



# EMPLOYING STUDENT SUCCESS

A **COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION**  
OF **ON-CAMPUS STUDENT EMPLOYMENT**

 **NASPA**  
Student Affairs Administrators  
in Higher Education

**OMARI BURNSIDE,  
ALEXA WESLEY,  
ALEXIS WESAW, AND  
AMELIA PARNELL**

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

**N**ASPA–Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education would like to thank the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for its support of this project. We also thank the researchers and practitioners who offered their time, effort, and insights as part of an advisory group. These individuals include:

- Jenna Corcoran, Assistant Director of Student Employment Services and Assessment at Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis
- Charlotte Etier, Assistant Director of Research and Grants at the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA)
- Shirley Govindasamy, Director of Payroll at Bates College
- Ruben Guzman, Research Coordinator at NIRSA: Leaders in Collegiate Recreation
- Sarah Hansen, Associate Vice President for the Division of Student Life at The University of Iowa
- Edwin Koc, Director of Research, Public Policy, and Legislative Affairs at the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE)
- George McClellan, Associate Professor of Higher Education at the University of Mississippi
- Janna McDonald, Director of the Office of Student Employment at Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis
- Pamela Payne, Director of Job Resource Center at Moraine Valley Community College
- Donna Jo Pepito, Director of Research at National Association of College Auxiliary Services (NACAS)
- Marianna Savoca, Assistant Vice President for Career Development and Experiential Education at Stony Brook University
- Teri Schnelle, Associate Director for Assessment and Strategic Initiatives at The University of Iowa
- Jennifer Skluzacek, Assistant Director of Financial Aid at St. Olaf College
- Jacob Tingle, Director of Experiential Learning at Trinity University
- Audrey Turner, Student and Staff Employment Specialist at St. Olaf College
- Christine Wilson, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs & Director of Student Activities at the University of Connecticut
- Urszula Zalewski, Director of Experiential Education at Stony Brook University

We would also like to give a special thanks to the National Student Employment Association and the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators for engaging their members to help widen the reach of NASPA's research.



Copyright © 2019 by the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), Inc.  
All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, now known or hereafter invented, including electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, information storage and retrieval, or otherwise, except as permitted under Section 107 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without the prior written permission of the Publisher.

NASPA does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, gender identity, gender expression, affectional or sexual orientation, or disability in any of its policies, programs, and services.



## CONTENTS

Executive Summary .....	1
The Working Student Dilemma .....	5
Methodology .....	9
Drivers of Student Employment Program Design .....	11
The Current State of Student Employment .....	15
Enhancing the Student Employment Experience .....	23
Leadership Engagement .....	25
Hiring Policies and Procedures .....	28
Growth and Professional Development Opportunities .....	32
Student Learning Outcomes .....	40
Assessment and Evaluation .....	44
Conclusion .....	46
References .....	47
Appendix A: Survey Respondents by Institution Type and Size .....	49
Appendix B: Institutions Interviewed .....	50

## LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

### TABLES

Table ES1. Student Employment Capacity Areas.....	2
Table 1. Survey Respondents by Institution Type .....	10
Table 2. Top Three Desired Investment Areas Within the Next Three to Five Years .....	13
Table 3. Top 10 Environmental Factors That Affect Student Employment .....	14
Table 4. Core Student Employment Functions .....	17
Table 5. Top Eight Student Employee Hiring Areas .....	22
Table 6. Top Three Student Employee Hiring Areas by Institution Type.....	22
Table 7. Student Employment Capacity Areas.....	24
Table 8. Usage of Learning Outcomes and/or Job Competencies in Position Descriptions by Institution Type.....	30

### FIGURES

Figure 1. Goals of Student Employment Program .....	11
Figure 2. Barriers to Advancing On-Campus Student Employment.....	12
Figure 3. Student Employment Investment Areas in the Past Three to Five Years .....	13
Figure 4. Largest Sources of Student Employment Funding .....	15
Figure 5. All Sources of Student Employment Funding by Institution Type .....	16
Figure 6. Student Employment Program Structures .....	18
Figure 7. Student Employment Office Locations by Institution Type .....	18
Figure 8. Wage Determining Factors by Institution Type.....	20
Figure 9. Student Employee Hours Worked Per Week by Institution Type .....	21
Figure 10. Student Employment Goals by Leadership Involvement .....	25
Figure 11. Student Employment Advancements Within the Past Five Years by Leadership Involvement .....	26
Figure 12. Outreach Methods of Student Employment Opportunities by Institution Type .....	28
Figure 13. Centralized Job Posting Usage.....	29
Figure 14. Hiring Process Elements by Level of Requirement.....	30
Figure 15. Student Employee Resources and Support.....	32
Figure 16. Student Employee Career-Readiness Competency Focus Areas by Institution Type .....	33
Figure 17. Institutional Support for Supervisors of Student Employees .....	36
Figure 18. Development of Learning Frameworks.....	40
Figure 19. Usage of Student Employee Evaluations.....	42
Figure 20. Collection of On-Campus Employment Student Success Data.....	44
Figure 21. Usage of On-Campus Employment Student Success Data.....	45

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Traditionally seen as a way for institutions to help students alleviate some of the financial demands placed on them, on-campus student employment has several additional benefits institutions can leverage to assist students along their collegiate journey. Throughout the years, institutions of higher education have advanced the use of the Federal Work-Study program and institutionally funded campus-based employment opportunities to provide students supporting campus operations with modest financial support (McClellan, Creager, & Savoca, 2018). However, if designed and operationalized effectively, institutions can use their on-campus student employment program to provide students with meaningful learning and engagement opportunities that can help with retention and build career-readiness skills.

The degree to which a particular on-campus employment opportunity serves as a high-quality, developmental experience can depend on the various work conditions, processes, and policies an institution has in place. To better understand how institutions actualize the benefits of on-campus employment, NASPA–Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education conducted a landscape analysis that examined the current condition of on-campus employment opportunities and identified promising practices and components of programs characteristic of a highly impactful practice.

The landscape analysis adds to existing research and informs the field’s understanding in several areas:

- current data regarding the range of on-campus student employment opportunities by institutional type and sector;
- variety of promising practices being implemented at the division and/or institution level;
- degree to which student employment is being implemented and leveraged at the institution level as a student success strategy;
- extent to which institutions are assessing the effect of employment on various student success measures; and
- barriers to administering, sustaining, and improving student employment.

The bulk of this report unfolds in three sections. The first two sections provide foundational information on how student employment is currently administered at institutions. The first section presents survey data that highlight three main drivers that influence an institution’s student employment program: program goals, institutional contexts, and environmental factors. The second section answers general and operational questions about on-campus student employment programs, such as typical funding sources, management structure and key activities, top hiring areas across the campus, wage determination factors, and average hours worked. The third section draws on insights from an extensive review of existing research, campus interviews, and site visit data, and presents a list of capacity areas and practices that institutions can use to elevate their student employment program into a high-impact practice (see the table on the next page). Survey data analysis is used to show the current use of these practices at institutions.



**TABLE ES1. Student Employment Capacity Areas**

<b>Leadership Engagement</b>	
<b>Goal Setting</b>	Integrate retention and student learning as primary goals of student employment.
<b>Institutional Alignment</b>	Prioritize and invest in student employment resources to support campuswide student success goals.
<b>Hiring Policies and Procedures</b>	
<b>Outreach and Awareness</b>	Ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to apply for a position.
<b>Application Procedures</b>	Create a hiring experience that allows students to practice and develop professional job-seeking skills and provides students with clear information about job expectations.
<b>Growth and Professional Development Opportunities</b>	
<b>Student Employee Supports</b>	Provide professional development opportunities for students to further build critical career-readiness skills.
<b>Supervisor Capacity</b>	Provide clear guidelines and support for supervisors of student employees.
<b>Recognition</b>	Identify ways to recognize and highlight the contributions of student employees.
<b>Student Learning Outcomes</b>	
<b>Learning Framework</b>	Identify institutionwide student learning outcomes of employment opportunities.
<b>Feedback and Reflection</b>	Help student employees evaluate and document their learnings from their employment experience.
<b>Assessment and Evaluation</b>	
<b>Student Success Data</b>	Use data to understand and share the impact of student employment.

This report identifies ways to support and scale conditions of highly impactful employment programs, which include a focus on leadership engagement, equitable hiring processes, growth and professional development opportunities, student learning outcomes, and assessment and evaluation. Institutions that have demonstrated a willingness to advance the practice can engage in thoughtful planning and build upon their existing infrastructure to actualize goals for on-campus employment.

The landscape analysis will help inform and offer guidance for colleges and universities that consider on-campus employment as an underutilized resource and are seeking to transform the practice into a powerful means of advancing student success.

Five key findings emerge from the report.

1

### **Senior leadership engagement is critical.**

Institutions with senior-level or cabinet member involvement seem better positioned to elevate their student employment program as a multifaceted student success strategy. Approximately 47% of survey respondents reported having senior-level or cabinet member involvement in vision and strategy-setting. Those with leadership involvement have a larger set of goals for their student employment program, and also were more likely to report having made investments in innovative ideas to advance the program than those without such leadership.

2

### **Multiple communication channels are needed to explain to students the benefits on working on-campus and to inform them about on-campus positions.**

Survey respondents use centralized databases and job boards (87%), referrals (62%), job fairs (55%), social media (49%), new student orientation (49%), and print materials (48%) to try to reach and inform students about the availability and value of on-campus student employment opportunities and how to apply for those opportunities. While having multiple outreach strategies is important for helping students identify and ultimately secure on-campus employment positions, the most important outreach is for institutions to have all jobs posted in a central location. Requiring hiring departments to post open positions in a central location may help institutions shift away from word-of-mouth hiring that can unfairly advantage well-connected students over equally qualified peers who may not know such opportunities exist.

3

### **Supervisors are the linchpin of the student employee experience.**

Over a quarter of survey respondents noted that student employee supports are provided at the hiring department or division level rather than at the institution level. As a result, often times supervisors serve as the primary facilitators of professional development and learning opportunities for student employees, and the extent to which supervisors are supported can determine whether an employment experience is menial or meaningful. Therefore, institutions should identify and develop helpful resources and tools to better prepare and engage supervisors for their critical role.



---

4

**Institutions should have a shared understanding of what student employees should be and are actually learning.**

Approximately 37% of survey respondents have or are developing a learning framework associated with student employment efforts. Such frameworks should define and categorize knowledge and skill sets students should acquire throughout their campus experience. Institutions can use frameworks to help students establish and articulate progress in meeting learning objectives and how what they are learning on the job connects with other experiences inside and outside the classroom.

---

5

**Data usage for the purposes of analyzing and sharing the impact of student employment is an area for improvement among many institutions.**

Survey data reveal that 35% of respondent institutions analyze data on hourly on-campus student employees for reasons other than federal and state employee compliance purposes. While data metrics related to compliance are important, more institutions should also assess data to understand student employee success, which can include metrics such as retention rates, completion rates, grade point averages, levels of engagement, and overall satisfaction rates. Such data can be used strategically to advance the program. The top three strategic uses of student employment data include raising awareness of and buy-in for student employment (59%), improving the institution's student employment structure and supports (53%), and supporting recruitment and enrollment efforts (47%).

**REFERENCE**

McClellan, G. S., Creager, K., & Savoca, M. (2018). *A good job: Campus employment as a high-impact practice*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.

# EMPLOYING STUDENT SUCCESS

## A COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION OF *ON-CAMPUS* STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

### THE WORKING STUDENT DILEMMA

The combined pressures of the rising cost of attendance and the need to gain valuable skills and career-relevant experiences before graduation are among the reasons many students today work while in college. With approximately 80% of college students participating in some form of paid employment, working students represent a large portion of the student population on many college campuses (Carnevale, Smith, Melton, & Price, 2015).

Students needing or choosing to work is not a new or recent trend (McCormick, Moore, & Kuh, 2010). Whether enrolled on a part-time or full-time basis, students have sought and secured employment opportunities to support themselves while in school for several decades (Carnevale et al., 2015; U.S. Department of Education, 2017). Throughout the years, students have worked not only to offset college costs, but also to acquire relevant work experiences and competencies, build or maintain professional networks, foster a sense of community, and reinforce their classroom learning (Carnevale et al., 2015; Perna, Cooper, & Li, 2007). What has changed is that students are now stretching their paychecks too thin when trying to cover the rising costs of college (Ma, Baum, Pender, & Libassi, 2018). As a result, many students cite the need to pay for tuition, fees, or living expenses as the primary reason for working (Perna et al., 2007).

Regardless of the reasons why a student seeks employment, the decision to work while in school can be a barrier on their path toward a degree. Several studies have looked at the relationship between academic performance and student employment in the past three decades; however, the results of the research on this are mixed. Research is typically framed by a zero-sum theory that argues that increases in employment intensity can negatively affect school performance. The tipping point on the number of



hours a student can work before their job negatively impacts academic performance seems to range between 16 and 25 hours per week (Hawkins, Smith, Hawkins, & Grant, 2005; Pike, Kuh, & Massa-McKinley, 2008; Warren, 2002; Wenz & Yu, 2010). Although working is a necessity for many students, the more hours they work can mean less time that they have available to devote to their studies or participate in many of the campus practices that are designed to enhance their collegiate experience, support their classroom learning, and help them persist at the institution (Hawkins et al., 2005; Kuh, O'Donnell, & Reed, 2013; Warren, 2002).

