

EXTERNAL CONFERENCE

FINAL REPORT

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1. TITLE OF CONFERENCE

NAGCAS Conference 2010: Through the Looking Glass: career development in the 21st century

2. CONFERENCE ORGANISER

National Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (NAGCAS)

3. DATE OF CONFERENCE

28 November to 1 December 2010, Adelaide

4. MAIN CONFERENCE THEMES

The theme for this year's conference "Through the Looking Glass" focused on the roles of career development professionals as roles of constant change and evolution. Delegates were asked to reflect on the integration of education, career and the individual.

5. CONFERENCE OUTCOMES (BRIEF DESCRIPTION MAX 100 WORDS)

The conference provided vital information and networking opportunities for the Careers Connect Service to promote growth within the service for Sydney Institute and the success of the Service for 2011.

Over the three days, delegates were given the opportunity to attend 6 sessions and workshops (each session provided 5 options) as well as keynote addresses presented by NAGCAS members and industry experts. The optional sessions focused on experiences within the Careers Services industry and provided a program which allowed delegates to hear about research being undertaken, showcased current best practice via case studies and provided the opportunity to exchange ideas and collaborate with other delegates in workshop settings.

6. POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS AND/OR BENEFITS TO INSTITUTE/SECTION/STAFF

The conference allowed me the opportunity to hear about all kinds of activities currently being undertaken by Careers Services in the Higher Education. There was a strong focus on lifelong learning and the necessity for career education, especially careers management skills, i.e., providing the students with the skills to identify the right job for them and create a plan at the beginning of their studies rather than at the end. This may be a greater issue amongst universities particularly in the arts and humanities faculty areas; however the theory can certainly be applied to TAFE students. There was a strong argument to develop a "self awareness" amongst students – not just through resume writing and other workshop activities but by developing the skills needed to identify, develop and articulate their employability skills.

Some ideas discussed during the conference that may benefit Sydney Institute students include:

- Developing existing workshops targeting groups such as international students, students with disabilities and students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Covering topics such as expectations of the Australian workplace; business etiquette; workplace culture; rights and responsibilities and networking skills. Many services are creating targeted workshops and groups with the aim of developing more specific skills to be better prepared for a particular industry. These outcomes were achieved by working more closely with teaching faculties.
- Increasing student awareness of online resume and job search resources provided by the careers service whilst assisting students to develop their resume writing skills via a resume writing competition.
- Creating opportunities for students to gain casual, part-time and work experience on campus as an alternative to faculties utilising the services of temp agencies. Creating a safe flexible work environment for students to gain skills prior to entering full time employment.
- The use of virtual technologies, particularly 3D virtual environments to reproduce authentic experiences in the workforce, including communication, teamwork and problem solving skills was also discussed and it is anticipated that the use of Web 2.0 and 3DVE technologies will generate significant employability skills awareness and articulation in higher education students more and more in the future.

One of the sessions attended discussed implications of the 2009 Fair Work Act on Careers Services, Careers Connect staff traditionally advises students to gain as much experience as possible, whether paid or unpaid. However the 2009 Fair Work Act prevents students from undertaking unpaid work unless it is a course requirement or with a not-for-profit organisation. This may impact on the types of opportunities we advertise to students and we may need to be mindful when unpaid work experience is not included in the course/training package.

7. CONFERENCE RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR DISTRIBUTION (PAPERS, CD, WEB LINKS ETC)

<http://www.nagcas.org.au/>

Conference program and speakers notes are available at:

<http://www.alloccasionsgroup.com/nagcas-2010-conference-program-social-program>

Conference program, speaker notes, along with promotional material will be filed in the Careers Connect Office for future reference.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS/FURTHER ACTION

- NAGCAS 2011 Continued attendance at this conference in addition to NAGCAS membership would benefit not only the Careers Connect service but also the Counselling Unit staff. More information about NAGCAS is available at <http://www.nagcas.org.au/>
- Careers Connect investigate opportunities to work with the equity and counselling units to better inform students with disabilities.
- Careers Connect to investigate the possibility of offering students workshops or activities to develop their networking skills.

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