JSAIII

Journal of Student Affairs Inquiry, Improvement, and Impact | Volume 8, Issue 1
Special Issue Series: Career Preparation and Outcomes

Moving Past Utilization

Understanding Proactive Career Behaviors and Satisfaction with Career Services

Lakeisha Mathews, Ed.D.
University of Baltimore
Director, Career & Internship Center
lmathews@ubalt.edu | LinkedIn

Abstract: This study examined the impact of proactive career behavior on career readiness and career goal attainment among college students. It was hypothesized that students who engage in career interventions possess higher levels of proactive career behaviors. In addition, inferential statistics were used to discover if a higher degree of career engagement correlated with students' perceptions of career interventions, their impact on career readiness and career goal attainment, and satisfaction with services. Results highlight students' self-reported engagement in proactive career behaviors and uncovered an unexpected outcome - differing levels of engagement in internal versus external behaviors.

Keywords: career engagement, career decision-making, proactive career behavior, career services

Tracking and assessing student outcomes has become common for higher education administrators. Stimulated by enrollment declines, consumer doubt about the benefits of education, highly publicized college rankings, and Federal mandates for completion, many units on college campuses have started tracking and assessing outcomes (Kushimoto, 2010). This includes college career centers that contribute to student success by helping students attain gainful employment after graduation (Hammond, 2001). Historically, college career centers focused on assessing student utilization and satisfaction by administering surveys after workshops, career fairs, and other programs. Since the Great Recession, more focus has been on universities to report student career outcomes and related assessment measures (Irwin et al., 2019). Moreover, the focus on assessment has also put a spotlight on understanding the career competencies students are garnering through career development interventions and requires career center professionals to move beyond assessing utilization to focusing on career outcomes.

At the University of Baltimore (UBalt), a public institution in an urban area serving non-traditional commuter students, the Career and Internship Center (CIC) takes a holistic approach to assessing student learning outcomes and unit effectiveness. This holistic approach to assessment includes tracking utilization, satisfaction, engagement, learning outcomes, and employment-related outcomes, including internships, student employment, and first-destination data. In addition, the CIC conducts a unit effectiveness study every five years in conjunction with UBalt's regional accreditation review. Moreover, to develop a stronger understanding of students' career engagement behaviors, an empirical study was completed on students' proactive career engagement behaviors (Mathews, 2022). The

study sought to understand what proactive career behaviors students engage in inside or outside of career services and if students with strong proactive career engagement behaviors are more satisfied with career services. The study's results helped the CIC move past assessing utilization and satisfaction to studying students' career behaviors and motivations. An unintended outcome of the study was insight into which career behaviors students are more or less likely to engage in to advance their careers. (Mathews, 2022).

The Case for Engagement

Since the Great Recession, some institutions have successfully re-designed career services offices and added additional resources to career centers (The Council for Adult & Experiential Learning, 2018). However, across institutions in the United States, many students still do not engage in the services offered by their career centers. One reason for this lack of engagement is that career centers are a support service students must intentionally choose to engage in (e.g., opt-in services). Unfortunately, the lack of engagement in support services, like career services, can negatively impact student success (Hoyt, 2021).

As a campus resource that students can optionally utilize, educators relegate engagement in career development to students' ability to display proactive career behaviors. However, career center administrators rarely assess proactive career behavior among college students. Moreover, the literature is lacking regarding students' motives to engage in career development and the impact of career interventions on student success (Jackson & Tomlinson, 2019).

Literature Review

Stakeholder expectations concerning career outcomes have increased since the Great Recession (Ratcliffe, 2015). Student success is no longer solely defined by persistence and completion but also by gainful employment rates (Kim et al., 2014). The focus on career outcomes, coupled with the rising cost of higher education, has made college career centers a focal point on many campuses, where they help build students' career readiness and work to impact gainful employment post-graduation (Ratcliffe, 2015). As a result, career center administrators are constantly seeking to increase student engagement in career services, regardless of their opt-in status.

The shift to focusing on career services in higher education has been well established in mainstream, opinion-based literature surrounding education issues; however, research-based evidence linking career services' engagement to career readiness and career attainment is lacking. Currently, there is little evidence proving a clear connection from a theoretical perspective concerning students' outcomes and college students' engagement in career services (Hirschi & Freund, 2014). The lack of research linking career interventions and career services to students' career outcomes may be due to the large number of variables found in the literature, which prevents the ability to compare studies (Sampson et al., 2013). In addition, the definitions and competencies associated with key variables, such as engagement, career readiness, career goal attainment, and underemployment, lack consistency across the literature (Hilbrecht et al., 2017).