These challenges represent the *working student dilemma*. The time, energy, and resources required to succeed as an employee and as a student can present working students with tough tradeoffs and decisions on how to handle these competing priorities. However, the solution to the dilemma is not to encourage students to stop working altogether. Institutions should leverage an existing practice that is known to help students accommodate their need to work and simultaneously serve as a learning and engagement opportunity: on-campus student employment. Institutions have far more influence over the structure and administration of on-campus employment opportunities than they do for jobs available off campus. Strengthening and promoting supports for students who work on campus on a part-time basis can have a positive effect on student success outcomes. Research shows that many, if not all, of the negative effects employment can have on a student's academic progression are mitigated when opportunities are offered on campus and on a part-time basis (Furr & Elling, 2000; Pike et al., 2008; Wenz & Yu, 2010). Compared with their peers who work off-campus, students who hold on-campus jobs have higher academic success rates, deeper connections to the campus community, and higher persistence rates (Cramer & Kulm, 2006; Pike et al., 2008).

The working student dilemma presents an opportunity for institutional leaders to further understand their working student population and to consider designing strategies that can best support these and any other student that desires employment while in school.

## **THE NEXUS OF STUDENT SUCCESS**

Institutions of higher education have offered and advanced on-campus employment opportunities for decades through the use of the Federal Work-Study (FWS) program<sup>1</sup> and institution-funded employment programs, providing students with needed financial support (Kuh, 2016; McClellan, Creager, & Savoca, 2018). However, there are many other benefits to the practice that often go undiscussed or underutilized.

On-campus employment opportunities that are intentionally designed around learning and engagement can considerably enhance the student experience in multiple ways (McClellan et al., 2018). Working alongside a cohort of peers or other professionals who directly contribute to the mission and success of an institution can help build a student's sense of identity, connection, and value to the campus (McCormick et al., 2010). In a time of competing priorities and responsibilities, students also benefit from the time saved and the convenience of working near their academic resources, housing, and cocurricular activities (Cheng & Alcantara, 2004).

Institutions can leverage on-campus student employment as an effective mechanism for supporting student success at the institution and beyond. Typically, the practices, policies, and initiatives institutions implement to improve student success fall into one or more of the following focus areas: academic enrichment, social engagement, and financial capability.

- **Academic enrichment** provides students with educational learning experiences that enable them to develop intellectually, build career-readiness skills, and access adequate instructional support.
- **Social engagement** ensures that students have access and opportunity to freely participate in diverse, educational, community-building activities outside of the classroom with peers, faculty, and staff.
- **Financial capability** helps students build the capacity to meet the financial demands of higher education.

<sup>1</sup>Administered by an institution's financial aid office, FWS is a limited-fund program that subsidizes at least some level of wages—up to 20 hours per week—for students who qualify for financial aid and work in on- or off-campus jobs. According to the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Federal Student Aid (n.d.), positions for which FWS students are eligible should "emphasiz[e] employment in civic education and work related to [the student's] course of study whenever possible" (para. 3). The U.S. Department of Education allocates FWS dollars as a lump sum to institutions that award funds to eligible students as the particular institution chooses.



*The landscape analysis will help inform and offer guidance for colleges and universities that consider on-campus employment an underutilized resource and seek to transform the practice into a powerful means of advancing student success.*



A comprehensive on-campus student employment program can be a cost-effective strategy that can address all these student success focus areas, thus serving as a potential high-impact practice.<sup>2</sup> If designed and operationalized effectively, on-campus employment can support students' financial security, while also improving their learning, career-readiness, and persistence outcomes.

This report offers a comprehensive student employment landscape analysis that identifies key foundational elements of an effective on-campus employment program. The landscape analysis adds to existing research and informs the field's understanding in several areas:

- current data regarding the range of on-campus student employment opportunities by institutional type and sector;
- variety of promising practices being implemented at the division and/or institution level;
- degree to which student employment is being implemented and leveraged at the institution level as a student success strategy;
- extent to which institutions are assessing the effect of employment on various student success measures; and
- barriers to administering, sustaining, and improving student employment.

The landscape analysis will help inform and offer guidance for colleges and universities that consider on-campus employment an underutilized resource and seek to transform the practice into a powerful means of advancing student success.

<sup>2</sup> According to George Kuh, "[t]he phrase *high-impact practices* (HIP) refers to institutionally structured student experiences inside or outside of the classroom that are associated with elevated performance across multiple engagement activities and desired outcomes, such as deep learning, persistence, and satisfaction with college" (McClellan et al., 2018, p. x).

## METHODOLOGY

**N**ASPA's overarching research question was, "How are institutions maximizing student employment funds to support student retention?" Through this question, NASPA explored how institutions designed and administered on-campus student employment as a high-impact practice. NASPA examined the current condition of on-campus employment opportunities and identified promising practices and components of robust programs.

### **STUDENT EMPLOYEE DEFINITION**

This landscape analysis primarily focuses on student employees who meet the following criteria:

- Employed by the institution to work in a campus facility
- Employed on a part-time basis
- Enrolled at least half-time in an undergraduate program at the institution
- Received hourly wages
- Supervised by institution staff

Interview data suggest that distinct but equally beneficial employment experiences exist in positions where students receive alternative forms of compensation, such as scholarships or free housing, or are employed by external vendors, such as dining services or call centers. Therefore, to capture high-level data on the size and breadth of on-campus employment, the research provides some insight on students who fall outside the scope of the primary definition.

### **LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS PROCESS**

NASPA's landscape analysis occurred in three phases: (1) interviews with leaders and practitioners at institutions, (2) campus site visits, and (3) a national survey.

NASPA conducted semistructured interviews with professionals from institutions varying by sector, size, and student population. The person and position interviewed also varied by institution, given that the offices or departments responsible for student employment differ by institution. This allowed for a beneficial mix of interviews that brought perspectives from departments of human resources, financial aid, career services, and stand-alone student employment offices. The position and level of those interviewed ranged from vice presidents for student affairs to program managers of student employment efforts for the institution. Regardless of their position or type of institution, each person was asked a series of in-depth questions about their role in administering or sustaining on-campus work opportunities.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> See appendices for institutions interviewed and for a breakdown of survey respondents by institution type and size.



NASPA also visited several institutions to examine the process by which on-campus jobs are administered and to conduct follow-up interviews with personnel. Each campus visit included multiple focus group meetings with administrators who manage key aspects of student employment activities for the institution, supervisors of student employees, and students employed by the institutions. The focus group interviews allowed the research team to gather perspectives and insights on student employment processes and practices, and the benefits and challenges of administering and participating in student employment.

Insights gleaned from campus interviews and site visits were used to identify promising practices and inform the development of a national survey instrument. The survey was sent to senior-level student affairs professionals from institutions of multiple sizes and sectors across the United States. NASPA recommended that survey recipients complete the survey with a team of campus professionals who have varying levels of involvement with student employment. At the close of the survey, NASPA received submissions from 244 institutions. See Table 1 for the survey respondent breakdown by institution type.

**TABLE 1. Survey Respondents by Institution Type**

Institution Type	Frequency	Percentage
Public, four-year or above	114	47%
Private, nonprofit four-year or above	91	37%
Private, for-profit four-year or above	2	1%
Public two-year	34	14%
Private, non-profit two-year	1	< 1%
Other	2	1%
Total	244	100%

## DRIVERS OF STUDENT EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM DESIGN

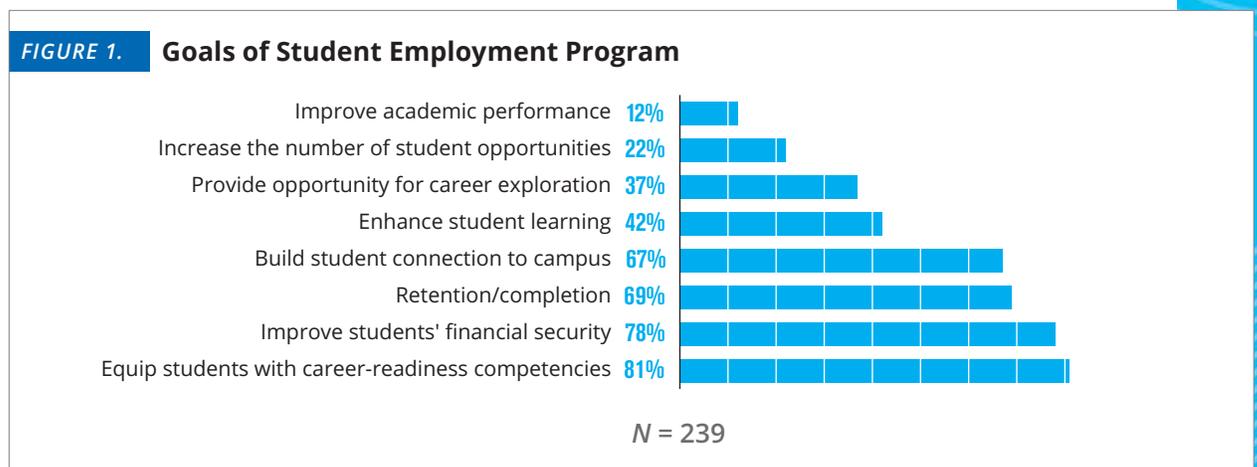
On-campus student employment is a longstanding practice that nearly all institutions offer to their students. However, the administration and operations of the practice can vary among campuses. Institutions continue to design and manage student employment programs that are influenced by their (a) goals for the program, (b) institutional contexts, and (c) environmental factors. These components help shape the contours of an institution's student employment efforts.

This section highlights how these three influencing factors vary across different types of institutions.

### GOALS OF STUDENT EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

An institution's vision and goals for student employment can shape the scope of its support and approach to program administration. For example, an institution that promotes its student employment effort as a way to enhance student learning may target resources toward developing and integrating a formalized learning framework into students' employment experiences.

To better understand the range of priority areas for student employment, survey respondents were asked to identify all the goals of their student employment efforts, which are illustrated in Figure 1.

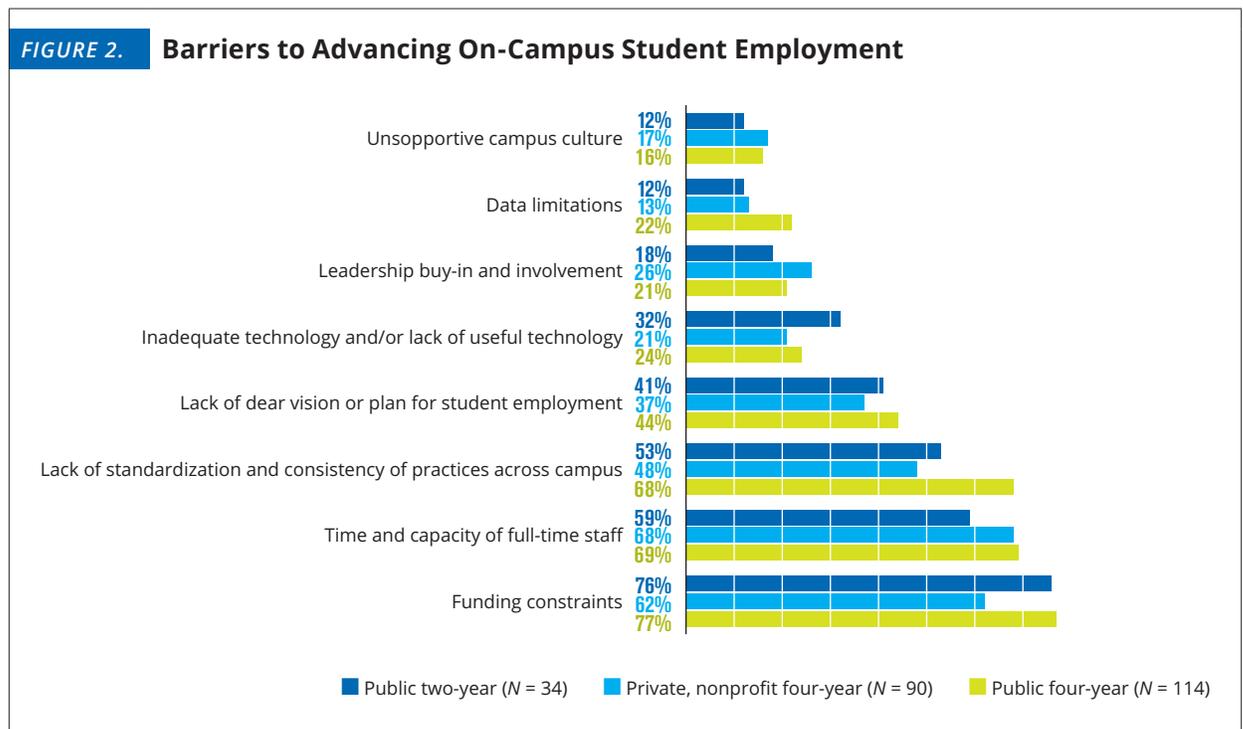


The aggregate of all responses revealed that equipping students with career-readiness competencies (81%) and improving students' financial security (78%) were the most frequently selected goals for an institution's student employment program, followed by retention/completion (69%) and building students' connection to campus (67%). Institutions were also asked to rank the goals of their student employment program by order of importance. Improving students' sense of financial security ranks as the top priority for student employment, with close to 40% of respondents identifying it as the main driver of their employment efforts.

