



LaGUARDIA
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Periodic Unit Review
Business Services and Career Services
2022-2023 to 2023-2024

Adult & Continuing Education Division

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Historical Background	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Overview of the Unit.....	4
Evaluation of Annual Assessment Trend Data.....	5
Review of Business and Career Services Mission, Goals, and Objectives	7
Measures and Associated Targets	8
Unit's Strategies for Improvement, including Required Resources	9
Conclusion	11
Appendix A: Business and Career Services Combined AED.....	A1
Appendix B: Strategies	B1
Appendix C: Student and Employer Success Stories	C1
Appendix D: Evaluator's Notes	D1

Introduction

This Periodic Unit Review (PUR) report assesses the Administrative Educational Support (AES) units developed collaboratively between Business Services and the Center for Career and Professional Development. The review process included meetings with:

- Sunil Gupta, Vice President of Adult and Continuing Education
- Assuanta Howard, Assistant Dean of Business Services
- Jessica Perez, Ed. D Director of the Center for Career and Professional Development
- Carolyn Nobles, Senior Director of Career Services and Career and Technical Education Assistance Center

Recognizing the interconnected nature of the work in supporting economic growth, career development, and job search opportunities for students and local businesses, the leadership team decided to develop combined assessment processes. These annual and periodic processes encompass the activities of Business Services, the Center for Career and Professional Development, and the Career and Technical Education Assistance Center. This integrated approach comprehensively evaluates the units' collective impact on student success and community economic development. The respective areas aligned their missions, goals, and annual assessment trends.

This report represents a unified perspective on how these units within the Division of Adult & Continuing Education are fulfilling their role in empowering social and economic advancement for the students and businesses served by LaGuardia Community College.

Historical Background

The Division of Adult & Continuing Education (ACE) at LaGuardia Community College encompasses various units, including Business Services and the Center for Career and Professional Development (CCPD). For the Periodic Unit Review (PUR), these units have combined their collective efforts to support students and the community.

Approximately five years ago, the structure of career services within ACE underwent significant changes. Mark Healy, who was then the Vice President of the Adult & Continuing Education Division, implemented a strategic reorganization of the Career Development Center (CDC). This restructuring divided the CDC into two distinct areas based on function, aiming to enhance efficiency and specialization in student support services.

The Division of Adult & Continuing Education (ACE) at LaGuardia Community College includes Business Services and the Center for Career and Professional Development (CCPD). For the

Periodic Unit Review (PUR), these units have combined efforts to support students and the community.

In recent years, the structure of career services within ACE has undergone significant changes. Mark Healy, the previous Vice President of the Adult & Continuing Education Division, implemented a strategic reorganization of the Career Development Center (CDC). This restructuring divided the CDC into two distinct areas based on function, aiming to enhance efficiency and specialization in student support services.

As a result of this reorganization, the CDC was relocated to the pre-college unit, where it continued its mission of providing job readiness and career development services. Additionally, it maintained its role in tracking non-credit students enrolling in the College. Meanwhile, a new entity emerged: the Career & Technical Education Assistance Center (CTEA). Placed under Business Services, the CTEA was established with a focused mandate to address Labor Market Information, job placement, experiential learning, and internship opportunities.

President Adams and Vice President Gupta initiated several organizational changes. Their vision included integrating credit and non-credit career development, experiential learning, internships, and employment efforts. This comprehensive approach aimed to merge the Center for Career and Professional Development (credit), Career Development, and Career and Technical Education Assistance Center (non-credit).

In response to this initiative, Assuanta Howard, Assistant Dean of Business Services; Carolyn Nobles, Senior Director of the Career Development Center and the Career and Technical Education Assistance Center; and Dr. Jessica Perez, Director of the Career and Professional Development Center, aligned their goals and developed a collective strategy to track and evaluate their outcomes.

While the official merger between the credit and non-credit career development units is pending, some consolidation has already occurred. Under the Adult & Continuing Education Division (ACE), the Career Development Center (CDC) and the Career & Technical Assistance Education Center (CTEA) have been combined following the departure of the CTEA Director. However, staffing disparities between these units remain a factor that may impact outcomes and require ongoing consideration.