Proactive Career Behavior and Opt-in Career Services

One variable that can provide insight into students' engagement in career services is proactive career behavior. Though some institutions may require academic advising or career-related courses, overwhelmingly, students display self-motivation to access the programs and services offered in career centers. Inasmuch, students' goal orientation and internal motivation might impact students' decision to engage in opt-in career service interventions. Therefore, the proactive career behavior of students is worth investigating to increase engagement in the services and resources offered by a career center.

Proactive career engagement is "the degree to which somebody is proactively developing his or her career as expressed by diverse career behaviors" (Hirschi & Freund, 2014). This includes engaging in various career management activities and displaying career behaviors such as career planning, self-exploration, and networking (Hirschi & Freund, 2014). Proactive career engagement focuses on the degree to which students display career management activities and behaviors to accomplish their goals (Chan et al., 2013). In addition, several variables intersect with proactive career behavior including career adaptability (Spurk et al., 2020), values (Jackson & Tomlinson, 2019), motivation (Parker et al., 2010), career success (Hilbrecht et al., 2017), goal setting (Clements & Kamau, 2018), personality (Brown et al., 2006), self-efficacy (Kim et al., 2014), and career maturity (Sampson et al., 2013).

Methodology

This study utilized a quantitative research design methodology featuring descriptive and inferential statistics to describe proactive career engagement. Several variables were examined, including satisfaction with college career center interventions, perception of the impact career services have on career readiness and career goal attainment, and proactive career behavior, specifically focusing on results concerning proactive career behavior.

Study Context and Level of Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using a multi-pronged approach. First, descriptive statistics explain the composition of the respondents and their reported satisfaction levels with career interventions administered by career services, including describing the frequency distribution of the student sample by demographic make-up, such as class level, race, age, and college affiliation (major). Frequency distribution allows for counts and percentages of each individual participating in the study (Remler & Van Ryzin, 2015). Second, measurements of central tendency, including mean, mode, and median, describe respondents' satisfaction with career interventions. This measurement included calculating the distribution spread for satisfaction in relation to the mean by group (Remler & Van Ryzin, 2015).

Inferential statistical calculations determine if a relationship exists between satisfaction with career interventions and perceived impact on career readiness and career goal attainment compared with proactive career engagement. Specifically, the Pearson correlation (Pearson's *r*) determined the strength and empirical relationship between the variables (Remler & Van Ryzin, 2015). Correlation was selected for this study because it is a

unit-free measure that compares two different variables (Remler & Van Ryzin, 2015). This comparison includes exploring the similarities and dissimilarities between two data sets–in this case, proactive career engagement and satisfaction with career interventions (Kothari, 2004).

Participants' Information

The population targeted included students currently enrolled at UBalt. The CIC asked students who scheduled and attended an appointment with them to voluntarily participate in the study after engaging in various opt-in career interventions. The potential participants included a diverse group of students, as UBalt is the most racially diverse institution in the University System of Maryland (UBalt, n.d.). The institution also has several unique characteristics, including serving adult learners, being a non-residential commuter campus, and being located in an urban setting. Student demographics were self-reported and analyzed by group, including class year (undergraduate or graduate), college (Arts and Sciences, Public Affairs, and Business), race, and age.

For the 2020-2021 academic year, the UBalt's student body consisted of approximately 4,000 students. The 700 students majoring in law and not served by the main CIC were excluded from participating in this study (UBalt, n.d.). Of the non-law students, 34.3% are in Business, 29.5% in Public Affairs, and 21.4% in Arts and Sciences (UBalt, Office of Institutional Research, 2019). Regarding the class level, 1,917 were undergraduate students, and 1,530 were graduate students (UBalt, n.d.). In addition, the average student age is 28 for undergraduate students and 33 for graduate students (UBalt, n.d.). Lastly, of the students currently enrolled at the UBalt, 45% are Black, 39% are White, 6% are Hispanic, 5% are Asian, and 4% are multi-racial (UBalt, n.d.). Student participants reflected the overall student body, including 55% Black, 23% White, 7% Hispanic or Latino, 5% Asian, and 9% Multi-racial (Mathews, 2022).

