



University Students' Council Standing Policy

Student Employment	SP 12.1(II)
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Legislative History
Approved by Council in February 2018
To be reviewed by Council in its 2020 - 2021 sitting
Approved by Council in March 2021 (tentative)
To be reviewed by Council in its 2024- 2025 sitting

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Land Acknowledgment

Western University is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lunaapeewak and Attawandaron peoples, who have longstanding relationships to the land and region of southwestern Ontario and the City of London. The local First Nation communities of this area include Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, and Munsee Delaware Nation. In the region, there are eleven First Nation communities and a growing Indigenous urban population. Western University values the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all of the Original peoples of Turtle Island (North America).

Key Terms

Work Integrated Learning: Work Integrated Learning (WIL) provides students with meaningful opportunities to apply their academic knowledge to practical experiences in the workplaces. WIL includes internships, coops, and practicums, that industry-specific and transferable skills, including communication, problem solving, teamwork, and leadership¹.

Experiential Learning: Experiential Learning (EL) activities, such as internships, co-op's, community engaged learning and clinical placements, provide students opportunities to 'learn while doing.' Experiential Learning asks students to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world environments. These opportunities require students to step outside the classroom and consider how community, industry and/or field experience might influence their academic learning and personal development.

Career-Integrated Learning: Career-Integrated Learning (CIL) is in-class learning focused on encouraging students to articulate the competencies which they gain through their university curriculum, which will aid them in future careers or further graduate studies². Career-Integrated Learning is based on the idea that students should be taught why what they are learning (competencies) matters for their careers. Students develop those competencies through their experiences in the classroom. By identifying and articulating the broader skills and attributes acquired through completion of a course, students can readily make a clear connection to the workplace.

Employment Services: This paper uses the term "Employment Services" to refer to all services and organizations on campus that are meant to help students find employment. This includes, but is not limited to the Student Success Centre, Faculty-specific employment services, affiliate career advisors, and all other groups designated to help students with employment.

¹ "Work Integrated Learning (WIL): Internships, Co-op, Practicum." HireWesternU. Accessed February 13, 2018. http://hirewesternu.ca/hire_western_talent/work_integrated_learning_wil/index.html.

² Joy, Rhonda et al. "Meeting the Challenge of Work and Life Using a Career Integrated Learning Approach" *Proceedings of the Atlantic Universities' Teaching Showcase 19* (2015). Pg 76-79.

Introduction and Overview

Student employment is an incredibly important issue, but also very complex. One of the primary motives students have for pursuing post-secondary education is for the end result of obtaining employment. For the USC, student employment should be a top priority because of the benefits it adds to the lives of students. Student employment is particularly important to students because:

- Employment income helps pay for immediate needs and offset the expensive cost of education (63% of post-secondary students report that income from employment is the most common source of funding for their education)³.
- A job enhances the professional and personal development of the student.
- Employment expands students' professional networks.
- Holding employment as a student can increase job prospects for graduating individuals.

The USC's mission statement is to "enhance the educational experience and quality of life for all undergraduates at Western University."⁴ The relation of student employment with the USC's mission statement is two-fold: (1) enhanced quality of life and (2) enhanced educational experience.

Quality of life is described as "It observes life satisfaction, including everything from physical health, family, education, employment, wealth, religious beliefs, finance and the environment."⁵ Being able to pay for necessities, having job security, and increasing the prospects for a more prosperous future are all elements of quality of life that this paper aims to tackle.

The USC's commitment to providing the best educational experience for students aligns directly with the spirit of this paper. By focusing on student employment the USC is able to give students access to opportunities that expand their personal and professional skills, thereby, enhancing their educational experience.

Furthermore, work-integrated learning is a type of employment that enhances both the quality of life and education. Having these opportunities allows students to increase their competitive edge in today's global economy.

³ Marshall, Katherine. "Employment patterns of Post-Secondary students." Statistics Canada. September 29, 2010. Accessed November 26, 2017. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75-001-x/2010109/article/11341-eng.htm>.

⁴ "Mission Statement." About Us. August 9, 2014. Accessed February 13, 2018. <http://westernusc.org/blog/2014/10/09/about-us/>.

