

Career Development Center



WKU

ADVISING & CAREER
DEVELOPMENT CENTER

2025-2026 Annual Report



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Dear Hilltoppers,

Another great year is in the books. I am proud of the WKU Career Team. This year brought growth, innovation, and student success.

Our main goal is graduation prep. We connected students with employers, alumni, faculty, and industry leaders. We used career fairs, workshops, networking, and coaching. These events helped students build skills, explore options, and gain confidence.

Employer partnerships grew fast this year. New initiatives boosted campus career readiness. Students gained more ways to engage with the workforce. Updated programs expanded exploration, hands-on learning, and career growth.

This report tells an important story. Every number represents a real student. They found opportunities, built networks, landed internships, or advanced their careers. The entire WKU community drove this progress. Students seized every chance. Faculty and staff promoted career growth. Employers and alumni gave their time, skills, and support.

Our mission remains simple. We connect education to real careers. We prepare students for life after college. This report builds a strong foundation. The future looks bright.

Thank you for your ongoing partnership. Together, we build success for all Hilltoppers.

With gratitude,

Go Tops!!!

Wayne E. Simpson

Mr. Wayne E. Simpson
Associate Director of Career Development



Meet Our Team

Our team is here to help Hilltoppers turn goals into success stories. Get to know the people behind the programs, events, and support that make your career experience at WKU possible.

**Contact us by phone, (270)-745-3095, email :
careerhelp@wku.edu, or in person at DSU Suite 2001**



**Mr. Wayne E. Simpson,
M.S., B.S.W**

*Associate Director of
Career Development*



**Mr. Brian Ahern,
M.S., B.S.**

*Career Coach -
Ogden College & CHHS*



**Ms. Jolee Campbell,
M.B.A, B.S.**

Career Event Coordinator



**Ms. Holly Stacker,
B.I.S**

*Career Coach -
CEBS & PCAL*

Our Mission

Empowering Hilltoppers to turn career confusion into career confidence through personalized guidance, meaningful opportunities, and lifelong support.

Our Vision

We envision a WKU community where every student graduates confident, connected, and ready to thrive in a fulfilling career.

Our Values

1

Empowerment: We equip students to take ownership of their career journey with confidence and purpose.

2

Collaboration: We build strong partnerships across campus and beyond to create opportunities for success.

3

Encouragement: We celebrate every step of progress as Hilltoppers rise toward their goals.

Our Services

Resume, Cover Letter & Handshake

- We help students tailor their career documents and Handshake profiles to stand out to employers.

Career Fair Preparation

- Gain confidence and understand expectations for professional dress, résumés, and networking.

Choosing a Major or Career

- Explore interests, values, and strengths to find the career path that fits you best.
- Steppingblocks: Connect majors to careers

Interview Skills

- Build confidence with interview coaching, tips, and mock interviews to sharpen your skills.