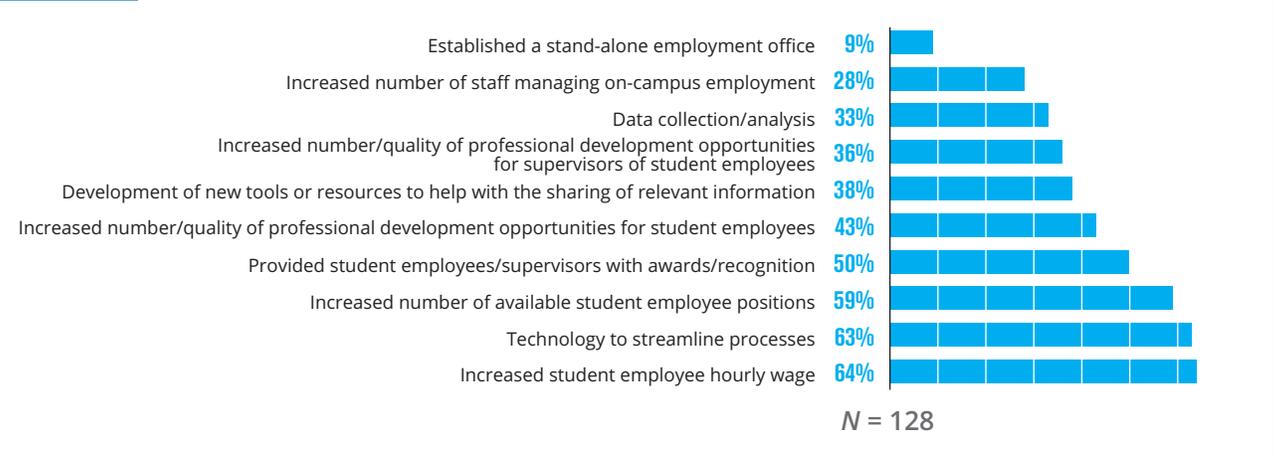
### **INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXTS**

In addition to goals, institutions must take into account their campus culture, ongoing priorities and initiatives, and their most prevalent challenges and limitations when administering student employment programs. Survey respondents were asked to identify the greatest barriers to scaling or advancing student employment at their respective institutions. Figure 2 shows that funding constraints, the time and capacity of full-time staff, and a lack of standardization and consistency of practices across a campus serve as the greatest barriers for all institution types.

Despite funding constraints being the number one barrier for institutions, 54% of survey respondents indicated that they have invested in and utilized resources to support or scale student employment efforts at their institution within the past five years. As illustrated in Figure 3, resources were used to increase hourly wages for students, utilize technology to streamline processes, and increase the number of available student employee positions.



**FIGURE 3. Student Employment Investment Areas in the Past Three to Five Years**



As shown in Table 2, when respondents were asked where their institution would like to invest resources in the next five years, two of the top three desired areas for investment across all institution types are increase professional development offerings for student employees and increase number of positions available. One of the top three desired investment areas did differ for each institution type (bolded in Table 2 below). Respondents from public two-year institutions reported increase student employee hourly wages, respondents from public four-year institutions selected data collection and analysis, and respondents from private four-year institutions selected increase number and quality of professional development opportunities for supervisors of student employees.

**TABLE 2. Top Three Desired Investment Areas Within the Next Three to Five Years**

Public Two-Year (N = 18)	Public Four-Year (N = 59)	Private Four-Year (N = 49)
1) Increase number and quality of professional development opportunities for student employees	1) Increase number of available student employee positions	1) Increase number and quality of professional development opportunities for student employees
2) Increase number of available student employee positions	<b>2) Data collection and analysis</b>	<b>2) Increase number and quality of professional development opportunities for supervisors of student employees</b>
<b>3) Increase student employee hourly wage</b>	3) Increase number and quality of professional development opportunities for student employees	3) Increase number of available student employee positions



*Survey respondents indicated that state and local minimum wage changes, a competitive off-campus job market, and declining resource allocations are the top three environmental factors affecting their student employment programs.*



### **ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS**

Student employment is affected by a number of factors outside of direct campus community control. Institutions must comply with updates in federal, state, and local employment policies in a timely manner and adapt to changes in the local job market. For example, without a commensurate increase in resources, an increase in the state or local minimum wage can directly affect the number students an institution can employ. Additionally, the number of students interested in on-campus positions can depend on the off-campus job market in terms of the number of jobs available and the competitiveness of wages. Student demand, or lack thereof, can consequently affect the number of available positions offered at an institution. Table 3 shows how these and other environmental factors rank across all institution types.

**TABLE 3. Top 10 Environmental Factors That Affect Student Employment (N = 237)**

<b>1</b>	State or local minimum wage changes
<b>2</b>	Competitive off-campus job market
<b>3</b>	Declining resource allocations
<b>4</b>	Changing student demographics, job preparedness, and experience
<b>5</b>	International student hiring policies
<b>6</b>	Changes to Federal Work-Study program
<b>7</b>	Limited access to off-campus jobs
<b>8</b>	Government healthcare and Affordable Care Act regulations
<b>9</b>	Federal or state labor and employment laws
<b>10</b>	Limited off-campus job availability

Survey respondents indicated that state and local minimum wage changes, a competitive off-campus job market, and declining resource allocations are the top three environmental factors affecting their student employment programs. When the data are disaggregated by institution type, limited access to off-campus jobs is a more prevalent factor affecting student employment efforts than declining resource allocations for private four-year institutions.

## THE CURRENT STATE OF STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

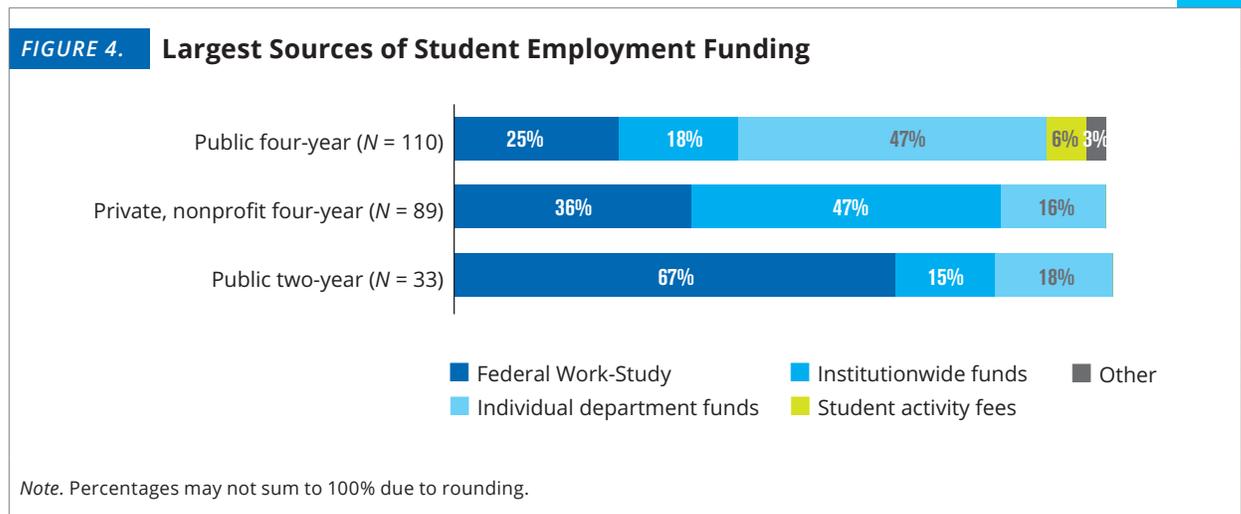
**A**wareness of the internal and external contexts in which an institution operates can influence its answers to critical questions about its on-campus student employment programs.

- **Funding:** What are the funding sources for student employment programs and supports?
- **Management Structure:** How is student employment currently administered on our campus?
- **Hiring Areas:** What areas across the campus employ students?
- **Wages Earned:** How do we determine student employee wages?
- **Hours Worked:** How many hours are students typically working?

This section highlights how institutions have answered these questions and the differences in answers by institution type.

### FUNDING

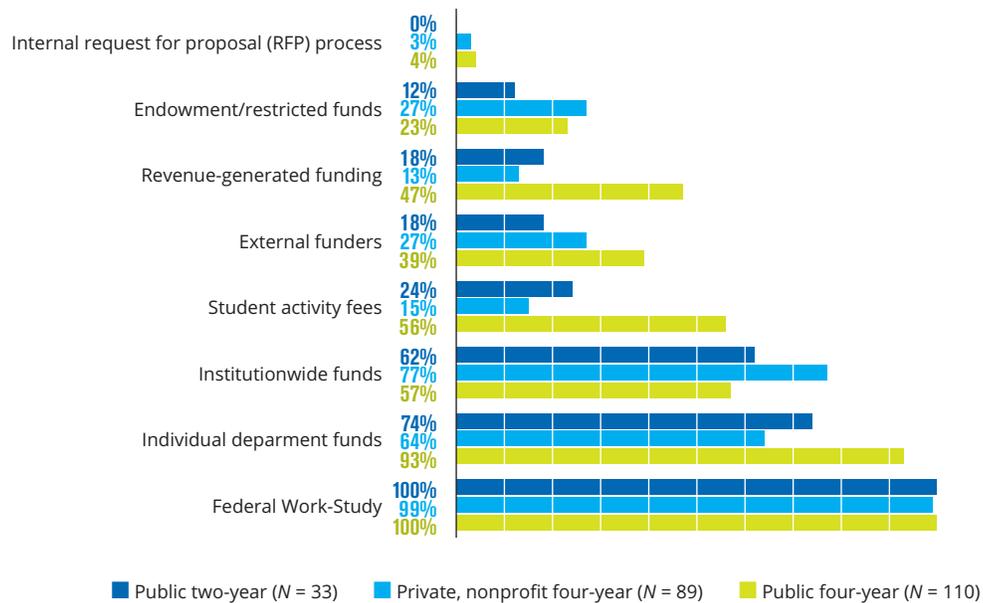
Funding for a student employment program can come from a variety of sources on a campus. Survey data indicate that student employment is primarily funded by the Federal Work-Study program, institutionwide resources, and individual department funds. As shown in Figure 4, the proportion of each source's funding varies by institution type.



While nearly all respondents reported that their student employment program is supported by FWS funds, 67% of respondents from public two-year institutions selected it as the largest funding source, compared with 36% of private four-year and 25% of public four-year institutions.

Figure 5 illustrates that nearly all institutions use a mix of resources to fund student employment. Several professionals noted in campus interviews that the increase in student demand for employment has outpaced levels of FWS funding, which has caused their institution to seek other funding sources to support their programs. Public four-year institutions appear to have the most diverse mix of funding sources, including student activity fees, revenue-generated funding, external funders, and endowment and restricted funds.

**FIGURE 5. All Sources of Student Employment Funding by Institution Type**





## **MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE**

Institutions must have a formalized structure in place for carrying out the day-to-day functions and operations of a student employment program. Core functions range from communicating open positions to students to ensuring that students have a safe space to voice any employment-related concerns. Table 4 provides a sample list of core functions institutions manage as part of their student employment efforts.

**TABLE 4. Core Student Employment Functions**

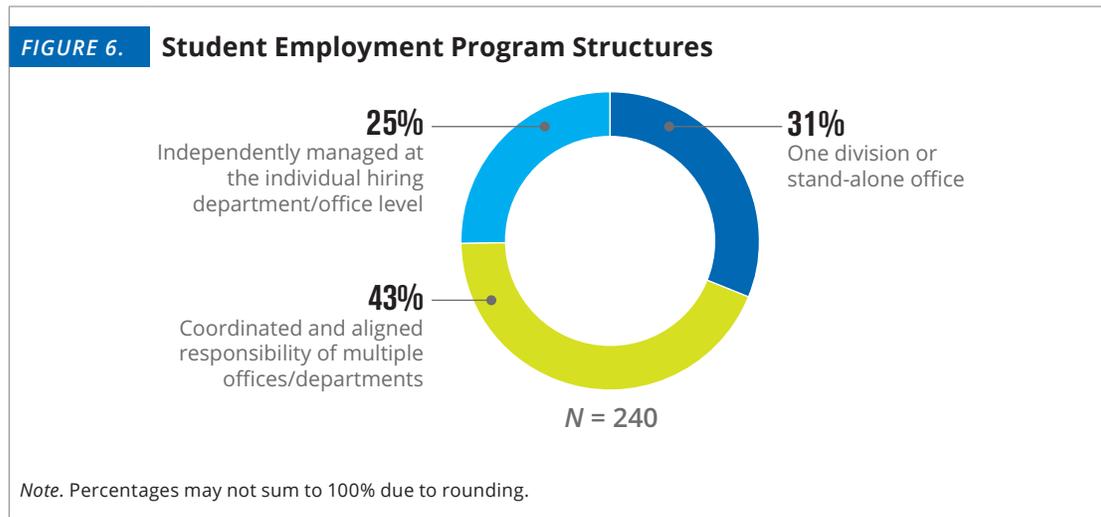
Marketing and outreach of positions
Résumé preparation and job application assistance
Interview preparation
Federal Work-Study compliance
Orientation planning and execution
Professional development planning and execution
Employment data collection
Employment data analysis
Student employee grievances and conduct matters

Campus interview and site visit findings reveal that there is no single best way to manage or structure on-campus student employment to carry out the functions needed to successfully operate a student employment program. Acknowledging the nuance of management styles within institutions, survey data still offer insight into common student employment structures and the spread of responsibilities at the institution level.