⁵ "Quality Of Life: Everyone Wants It, But What Is It?" IESE Insight. September 4, 2013. Accessed December 13, 2017. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/iese/2013/09/04/quality-of-life-everyone-wants-it-but-what-is-it/#13462c15635d>.

Recommendations

The University Students' Council proposes the following recommendations in an effort to improve the student experience in regards to employment for undergraduate students at Western University:

Recommendation: Western should embed self-reflection and self-assessment into the approximately 2000 annual Work-Study opportunities, expanding Work-Integrated Learning to all Work Study positions.

Recommendation: Western should develop paid internships for faculties that do not currently have paid Work-Integrated Learning Opportunities and expand the current paid internship programs that currently exist in some faculties.

Recommendation: Alternative spring break should be expanded to include opportunities during the fall reading week.

Recommendation: Western should implement Career-Integrated Learning Initiatives on Campus across all faculties⁶.

Recommendation: The Student Success Centre should work with faculty to identify opportunities for CIL within courses.

Recommendation: Western should increase the capacity of Student Success Centre career counsellors and advisors in order to lower wait times and match expected increases in demand.

Recommendation: Existing programing, resources, and services should be better promoted through a variety of channels to reach underserved students.

Recommendation: Different Employment Services on campus like Propel, The Student Success Centre, and Affiliate and Faculty-specific career services should cross-promote opportunities.

Recommendation: Western should create a centralized catalogue of career resources and services to clarify when and how a students could use each service.

Recommendation: Western should capitalize upon external programs like the Career Readiness Fund to enhance the opportunities for students.

Recommendation: Western should study and address barriers faced by employers looking to hire Western students.

Recommendation: Western's Employment Services should collaborate to pursue partnerships with community organizations including local businesses and not-for profit organizations.

Recommendation: The Ontario government should amend the Employment Standards Act to remove the exemption of post-secondary programs under internships.

⁶ Teja, Inam, and Catherine Dunne. USC Employment & Affordability Survey. February 11, 2018. Raw data. University Students' Council, London.

Experiential Learning at Western

Principle: Alternative spring break provides a valuable experiential opportunity to students.

Principle: Short term Experiential Learning opportunities are “Effective and Practical” (Gaia 2015).

Principle: Students from all faculties should have access to Work Integrated Learning Opportunities.

Principle: All work-study opportunities should include reflection and assessment to maximize student learning.

Concern: There were no Experiential Learning opportunities offered to students during the fall reading week in 2017.

Concern: Not all of Western’s Work-Study opportunities meet the criteria of Work Integrated Learning as they do not include reflection and self-assessment.

Concern: Students have been raising concerns about the lack of paid internships, co-ops and practicums available, particularly students in Arts faculties.

Recommendation: Western should embed self-reflection and self-assessment into the Work Study opportunities available, expanding Work-Integrated Learning to all work study positions.

Recommendation: Western should develop paid internships for faculties that do not currently have paid Work Integrated Learning Opportunities and expand the current paid internship programs that currently exist in some faculties.

Recommendation: Alternative spring break should be expanded to include opportunities during the fall reading weeks.

Broadly defined experiential learning means to learn from the experience of doing. Experiential learning opportunities such as internships, co-ops, community engaged learning and job shadowing act as a complement to classroom learning. These opportunities are valuable as they encourage students to apply theoretical knowledge to real world environments. By stepping outside of the traditional classroom students learn how the community, industry and/or field experience influences their academic and personal development⁷. Further, experiential education encourages students to reflect on their experience and how it helped in developing new competencies, attitudes and ways of thinking⁸.

The Alternative Spring Break (ASB) program is one of the community engaged learning programs available to students at Western. It gives students the opportunity to engage in meaningful community based service while supporting their academic learning and personal development⁹. This program is a great example of how students can engage with experiential learning opportunities that will complement their degrees.

Prior to the 2017 Western Senate’s decision to approve a full fall reading week only two study days were provided

⁷ "Experiential Learning." Student Success Centre. Accessed February 9, 2018. <http://www.success.uwo.ca/experience/>.