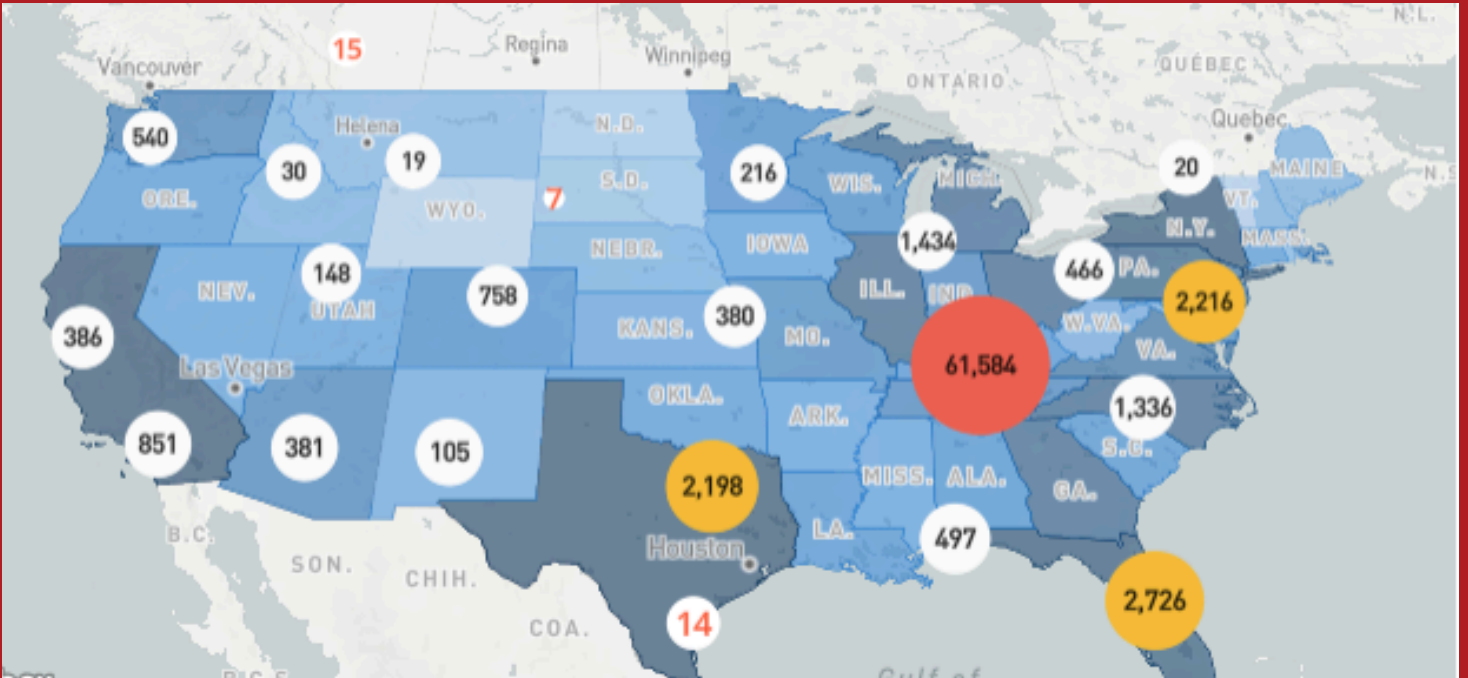
Internship & Job Search Tips

- Learn effective strategies to discover opportunities and connect your skills to employer needs.

Additional Support

- Get guidance on post-graduation plans and developing a personal brand for your career journey.

LIFE AFTER WKU



Top States

- Kentucky
- Tennessee
- Indiana
- Florida
- Texas
- Georgia
- Ohio
- California
- North California
- Illinois

Top SteppingBlocks Employers



Top First Destinations (from Handshake)



Steppingblocks Numbers

- 86,449 Alumni Reported from 1950–Present
- Average Salary – \$76,055
- 51% Male Alumni
- 49% Female Alumni

Career Coaches

Our Career Development Team provides personalized coaching tailored to each student's unique academic background, career path, and ambitions. To ensure easy access to services, we offer in-person coaching and virtual appointments to meet students where they are. This flexible, student-first approach allows us to reach more Hilltoppers and help them prepare for successful futures, wherever their paths may lead.

Appointment Topics

- Professional Document Review
- Job/Internship Search Tips
- Uncertain Major/Career
- Interview Preparation
- General Career Help
- Personal Branding
- Graduate School Planning



806 Appointments

07 Career Success Professionals

60 Workshops & Presentations

1,360 Attendees

RESUME DEVELOPMENT

The Career Development Center is implementing a Pre-Test and Post-Test Assessment model. This assessment strategy is designed to measure student learning outcomes and knowledge gains in key career development areas. The goal of the assessment is to establish a baseline understanding of students' knowledge prior to participating in a workshop and to compare it with their knowledge following the session. This will help identify areas of strength and those requiring further instructional focus.

We aim to achieve a minimum 15% improvement in student scores from pre- to post-assessment, indicating measurable knowledge gains in key career development topics..



18.02%

Relative %
Improvement

"The Advising and Career Development Center has been one of the most helpful campus resources I have utilized. As a Dental Hygiene Program applicant, the career coaching and mock interviews have helped me be more confident and even excited for the interview. I felt so welcomed and got such good feedback on my responses. I have and will continue to recommend anyone seeking help with class selection or career/program coaching to the Advising and Career Development Center."