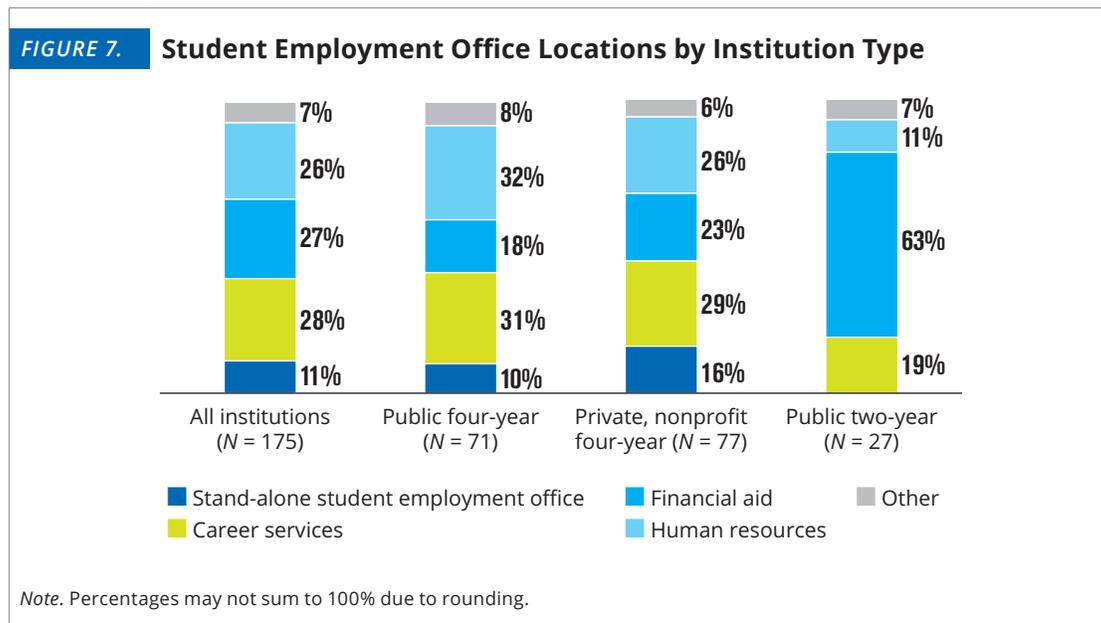
The management of an on-campus employment program can largely be sorted into one of three categories:

- 1 **One division or stand-alone office** that oversees the majority of functions related to developing and coordinating resources and managing the student employee experience at the institution level
- 2 **Coordinated and aligned responsibility of multiple offices and departments** to carry out the management of the student employment efforts, with a clear division of labor responsibilities
- 3 **Independently managed at the individual hiring department or office level**, with little shared functions across the institution

As indicated in Figure 6, institutions appeared somewhat evenly spread across each category. Survey data also reveal that, regardless of management structure category, most institutions have approximately two full-time equivalent professional staff responsible for managing and coordinating student employment efforts at the institution level.



Excluding respondents who report having a student employment program independently managed at the individual hiring department or office level, Figure 7 illustrates the office in which the majority of student employment functions are housed.



Likely due to the prevalence of students who qualify for positions funded by FWS dollars, 63% of public two-year institutions report having student employment primarily housed in the financial aid office. With this exception in mind, program delivery largely requires coordination across functional units regardless of where student employment is housed. In addition to the previously mentioned offices, survey respondents indicated that core student employment functions can also include offices such as payroll, information technology, and institutional research.

Unsurprisingly, survey data indicate that financial aid offices primarily handle FWS compliance matters and human resources offices handle student employee grievances and conduct matters. Employment data collection responsibilities appeared spread across all offices, with it being the most commonly reported activity carried out by payroll offices. A small number of institutions reported institutional research office involvement, and a majority of those reported that the office typically handles data analysis activities. While few institutions report having one, a stand-alone office is primarily involved with marketing and outreach, data collection and analysis, as well as student employee grievances and conduct matters. Notably, data indicate that orientation and professional development activities are primarily managed at the hiring department level. Of the institutions that report having a career services office carry out at least one student employment activity, nearly all institutions reported that the office handles résumé preparation and job application assistance, interview preparation, and marketing and outreach for positions.

## **WAGES**

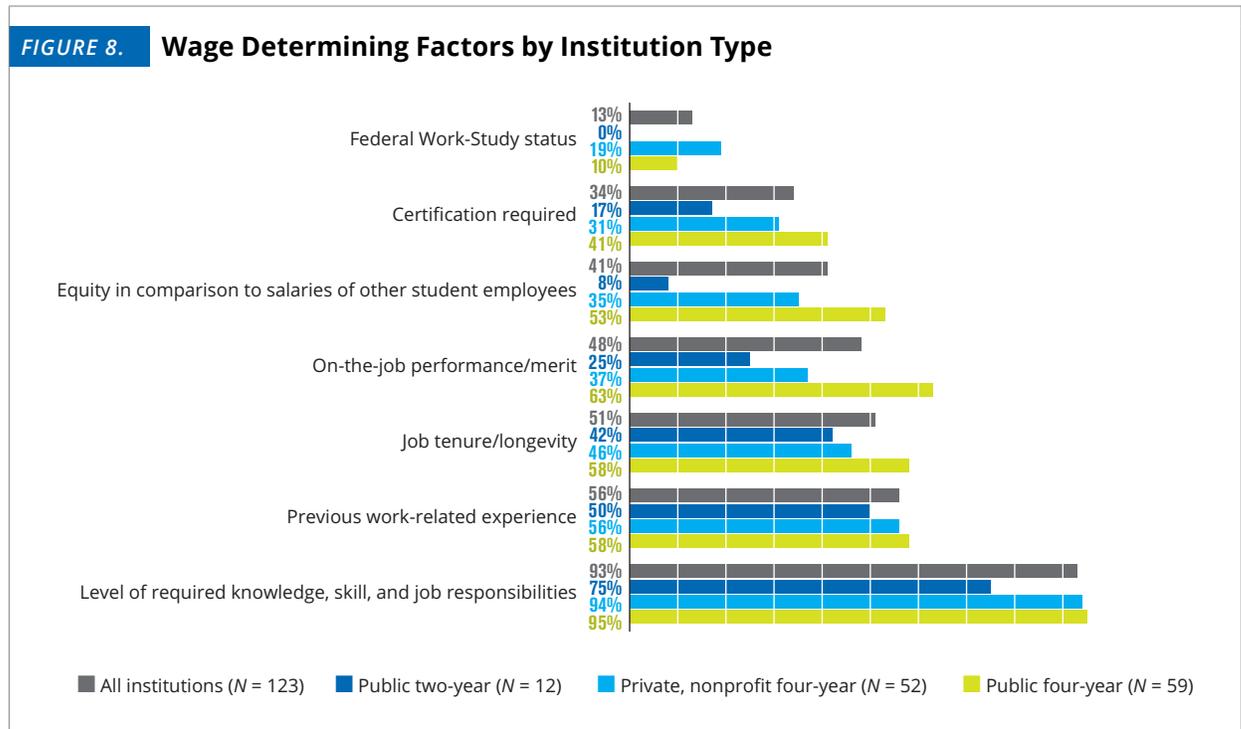
Paying students for their work is an essential component of an on-campus student employment program. For hourly employees, institutions have utilized one of two options: Institutions may provide students with a fixed wage in which all student employees receive the same hourly rate regardless of role or time in position, or institutions may offer student employees a variable wage scale where hourly rates are determined based on a number of factors.

When asked whether the wage is the same for all hourly employees, only 14% of respondents said that it is; the majority (86%) reported having hourly compensation rates that differ depending on one or more factors. Of the respondents from institutions that provide descriptions or other forms of guidance on student employee pay scales or steps, the most commonly selected wage-determining factors include:

- level of required knowledge, skill, and job responsibilities (93%);
- previous work-related experience (56%);
- job tenure and longevity (51%);
- on-the-job performance and merit (48%); and
- equity in comparison to salaries of other student employees (41%).



Figure 8 shows that the most commonly selected wage-determining factors remain relatively consistent across all institution types.

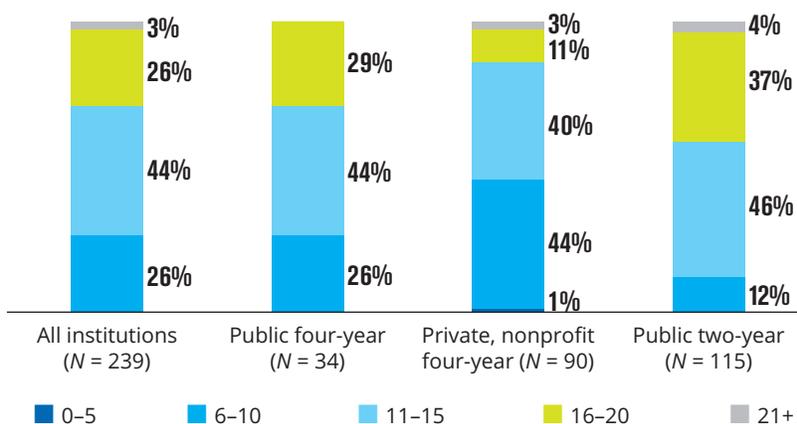


### **HOURS WORKED**

As previously mentioned, research suggests that working too many hours per week can negatively impact a student employee’s academic performance, with students crossing the threshold at somewhere between 16 and 25 hours per week (Hawkins et al., 2005; Pike et al., 2008; Warren, 2002; Wenz & Yu, 2010).

As shown in Figure 9, most institutions reported on-campus student employees working 15 hours or less per week during the fall and spring terms. Private four-year institutions appear to have a greater proportion of student employees working 6 to 10 hours per week than public four-year and public two-year institutions (44%, compared with 12% and 26%, respectively). Additionally, public four-year institutions and public two-year institutions reported having more student employees working 16 to 20 hours per week than private four-year institutions (37% and 29%, compared with 11%, respectively).

**FIGURE 9. Student Employee Hours Worked Per Week by Institution Type**



Note. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

### **HIRING AREAS**

From dining halls and libraries to research labs and administrative offices, student employees can be seen throughout the campus fulfilling various roles and responsibilities for the institution.

According to survey respondents, the top three areas that hire the most student employees are (1) student life and student affairs, (2) recreation services and fitness center, and (3) residential life. When disaggregated by institution type, the top three areas of employment slightly shift. For public four-year institutions, the top areas are (1) residence life, (2) recreation services and fitness center, and (3) academic schools and departments (see Table 5). For private four-year institutions, the top areas are (1) the athletics department, (2) student life and student affairs, and (3) libraries. For public two-year institutions, the top areas are (1) academic support services, (2) student life and student affairs, and (3) academic schools and departments (see Table 6).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Refer to Methodology section. This portion of the survey asked respondents questions about student employees who fell outside the scope of the primary definition. To capture high-level data on the size and breadth of on-campus employment, the survey question on top hiring areas includes student employees who receive any form of compensation (i.e., hourly wages, stipends, or housing).



**TABLE 5. Top Eight Student Employee Hiring Areas (N = 236)**

1	Student life/student affairs (general)
2	Recreation services/fitness center
3	Residential life
4	Academic schools/departments
5	Athletics department
6	Dining halls/food services
7	Academic support services
8	Libraries

**TABLE 6. Top Three Student Employee Hiring Areas by Institution Type**

	Public Two-Year (N = 33)	Public Four-Year (N = 113)	Private Four-Year (N = 90)
1	Academic support services	Residential life	Athletics department
2	Student life/student affairs (general)	Recreation services/fitness center	Student life/student affairs (general)
3	Academic schools/departments	Academic schools/departments	Libraries

The above analysis highlights the key areas of difference and similarity across institutions in terms of student employment resources, management structures, operations, and policies. The current state of student employment demonstrates that colleges and universities across the United States have invested considerable time and resources into advancing the delivery and impact of on-campus student employment efforts.

## ENHANCING THE STUDENT EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

Increased recognition of the distinct and pragmatic value of on-campus employment has led colleges and universities across the United States to establish bolder goals and expectations for the practice to maximize its impact on student success. Achieving the desired state will require both the will and the understanding of what comprises a highly effective student employment program.

Driven by an evolved sense of purpose for on-campus employment, institutions can draw from existing research to infuse the practice with high-impact activities known to help students of all backgrounds persist, accelerate their learning, and build career-readiness skills. Based on insights from an extensive review of literature, campus interviews, and site visit data, activities within a highly impactful student employment program may include:

- establishment of foundational requirements or criteria to ensure preparedness and clarity regarding student and employer goals and expectations;
- cultivation of a supportive student-supervisor relationship in which the supervisor provides guidance and constructive feedback;
- frequent opportunities for student articulation of learning and reflection on the connections between the student's experience, their coursework, and long-term career goals;
- engagement in both planned and authentic programming that allows for application of classroom learning, exploration of professional skills, and the development of relevant learning outcomes; and
- acknowledgment and documentation of student growth, contributions, and commitment during and after the experience.

Colleges and universities may sequence or prioritize these activities based on their relevance and fit across diverse contexts. Integrating a variation of one or all of the above activities into an on-campus student employment program will require the implementation and maintenance of several capacity areas at the institution level. Conditions needed to ensure that students can achieve a highly impactful experience include leadership engagement, equitable hiring processes, growth and professional development opportunities, articulated learning outcomes, and assessment and evaluation. For each of these capacity areas, there are guiding principles institutions can use to elevate their student employment program to the next level (see Table 7).



**TABLE 7. Student Employment Capacity Areas**

<b>Leadership Engagement</b>	
<b>Goal Setting</b>	Integrate retention and student learning as primary goals of student employment.
<b>Institutional Alignment</b>	Prioritize and invest in student employment resources to support campuswide student success goals.
<b>Hiring Policies and Procedures</b>	
<b>Outreach and Awareness</b>	Ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to apply for a position.
<b>Application Procedures</b>	Create a hiring experience that allows students to practice and develop professional job-seeking skills and provides students with clear information about job expectations.
<b>Growth and Professional Development Opportunities</b>	
<b>Student Employee Supports</b>	Provide professional development opportunities for students to further build critical career-readiness skills.
<b>Supervisor Capacity</b>	Provide clear guidelines and support for supervisors of student employees.
<b>Recognition</b>	Identify ways to recognize and highlight the contributions of student employees.
<b>Student Learning Outcomes</b>	
<b>Learning Framework</b>	Identify institutionwide student learning outcomes of employment opportunities.
<b>Feedback and Reflection</b>	Help student employees evaluate and document their learnings from their employment experience.
<b>Assessment and Evaluation</b>	
<b>Student Success Data</b>	Use data to understand and share the impact of student employment.

More information on the how institutions use these student employment capacity areas and associated guiding principles is provided in subsequent sections.