Demographics

The Proactive Engagement Scale survey was administered to 229 students engaged in services offered by the CIC over an eight-week period. Of the 229 documented cases, 181 were considered one-on-one coaching sessions. A total of 75 respondents participated in a career intervention and opted to complete the survey, resulting in a 41% response rate. Of the 75 respondents, 30 (40%) were enrolled in academic programs at the Yale Gordon College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), 24 (32%) were enrolled in programs at the Merrick School of Business (MSB), and 16 (21%) were enrolled in programs at the College of Public Affairs (CPA). Five (7%) students opted not to report their academic program. Data on the class level was also collected. Of the 75 respondents, 39 (55%) were undergraduate students, 24 (32%) were graduate students, 10 (13%) were recent graduates, and two (3%) identified as certificate or continuing education students.

Data were also collected on respondents' ages and race. The ages gathered were divided into nine categories to replicate the UBalt demographic reporting standards. The groups included: 16–18, 21–22, 23–24, 25–29, 30–34, 35–39, 40–44, 45–49, and 50–54. Table 1 displays the distribution of age ranges for all respondents.

Table 1. *Number of Respondents by Age*

Age	*n*	%
16–18	7	9.3
21–22	5	7.0
23–24	3	4.0
25–29	21	28.0
30–34	14	18.6
35–39	12	16.0
40–44	2	2.6
45–49	2	2.6
50–54	2	2.6
Unknown	7	9.3
Total	75	100.0

Participants selected for this study were currently enrolled students at the UBalt who opted to engage in a career intervention in the CIC in the fall of 2021. The participants scheduled an appointment with a professional staff member in the CIC for a pre-selected career intervention. The student scheduled an appointment through the CIC's Career Management System, UBworks, and was required to select a specific career intervention from the list of offerings:

- Career Change Assistance
- Career Closet
- Decide Career Path/Major
- Graduate School Planning
- Internship Assistance
- Interview Preparation
- Job Location & Development
- Job Search Assistance
- Leadership Development
- Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)
- Networking Strategies
- On-campus Employment
- Practice Interview
- Professional Development
- Professional Headshot
- Resume/Cover Letter/Development/Review
- Salary Negotiation
- Self-branding & Marketing
- Strengths
- Take/Review Career Assessment

The aim was to have a sample population of between 100 and 200 students participate in this research study. On average, 500 students from the UBalt engage in interventions administered by the CIC per semester (CIC, 2020).

Measuring Career Engagement

The Career Engagement Scale (CES) developed by Hircshi and Freund (2014) to measure career engagement in college students was selected for this study. The scale isolates proactive career behavior from distinct career components, such as career management,

career planning, or career exploration (Hirschi & Freund, 2014). The CES defines career engagement as "the general degree of being engaged in different career management behaviors" (Hirschi & Freund, 2014, p. 578). The entire nine-item scale for measuring proactive career engagement was used in this study. The nine questions are all prefaced with the statement "To what extent have you in the past six months" (Hirschi & Freund, 2014):

1. Actively sought to design your professional future
2. Undertook things to achieve your career goals
3. Cared for the development of your career
4. Developed plans and goals for your future
5. Sincerely thought about personal values, interests, abilities and weaknesses
6. Collected information about employers, professional development opportunities or the job market in your desired areas
7. Established or maintained contact with people who can help you professionally
8. Voluntarily participated in further education, training or other events to support your career
9. Assumed duties or positions that will help you progress professionally. (p. 580)

Validity of the Career Engagement Scale

Hirschi & Freund (2014) took several steps to develop the nine items included in the CES. First, a literature review was conducted concerning self-directed career management, career self-management, and career competencies. Second, six career behaviors were identified from the literature review that described proactive career behaviors. The six career behaviors identified were career planning, career self-exploration, environmental career exploration, networking, voluntary human capital/skill development, and positioning behavior (Hirschi & Freund, 2014). Third, a deductive item generation strategy was utilized by creating three items for each behavior mentioned above, followed by a pilot test with a group of 24 university students. The pilot test had a (M = 22.5, SD = 2.3), and the feedback garnered was utilized to narrow each set of three questions for the six career behaviors down to one question for each behavior (Hirschi & Freund, 2014). In addition, the authors decided to add three general career engagement questions to the six career behaviors, arriving at the nine-item scale. Fourth, a five-point Likert scale was used to show the degree to which someone is engaged in proactive career behavior, ranging from "almost never" to "very often."