⁸ McMaster. Students Union. Student Employment and Experiential Education. By Alex Wilson et al. November 2017. <https://www.msumcmaster.ca/advocacy/policies>.

⁹ "Alternative Spring Break." Alternative Spring Break. Accessed February 9, 2018. <http://asb.uwo.ca/about/index.html>.

to students¹⁰. If fall reading week is approved past its two-year pilot period, experiential learning programming such as ASB should be provided during this week.

The work study program at Western offers students an opportunity to work part-time on campus in conjunction to their studies. The focus of this program is to alleviate financial burdens and help students gain skills and experiences that will help them in their life, studies and future workplaces. There are different work study program options available at Western: fall/winter, summer, international students and graduate students¹¹. While Western has roughly 2000 annual Work Study opportunities not all of them have a Work Integrated Learning framework. It is important to note that Work Study opportunities aim to enrich one's education and in order to do so the work must be meaningful. By including self-reflection and assessment components to all Work Study opportunities it offers students to critically reflect on what they have learnt through their experience.

Self reflection and assessment are beneficial as they allow students to see how theory relates to real life and gain insight about themselves and their experiences¹². Further, it helps in the recognition of newly developed skills and critical thought. Through the process of reflection students are able to assess what they learnt and apply it to other situations in their lives¹³. In order for students to benefit from any experiential experience, including a job, it is essential to focus on learning not simply the task. This can be done by having specific learning outcomes, briefing sessions and self reflection and assessment tools.

Out of 332 respondents 66.6% of students indicated that they rely on summer earnings to pay for post-secondary education¹⁴. Further, meaningful work experience should be accessible to all students regardless of faculty. Students have been raising concerns about the lack of paid internships, co-ops and practicums available, particularly students in Arts faculties. 49% of students stated that their current employment does not reflect their desired field of work as there aren't opportunities available to them¹⁵. With the costs of tuition, textbooks and rent being a burden on students as well as the current job market being highly competitive it is crucial that all students have access to opportunities that will not only help financially but build on their personal and professional development to help give Western students a competitive edge.

¹⁰ Mayne, Paul. "Senate OK's Fall Reading Week." Western News. February 21, 2017. Accessed February 13, 2018.

<http://news.westernu.ca/2017/02/senate-debate-fall-reading-week/>.

¹¹ "Work Study." Work Study. Accessed February 10, 2018. http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/student_finances/work_study.html.

¹² McMaster. Students Union. Student Employment and Experiential Education. By Alex Wilson et al. November 2017.

<https://www.msumcmaster.ca/advocacy/policies>.

¹³ McMaster. Students Union. Student Employment and Experiential Education. By Alex Wilson et al. November 2017.

<https://www.msumcmaster.ca/advocacy/policies>.

¹⁴ Teja, Inam, and Catherine Dunne. USC Employment & Affordability Survey. February 11, 2018. Raw data. University Students' Council, London.

¹⁵ Ibid

Career-Integrated Learning

Principle: Academics and career readiness are not mutually exclusive learning outcomes.

Principle: Students should learn skills that prepare them for their careers in the classroom.

Principle: Bringing career resources into the classroom is one of the best ways to engage students.

Principle: University classes should prepare students for their careers¹⁶.

Concern: Currently connections between course learnings and career applicability are not made clear to students.

Concern: There is currently no broad framework for integrating career readiness into a classroom setting.

Recommendation: Western Should implement Career Integrated Learning Initiatives on Campus across all faculties.

Recommendation: The Student Success Centre should work with faculty to identify opportunities for CIL within courses.

Career Integrated Learning is focused on encouraging students to articulate the competencies which they gain through their university curriculum that will help them ease their transition to the world of work or further graduate studies¹⁷. Career Integrated Learning is based on the idea that students should be taught why what they are learning (competencies) matters for their careers. Students develop those competencies through their experiences in the classroom, work based programs and community involvement. By identifying and articulating the broader skills and attributes acquired through completion of a degree, students can readily make a clear connection to the workplace. The concept of identifying competencies is not new, especially for students who participate in experiential learning activities. What is innovative about this Career Integrated Learning is translating the process to classroom-based courses¹⁸. Western can look to the implementation of Career Integrated Learning at Memorial University for an implementation model. Without changing any aspect of curricula, faculty and career services at Memorial University identified the career competencies that existed in syllabi. These competencies were then introduced to students alongside the course content and students were encouraged to reflect on the course learnings in relation to career opportunities throughout the semester¹⁹. By reflecting, students make the connection between their university courses and the skills required to progress in life after university. While reflection is already a significant part of Work-Integrated Learning programs, this project extends that concept from workplace and/or community based programs to the classroom.