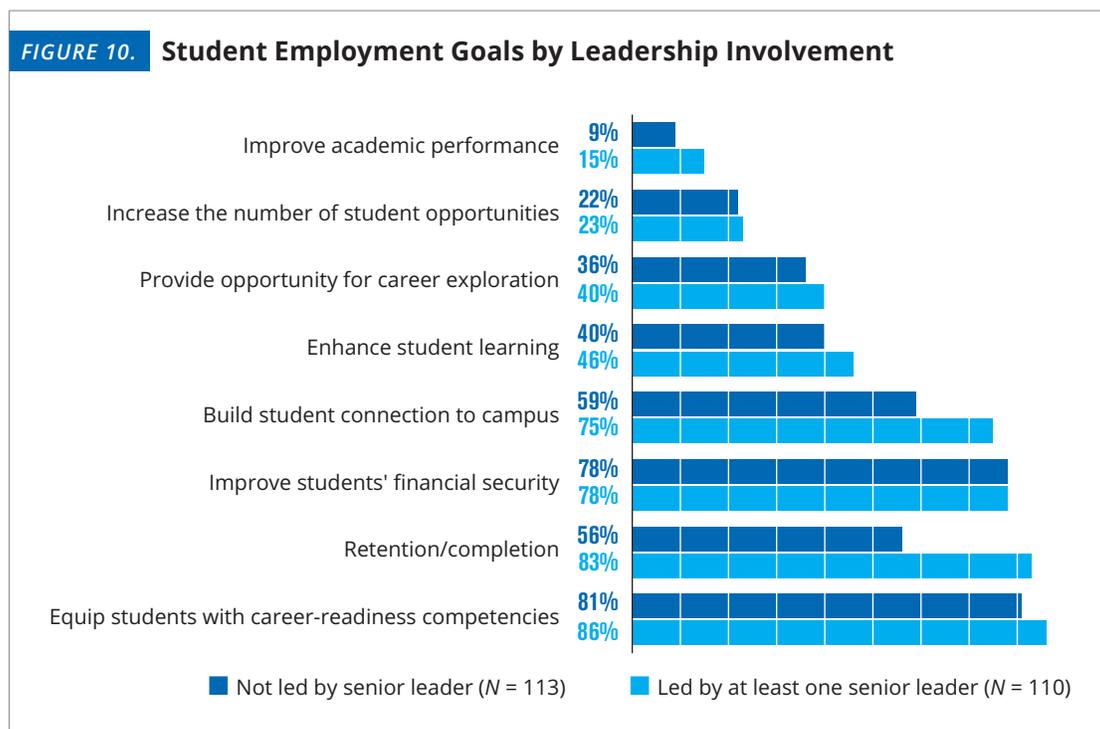
## LEADERSHIP ENGAGEMENT

### GOAL SETTING: INTEGRATE RETENTION AND STUDENT LEARNING AS PRIMARY GOALS OF STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

The findings of this research indicate that institutions with senior-level or cabinet member involvement are better positioned to elevate their student employment program as a multifaceted student success strategy. During interviews and site visits, practitioners touted the importance of leadership buy-in and engagement in facilitating staff and faculty buy-in and communicating the value of student employment for students, faculty, and staff.

Approximately 47% of survey respondents report that their student employment vision and strategy is set by a senior leader or cabinet member. Revisiting data displayed in aggregate in Figure 1, Figure 10 shows the goals of student employment disaggregated by whether respondents reported having leadership involvement. Figure 10 shows that, while financial security and building career-readiness skills still remain the top identified student employment for all respondents, those with senior-level respondents were more likely to select goals of improved student retention, completion, and connection to campus than those without senior leader involvement.

One caveat to highlight is that while the other half of responding institutions may not report having a senior leader directing the strategy or vision for student employment, those institutions may still have senior leaders who participate in planning conversations and embrace the vision set by other administrators.

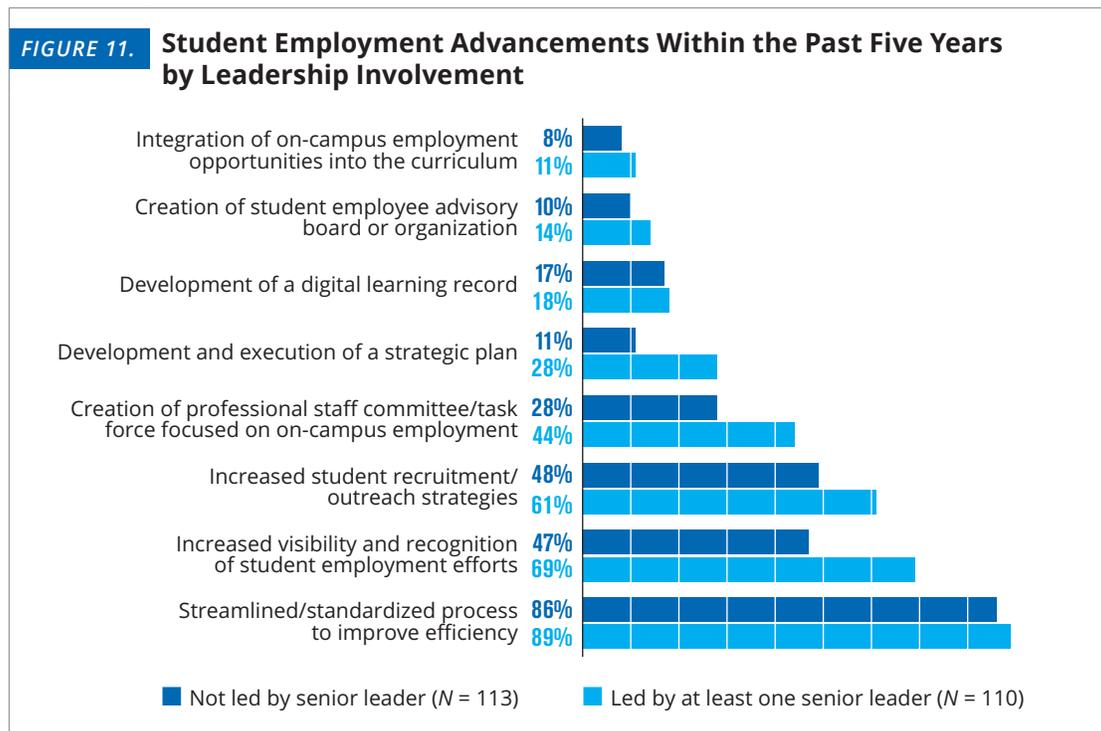


**INSTITUTIONAL ALIGNMENT: PRIORITIZE AND INVEST IN STUDENT EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES TO SUPPORT CAMPUSWIDE STUDENT SUCCESS GOALS**

To enhance the student employment experience, resources are needed to build, strengthen, and maintain student employment opportunities and supports. Survey results reveal that many institutions both with and without significant senior leadership involvement have made advancements in their student employment programs within the past three to five years. For example, several institutions have used their resources to streamline or standardize student employment processes. However, as previously mentioned, 80% of institutions report funding constraints as a barrier to advancing and scaling their student employment program. Further leveraging senior leadership can help overcome this barrier.

In a time of limited and diminishing resources, leadership engagement is critical to ensure that an institution takes the necessary campuswide actions to improve the employment experience for students. Research findings show a greater percentage of respondents with leadership at the institution or division level report advances in their student employment programs and investments in innovative ideas than those without such leadership. As shown in Figure 11, respondents whose senior leadership was involved in setting the vision for student employment also reported progress in concerted efforts to:

- increase the visibility and recognition of student employment efforts;
- create a professional staff or task force focused on on-campus employment;
- increase student recruitment and outreach strategies; and
- develop and execute a strategic plan that incorporates student employment.



## **UTILIZING STUDENT EMPLOYMENT AS A CAMPUSWIDE STUDENT SUCCESS STRATEGY**

UTEP Edge is more than an initiative; it is a cross-campus culture of student success. Developed in 2016 as part of The University of Texas at El Paso's (UTEP's) quality enhancement plan, UTEP Edge develops student success through a range of 10 high-impact engagement experiences, including on-campus student employment. As a part of a campuswide investment with an asset-based philosophy for change, student employment is administered as an interconnected experience that helps students identify and apply their strengths while making valuable contributions to the campus community.

By having at least one dedicated campus ambassador overseeing the advancement of each Edge experience, cross-campus collaboration is structurally baked in to the student employment experience. For student employment, this has resulted in the creation of a position that reports to a senior student affairs administrator and is responsible for overseeing all campus student employment. The student employment ambassador benefits from sitting in an independent position that directly involves senior student affairs leadership, while maintaining formal lines of communication with student employers and counterparts who manage the nine other campus Edge experiences. Given the extensive Edge branding and communication efforts, on-campus employment is widely recognized across the UTEP campus as a strategic priority with a focus on advancing student learning. Positive brand awareness gives students confidence in the benefits that will come from an on-campus employment opportunity and provides supervisors with a clear understanding of how the practice links back to a larger institutional vision.

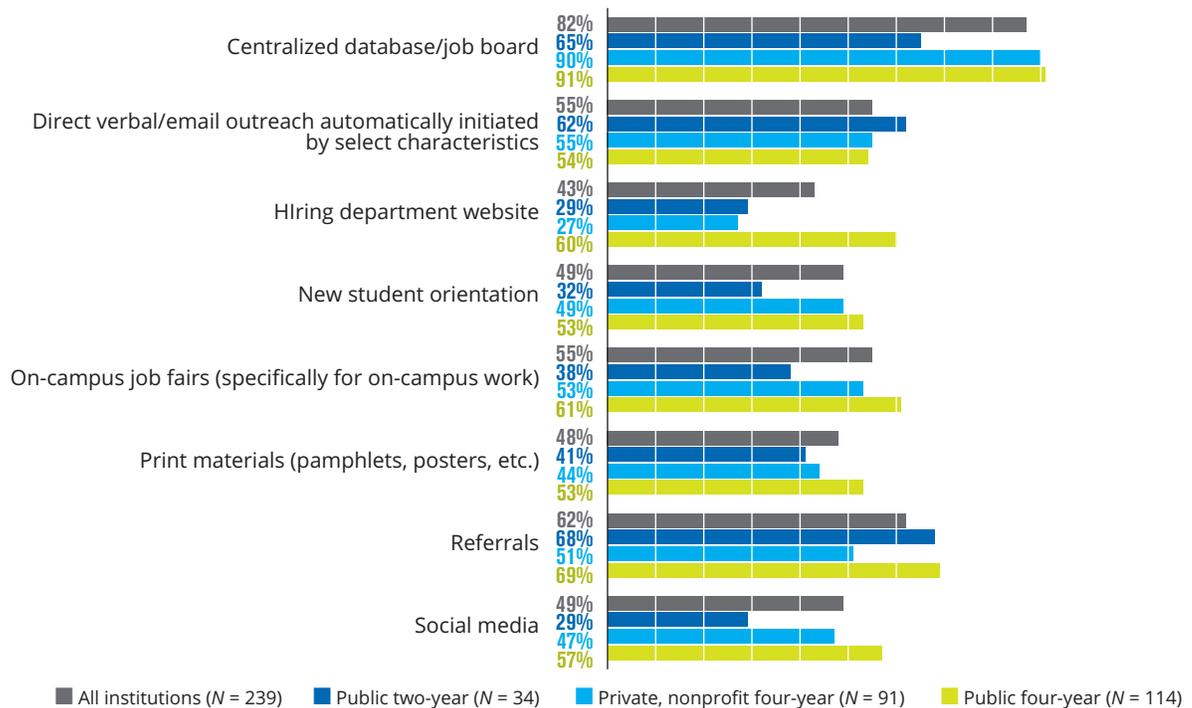


## HIRING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### **OUTREACH AND AWARENESS: ENSURE THAT ALL STUDENTS HAVE AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY TO APPLY FOR A POSITION**

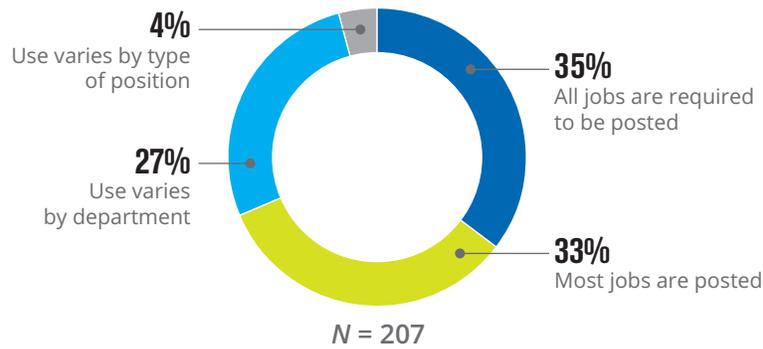
To maximize the reach and impact of on-campus employment, all students must be aware of the availability and value of employment opportunities and have access to the information needed to apply for those opportunities. Figure 12 shows the various ways institutions communicate employment opportunities to students. Survey respondents reported a mixed use of methods to inform students about employment opportunities, with the top two methods being a centralized database or job board (87%) and referrals (67%). Institutions are also using job fairs, social media, and new student orientation to reach and inform more students about opportunities.

**FIGURE 12. Outreach Methods of Student Employment Opportunities by Institution Type**



While having multiple outreach strategies is important for helping students identify and ultimately secure on-campus employment positions, the most important outreach is for institutions to have all jobs posted in a central location. Requiring hiring departments to post open positions in a central location may help institutions shift away from word-of-mouth hiring that can unfairly advantage well-connected students over equally qualified peers who may not know such opportunities exist. As shown in Figure 13, 35% of institutions that report having a centralized job posting board also report requiring all jobs to be posted, and another 33% of them say that most jobs are posted.