The revised version of the CES was administered to 146 German university students to assess the factor reliability and establish the scale's unidimensionality (Hirschi & Freund, 2014). The completed analysis resulted in an item correlation ranging from .35 to .77, showing that the items were reliable in measuring a one-dimensional construct (Hirschi & Freund, 2014). A second pilot test was administered with a larger, more homogenous sample of 2,027 students to test the finalized one-factor structure of the nine-item scale and to assess invariance across gender. This version of the scale resulted in a total sample Cronbach's alpha of .88, indicating good internal consistency for the one-dimension CES (Hirschi & Freund, 2014). The average scale scores (item means) were 3.08 (SD = 0.86) for the total sample, 3.09 (SD = 0.87) for the female group, and 3.04 (SD = 0.85) for the male group.

Results

Career Services Requested

Students had to identify which career interventions they requested and/or participated in during their appointment. Students selected from 19 service options and could select all that applied. Twenty-six (35%) respondents reported receiving *resume/cover letter development or review services*, 14 respondents (19%) utilized *job search assistance*, 13 respondents (17%) utilized *career change assistance*, and 11 respondents (15%) utilized *professional headshots*. Table 3 represents the career intervention services utilized by all respondents. Respondents indicated that they utilized all 19 services throughout the study, with r*esume and cover letter development* selected the most.

The findings demonstrated that students at the UBalt who engaged in career services in the fall of 2021 were satisfied with the services delivered by the CIC. Regardless of services rendered, 94% reported being "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with career interventions. None of the respondents reported being unsatisfied with their career coaching experience. In addition to satisfaction with services rendered, students reported that their career coaching experience impacted their career readiness.

Table 3. *Career Coaching Service Requested*

Service	*n*	%
Resume/Cover Letter Development/Review	26	35
Job Search Assistance	14	19
Career Change Assistance	13	17
Professional Headshot	11	15
Decide Career Path/Major	7	9
Internship Assistance	7	9
Interview Preparation	7	9
Take/Review Career Assessment	7	9
Career Closet	6	8
Practice Interviewing Skills	6	8
Job Location & Development	5	7
Salary Negotiation	5	7
Self-branding & Marketing	5	7
On-campus Employment	4	5
Graduate School Planning	3	4
Leadership Development	3	4
MBTI Assessment Interpretation	3	4
Networking Strategies	3	4
Strengths Assessment Interpretation	3	4

Table 4. *Percentage of Responses to Career Engagement Scale Items Actions in the Past Six Months*

Item	Very Often	Quite Often	Moderate Amount	Occasionally	Almost Never	*M*
Actively sought to design your professional future	41%	27%	20%	12%	0%	4
Undertook activities to achieve your career goals	36%	32%	23%	9%	0%	4
Cared for the development of your career	56%	28%	9%	7%	0%	4
Developed plans and goals for your future	53%	21%	17%	5%	3%	4
Sincerely thought about personal values, interests, abilities and weaknesses	56%	32%	8%	3%	1%	4
Collected information about employers, professional development opportunities or the job market	32%	23%	23%	17%	5%	4
Established or maintained contact with people who can help you professionally	23%	20%	27%	17%	13%	3
Voluntarily participated in further education, training or other events to support your career	23%	21%	19%	27%	11%	3
Assumed duties or positions that will help you progress professionally	23%	21%	24%	24%	8%	3

Students also reported that their coaching experience impacted their career goal attainment. Aside from the requested service, it is unknown what the specific goals were for each coaching session. Nevertheless, 92% of students reported that their coaching experience impacted their ability to attain their career goals. As a result, students reported satisfaction with their coaching experience and perceived that engaging in career services impacted their career readiness and career goal attainment.