By having students gain an understanding of why what they are learning will help them in the future, students can have a better appreciation for the course content. Additionally, this will enable students to better articulate their skills to potential employers. "In over 450 surveys delivered in classrooms during 2013 and 2014, seventy-two

¹⁶ Miller, Kim (The Student Success Centre). Interview by Hadia Fiaz and Inam Teja. *University Students' Council*, January 10, 2018.

¹⁷ Joy, Rhonda et al. "Meeting the Challenge of Work and Life Using a Career Integrated Learning Approach" *Proceedings of the Atlantic Universities' Teaching Showcase* 19 (2015). Pg 76-79.

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ "What is Career Integrated Learning." The Career Integrated Learning Project. Accessed February 10, 2018.

<https://www.mi.mun.ca/departments/officeoftheassociatevice-presidentacademicandstudentaffairs/careerintegratedlearningproject/>.

percent of students indicated that they found the identification of [competencies] helpful.”²⁰ Career Integrated Learning clearly has the potential to help students by providing answers to the age-old student question: “how will my school work help me in the real world?”

Career Integrated Learning at Western should be implemented through a centralized system to ensure that faculty are kept up to date with consistent information. At Western, the Student Success Centre is best positioned to act as this central project administrator²¹. Staff members from the Student Success centre should be given a mandate to engage with professors, to help identify competencies in their current curricula. Furthermore, staff from the Student Success Centre, should provide faculty with the necessary information to refer students to, if and when they are looking for work. Furthermore, if faculty members are updated frequently, they can highlight applicable work opportunities for their students. By having all faculty on the same page, students will receive cohesive information, reducing confusion.

This paper ultimately recommends Career Integrated Learning be implemented at Western because it bridges the gap between course learnings and career preparedness. Students gain an understanding of how to use course learnings in their career, as well as the ability to articulate these learnings to potential employers.

²⁰ Joy, Rhonda et al. “Meeting the Challenge of Work and Life Using a Career Integrated Learning Approach” Proceedings of the Atlantic Universities' Teaching Showcase 19 (2015). Pg 76-79.

²¹ Miller, Kim (The Student Success Centre). Interview by Hadia Fiaz and Inam Teja. University Students' Council, January 10, 2018.

Availability and Accessibility of Career Resources

Principle: All students should be made aware of the resources, opportunities, and services available to help them find employment.

Principle: All students, should have barrier-free access to resources, opportunities, and services designed to help them find employment.

Principle: Employment Services on campus should provide resources, opportunities, and services to one another to ensure coordination to students.

Principle: Employment Services should be aware of all opportunities available to students, including entrepreneurship, volunteer, and paid opportunities.

Concern: Students are unaware of the resources, services, and opportunities currently available to them.²²

Concern: Many current opportunities, resources, and services are underutilized by students.²³

Concern: Many concerns regarding wait times and capacity constraints at the Student Success Centre have been brought up by students.²⁴

Concern: Western currently has a disorganized system of Employment Services for students.

Concern: Students can get confused and overwhelmed by the many different Employment Services provided to them.

Recommendation: Western should increase the capacity of Student Success Centre career counsellors and advisors in order to lower wait times and match expected increases in demand.

Recommendation: Existing programing, resources, and services should be better promoted through a variety of channels to reach underserved students.

Recommendation: Different Employment Services on campus like Propel, The Student Success Centre, and Affiliate and Faculty-specific career services should cross-promote opportunities.

Recommendation: Western should create a centralized catalogue of career resources and services to clarify when and how a students could use each service.