**FIGURE 13. Centralized Job Posting Usage**



Note. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

**APPLICATION PROCEDURES: CREATE A HIRING EXPERIENCE THAT ALLOWS STUDENTS TO PRACTICE AND DEVELOP PROFESSIONAL JOB-SEEKING SKILLS AND PROVIDES STUDENTS WITH CLEAR INFORMATION ABOUT JOB EXPECTATIONS**

The application process for an on-campus position has become another increasingly critical element of the student employment experience. Institutions should use the hiring process to expose students to the realities of obtaining employment. To model the real-world experience, institutions should develop student employment hiring practices and policies that are comparable to the processes required for professional staff and those that students will follow when they apply for off-campus jobs. This primarily involves (a) clearly articulating job functions and expectations up front, and (b) requiring students to submit formal application documents.

One way to ensure that potential student employees better understand the expectations about the positions for which they can apply is to create comprehensive position descriptions they can review prior to submitting application materials. Institutions should develop position descriptions that accurately and clearly reflect employee job responsibilities, preferred skill sets, expected learning outcomes, and earning potential. Encouragingly, survey results revealed that 84% of institutions currently require position descriptions for all on-campus job postings. Institutions should inform prospective applicants of learning outcomes they can expect as a result of a potential employment experience. As shown in Table 8, this can serve as a new practice for institutions to implement, given that only 35% reportedly require or explicitly encourage the use of learning outcomes or job competencies in the position description. This finding is consistent across all institution types.

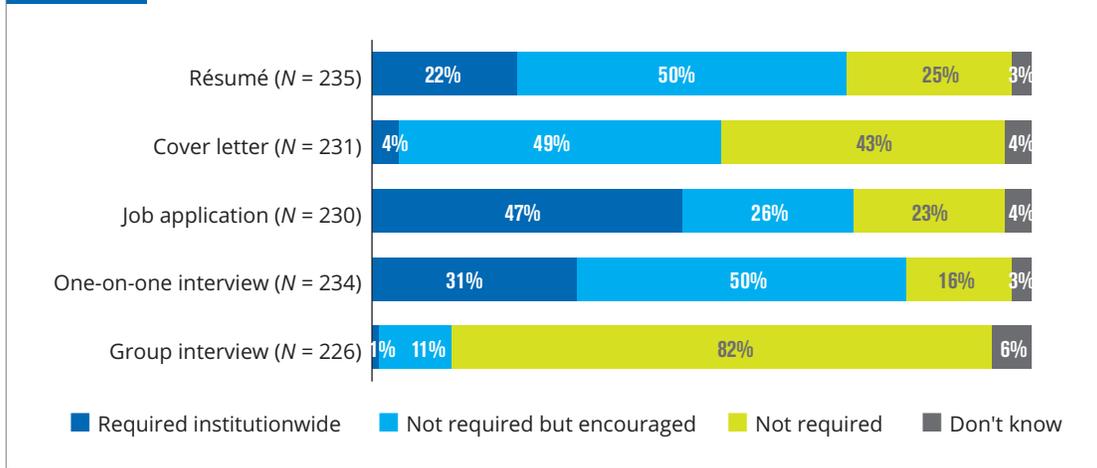
**TABLE 8. Usage of Learning Outcomes and/or Job Competencies in Position Descriptions by Institution Type**

	All		Public Four-Year		Private, Nonprofit Four-Year		Public Two-Year	
	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Yes	35%	68	33%	28	37%	29	35%	11
No	63%	123	65%	56	59%	47	65%	20
Don't Know	3%	5	2%	2	4%	3	0%	0

*Note.* Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Once a student fully understands a position’s responsibilities and employment criteria, the student should enter a hiring process that requires them to submit a résumé, cover letter, job application, and participate in an interview. Interviews with institutions revealed that campus employers are often encouraged but not required to have these elements as part of their hiring process. Many schools allow individual hiring departments to establish their own hiring processes or requirements. Figure 14 shows that 47% of institutions require students to submit job applications as part of the hiring process. However, most other hiring process elements, such as the use of one-on-one interviews (50%), résumés (50%), and cover letters (49%), are encouraged but not required institutionwide.

**FIGURE 14. Hiring Process Elements by Level of Requirement**



Notably, the purpose of asking students to complete these application requirements is to provide them with a low-risk space to experience a hiring process similar to that required by off-campus employers, while also providing them with a new learning and development opportunity to complete. The application requirements are not meant to serve as barriers to students applying for a job or to be highly weighted in hiring decisions. To minimize any potential challenges or discomfort for students, institutions can consider directing students to career services or another office that can help students develop their résumés and cover letters and prepare for interviews.

## CREATING A CULTURE OF STUDENT EMPLOYMENT APPRECIATION AT MVCC

At Moraine Valley Community College (MVCC), student employees are seen as valuable professionals whose contributions are integral to the efficient operation of campus programs and offices. With student employment positions spread across a wide variety of departments, student employment is highly regarded by both students and faculty on the MVCC campus. This positive perception is largely the result of the Job Resource Center's (JRC's) intentional efforts.

As an introduction to campus employment, new student employees are required to attend orientation led by the JRC. Students are paid for their time spent during the orientation, which reinforces the importance of attendance. The orientation session offers an overview of relevant federal, state, and campus policies for student employees, and also provides tips on how students can succeed in their positions. The session includes information intended to prepare student employees for success and proactively address any confusion or misunderstanding about workplace etiquette. By consciously shifting language from student *aides* to student *employees*, the JRC helps set the tone that students are held to the same standards of professionalism as any other staff member employed by the college. Additionally, the JRC asks that new student employees and their respective supervisors sign a student employee contract. The document outlines 10 requirements and guidelines to ensure all student employees have a clear understanding about the level of professionalism expected from them.

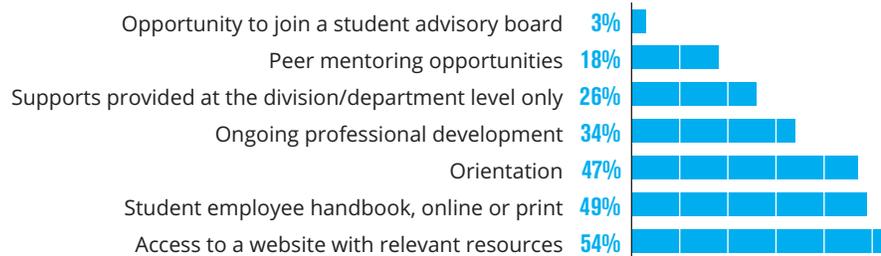
Setting high expectations of student employees as professionals is complementary to the campus culture of student employment appreciation. As part of National Student Employment Week, the JRC hosts a luncheon dedicated to recognizing the high-quality work and achievements of student employees and their supervisors. During the luncheon, the JRC presents data on the grade point averages, retention rates, and completion rates of on-campus student employees compared with the outcomes of the overall MVCC student population. Another way the JRC proudly communicates the success of on-campus student employees is by recognizing a Student Employee of the Year, who earns a \$250 scholarship and whose name is displayed on a plaque in the JRC office. Celebrating student employee success not only serves as a motivational boost for employees, but it also helps raise awareness about the benefits of student employment to other departments and students across campus.

## GROWTH AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

### **STUDENT EMPLOYEE SUPPORTS: PROVIDE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS TO FURTHER BUILD CRITICAL CAREER-READINESS SKILLS**

Once hired for an on-campus position, student employees should receive an array of supports for the purposes of both information sharing and skill development. Figure 15 shows the extent to which such supports are currently offered to student employees at the institution level. The three most frequently selected institutionwide supports are access to a website with relevant resources (53%), a student employee handbook available online or in print (49%), and orientation (47%). Websites, handbooks, and orientation sessions geared toward student employees may include a review of relevant campus, state, and federal policies, and other forms of guidance meant to equip student employees with the tools needed to succeed in the workplace.

**FIGURE 15. Student Employee Resources and Support**

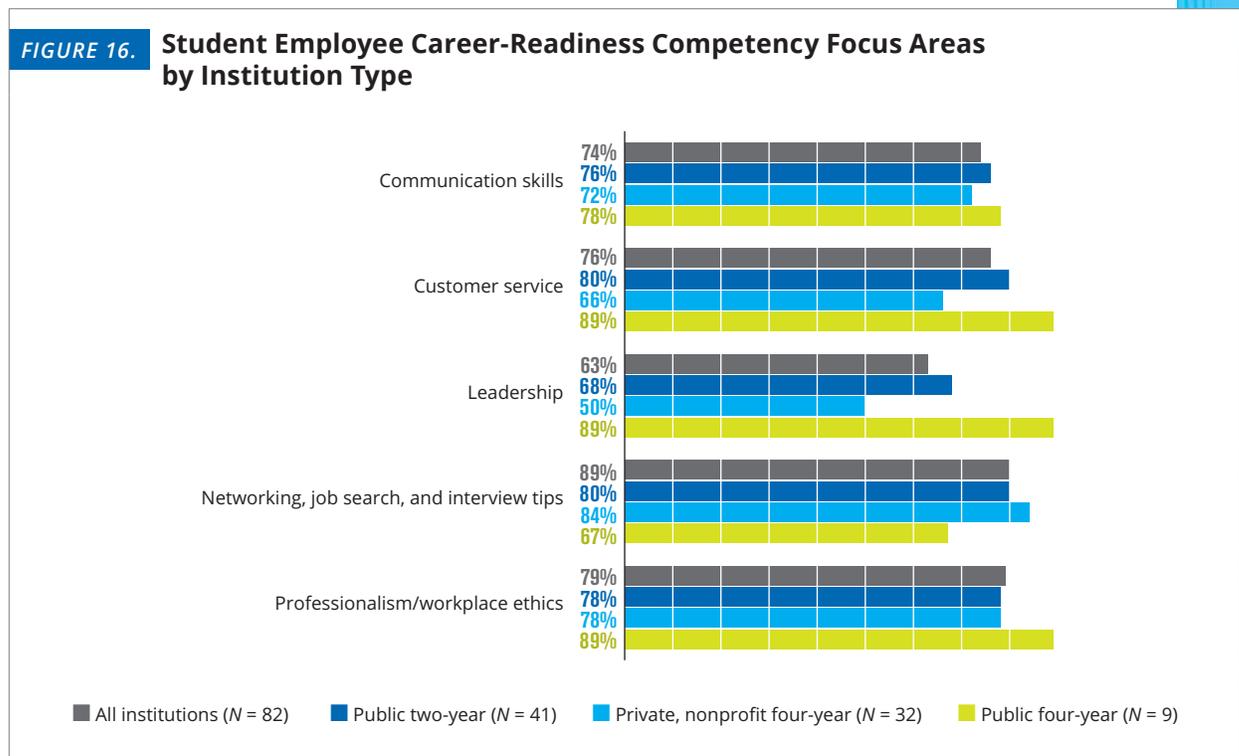


*N* = 239

Moreover, 26% of respondents noted that student employee supports are provided at the hiring department or division level rather than at the institution level. This may help explain why few survey respondents reported offering peer mentorship or student employee advisory board opportunities (18% and 3%, respectively) despite interview and site visit data suggesting that such supports are still happening on campuses at a smaller scale.

While the types of support may vary within and across campuses, institutions should work to ensure that all student employees—regardless of where they are hired—are provided with sufficient foundational information and opportunities needed for them to develop career-readiness competencies. Of respondents who report that their institutions offer ongoing professional development opportunities, the most frequently selected topics available to student employees include: (a) networking, job search, and interview tips; (b) professionalism and workplace ethics; (c) customer service; (d) communication skills; and (e) leadership. As shown in Figure 16, the prevalence of these topics is relatively consistent across all institution types.

**FIGURE 16. Student Employee Career-Readiness Competency Focus Areas by Institution Type**



## **SPECIAL ON-CAMPUS PROGRAMS TO BUILD CAREER-READINESS SKILLS**

Internships are intended to provide students with opportunities to explore career interests, develop competencies, and apply lessons from academic coursework in a supervised, professional setting. These principles, traditionally guiding the structure of off-campus internships, can be adapted to an on-campus setting (McClellan et al., 2018). With limited resources, several colleges and universities have implemented on-campus employment programs that are distinct from entry-level positions as a way to provide advanced opportunities for students who are either high-performing or who are interested in the rigor that comes with a campus employment opportunity aligned with their academic coursework. These specialized on-campus programs may require students to take a supplementary class or training series for academic credit. Such specialized programs tend to be smaller, more resource intensive, and more competitive than other campus employment opportunities because they often offer high-quality professional development opportunities tailored to student career interests. Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis, Clemson University, and Valencia College all offer programs that exemplify such characteristics in practice.



Led by the student employment office at Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis, the Hire Achievers Program is a paid, on-campus career and professional readiness program that requires specific interactions between undergraduate student employees and supervising staff. Students must attend one session of a Campus Employment Essentials for Student Employees class, a one-credit-hour Experience in Professionalism course, and four other professional development opportunities determined by the department or supervisor.