Students (*N* = 75) who engaged in a career intervention at the CIC during the fall 2021 term at the UBalt reported high proactive career engagement behavior levels as measured by the CES. A composite score for all 75 participants' responses was determined using the Likert scale associated with the nine items (Table 4). Notably, 44% of respondents reported engaging in proactive career behaviors "very often," and 35% reported "often. Of the respondents, 19% indicated "moderately" engaging in proactive career behaviors, and 3% indicated "occasionally" engaging in proactive career behaviors. It appears the students

who received coaching services at the UBalt in the fall of 2021 and participated in this study are career-minded and engage in a degree of proactive career behaviors, including career planning, career exploration, networking, and vocational identity and clarity activities (Hirschi & Freund, 2014).

Lastly, the study sought to determine if a relationship existed between a high degree of proactive career engagement and satisfaction with career services (r = .601, p = .034), including perceptions regarding career readiness (r = .612, p = .920) and career goal attainment (r = .650, p = .598). A Pearson's correlation coefficient calculation compared respondents' CES scores with their scores on satisfaction, career readiness, and career goal attainment. The results indicated no relationships between career intervention outcomes—satisfaction, career readiness, and career goal attainment—and the degree of proactive career engagement. Students at the UBalt reported being highly engaged in proactive career behaviors and highly satisfied with the services rendered at the CIC. Moreover, students viewed the services as impacting their career readiness and career goal attainment regardless of their CES score.

Discussion

This study explored the impact of proactive career behaviors on career readiness, career goal attainment, and satisfaction with career services. The purpose was to understand two unknowns, including (a) the perceived outcomes of engaging in career interventions administered by the college career center and (b) what students who displayed proactive career behaviors perceived about the impact of services rendered on their career readiness and/or career goal attainment. Assessment of career services is frequently limited to evaluating satisfaction. This study allows career practitioners to move beyond satisfaction and examine the behavioral patterns of students in connection to career development. Insights gained can help career practitioners develop high-impact services and programs that meet the developmental needs of students while providing a method for measuring growth and outcomes. In addition, measuring student perceptions of their career readiness and the connection to career outcomes provides a pathway to understanding career interventions' impact on post-graduation outcomes.

Implications

The degree to which students engaged in internal and exploratory-related proactive career behaviors was higher than those requiring external focus or interpersonal interactions. CES questions 1 to 6 measure internal and exploratory-related proactive career behaviors; each had an overall mean score of four. These scores indicated that students engaged in behaviors such as career planning, self-exploration, industry exploration, and market research. In contrast, CES questions 7 to 9, which measure external focus and interpersonal interactions, had a mean score of three. These scores reflected behaviors involving building social capital, such as networking, attending career events and training, and positioning behavior.

The study's results also uncovered an important distinction in the proactive career behavior of respondents. Respondents scored lower in the CES domains associated with

external proactive career behaviors relevant to building social capital. This unintended result provided insight into why past programs focused on mentoring and networking may have been unsuccessful. Moving past utilization and satisfaction to studying the proactive career behaviors of respondents has been beneficial for the CIC at the UBalt, and results can be used to increase student engagement in career services. For instance, uncovering that students engage in external proactive career behaviors at lower rates has led the career services team to design a secondary study about students' perceptions of external career behaviors.

In total, results uncovered students' positive perceptions of the impact career services have on their career readiness and that students are satisfied with CIC services regardless of their level of proactive engagement. The study is also an example of the benefit gained when career services professionals expand assessment beyond utilization and assess the behaviors of their students and the impact of services rendered. Many institutions would benefit from knowing the level of proactive career engagement amongst their student body upon enrollment and collecting data on the impact of career interventions on career outcomes.

Limitations

The study has a few notable limitations. First, the intended collection of 100 to 200 surveys was not attained even though the CIC had 490 appointment requests for the fall of 2021. A possible cause is that the participation window coincided with the Thanksgiving holiday break, reducing the available days for students to schedule appointments with the CIC staff. In addition, of the 229 appointments during the study, only 181 were one-on-one coaching sessions. Nearly 50 documented appointments took place over email or other alternative interaction modes, such as virtual mock interviews.

Another limitation is the students' demographics at the UBalt which must be considered when applying the results to other institutions with different student body compositions. The average age of students at the UBalt is 28 at the undergraduate level and 34 at the graduate level. In addition, the UBalt is a commuter institution that does not offer residential living and is designated as an urban institution. Finally, the UBalt is designated as a minority-serving institution by the U.S. Department of Education. Inasmuch, the unique make-up of the student body could be reflected in the high degree of proactive career engagement revealed in the study and might not be comparable to younger students, students attending residential campuses, or students attending predominantly White institutions.

