

# Scaling Career Services with Peer Facilitators

## An Integration Story with University of Tampa

### TRUMOTIVATE

University career centers tend to have a few prominent areas for which they need to continuously brainstorm solutions: resources, support scalability, professional development opportunities for student workers, and getting students excited about career exploration. Hoping to feed all four birds with one stone, the University of Tampa's Office of Career Services and TruMotivate teamed up in Fall 2020 for a Peer Facilitation pilot that would address common career center obstacles by leveraging the role of student workers.

#### **A Tool that Scales Career Center Programming While Professionally Developing Student Workers**

The office's Senior Assistant Director of Career Exploration, Rachel Killman, was especially excited about the pilot. "I've been in career services for 14 years," shares Killman, "and we've always had tools to help students explore their VISPM," a career service acronym that stands for exploring one's values, interests, skills, personalities, and motivations. "One thing that's always bugged me, though" reflects Killman, "is that we hadn't been able to resource support for the 'motivation' piece. Tapping into what brings meaning and motivation to one's life is ambiguous yet so important to the exploration process." Killman was equally excited about what this meant for the office's ability to support students. "It was a huge benefit when we found out we could train our student employees to facilitate workshops. We are a small team with a caseload of 10,000+ students and alumni; finding a way to scale exploration programming in a meaningful format is always high on the priority list."



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-Rachel Killman

Amongst responsibilities like tabling and conducting presentations, the center's student workers lead basic career exploration and career readiness drop-in appointments. "One question continuously top of mind is, 'How can we best support our Career Ambassadors' professional development while keeping them motivated and engaged?'" recalls Killman. "Participating in this pilot uniquely addressed both of those concerns." Killman points out that her student workers were able to learn more about themselves while acquiring a new set of marketable skills, like public speaking and group facilitation.



Sam Frazier, one of the Career Ambassadors that participated in the pilot, echoed Killman's sentiments. "The topic of 'career' can be a daunting and vulnerable space for students, especially those in exploration. I got to witness how TruMotivate made that reflection process easier for everyone involved." Expanding on that comment, Frazier mentioned the impact of peer-to-peer coaching. "There is a lot of relatability and connection going on in these sessions; we are all in, have been in, or will be in the same shoes. It's reassuring for the student when they experience that there are others going through what they are." When asked what it was like to learn TruMotivate, Frazier comments on how quickly he was able to assimilate the information and apply it right away. While comparing it to other assessments he's had experience with, Frazier comments on the amount of information required to learn before conducting a debrief or facilitation. "With TruMotivate, though, I was able to have a guided conversation around career exploration and self-understanding almost immediately without needing all the education."

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## Holistically Applicable to Individuals at All Stages and Phases of Career

Another added value witnessed by the team was the tool's versatility and application. Killman spoke to the volume and mix of participants that regularly join the workshops. "I was anticipating that the freshmen and sophomore population would be the main groups to take an interest in this, but we have seen a significant amount of the upperclassmen and graduate populations find value in these workshops, too." Killman recalls how a student of hers used the assessment to evaluate internship opportunities. "I thought we'd be using this with students interested in career exploration solely, but I've been pleasantly surprised at the tool's ability to support a student who is in the career readiness stage, too."

Also commenting on the assessment's resourcefulness, Frazier spoke about how he used his results for a variety of things in his career readiness journey, like winning elevator pitch competitions and preparing for job interviews. When trying to figure out what life looked like beyond graduation, Frazier tapped into his results to evaluate different job opportunities. He credits the 'Ideal Work Environment' section from the TruMotivate report for helping him strategize through that. "I found it challenging to analyze which opportunities would be most fulfilling for me when I first started interviewing for jobs. I used my results to come up with motivationally tailored questions that'd offer insight into whether a company's environment would be the right fit for me. It [the report] equipped me with the language and confidence to navigate the conversation with employers."

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-Rachel Killman

Today, the Office of Career Services at the University of Tampa still utilizes the assessment in coaching appointments and workshop facilitations. In fact, Killman has begun incorporating TruMotivate into her alumni career appointments and team building initiatives. "This assessment offers an incredible amount of added value to our operations and services. We've seen significant improvement in our efforts to scale support, meaningfully engage our students with career exploration, and thoughtfully develop our student workers with a multipurposed resource."