Although these units maintain distinct roles, they have identified significant benefits in consolidating efforts and aligning strategic initiatives. By unifying their mission, vision, and goals for assessment purposes, the units can more effectively evaluate their individual and shared objectives.

Overview of the Unit

The Business and Career Services unit at LaGuardia Community College consists of Business Services and the Center for Career and Professional Development. This unit supports student

career development and local business growth, aligning with the College's strategic goals highlighted below:

Business Services:

- Provides programs for local small businesses and entrepreneurs
- Key initiatives: Appex Accelerator, Goldman Sachs *10,000 Small Businesses* program, Small Business Development Center, and Small Business Transportation Resource Assistance Center
- In 2022-2023, the economic impact of businesses served included: • \$15,308,903 in loans facilitated • \$850,954,888 in contracts awarded • 15,893 jobs created

Center for Career and Professional Development (CCPD) and Career and Technical Education Assistance Center (CTEA):

- Offers career development, experiential learning opportunities, and job search services
- Serves both credit and non-credit students
- 631 students (both credit and non-credit) have found gainful employment
- Student participation: 458 in internships, 1,340 in experiential learning activities, 939 in resume writing, and 691 in interviewing advisement
- Industry partnerships increased from 20 to 159, aligning with both academic and non-academic programs

Guiding Principles:

- Promote social and economic advancement for students and businesses
- Facilitate connections between student skills and market opportunities
- Foster local economic growth and workforce development

Alignment with College Strategic Plan Goals:

The unit's activities support the following College goals:

- Build Student Access and Success
- Strengthen Learning for Students - and for Faculty, Staff and the College
- Enrich the Student Experience
- Advance Career and Workforce Development

Evaluation of the Annual Assessment Trend Data

A comprehensive analysis of the annual assessment trend data for Business Services and the Center for Career and Professional Development revealed significant synergies and overlapping objectives. This led to a strategic decision, approved by the Vice President, to formally collaborate and combine efforts, leveraging complementary strengths to amplify impact.

For the Administrative Educational Support (AES) process, the combined units aim to bridge the gap between education and industry to enable social and economic advancement. By providing innovative career development, internships, and experiential programs and services aligned with real-time labor market needs for students, alumni, faculty, employers, and local small business owners. (See Appendix A Combined Annual Assessment Plan)

Key Findings:

1. Pandemic Adaptability:

- Both units exceeded overall targets while adapting metrics and approaches to evolving circumstances, such as the shift to online learning and remote work due to COVID-19.
- Example adaptations include:
 - Shifting from in-person career fairs to completion of LinkedIn profiles
 - Transitioning to online job readiness and career coaching sessions via Zoom
 - Introducing digital badges to demonstrate career readiness

2. Student Employment Outcomes:

- Employability varies significantly across individuals and programs.
- Many students require additional coaching and training beyond their academic programs to enhance employability.
- High-impact programs showing superior outcomes:
 - SOAR Experiential Learning
 - President's Society
 - Student Success Mentors
 - Peer Advisor Academy
 - These programs often lead to direct job offers from internship sites.

3. Non-Credit Program Success:

- Notable success in placing students from Healthcare Workforce training programs (ACE).
- Strong partnerships with local hospitals and healthcare facilities have created effective internship and employment pipelines.

4. Sector-Specific Initiatives:

- Current efforts focus on replicating healthcare sector success in tech programs.
- Ongoing work is needed to strengthen existing relationships within the trade sector.

Future Directions:

Based on these findings, plans include:

1. Expanding high-impact practices across a broader range of students and programs.
2. Increasing the number of internship opportunities.
3. Offering more specialized training programs.
4. Fostering stronger relationships with industry leaders across various sectors.

Data Management and Tracking:

To support these efforts and improve outcome tracking:

- The CTEA Center is transitioning from Xenegrade to Symplicity to manage workforce student data.
- This alignment with CCPD's reporting system will allow for more comprehensive and consistent tracking across the unit.
- Implementation timeline: All FY24 students and employment outcomes will be in Symplicity by September 2024, with quarterly manual uploads planned.