Clemson University offers a University Professional Internship and Co-op (UPIC) program that provides undergraduate students with mentorship and supervision as they participate in a professional on-campus work experience related to their field of interest and study. Students accepted into the program receive a competitive wage and are eligible for course credit on completion of a mandatory online internship course, which includes timely completion of projects assigned by mentors and a site visit. UPIC



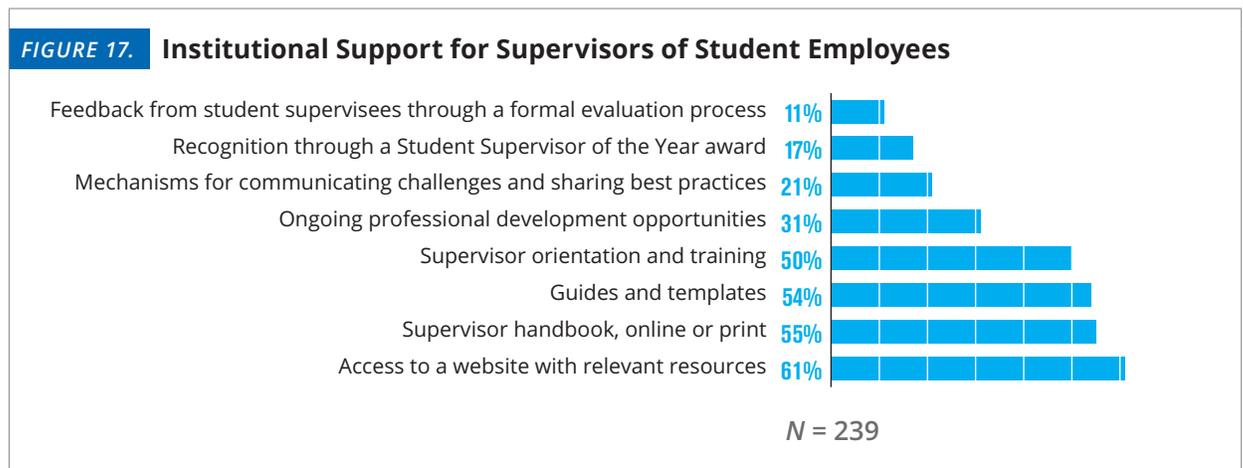
interns who pass the course are eligible for pay rate increases and also have the opportunity to earn an academic notation validating their internship experience on their transcript. Interns who do not pass the course are required to meet with UPIC site coordinators to create a success plan prior to applying for another internship. To ensure high-quality internship experiences for the students, the program requires hiring departments interested in supervising and mentoring interns to submit detailed proposals outlining the responsibilities and learning objectives of the internship opportunity, which must meet UPIC criteria.

Valencia College offers an extensive leadership series for students employed in select departments under student affairs. Groups that are a part of Valencia LIVE (Leadership equals Integrity, Values, and Experience) are: Atlas Access Labs, the Answer Center, Financial Learning Ambassadors, New Student Orientation, the Campus Activities Board, Transition Services, Valencia Volunteers, and Wellness Ambassadors. LIVE participants attend several Leadership Academy sessions, an Emerging Leaders Conference, and a leadership symposium to help develop communication, collaboration, and interpersonal skills applicable in both academic and workplace environments.

## **SUPERVISOR CAPACITY: PROVIDE CLEAR GUIDELINES AND SUPPORT FOR SUPERVISORS OF STUDENT EMPLOYEES**

Supervisors serve as the linchpin that determines whether a student employee's experience is meaningful or menial (Burnside, 2017). In addition to playing a professional managerial role, supervisors often serve as mentors and advisors to students. Those supervising students for the first time may desire or need some assistance in succeeding in their multifaceted role. Even the most tenured supervisor must continuously invest time and energy into planning effective ways to develop their student employees and how to maximize their time together.

Institutions recognize the importance of highly effective supervisors and have developed tools and resources to help them understand and navigate their roles. Figure 17 shows the range of institution-level supports provided to professional staff who supervise student employees.



Over 60% of institutions provide supervisors with access to a website with relevant resources, 55% offer supervisor handbooks available online or in print, 54% provide guides and templates, and 50% offer orientation and training. These supports often provide supervisors with information on relevant human resources policies, how-to guides on conducting employee evaluations, and other resources that help establish expectations for student employee management (Burnside, 2017). Institutions should establish clear mechanisms for communication and improvement that may come in the form of periodic meetings, workshops, or trainings where supervisors can share new ideas for improvement, promising practices, and common challenges with each other.



**WHEN TWO COLLEGES ARE BETTER THAN ONE**

More than 40 miles away from the Twin Cities, St. Olaf College and Carleton College are neighboring private liberal arts colleges in the fairly small town of Northfield, Minnesota. Despite differences in institutional culture and mission, the two colleges benefit from a history of collaboration and resource alignment, including sharing library services, information technology, management operations, and academic programs. In another partnership effort, the colleges jointly offer on-campus student employment training for any campus faculty or staff interested in the topic of developing student employees, including those who may be direct supervisors of student employees (Carleton College, 2017). The colleges typically offer the training sessions once a year, typically with a morning session at one institution and another session the following afternoon at the other. Professional development opportunities are a key aspect of advancing student employment programs and can serve as a way to bring supervisors together to share ideas and promising practices. By sharing the travel and housing costs of outside guest speakers, the colleges are able to feature speakers for two days rather than one. St. Olaf and Carleton mutually leverage individual resources to cut down training session costs and maximize the number of student employee supervisors served.

**RECOGNITION: IDENTIFY WAYS TO RECOGNIZE AND HIGHLIGHT THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF STUDENT EMPLOYEES**

Institutions should identify ways to recognize and reward student employees for their efforts, accomplishments, and growth as professionals. As previously mentioned (see Figure 3), 50% of respondents from institutions that invested funds to support student employment efforts over the past three to five years report using funds to provide student employees or supervisors with some form of award or recognition.

When possible, student employment opportunities should be structured in a way that allows for the upward advancement of student employees who have demonstrated excellent on-the-job performance, skill development, or other forms of merit. Such promotions should include a meaningful shift to higher-level job responsibilities and position title, as well as an increase in wages if sufficient resources are available. Some institutions may offer special on-campus leadership development employment programs that give participants exclusive access to additional coaching, mentoring, and individualized professional development opportunities. Such programs may have more extensive application requirements than other on-campus positions as a way to manage a limited budget and also ensure that student employees are prepared for advanced workloads.

Rewarding the success of student employees not only serves as an extrinsic motivator for student employees, but it can also be a communication and recruitment tool. Public displays of celebration help raise awareness about the value of student employment and can help increase buy-in among departments that do not already hire student employees and are missing out on an important opportunity. Similarly, widespread communication about the benefits of on-campus employment can help attract students who do not already work in on-campus positions.



*Rewarding the success of student employees not only serves as an extrinsic motivator for student employees, but it can also be a communication and recruitment tool.*





## **NATIONAL STUDENT EMPLOYMENT WEEK**

### ***AN OPPORTUNITY FOR RECOGNITION, CELEBRATION, AND DEVELOPMENT***

Student employees deserve to be recognized for their valuable contributions to college campuses. National Student Employment Week is an annual celebration of student employee and supervisor accomplishments, and typically includes a series of relevant events and activities such as job fairs, award ceremonies, or professional development workshops. Setting aside an entire week to celebrate student employment helps student employees feel appreciated and simultaneously helps raise department and student body awareness about the benefits and importance of the practice.

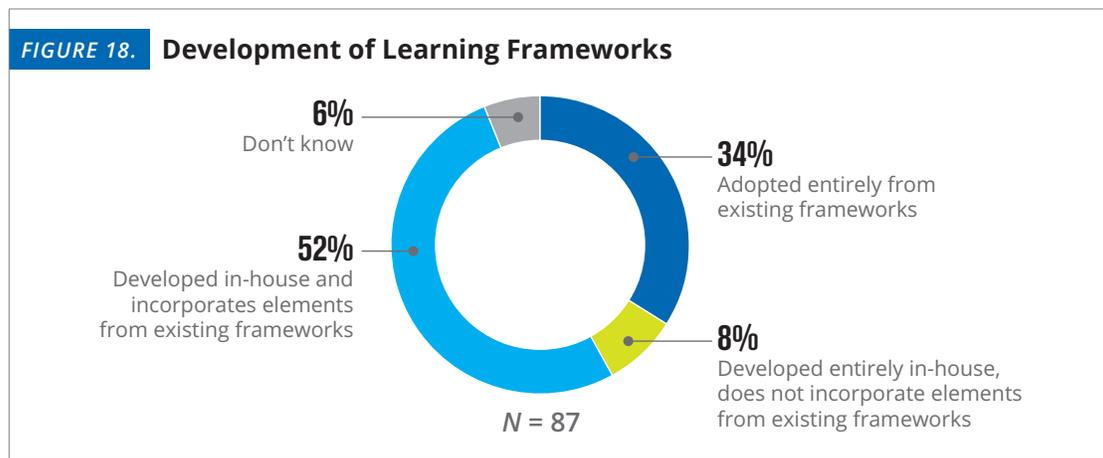
During National Student Employment Week, institutions are encouraged to participate in the National Student Employee of the Year competition. The process is managed by the National Student Employment Association (NSEA), which is the leading source of professional development opportunities for those involved with administering student employment programs. Student employees are first nominated by their supervisors before becoming eligible for the regional competition. NSEA's regional affiliates may then nominate their respective Student Employees of the Year for the national competition. Winners receive a \$1,000 cash prize and a visit from the NSEA president or designee.

## STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

### **LEARNING FRAMEWORK: IDENTIFY INSTITUTIONWIDE STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

Students can develop a variety of skills and competencies from their on-campus employment experiences. However, institutions may find it difficult to consistently identify and capture learning without having a shared understanding of the knowledge and skill sets students are intended to acquire from an experience. By developing a framework that defines and categorizes learning, institutions can more easily structure different employment experiences around learning and then consistently assess that learning.

Of the 37% of respondents that report currently having or developing a learning framework in relation to student employment, Figure 18 shows the mix of those from an institution with a framework adopted entirely from an existing learning framework (34%), developed entirely in-house (8%), or developed in-house with some elements of an existing framework (52%).



Two of the most commonly used frameworks for establishing student learning outcomes are the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) career-readiness competencies and the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) learning outcomes under the Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) initiative.

Based on results from an annual survey of employers, NACE offers a list of the top eight skills and qualities that employers are looking for in new hires. Students should presumably develop these competencies in college so that they are prepared to successfully enter the workforce upon graduation. NACE career-readiness competencies include: (a) critical thinking and problem solving, (b) oral and written communication, (c) teamwork and collaboration, (d) digital technology, (e) leadership, (f) professionalism and work ethic, (g) career management, and (h) global and intercultural fluency (NACE, 2017).

Under the AAC&U LEAP initiative, students should demonstrate the application of the following learning outcomes: (a) knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world, (b) intellectual and practical skills, (c) personal and social responsibility, and (d) integrative and applied learning (AAC&U, 2011). Establishing a common learning framework can enable campuses to draw connections across learning experiences and guide the vision-setting and planning processes for student employment.

### **CONNECTIONS WITH CAREER DEVELOPMENT AT STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY**

**S**tony Brook University, a large public research university on Long Island, New York, has leveraged its centralized and comprehensive career center to transform traditional on-campus jobs into work-integrated learning opportunities. In an effort to reenvision the student employment unit, the director of the career center formally launched an organizational change initiative in 2015. Using a career development lens, essential decision points key to the success of the initiative include:

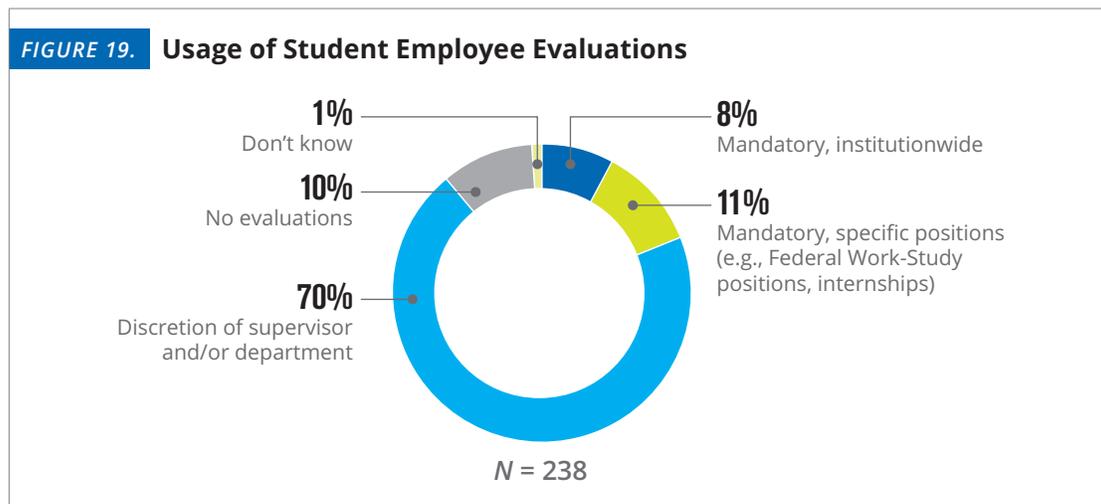
- using NACE career-readiness competencies as the framework for learning outcomes;
- engaging faculty to work together and create rubrics with which to evaluate student employee attainment of learning outcomes; and
- adapting an existing digital badging system at the university to recognize student achievement of career-readiness competencies through on-campus jobs.

By aligning with the career center, the formerly fragmented student employment unit now includes hiring departments that are more intentional about supporting and recognizing student employee learning.



### **FEEDBACK AND REFLECTION: HELP STUDENT EMPLOYEES EVALUATE AND DOCUMENT THEIR LEARNINGS FROM THEIR EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**

Institutions should ensure that student employees are provided with opportunities to reflect on what they are learning throughout their employment experience. While having a learning framework in place can serve as a valuable asset for institutions assessing student employee learning, institutions with less formal guidance can and should still evaluate the extent to which stated learning objectives are being met. Institutions may encourage or require supervisors to engage in regular feedback or evaluation sessions to help student employees establish and articulate progress in meeting their own goals as well as the learning objectives set out by the institution. Committing time to reflect on an experience can help student employees practice articulating what they are learning and how their job connects with what they are learning in their coursework. As shown in Figure 19, 70% of respondents report student employee evaluations happening at the discretion of supervisors or hiring departments.



Such data reinforce the importance of providing time-strapped supervisors with supports and resources in this critical area. Intentional reflection can happen in a variety of ways other than one-on-one supervisor-led discussions. Other mechanisms for student employee reflection on learning may include supervisor-facilitated group discussions, peer-led evaluations, employee-written self-reflections, or even pre- and post-employment surveys.