Many Western students are completely or partially unaware of the employment opportunities, services, and resources available to them - very few students were able to name more than one career resource on a survey of over 300 Western students.²⁵ In this same survey, many students expressed that they were not aware of which resources were available to them. One respondent echoed the concerns of many students when they stated "I'm

²² Teja, Inam, and Catherine Dunne. USC Employment & Affordability Survey. February 11, 2018. Raw data. University Students' Council, London.

²³ Miller, Kim (The Student Success Centre). Interview by Hadia Fiaz and Inam Teja. University Students' Council, January 10, 2018

²⁴ Teja, Inam, and Catherine Dunne. USC Employment & Affordability Survey. February 11, 2018. Raw data. University Students' Council, London.

²⁵ Teja, Inam, and Catherine Dunne. USC Employment & Affordability Survey. February 11, 2018. Raw data. University Students' Council, London.

sure there are a lot of resources available to us, but the[y] need to do a better job presenting them to us. I have no idea where to go to ask about jobs.”²⁶ This is not due to a lack of resources, but a lack of clear communication regarding what services, resources, and opportunities are available to students. It is clear that simply increasing the resources available to students will not be the solution to this issue. In an interview with the Acting Director of The Student Success Centre, she indicated many resources, services, and opportunities that are provided to students are actually under-utilized.²⁷ While this is not the case for Career Advising through the Student Success Centre, it is the case for most other offerings Western has under-utilized resources, and it has students who have a high demand, so the issue lies in connecting students to the help they need.

This paper makes recommendations that draw on student perspectives to determine how Employment Services on campus can reach students best. Currently Western has a very confusing variety of services offered to students. Many faculties have their own employment services, and each affiliate as well. Western also has the Student Success Centre which serves all students across campus. Furthermore, there are other organizations on campus which aid in student employment, such as Propel, an entrepreneurial incubator, and the University Students Council which employs over 300 students. This paper recommends that Western creates a full centralized catalogue of career resources and services to clarify when and how a student could use each service. This comprehensive guide to accessing employment services should be promoted as a part of the proposed Career Integrated Learning initiative, so that students who will now be reflecting on their careers in classes, will know how to take the next steps in seeking employment.

Campus Employment Services currently coordinate with each other and occasionally cross-promote, however this paper recommends that this cross-promotion occurs on a regular and frequent basis. This promotion should occur on numerous platforms including social media and through posters. By leveraging each others promotional competencies, Western’s Employment Services can bridge the gap between students and their services.

While career advising services at the Student Success Centre are not currently over-capacity, some students have indicated they want “shorter wait times to get appointments at the success center.”²⁸ Along with the implementation of the recommendations around Career Integrated Learning and increased promotion to students, the Student Success Centre should increase the capacity of its core services. Recognizing that it takes time to hire and train new staff, the Student Success Centre should look to expand capacity before it implements the promotion recommendations. This will ensure that the service level is maintained through an increase in demand.

It is clear that there is a disconnect between students wanting employment services and them actually accessing those services. Currently, Employment Services are not utilized at capacity, despite being in high demand. To rectify this, Employment services should cross promote on numerous channels, as well as in classrooms as part of the Career Integrated Learning initiative. Furthermore, Western should create a guide of all the Employment Services and resources on campus, so that students go look in one place to find out when and how to access the services they require.

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ Miller, Kim (The Student Success Centre). Interview by Hadia Fiaz and Inam Teja. University Students’ Council, January 10, 2018.

²⁸ Teja, Inam, and Catherine Dunne. USC Employment & Affordability Survey. February 11, 2018. Raw data. University Students’ Council, London.

External Opportunities

Principle: Employment Services should provide adequate opportunities for all students to find employment.

Principle: Students participating in internships should hold equal rights to all other employed individuals under the Employment Standards Act of Ontario.

Principle: Western should participate and engage with local stakeholders to work together on community based student employment initiatives.

Principle: Western should facilitate the smooth connection of potential employers with students seeking employment.

Principle: Western students should receive the benefits of programs from external stakeholders designed to improve their employment situation.

Concern: Employers currently face barriers when looking to hire Western students.²⁹

Concern: Many students feel that there are not many job opportunities related to their field of study promoted by Western.

