# Career Readiness CAIT Report

**Provost's Teaching Academy Gathering June 7, 2021**

**Overview**

CAITs (Communities Accelerating the Impact of Teaching) are topical innovator groups that develop teaching and curriculum-related recommendations, resources, experimental courses, and other contributions to the wider teaching community.

The **Career Readiness CAIT**, a partnership between the **Teaching Engagement Program**, **Career Center**, and **College of Arts and Sciences**, met between June 2020 and June 2021 to "build and refine an archive of resources, encourage units to adopt and assess career readiness learning outcomes, and consider ways UO can support students as they face uncertain internship and job prospects in light of the COVID pandemic."

Attention to the career legibility of the curriculum had been identified as a priority including during the 2019 Academic Leadership Retreat, in the recommendations of units participating in a 2019 STEM Student Success Retreat, and in the winter 2019 gathering of the Provost's Teaching Academy.

**Membership**

**Jagdeep Bala**, Department of Psychology
**Jessica Best**, Senior Associate Director of Career Strategy, Lundquist College of Business
**Bruce Blonigen**, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
**Peg Boulay**, Environmental Studies, Environmental Leadership Program
**Alison Carter**, Department of Anthropology
**Chuck Kalnbach**, Lundquist College of Business
**Dean Livelybrook**s, Department of Physics
**Leslie McLees**, Department of Geography
**Dorothee Ostmeier**, Department of German and Scandinavian & Department of Theatre Arts
**Damian Radcliffe**, School of Journalism and Communication
**Judith Raiskin**, Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies
**Emily Simnitt**, Department of English, Composition Program
**Paul Timmins**, Executive Director, UO Career Center
**Julie Voelker-Morris**, School of Planning, Public Policy and Management
**Matthias Vogel,** Department of German and Scandinavian
**Eleanor Wakefield**, Department of English, Composition Program
**Ashley Walker**, Department of Human Physiology
**Michal Young**, Computer and Information Science

**Challenge:**

Many students see employment as *the* essential outcome of a UO degree.

(1) How do faculty and staff surface all the ways the curriculum prepares students for future careers (not just first jobs) in order to motivate learning, help students understand the relevance of academic work across disciplines, and give them tools to translate that relevance beyond the university?

(2) How do we ensure, even measure, that the curriculum truly is helping them prepare for a rapidly evolving world of work?

(3) How do we keep lifelong learning, civic engagement, and the direct social benefits of the knowledge and skills of a UO education as a part of the idea of career readiness?

**Key findings:**

1.  National Association of Colleges and Employers' "career competencies"—career and self development, communication, critical thinking, equity and inclusion, leadership, professionalism, teamwork, and technology—closely align with UO faculty's course goals, including for UO Core Education. By **transparently naming** these competencies as the goals of assignments and **using common language** in assigning work across the curriculum, we create a shared sense of purpose.

2.  "Career readiness" preparation needs to begin early in UO students' experiences and account for **multiple, divergent paths of discovery**: many kinds of experiences are relevant to career readiness (coursework, campus jobs, internships, student activism, artistic expression). Students need support **exploring**, **reflecting on and translating these experiences**; they need to be encouraged to interview alums, read job ads, and practice describing their experiences for academic and non-academic audiences.

3.  Faculty have the power to fold explicit career competency building and career connections into coursework, including the **graded work of classes. Faculty are crucial models of the power of skills in action and points of connection to people in careers.**

4.  **Departments can build explicit career readiness goals into the learning outcomes for their majors**, gather department-level data from the First Destination survey data and career outcomes, and assess career readiness outcomes as part of regular assessment report processes.

5.  Faculty can drive contact with the UO Career Center and platforms like Handshake and Big Interview.

**Resources**

UO Career Readiness Teaching Toolkit: https://teaching.uoregon.edu/career-readiness

This new faculty toolkit features the NACE competencies (including real examples of class assignments that draw on them and downloadable icons for use in your course materials); career connections assignments prepared by the Career Center that you can upload directly into your Canvas course; resources for departments that seek to highlight career readiness as key to their programs of study; and more!

**Get involved**

- Identify where Career Competencies already exist in your course and assignments, and use the UO Career Competency icons on your transparent assignments and syllabus.
- Assign a career connections activity or reflection in your class – and have it count for points in your course.
- Talk with your department about how it develops students' career readiness —use the departmental resources on the Career Readiness Teaching Toolkit.
- Write to (tep@uoregon.edu) to learn more and share what you're doing with your dean.