This integrated data analysis and program development approach underscores the commitment to continuous improvement and adaptability in serving a diverse student population and business community.

Review of Business and Career Services Mission, Goals and Objectives

The individual missions of Business Services and the Center for Career and Professional Development previously aimed to bridge the gap between education and industry - one by supporting small businesses and entrepreneurs, the other by empowering student career readiness.

Deeper analysis revealed significant synergies and overlapping objectives between the two units. For example, the shared common goal of utilizing labor market data to inform academic programming. They also both engage in direct outreach to industry partners that could benefit students. The strategic decision was made to collaborate and combine efforts under a unified mission formally:

Business and Career Services furthers the college's mission by bridging the gap between education and industry to enable social and economic advancement. We provide innovative career development programs and services aligned with real-time labor market needs for students, alumni, faculty, employers, and local small business owners.

This unified approach leverages the units' complementary strengths, networks, and offerings to amplify impact. By assessing labor market trends and engaging with industry partners to be more responsive to economic needs and facilitate stronger student career pathways.

Measures and Associated Targets

Based on the goals and objectives for the combined Business and Career Services, the units identified key performance indicators and measures to track progress, supplemented by targeted benchmarks to work towards.

Existing student and employer survey instruments will continue to be utilized to promote assessment efficiency. The identified measures will leverage operational data on career coaching appointments and small business program engagement.

The targets establish measurable benchmarks for monitoring performance and progress toward goals and objectives to include:

Objectives	Measures	Annual Targets
Goal 1. Provide students professional development activities and engage them in pursuing career goals through career coaching and planning		
1.1 Students will demonstrate an understanding of their interests, abilities, values in relation to the world of work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of students completing Career/% out of total degree enrollment Coach Assessment • Number of students attending First Year seminar workshops / % out of first year 0-15 credits students • Number of first year students met with career services staff / % out of first year students 0-15 credits 	25% of 0-15 credit new degree-seeking students will complete a career assessment and program assessment (Fall I& II and Spring I & II) 3%
1.2 Students will participate in professional development activities such as resumes, mock interviews, LinkedIn, professional pitch, career plans and interactions with employers to demonstrate career readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of participants in Professional Development Activities • Number of badges • Number of approved resumes • Number completed milestones 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase the number of badges by 3% 2. Increased the number of approved resumes by 3% 3. Increase the number completed milestones by 3%
1.3 Collaborate and engage with faculty on career readiness initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of participants in EL • Number of Cross divisional collaborations 	Increase the # of Elmezzi program participation* by 2% Increase the number of cross-divisional collaborations by 3%
Goal 2: Provide opportunities to explore career options through experiential learning/work-based learning opportunities and employment.		
2.1 Students will engage in experiential learning activities such as internship placement, job shadowing, mentoring, informational interviews and professional development sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of participants in internships • Number of participants in experiential learning activities • Number of participants in resume writing • Number of participants in interviewing advisement 	Increase participation in experiential learning activities by 5%
2.2 Students and alumni will participate in employer engagement activities (fairs,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of students who found gainful employment 	Increase participation in industry sessions by 3%

information sessions, recruitment sessions, referrals) to advance their job search and potentially secure full-time and part-time jobs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of participants in industry sessions 	
Goal 3. To provide education and support services that contribute to employers including small business growth and promote positive economic impact for the local economy		
3.1 Increase the number of industry partners aligned with academic and non-academic programs at the college.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of industry partners aligned with academic and non-academic programs 	Expand current industry partnership alignment with other programs offered at the college by 5%
3.2 Provide resources and business support services (entrepreneurship education, business advisement, and access to capital) which they can use to positively impact business groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of businesses supported through business advisement, access to capital and entrepreneurship • Overall economic impact 	Increase the number of businesses supported through business advisement, access to capital and entrepreneurship education by 3%
3.3 Utilizing labor market information and trends to increase engagement with faculty and academic programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of events geared toward the utilization and implementation information trends • Number of employers participating in utilization of labor market information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of sectors participating in the bi-annual advisory council by 3. • Increase the # of faculty participating in bi-annual advisory council activities by 3%. • Increase the # of employer partners participating in bi-annual Advisory Council activities by 5%.