Concern: The Employment Standards Act does not apply to students participating in internships that are recognized by that students' post-secondary institution.

Recommendation: The Ontario government should amend the Employment Standards Act to remove the exemption of post-secondary programs under internships.

Recommendation: Western's Employment Services should collaborate to pursue partnerships with community organizations including local businesses and not-for profit organizations.

Recommendation: Western should study and address barriers faced by employers looking to hire Western students.

Recommendation: Western should capitalize upon external programs like the Career Ready Fund to enhance the opportunities for students.

Interns are often expected to work just as much as regular employees without the benefit of a regular pay cheque.³⁰ The ESA provides employees with rights to minimum wage, leaves of absence, vacation pay, and benefit plans.³¹ There are several exclusion criteria: "a secondary school student who performs work under a work experience program authorized by the school board that operates the school in which the student is enrolled" or those students who are training for listed professions like law.³² This exception of students from the ESA unfairly exposes post-secondary students to exploitation when working at an internship.

²⁹ Collins, Robert (London Economic Development Corporation). Interview by Hadia Fiaz Rakshith Gangireddy, and Inam Teja. University Students' Council, November 26th, 2017.

³⁰ McMaster. Students Union. Student Employment and Experiential Education. By Alex Wilson et al. November 2017. <https://www.msumcmaster.ca/advocacy/policies>.

³¹ Ibid

³² Ibid

In February 2015, within the minister of labours began the independent Changing Workplaces Review (focused on the Labours Relations Act, 1955 and the ESA). One of the 173 recommendations brought forward was the removal of the clause that prohibits interns and trainees to be protected under the ESA. Thereby, Western should advocate for this clause to be removed and clearer language be put in place. This would allow interns to be treated as regular employees as well as prevent employers from making assumptions due to broad wording of the ESA. Students in unpaid positions are often performing the same tasks as regular paid employees, therefore, should be entitled to fair working hours and reasonable pay.³³ If this change is implemented this would encourage students to seek out WIL opportunities without the fear of unpaid work and unfair work environments posing as barriers.

Western should work on expanding its relationships with potential employers in the London community. As the largest post-secondary institution in London, Western can work on forging partnerships with many corporations looking for talent. Robert Collins, the Director of the London Economic Development Corporation expressed that many organizations in the London area are looking for young bright talent in London.³⁴ This is an opportunity for Western students that should not be ignored. Western Employment Services should look for ways to collaborate to attract partnerships with organizations. Effective, efficient, streamlined communication is in the best interest of both students and employers. Employment services across faculties and affiliates should collaborate to provide opportunities to businesses with students in multiple fields as well as avoiding any redundant double-targeting. These partnerships with external organizations can be leveraged to provide more summer employment and Work Integrated Learning Opportunities for students.

Recognizing that engaging stakeholders requires many resources, Employment Services should first target large organizations or formal networks of smaller organizations, such as the Pillar Nonprofit Network, to maximize the return for students.

In order to facilitate these relationships with external groups, Employment Services at Western must remove barriers that employers have when attempting to connect to students. The Director of the London Economic Development Corporation indicated that Western's website has been a barrier for employers looking to hire Western students. Western should look into this and other barriers faced by employers looking to connect with student talent.

This paper also recognizes that the provincial and federal governments as well as other large national organizations have prioritized student employment in recent year. Programs like the provincial Career Ready Fund are great opportunities for Employment Services to receive funds to implement programs like Career Integrated Learning, as well as to increase their capacity to serve students and reach out to external organizations. The Student Success Centre has had success in the recent past receiving funds from programs like the Career Ready Fund, and this paper advocates for the continued capitalization on opportunities. It is critical to continue to engage with these large organizations to ensure that Western students are provided with the opportunities to be successful in their careers.

³³ Ibid

³⁴ Collins, Robert (London Economic Development Corporation). Interview by Hadia Fiaz Rakshith Gangireddy, and Inam Teja. University Students' Council, November 26th, 2017.

Sources

"Alternative Spring Break." Alternative Spring Break. Accessed February 9, 2018.
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http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/student_finances/work_study.html.