The last limitation is that career readiness and career goal attainment are concepts defined by the researcher but remain undefined by respondents. It is unknown if the students' definition of career readiness is comparable to the definition adopted by the UBalt's CIC. In addition, it is unknown what specific career goals students perceive the career coaching interventions helped them attain. Though assumptions can be made based on the type of career coaching service requested, the study does not provide insight into how students defined career readiness or what goals career services helped them attain.

Conclusion

This study shows how career services practitioners in higher education can move past assessing utilization to assess and measure program and student outcomes, including the impact of proactive career behaviors on career readiness, career goal attainment, and satisfaction with career services. Two questions guided this study:

1. What are the perceived outcome(s) of engaging in career interventions administered by college career centers in relation to career readiness and career goal attainment?
2. Are there differences in perceived outcomes based on the degree of proactive career engagement?

Using a sample of the student body at the UBalt, respondents participated in a two-part survey, including the CES, to gauge their perceptions about satisfaction with career services and the perceived impact that services rendered had on their career outcomes. This study's results were mixed with the findings, showing that students perceive that engaging in career coaching services does, in fact, impact their career readiness and goal attainment. The results were inconclusive regarding perceived outcomes of engaging in career interventions due to the overwhelmingly satisfactory responses participants reported concerning their engagement in career coaching services. Of note, unintentionally, the study uncovered differences in the types of proactive behaviors students engaged in, favoring internal and career exploration activities such as career planning, self-exploration, and occupational research versus external behaviors such as networking.

Since the Great Recession, college outcomes have been spotlighted, especially regarding career readiness and goal attainment. College career centers are tasked with ensuring that students are career-ready and attain gainful employment after graduation. However, assessing outcomes related to career development interventions administered by college career centers is difficult for several reasons. First, one difficulty stems from the literature using a myriad of terms to describe the phenomena of career development. Second, career planning is interconnected with a plethora of concepts, and it is impossible to narrow down what variables impacted students' career outcomes. In addition, career services are largely opt-in services engaged by a small portion of the student body. Lastly, many career centers focus on assessing satisfaction and have yet to start evaluating the effectiveness of services on career outcomes or the career behaviors of their populations. As demonstrated in this study, moving past utilization can help colleges determine the perceived impact their career interventions are having on student career outcomes, which has the potential to confirm the impact of career services on students' post-graduation outcomes.

References

Brown, D. J., Cober, R. T., Kane, K., Levy, P. E., & Shalhoop, J. (2006). Proactive personality and the successful job search: A field investigation with college graduates. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *91*(3), 717–726. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.91.3.717

Career and Internship Center. (2020). *End of semester report: Fall 2020*. The University of Baltimore. Retrieved on July 7, 2022 from https://www.ubalt.edu/campus-life/career-center/about-us/EOS%20Fall%202020.pdf

Chan, A., & Derry, T. (Eds.). (2013). A *roadmap for transforming the college-to-career experience: A crowdsourced paper* [Post-conference paper]. Rethinking Success: From the Liberal Arts to Careers in the 21st Century Conference, Winston-Salem, NC, United States. https://prod.wp.cdn.aws.wfu.edu/sites/74/2013/05/A-Roadmap-for-Transforming-The-College-to-Career-Experience.pdf

The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning. (2018). *More than just a job search: Relevant, intentional and accessible career services for today's student (and returning workers)*. https://www.cael.org/resources/research/more-than-just-a-job-search-relevant-intentional-and-accessible-career-services-for-todays-student-and-returning-adults

Clements, A. J., & Kamau, C. (2018). Understanding students' motivation towards proactive career behaviors through goal-setting theory and the job demands: Resources model. *Studies in Higher Education*, *43*(12), 2279–2293. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2017.1326022

Hammond, M. S. (2001). Career centers and needs assessments: Getting the information you need to increase your success. *Journal of Career Development*, *27*(3), 187–197. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/089484530102700305

Hilbrecht, M., Smale, B., & Mock, S. E. (2017). The relationship between perceived underemployment and wellbeing: Evidence from mid-size Canadian cities. *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, *12*(1), 607–631. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11482-016-9479-2