* The Elmezzi Career Fellows Program is a sub-internship program of the SOAR Experiential Learning Program, providing students with a 120-hour, 10-hour-per-week entry-level internship in their area of study. Through this internship program, students who are residents of Western Queens increase their professional profile and reinforce the skills they are developing through their academic coursework and other experiential learning opportunities.

Specify the Unit’s Strategies for Improvement, including Required Resources

Driven by insights from Periodic Unit Reviews, these strategies prioritize critical initiatives and resource allocation to propel Business and Career Services toward continuous improvement in Professional Development & Career Engagement, Experiential Learning & Employer Engagement, and Employer Growth & Economic Impact.

Goal 1: Provide students professional development activities and engage them in pursuing career goals through career coaching and planning

This goal, led by Dr. Perez, focuses on providing students with essential professional development activities and engaging them in pursuing their career aspirations through comprehensive career coaching and planning. Under Dr. Perez's guidance, students will participate in various activities designed to deepen their understanding of personal interests, abilities, and values concerning their career paths. Her leadership will encompass overseeing workshops for resume writing, mock interviews, LinkedIn profile optimization, professional pitch development, and detailed career planning. Furthermore, Perez's team will ensure students have opportunities to interact with employers, thereby gaining practical insights and showcasing their career readiness.

Goal 2: Provide opportunities to explore career options through experiential learning/work-based learning opportunities and employment.

Under the leadership of Jessica Perez, Ed. D and Carolyn Nobles this objective aims to offer credit and non-credit students' opportunities to explore diverse career options through hands-on experiential learning and work-based opportunities, as well as active employment engagement. They will also manage the organization and facilitation of various experiential learning activities, including internships, job shadowing, mentoring, informational interviews, and professional development sessions. Their team will be instrumental in organizing and coordinating activities connecting students and alumni with potential employers, such as job fairs, informational sessions, recruitment events, and referral programs to aid their job search and career progression.

Goal 3: To provide education and support services that contribute to employers including small business growth and promote positive economic impact for the local economy

Guided by Assuanta Howard and Erika Correa, this area will focus on providing education and support services that significantly contribute to employer growth, including expanding small businesses, thereby promoting a positive economic impact on the local economy. The goal is to offer resources and business support services, including entrepreneurship education, business advisement, and access to capital, which businesses can use to positively impact their growth and the broader business community.

In parallel, Carolyn Nobles will spearhead efforts to increase the number of industry partners aligned with both credit and non-credit programs. Her initiative will focus on fostering mutually beneficial partnerships that provide valuable opportunities for students and faculty. Nobles will also leverage labor market data and trends to enhance engagement with faculty and academic programs, ensuring these efforts align closely with current and projected market needs.

This dual approach aims to strengthen both the business support ecosystem and the college's industry connections, creating a more robust network that benefits students, local businesses, and the broader community. By integrating business support with targeted industry partnerships, we aim to create a more comprehensive and effective system that responds dynamically to both business needs and educational objectives.

To ensure a comprehensive representation of career and technical education majors, the bi-annual council will be expanded to include additional sectors. These may include advanced manufacturing, biotechnology, computer science, programming, criminal justice, cybersecurity, digital media, environmental science, and renewable energy. This expansion aims to better align our programs with emerging industry trends and provide more diverse perspectives on workforce needs. By incorporating these additional sectors, we can enhance our ability to prepare students for a wider range of career opportunities and respond more effectively to evolving market demands.

Under their respective leadership, each of these goals is strategically designed to create a robust framework for student success, employer growth, and economic development, fostering a synergistic relationship between education and the evolving demands of the workforce.

The strategies outlined in the chart in Appendix B focus on the goals, future initiatives, required resources, cross divisional collaboration, and personal responsible for leading and managing to enable Business and Career Services to achieve continuous improvement based on Periodic Unit Review findings.

