

Professional Recommendations: Career Services and the LIS Student

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MLIS - Capstone 2017

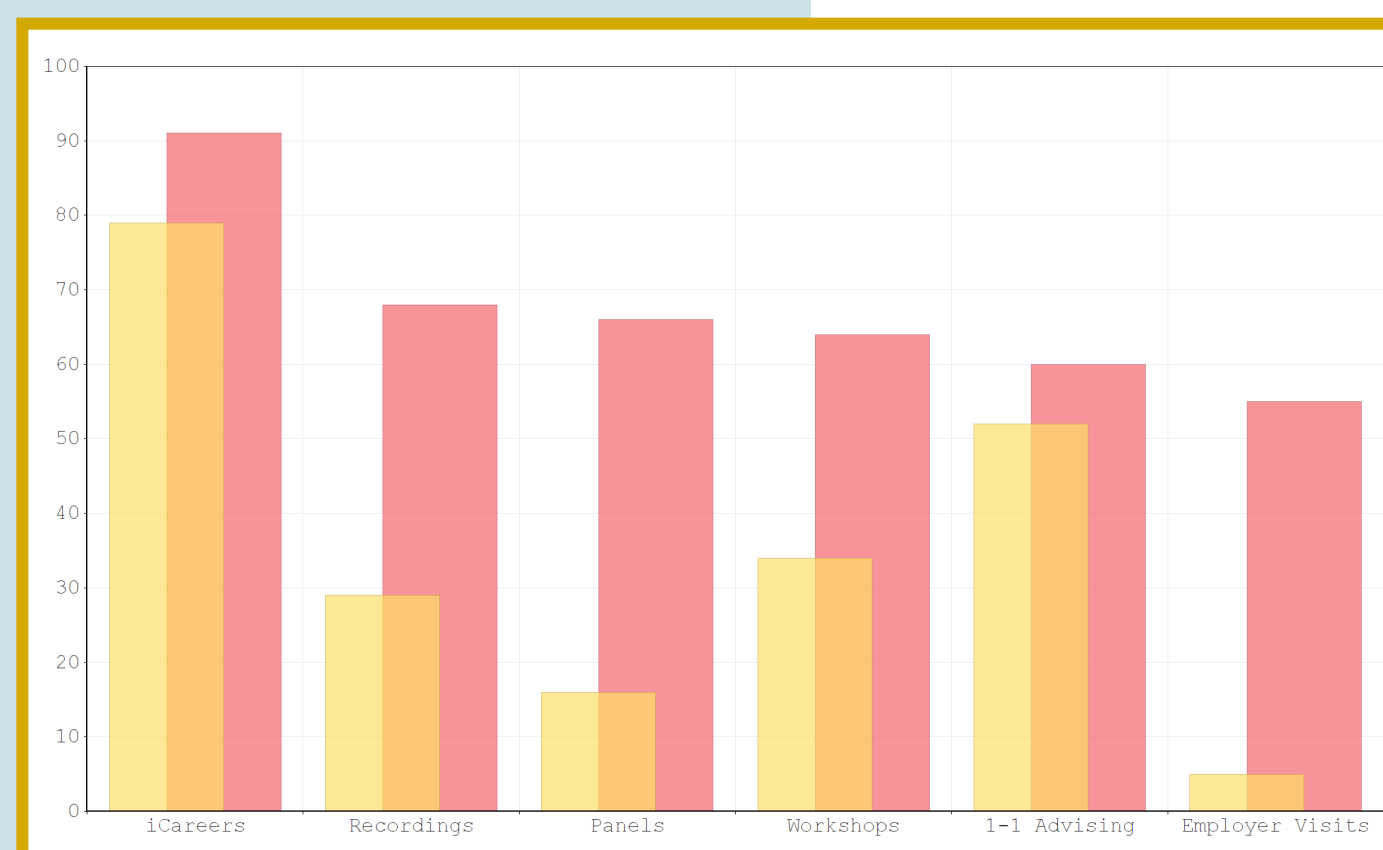
Sponsor: University of Washington iSchool
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Project Description

Utilizing surveys of current students, alumni, and faculty and a comparison of best-practices across ALA-accredited institutions, this project conducted a review of iSchool Career Services in order to identify information gaps between the department and the LIS student body, craft recommendations to address issues discovered, and facilitate an improved experience for both this student population and Career Services staff.

Student/Alumni Survey Data

Data was gathered from more than 180 iSchool MLIS students and alumni regarding their opinions of, and experiences with, the iSchool Career Services department.



Percent of students who want career services (coral) vs. those who've used them (yellow).

Results indicate that there is actually a great deal of overlap between what students want from career advising and what is currently available to them. However, an information gap around what is actually offered to students is persistent among students & grads from the MLIS program.

Changes students would like to see include:

- Increased access for online students
- More events with practicing professionals, recent alumni, and recruiting employers
- Improved scheduling for all services
- Advanced LIS-field-specific advice



“I think what they have to offer is great, but most students are unaware of the work they do.”
- 1st year residential student

“Finding a job in the library field is tough! I felt supported by my education & the career services and staff though.”
- iSchool MLIS Alum

Institutional Comparison

A survey of 18 comparable (and competitive) ALA-accredited programs shows that iSchool Career services are right on par with the best-practices offered to LIS students anywhere.

The only area in which it seems the iSchool can be beat is in leveraging alumni networks and connections with working professionals for the benefit of the current LIS student body.

The iSchool hosts an annual Career Fair: something done by only 2 other programs.

The iSchool provides students with two dedicated Career Advisors in order to provide key services:

- One-on-one Advising Appointments
- Resume/CV/Cover Letter review
- Job, Internship & Capstone listings
- Skills workshops and information sessions
- Online careers resources & recordings
- Panel talks on library-focused topics
- Weekly newsletters about department offerings, career tips, and job highlights

Career Services maintains a Canvas module with careers information targeted specifically for MLIS students.

iSchool Career Services

Project Outcomes

The results of this project confirmed what was expected going in: the information gap with the MLIS students has wide roots that can't be addressed with a single fix.

A series of recommendations have been developed, including the following:

- Integrating career activities into core elements of the program
- Improving advertisement & info dissemination around events
- Utilizing the alumni network as mentors, panel participants, & leads for jobs/internships for students
- Host a Virtual MLIS-Career Fair

- Restructure online resources to improve accessibility & highlight MLIS-specific features and advice

The hope is that with a variety of options, Career Services will be able to locate the right set of tools to facilitate an improved experience for all involved.