Penn Career Services was founded in 1926 and is the centralized career resource center for Penn undergraduate students, graduate and professional students in Annenberg School for Communication, Arts and Sciences, Graduate School of Education, Nursing, Penn Carey Law (Master in Law students only), Perelman School of Medicine (master’s and PhD), School of Engineering and Applied Science, Social Policy and Practice, Weitzman School of Design, and Wharton School doctoral students, post-doctoral fellows, and alumni. In total, the office serves approximately 21,000 current students and post-docs annually, in addition to alumni.
STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

During the 2018-2019 academic year, Penn Career Services came under new leadership and opted to conduct a thorough review of current services and operations. As part of this review, three well-respected and prominent career services practitioners were invited to Penn to conduct a multi-day external review. The reviewers met with nearly 100 individuals including faculty, staff, students and employers to gain a comprehensive view of the Career Services office and its place in the larger Penn community. As a follow-up to the external review, the Career Services staff met several times collectively to discuss the committee’s recommendations, held several focus groups with students during Spring 2019, and participated in a full-day strategic planning retreat led by an outside facilitator to discuss future steps and goals. This Strategic Plan is an outcome of these efforts.

STRENGTHS

- Career Services staff members are highly committed, well-versed in providing career-related resources, innovative and eager to stay abreast of new technologies and trends.
- The office is collaborative and has built strong relationships with many different offices and schools throughout Penn.
- Penn students are professional, extremely intelligent, and have diverse academic backgrounds and career interests making them highly sought after by both employers and graduate/professional schools.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Career Services has traditionally devoted much of its focus to students in the later years of their academic programs; there exists an opportunity to improve visibility and increase career exploration activities with students earlier during their time at Penn.
- The highly visible campus presence of employers in the finance, consulting and technology industries has resulted in a perception by some students that Penn Career Services is only helpful to students interested in these fields. An opportunity exists to better communicate the many ways that the office can help ALL students, regardless of field.
- Recruiting methodologies are changing rapidly with employers physically visiting college campuses less frequently. Career Services must continue to explore innovative ways to capitalize on technology to connect Penn students with a broad range of employers and graduate programs.
The Six Pillars of the Plan

1. Develop a Clear Brand and Comprehensive Communication Strategy
2. Strengthen Collaborations with Campus Partners
3. Create Culture of Early Career Engagement and Exploration to Help Students Achieve Success
4. Expand Employer, Alumni and Parent Engagement to Facilitate Greater Career Exploration and Connections
5. Provide Customized and Inclusive Service to All Penn Students
6. Capitalize on Operational and Revenue Opportunities
PILLAR ONE:
DEVELOP A CLEAR BRAND AND COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

GOALS

1. Develop a brand that conveys the following elements:
   - Reinforces that staff have expertise across a broad range of industries, job functions, and graduate and professional programs and can help students at all degree levels interested in all career options
   - Teaches life-long career management skills and empowers students to self-manage their careers
   - Communicates that there are many different ways to connect with employers on and off campus
   - Incorporates a Career Services "tag line"

2. Develop brand guidelines to provide more uniformity across marketing materials, but allow for flexibility
   - Develop branded but flexible templates and style guides for newsletters, PowerPoints, and other communication tools so messages are clearly recognizable as being from Penn Career Services

3. Develop a user-friendly website which allows for a high degree of personalization
   - Design new website that targets specific student populations (i.e. first-gen and international students), topic areas (i.e. media, journalism & entertainment)
   - Incorporate visualization tools to allow for interactive exploration of survey data
   - Include student narratives to showcase the many career paths available to Penn students

4. Include career wellness in brand as an important part of overall wellness
   - Incorporate career wellness in all office initiatives and collaborate with Penn Wellness Partners
   - Review office physical space to ensure supportive and welcoming environment

5. Utilize Career Services’ extensive data to tell the Penn Story
   - Ensure that the extensive data collected for surveys is easily accessible for review through interactive data available on website
   - Develop student narratives annually for use in marketing materials, development materials, and website

6. Continue to strengthen and expand digital and social media efforts
   - Form internal social media committee to ensure that engaging and relevant content is regularly posted on social media platforms including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and to keep abreast of social media trends

7. Encourage staff to embrace opportunities to highlight their expertise
   - Encourage staff to share their expertise by presenting at professional conferences and meetings and contributing to professional publications; track these contributions annually and take on leadership roles in professional organizations to contribute to the broader career development field
GOALS

1. Develop a staff liaison model to strengthen connections and relationships across campus and improve communication channels
   - Develop list of high priority campus partners and assign staff members to liaison roles for regular communication and periodic meetings
   - Strive for increase of workshops and programs to be co-sponsored with other offices and groups

2. Ensure that campus partners are familiar with all Career Services resources available to their students
   - Invite campus partners including faculty to annual open house and/or training event to improve familiarity with services available to students
   - Develop a "Campus Career Champions" program to acknowledge and recognize campus partners who contribute to the career development of Penn students in meaningful ways

3. Invite selected campus partners to submit regular industry or affinity group focused content for the website
   - Provide training and access to the new website to encourage collaboration