Hirschi, A., & Freund, P. A. (2014). Career engagement: Investigating intraindividual predictors of weekly fluctuations in proactive career behaviors. *The Career Development Quarterly*, *62*(1), 5–20. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0045.2014.00066.x

Hoyt, J. E. (2021). Student connections: The critical role of student affairs and academic support services in retention efforts. *Journal of College Student Retention*, *25*(3), 480–491. https://doi.org/10.1177/1521025121991502

Irwin, A., Nordmann, E., & Simms, K. (2019). Stakeholder perception of student employability: Does the duration, type and location of work experience matter? *Higher Education*, *78*(5), 761–781. https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10734-019-00369-5

Jackson, D., & Tomlinson, M. (2019). Career values and proactive career behaviour among contemporary higher education students. *Journal of Education and Work*, *32*(5), 449–464. https://doi.org/10.1080/13639080.2019.1679730

Kothari, C. R. (2004). *Research methodology: Methods & techniques*(2nd rev. ed.). New Age International.

Kushimoto, T. (2010). Outcomes assessment and its role in self-reviews of undergraduate education: In the context of Japanese higher education reforms since the 1990s. *Higher Education*, *59*(5), 589–598. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-009-9266-1

Kim, B., Jang, S. H., Jung, S. H., Lee, B. H., Puig, A., & Lee, S. M. (2014). A moderated mediation model of planned happenstance skills, career engagement, career decision self-efficacy, and career decision certainty. *The Career Development Quarterly*, *62*(1), 56–69. http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0045.2014.00070.x

Mathews, L., Wilmington University, & Wilmington University. (2022). The impact of proactive career behaviors on career readiness, career goal attainment, and satisfaction (Publication No.

2022.29166608) [Doctoral dissertation, Wilmington University]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. https://www.proquest.com/docview/2666466697

Parker, S. K., Bindl, U. K., & Strauss, K. (2010). Making things happen: A model of proactive motivation. *Journal of Management*, *36*(4), 827–856. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206310363732

Ratcliffe, S. (2015). Building relevancy and influence: A game changer for career services. *NACE Journal*, LXXV(4), 23–29.

Remler, D. K., & Van Ryzin, G. G. (2015). *Research methods in practice: Strategies for description and causation* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publication.

Sampson, J. P., Jr., McClain, M.-C., Musch, E., & Reardon, R. C. (2013). Variables affecting readiness to benefit from career interventions. *The Career Development Quarterly*, *61*(2), 98–109. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0045.2013.00040.x

Spurk, D., Volmer, J., Orth, M., & Göritz, A. S. (2020). How do career adaptability and proactive career behaviours interrelate over time? An inter- and intraindividual investigation. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, *93*(1), 158–186. https://doi.org/10.1111/joop.12288

University of Baltimore, Office of Institutional Research. (2019). UB fact book. University of Baltimore, Institutional Research. https://www.ubalt.edu/institutional_effectiveness/institutional_research/

University of Baltimore. (n.d.). *Diversity and inclusion at UBalt*. Retrieved December 3, 2021 from http://www.ubalt.edu/about-ub/diversity/

How to cite this article: Mathews, L. (2025). Moving past utilization: Understanding proactive career behaviors and satisfaction with career services. *Journal of Student Affairs Inquiry, Improvement, and Impact*, *8*(1), 120–132. https://doi.org/10.18060/28266

Editorial Acknowledgement. The *Journal of Inquiry, Improvement, and Impact* (*JSAIII*) uses an open and transparent peer-review process designed to foster professional, rigorous dialogue that strengthens each article. This approach also enables us to publicly recognize the essential contributions of our editorial team–work that is often invisible and uncredited. By acknowledging these efforts, we aim to bring greater equity to scholarly publishing and highlight the collaborative labor behind every published piece. The following individuals contributed to the editorial development of this article.

Kimberly Yousey-Elsener, Ph.D.
Guest Editor
Binghamton University
Visiting Research Associate Professor, Higher Education and Student Affairs
LinkedIn | ORCiD

Anna Mroch, M.S.E.
Assistant Editor
William & Mary
Assistant Vice President for Planning, Strategy & Integrative Practices and Director of Assessment
LinkedIn

Production editing for this article was completed by *JSAIII* Editor, Heather J. Strine-Patterson, as part of the journal's commitment to publishing quality scholarship with care and consistency.