Interview and site visit data also indicate the value of helping students document learning acquired from their on-campus employment experiences so that they have a tangible resource to present to employers upon graduation. A few of the more common ways institutions are helping students document their experience upon completion of employment include cocurricular transcripts, e-portfolios, badges or certificates, and résumé assistance (Green & Parnell, 2017).



### **IOWA GROW'S INCREMENTAL APPROACH TO SCALE**

What began in 2009 as a small initiative in The University of Iowa's student affairs division, Iowa GROW (Guided Reflection on Work), is now a trademarked intervention being implemented across the university and at over 100 institutions within the United States and abroad. Based on learning theory and student development research, the Iowa GROW intervention uses four brief questions that guide structured conversations between student employees and their supervisors to connect classroom learning with the work students are doing on campus. Practitioners looking to facilitate the widespread adoption of a new program may benefit from Iowa GROW's pilot model approach.

Iowa GROW initially included departments that were known for hiring large numbers of student employees and that offered positions with responsibilities already aligned with student learning outcomes within the Division of Student Life. Student employee responses to the four questions were captured in supervisor notes and then coded for themes. By starting small, The University of Iowa's Division of Student Life was able to assess how the intervention worked out in practice, noting any unexpected challenges and potential areas for improvement. A survey was administered to all student employees, which allowed for comparison of student employee GROW participant outcomes versus those of non-GROW participants. Strategic targeting of pilot participants and early and ongoing data collection helped the division make meaningful improvements to the intervention and garner authentic buy-in that expanded with each additional participating department. For more information about implementing Iowa GROW on your campus, visit <https://vp.studentlife.uiowa.edu/priorities/grow>.

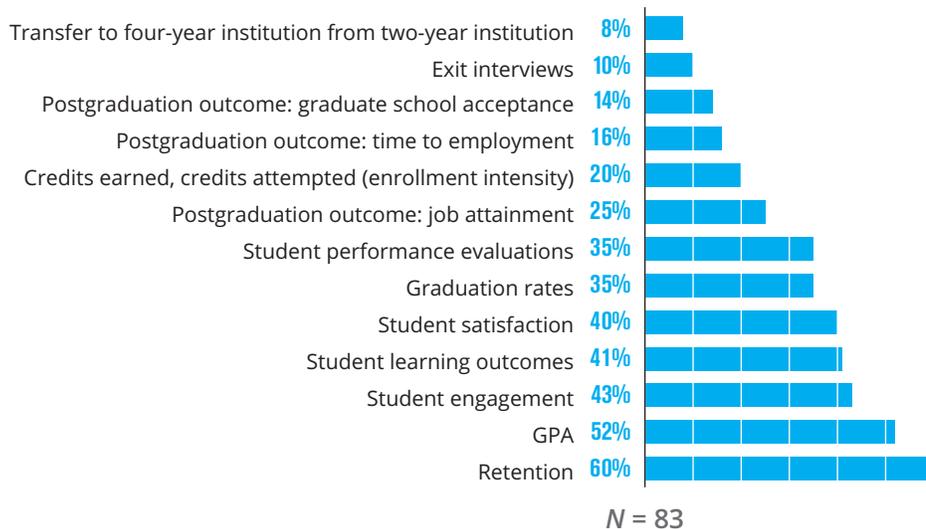
## ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

### **STUDENT SUCCESS DATA: USE DATA TO UNDERSTAND AND SHARE THE IMPACT OF STUDENT EMPLOYMENT**

Many institutions already collect and analyze data for most paid student employees for federal and state compliance reasons. These data may include number of students in positions funded by FWS, number of applications submitted, and number of students hired. While these metrics are important, data must also be collected to validate the impact student employment has on key student success metrics. Institutions should routinely analyze data on retention, completion, grade point average, engagement, and overall satisfaction of student employees.

Student employment-related data collection and utilization efforts for purposes beyond compliance and annual reporting are an important area for improvement. Survey data reveal that only 35% of respondent institutions analyze data on hourly on-campus student employees for reasons other than compliance purposes. As Figure 20 shows, the top three metrics these institutions analyze are retention (60%), grade point average (52%), and student engagement (43%). However, some institutions collect other types of student success data drawn from a variety of sources, such as student employee performance evaluations (35%) or instruments capturing postgraduation outcomes like whether or not a former on-campus student employee found a job following graduation (25%) or the time it took that student to find a job (16%).

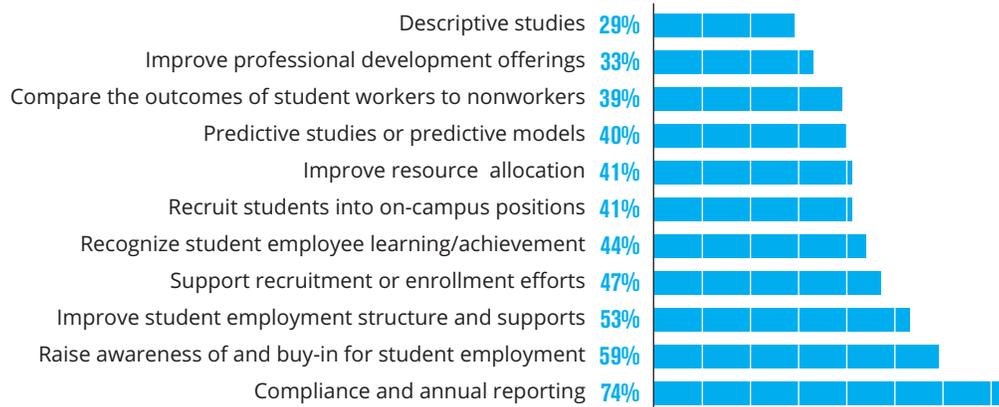
**FIGURE 20. Collection of On-Campus Employment Student Success Data**



Institutions have the potential to use student employment data in a number of strategic ways. As shown in Figure 21, of institutions surveyed, the top three uses of the data include:

- ① Raising awareness of and buy-in for student employment (59%)
- ② Improving the institution’s student employment structure and supports (53%)
- ③ Supporting recruitment and enrollment efforts (47%)

**FIGURE 21. Usage of On-Campus Employment Student Success Data**



N = 85

Additionally, while many members of the campus community understand the value of student employment for student success, others need to be convinced that it is a worthwhile investment. Once the relevant employment data have been analyzed, institutions should share them with the campus community. In the event that the data demonstrate higher success rates for student employees, institutions can more readily demonstrate a return on investment and potentially gain the momentum needed to further enhance their student employment programs.

## CONCLUSION

The *working student dilemma* is a prevalent challenge for many students who desire or need to work while in school. Institutions have an opportunity to alleviate the concerns that many students have when faced with choosing between work and school. On-campus employment can help students meet their financial demands and also prepare them to succeed in a career after graduation. And, as time and resource constraints prevent students from engaging in unpaid cocurricular activities, on-campus employment is well positioned to serve as a paid learning and engagement opportunity that will improve student retention and connection to the institution.

Leveraging on-campus student employment to improve student outcomes is not a new concept for institutions. This landscape analysis highlights the range over which institutions have already designed on-campus employment programs that are aligned with the principles of high-impact practices and created to fulfill goals for student success. However, research findings also illustrate that such efforts happen at varying levels of scale and consistency within and across institutions.

This report identifies ways to support and scale conditions of highly impactful employment programs, which include a focus on leadership engagement, equitable hiring processes, growth and professional development opportunities, articulated student learning outcomes, and assessment and evaluation. Institutions that have demonstrated a willingness to advance the practice can engage in thoughtful planning and build on their existing infrastructure to actualize goals for on-campus employment. This requires institutions to first take stock of their student employment efforts to date, better understand the working needs of their students, and involve multiple offices across their campuses in thoughtful planning. These activities will help guide the necessary processes for designing and implementing an on-campus student employment program that is beneficial not only to the student, but to the institution as a whole. ●

## REFERENCES

- Association of American Colleges and Universities. (2011). *The LEAP vision for learning: Outcomes, practices, impact, and employers' views*. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities. Retrieved from [https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/LEAP/leap\\_vision\\_summary.pdf](https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/LEAP/leap_vision_summary.pdf)
- Burnside, O. (2017). Beyond the paycheck: Transforming the student employment experience. *Leadership Exchange*, 15(3), 16–20.
- Carleton College. (2017). *Student employment events*. Retrieved from [https://apps.carleton.edu/campus/sfs/employment/contact/events/?event\\_id=1545410&date=2017-04-11](https://apps.carleton.edu/campus/sfs/employment/contact/events/?event_id=1545410&date=2017-04-11)
- Carnevale, A. P., Smith, N., Melton, M., & Price, E. W. (2015). *Learning while earning: The new normal*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Center for Education and the Workforce.
- Cheng, D. X., & Alcantara, L. (2004, May). *To work or not to work: The impact of work on students' college experience*. Paper presented at the Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research, Boston, MA. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED490999>
- Cramer, S., & Kulm, T. L. (2006). The relationship of student employment to student role, family relationships, social interactions and persistence. *College Student Journal*, 40(4), 928–938.
- Furr, S. R., & Elling, T. W. (2000). The influence of work on college student development. *NASPA Journal*, 37(2), 454–470.
- Green, T., & Parnell, A. (2017). *Comprehensive student record project: Final report*. Retrieved from American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers website: [https://www.aacrao.org/docs/default-source/signature-initiative-docs/clr/comprehensive-student-record-project-final-report-9\\_2017---pub-version.pdf](https://www.aacrao.org/docs/default-source/signature-initiative-docs/clr/comprehensive-student-record-project-final-report-9_2017---pub-version.pdf)
- Hawkins, C. A., Smith, M. L., Hawkins R. C., II, & Grant, D. (2005). The relationships among hours employed, perceived work interference, and grades as reported by undergraduate social work students. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 41(1), 13–27.
- Kuh, G. D. (2016). Making learning meaningful: Engaging students in ways that matter to them. In M. M. Watts (Ed.), *Finding the why: Personalizing learning in higher education* (New Directions for Teaching and Learning, No. 145, pp. 49–56). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Kuh, G. D., O'Donnell, K., & Reed, S. (2013). *Ensuring quality and taking high-impact practices to scale*. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Ma, J., Baum, S., Pender, M., & Libassi, C. J. (2018). *Trends in college pricing 2018*. Retrieved from The College Board website: <https://trends.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/2018-trends-in-college-pricing.pdf>

McClellan, G. S., Creager, K., & Savoca, M. (2018). *A good job: Campus employment as a high-impact practice*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.

McCormick, A. C., Moore, J. V., III, & Kuh, G. D. (2010). Working during college: Its relationship to student engagement and educational outcomes. In L. W. Perna (Ed.), *Understanding the working college student: New research and its implications for policy and practice* (pp. 179–212). Sterling, VA: Stylus.

National Association of Colleges and Employers. (2017). *Career readiness for the new college graduate: A definition and competencies*. Bethlehem, PA: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.naceweb.org/uploadedfiles/pages/knowledge/articles/career-readiness-fact-sheet.pdf>

Perna, L. W., Cooper, M. A., & Li, C. (2007). Improving educational opportunities for students who work. *Readings on Equal Education*, 22, 109–160. Retrieved from [http://repository.upenn.edu/gse\\_pubs/299](http://repository.upenn.edu/gse_pubs/299)

Pike, G. R., Kuh, G. D., & Massa-McKinley, R. C. (2008). First-year students' employment, engagement, and academic achievement: Untangling the relationship between work and grades. *NASPA Journal*, 45(4), 560–582.

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Federal Student Aid. (n.d.). *Federal work-study jobs help students earn money to pay for college or career school*. Retrieved from <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/types/work-study#kinds-of-jobs>

U.S. Department of Education. (2017). Digest of education statistics 2016. Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2017/2017094.pdf>

Warren, J. R. (2002). Reconsidering the relationship between student employment and academic outcomes: A new theory and better data. *Youth & Society*, 33(3), 366–393.

Wenz, M., & Yu, W. (2010). The influence of time-limitations, faculty, and peer relationships on adult student learning: A causal model. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 74(6), 665–688.

## APPENDIX A

### SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY INSTITUTION TYPE AND SIZE

Institution Size	All		Public four-year		Private, non-profit four-year		Public, nonprofit two-year		Other	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Under 1,000	12	5%	0	0%	7	8%	2	6%	3	100%
1,000–4,999	74	30%	14	12%	49	54%	11	31%	0	0%
5,000–9,999	64	26%	31	27%	20	22%	13	37%	0	0%
10,000–19,000	42	17%	26	23%	9	10%	17	20%	0	0%
20,000 and above	52	21%	44	38%	6	7%	2	6%	0	0%
Total	244	100%	115	100%	91	100%	35	100%	3	100%

## APPENDIX B

### INSTITUTIONS INTERVIEWED

Institution Name (State)		
• Alamo Colleges District (TX)	• Johns Hopkins University (MD)	• Trinity University (TX)
• Alfred University (NY)	• Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis*	• University of the District of Columbia
• Carnegie Mellon University (PA)	• James Madison University (VA)	• University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
• California State University, Fresno	• Moraine Valley Community College (IL)*	• The University of Iowa*
• California State University, San Bernardino	• Northern Illinois University	• University of Maryland*
• Queensborough Community College (NY)	• Rutgers University (NJ)	• University of Nebraska Omaha
• Clemson University (SC)*	• St. Olaf College (MN)	• The University of Texas, El Paso*
• Florida International University	• Stony Brook University (NY)	• Valencia College (FL)
• Florida State University	• Suffolk Community College (NY)	• Xavier University (OH)

\* = site visit conducted





**NASPA**<sup>®</sup>

Student Affairs Administrators  
in Higher Education

111 K Street NE  
10th Floor  
Washington, DC 20002  
[naspa.org](http://naspa.org)