to those served. Throughout the current study it has demonstrated that this concept has been supported through empirical evidence, however additional research in this area is required to better understand the phenomena.

### References

- Amundson, N. (2006). Challenges for career interventions in changing contexts. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, 6, 3–14. doi:10.1007/s10775-006-0002-4
- Amundson, N. E., Borgen, W. A., Iaquina, M., Butterfield, L. D., & Koert, E. (2010). Career decisions from the deciders’ perspective. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 58(4), 336–351.
- Arthur, N., & McMahon, M. (2005). Multicultural career counseling: Theoretical applications of the systems theory framework. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 53(3), 208–222.
- Aryanci, E., & Oge, E. (2011). A study of the relationship between student’s views towards a career management class and their future careers. *International Business Research*, 4(1), 198–207.
- Creswell, J. W. (2008). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Dagley, J. C., & Salter, S. K. (2004). Practice and research in career counseling and development- 2003. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 53(2), 98–156.
- Davis, J. L., & Davis, H. (2007). Perceptions of career and technology and training and development students regarding basic personal computer knowledge and skills. *College Student Journal*, 41(1), 69–78.
- Duffy, R. D., & Dik, B. J. (2009). Beyond the self: External Influences in the career decisions development process. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 58(1), 29–43.
- Fouad, N. A., Chen, Y., Guillen, A., Henry, C., Kantamneni, N., Priester, P. E., Terry, S. (2007). Role induction in career counseling. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 56(1), 19–33.
- Lara, T. M., Kline, W. B., & Paulson, D. (2011). Attitudes regarding career counseling: Perceptions and experiences of counselors-in-training. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 59(5), 428–440.
- Ludwikowski, W. M. A., Vogel, D., & Armstrong, P. I. (2009). Attitudes toward career counseling: the role of public and self-stigma. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 56(3), 408–416. doi:10.1037/a0016180
- Niles, S. G., Engels, D., & Lenz, J. (2009). Training career practitioners. *The Career Development*

- Quarterly*, 57(4), 358–365.
- Pope, M. (2003). Career counseling in the twenty-first century: Beyond cultural encapsulation. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 52(1), 54–60.
- Reddan, G., & Rauchle, M. (2012). Student perceptions of the value of career development learning to a work- integrated learning course in exercise science. *Australian Journal of Career Development*, 21(1), 38–48.
- Sibson, R. (2011). Career choice perceptions of undergraduate sport and recreation management students: An Australian case study. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism*, 10(2), 50–60. doi:10.3794/johlste.102.371.
- Schultheiss, D. E. P. (2007). The emergence of a relational cultural paradigm for vocational psychology. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, 7, 191–201. doi:10.1007/s10775-007-9123-7.
- Tien, H-L. S. (2007). Practice and research in career counseling and development. *Career Development Quarterly*, 56(2), 98–140.
- Venable, M. A. (2010). Using technology to deliver career development services: supporting today's students in higher education. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 59(1), 87–96.
- Vespia, K. M., Fitzpatrick, M. E., Fouad, N. A., Kantamneni, N., & Chen, Y. L. (2010). Multicultural career counseling: A national survey of competencies and practices. *Career Development Quarterly*, 54–71.
- Warnke, M. A., Kim, J., Kocltzow-Milster, D., Terrell, S., Dauser, P. J., Howie, J., & Thiel, M. J. (1993). Career counseling practicum; Transformations in conceptualization career issues. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 42, 180–185.