



CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON
College-Workforce Transitions

THE MISSION of the Center for Research on College to Workforce Transitions (CCWT) is to conduct and support research, critical policy analysis, and public dialogue on student experiences with the transition from college to the workforce in order to inform policies, programs, and practices that promote academic and career success for all learners.

What is the Center for College-Workforce Transitions?

CCWT is being created at a time when student employability, skills gaps, changes in the labor market, and the purpose of higher education is being discussed and debated around the world. In fact, career readiness has become one of the defining issues in postsecondary education.

Yet we know too little about how students are experiencing the crucial transition from college to the workforce. Documenting students' experiences with teaching and training, career advising, and the hiring process is essential in order to inform the design and improvement of postsecondary and workforce development programs. The Center is a response to these gaps in the public, policy, and scholarly discussions about the career readiness of college graduates.

The Center is organized around four program strands that focus on critical aspects of the college to workforce transition: student experiences with work-based learning, student experiences with career advising and decision-making, student and employer experiences with the job search process, and community views on the purpose of higher education. Throughout each of these strands will be an emphasis on two additional issues that will shape the selection of study populations and locations—that of comparative research (especially in East Asia) and a focus on students from marginalized populations.

THE GOALS OF THE CENTER ARE TO:

1. Inform the design and implementation of programs focused on college-to-workforce transitions through translational research, program evaluation, and policy analysis centered on student experiences;
2. Support established and emerging scholars in conducting innovative and applied research on topics related to students' experiences with college-to-workforce transitions;
3. Foster a local, regional, and national community of scholars and practitioners engaged in college-to-workforce issues; and,
4. Facilitate critical and productive debate and dialogue around issues facing the future of higher education and the labor market through panel discussions, conferences, and publications.



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What will CCWT be doing?

The Center will focus on four major activities. **FIRST**, we will support **original research** through the activities of Center staff, research collaborations, and a small-grants program. Early projects will address the following questions:

- What are students' experiences with college career advising services, and does their cultural background impact their experience?
- How tolerant and adaptable are today's college students with respect to changes in the labor market and their career plans?
- How, if at all, do internship and other work-based learning opportunities impact students' future labor market outcomes?
- How do employers view traditional and alternative educational credentials, especially badges and certificates?
- How do Wisconsin residents view the purpose of higher education? (Data for this project will be collected by undergraduate students at UW-Madison)
- What are the experiences of refugee populations in making the transition to higher education and the labor market?



SECOND, we will support **policy analysis** through the activities of Center staff and Fellows. Policy issues addressed by the Center include:

- How can institutions develop high-quality internship programs at scale?
- What is a middle skill job, and how many are there?

THIRD, we will host **monthly symposia** and **annual mini-conferences** focused on important topics identified by community members and Center advisors and staff. Examples of upcoming talks include:

- Center launch event focused on the importance of work ethic skills. Jim Morgan will talk about why work ethic is highly valued by employers, and Linda Nilson will discuss how college teachers can cultivate self-regulated learning skills in their students.
- Speakers for Fall 2017 include Lauren Rivera (Northwestern University sociologist), Andy Chan (Wake Forest University career services professional), Tressie McMillan Cottom (VCU sociologist) and Sean Gallagher (Northeastern University scholar).

FOURTH, all Center activities will be supported by a robust **dissemination campaign** centered on producing short, readable research and policy briefs, and talks given by Center staff to stakeholder groups.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

To get involved with CCWT activities, the following opportunities are available:

- Collaborate on research projects with CCWT staff
- Apply to be an intern with CCWT
- Participate in the small grants program that will link practitioners with researchers who will work on problems of practice
- Attend monthly seminars

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