External Review

The External Review Report was highly complementary of the Office's work and its dedicated, committed, and highly skilled team. The reviewer praised the report's exemplary nature, particularly noting the clarity of objectives, measures, and annual targets. Special mention was made of the Excel chart, which effectively illustrates future initiatives, resources, and cross-divisional collaboration. The reviewer emphasized how these elements create a clear roadmap for future action, integrated with the college's and division's strategic plans. They also commended the career development process and the combined impact of all programs, recognizing their value in enhancing students' experiences at LaGuardia and serving the Queens community.

Recommendations and Updates:

1. Added historical context about Business and Career Services, explaining the rationale for the combined Periodic Unit Review despite the merger not yet occurring. This section now addresses funding, administration, staffing disparities, shared goals, and resources for impact research.
2. Clarified the relationship between Business and Career Services and the SBDC. We've specified that 10KSB, SBDC, SBTRC, and APEX fall under Business Services, with SBTRC providing internship opportunities to students.
3. Increased growth goals beyond the initial 1-3%, considering the impressive student service numbers and extraordinary results for the 2022-23 year.
4. Provided commentary on the 631 students who found gainful employment, distinguishing between credit and noncredit (ACE) students, and discussing placement ease and employer satisfaction levels.
5. Evaluated and proposed additional sectors for inclusion in the biannual council meeting.
6. Highlighted the overall economic impact of businesses served in 2022-23, emphasizing the \$15,308,903 in loans, \$850,954,888 in contracts awarded, and 15,893 jobs created.
7. Included an explanation of the Elmezzi Program (EL) for the benefit of outside readers.
8. Addressed concerns about Xenergrade's student tracking capabilities and compared the relative value of Symplicity, Handshake, and EAB Navigate. We've noted that this area requires further investigation.

9. Enhanced the report with student success stories and real-time examples of service operations.

Conclusion

The Periodic Unit Review of Business and Career Services at LaGuardia Community College has provided valuable insights through trend analysis, data synthesis, and identification of improvement opportunities. The Business and Career Services unit aligns with the College's strategic goals through professional development, career coaching, experiential learning, business relationship building, and small business support. These efforts enhance student success, promote career readiness, and stimulate regional economic growth.

Key findings include:

1. Successful adaptation to challenging circumstances, including the shift to virtual services during the pandemic.
2. Strong performance in placing students in internships and employment, particularly in healthcare and emerging tech sectors.
3. The effectiveness of experiential learning programs in enhancing student employability.
4. Positive employer feedback on student preparedness and program quality.
5. Notable student achievements, including transfers to four-year institutions and prestigious scholarship nominations.

While targets were met and substantial value was delivered to students and employers, there are areas for continued improvement. Optimizing data coordination, refining metrics, and enhancing the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system are crucial for sustained success. Additionally, key priorities will be expanding successful models like the Elmezzi Career Fellows Program and strengthening partnerships in growing sectors.

The review underscores the importance of maintaining flexibility in program delivery, fostering strong industry partnerships, and continuing to align services with evolving labor market needs. By building on these strengths and addressing identified areas for improvement, Business and Career Services is well-positioned to continue the vital role of empowering student success and contributing to the local economy.

Future Considerations:

The Business and Career Services unit has identified the following key areas for strategic focus:

1. Increasing employment outcomes for students across credit and non-credit programs
2. Expanding support for small businesses, aiming to increase economic impact through loans, contracts, and job creation
3. Enhancing professional development and experiential learning opportunities, mainly through collaborations with academic departments

4. Implementing innovative, high-impact projects that bridge student skills with business needs
5. Strengthening internship programs and job placement pipelines
6. Expanding employer engagement and advisory input, with a focus on local small businesses

These initiatives aim to enrich student experiences, reinforce industry connections, and advance the College's career preparation and workforce development mission. Business and Career Services will play a crucial role in LaGuardia Community College's commitment to fostering economic opportunity and community development by intensifying efforts to increase student employment and support small business growth.