PILLAR TWO: STRENGTHEN COLLABORATIONS WITH CAMPUS PARTNERS
GOALS

1. Establish and implement a Peer Career Advisor program to accommodate students’ expressed desire to receive career guidance from peers and help broaden office’s ability to connect with students in a variety of settings
   - Recruit and train students for Peer Career Advisor Program to launch in Fall 2019
   - Develop tracking and assessment tools for Peer Career Advisor Program to help build and strengthen over time

2. Capitalize on Penn’s new two-year residential requirement by increasing number of workshops and other events held in residence halls
   - Connect with Residential Life staff to explore opportunities for collaboration
   - Develop standardized, easy to present workshops for Peer Career Advisors to present in residence halls

3. Make available and encourage use of self-service platforms that allow for independent early career exploration from students at all academic levels
   - Develop marketing materials to familiarize students with available resources
   - Track student usage of platforms including Handshake, CareerExplorer, a redesigned and interactive website, and career information resources such as Vault to determine actual usage
   - Introduce new online educational resources created by Career Services and made available on Canvas or similar platforms and track usage over time

4. Create interactive, dynamic programming providing the opportunity for students to actively participate in career developing activities, leveraging peer learning opportunities with Career Services staff serving as guides
   - Explore and implement possible models such as cohort programming, design thinking and flipped classroom approaches to content
   - Develop outcomes-focused, interactive skill labs to reinforce/develop career competencies among students

5. Encourage early career engagement by meeting students where they are, physically and virtually (for example, holding walk-ins in academic buildings, creating and maintaining social media accounts, etc.)
EXPAND EMPLOYER, ALUMNI AND PARENT ENGAGEMENT TO FACILITATE GREATER CAREER EXPLORATION AND CONNECTIONS

GOALS

1. Develop Career Advisor industry liaison model to better target employers and develop career expertise
   - Align advisors with industries for outreach to employers and career community coverage
   - Set annual targets for outreach for various industries for each advisor

2. Conduct outreach to alumni and parents to strengthen existing and build new networks across a broad range of industries to increase mentorship/networking experiences and the number of internship and job opportunities available to our students
   - Ensure regular communication with the Office of Parent Outreach and Development/Penn Parents and the Development & Alumni Relations Office
   - Develop programming for alumni to return to campus during Homecoming Weekend and Alumni Weekend to capitalize on alumni networks
   - Plan programming for Family Weekend engaging Penn parents with ways that they can connect with Penn students for mentoring (externship) opportunities and to hire for internship or post-graduate employment

3. Develop and implement a more robust system for tracking employer outreach and engagement
   - Explore tools to track employer engagement

4. Enhance current communication strategies within our branding guidelines to conduct outreach to employers
   - Develop enhanced, well-designed online and electronic marketing pieces outlining how employers can connect with Penn students; including a biannual newsletter

5. Develop a streamlined and cohesive employer partnership/sponsorship program to facilitate relationships and employer-driven revenue to support office operations
   - Complete market research on best practices among peer institutions

6. Explore and implement viable new technologies to connect students with employers in new and innovative ways
   - Possible technologies might include virtual employer panels or virtual career fairs

PILLAR FOUR:
PILLAR FIVE: PROVIDE CUSTOMIZED AND INCLUSIVE SERVICE TO ALL PENN STUDENTS

GOALS

1. Conduct an analysis of student usage to determine if there are differences in how specific student populations engage with Penn Career Services
   - Utilize results to determine if additional outreach is needed to specific student populations
   - Collaborate with relevant campus partners to extend reach to affinity groups

2. Track first-destination outcomes for specific student populations to better understand trends in post-graduate outcomes
   - Of particular interest are outcomes for first generation students and international students in line with Penn Compact 2020

3. Host events and walk-ins in locations outside of Career Services and in collaboration with campus partners (schools, academic departments, affinity groups, etc.) to increase accessibility to and familiarity with the Career Services office

4. Re-envision specialized community pages on website to more effectively provide targeted information to specific populations
   - Community pages should include those for athletes, DACA and Undocumented Students, First Generation and Low Income Students, LGBTQ+ Students, Online Students, Students of Color, Students with Disabilities, and Veterans

5. Provide ongoing staff training to ensure that staff are well-prepared to work with a diverse student body and understand specific concerns of individual students (i.e.: international students, first-generation students, LGBT students, etc.)
   - Schedule at least one staff training per year on related topic(s) and encourage and celebrate staff participation in programs such as I CARE training and the SALT Conference
   - Hold at least one focus group per year with a specific student population to gather feedback to inform efforts
PILLAR SIX: CAPITALIZE ON OPERATIONAL AND REVENUE OPPORTUNITIES

1. Explore fundraising opportunities for the Summer Funding Program for students pursuing unpaid or low-paid internship or research positions
   - Create marketing materials (blog posts, social media, flyers, student success stories, etc.) to showcase student experiences made available through these funds to highlight their impact

2. Continue to explore adding new staff positions as funding allows
   - As recommended by the comprehensive review process, positions deemed to have the strongest need/impact are an additional career advisor to serve graduate students, an employer development/employer events coordinator, and a marketing/communications professional

3. Ensure office facilities are welcoming and highly functional
   - If funding allows, enlarge and renovate the Career Services conference room to accommodate additional students for workshops, update technology to more easily allow video connections for programs with alumni and employers not physically able to visit campus, and a room configuration that more easily fosters interactive and collaborative engagement
   - Upgrade furniture in Career Services library to better accommodate students waiting to meet with Peer Career Advisors