Gracie Pirozzolo
WKU Sophomore, Pre-Dental Hygiene



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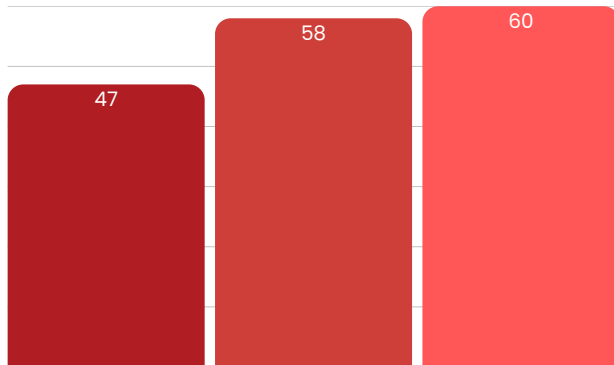


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Classroom Collaborations

Workshops/Presentations

● 2023-2024 ● 2024-2025 ● 2025-2026



Faculty Champs

- Dr. Paul Woosley
- Kelley Coppinger
- Heather Payne-Emerson
- Marrissa Bryant
- Jason Wilson
- Bertena Varney
- Ashley Edwards Cook
- Marybeth Hunt
- Chris Groves
- Tsai Pan
- Allison Wittum
- Dr. Soyeon Kim
- Dr. Navdeep Singh
- Dr. Sarah Scali
- Greg Goodrich
- Wendi Hulsey
- Dr. Tanya Burgess
- Lexy Fuson
- Alexander Poole
- Leah Spaulding
- Kumi Ishii
- Jennifer Mize Smith

Presentation Topics

- Resume/Cover Letter
- Development
- Career Development Services
- Elevator Pitch
- AI in Career Development
- Job/Internship Search Strategies
- Selecting a Major/Career
- Career Exploration
- Career Conversations

Classroom Topics

- Resume Reviews
- Mock Interviews
- Handshake/LinkedIn
- Profile Reviews
- Career Exploration
- Appointments
- Class Presentations
- Cover Letter Reviews

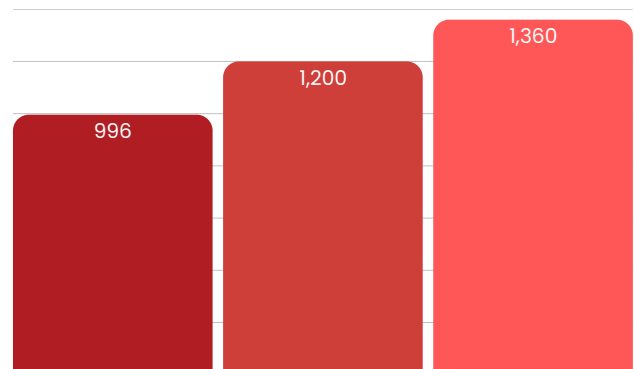
Classrooms

- AGRI 175
- Art 432
- PCAL 175
- HMD 459
- BA 170
- SEAS 175
- CM 490
- ENG 490
- CRM 199
- PCAL 175
- IDST 199
- GEOL 499
- COMM 494
- HMD 459
- AGRI 598
- CHHS 150
- EXS 122
- GEOG 175
- DH 324
- PH 488
- SWRK 483
- GEOG 499
- COMM 362
- CHNF 499
- PSY 390
- COMM 351



Workshop Attendees

● 2023-2024 ● 2024-2025 ● 2025-2026



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Quotes From the Community

“For the past four years, the WKU Career Development Center has been an invaluable partner to the Program of Dental Hygiene. Through targeted in-class workshops, individualized resume development guidance, and structured live mock interview practice, the team has significantly strengthened our students’ professional readiness and confidence. The Career Development Center is an essential contributor to our students’ employment success and to the continued excellence of our program.”

Wendi Hulsey, RDH, MDH, FADHA
Instructor II, Program of Dental Hygiene

“I was incredibly impressed and grateful for the resources and in-person support the Career Development team provided for my senior capstone students. Holly Stacker visited our class twice, first to talk about job searching and job materials, and then to discuss interview preparation. She also held mock interviews with each student. In their reflections, students made a special point to note how generous, supportive, and constructive Holly was, and many said they felt genuinely more confident afterwards (several even mentioned enjoying the interview). As a scholar of literature with no formal training in career preparation beyond the academy, I found the team’s individualized, personal, human (and humane!) support truly special.”

Gillian Knoll, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of English & Literature Advisor

“I have used the Career Development Center for anything I could possibly think of when it comes to being successful outside of school. I have had the opportunity to work with Mrs. Holly on different occasions related to finding internships, jobs, and even resume help. She has truly been the best thing that could have happened when it comes to supporting PCAL students, because there are not many resources for us here at WKU. She and Mr. Wayne have both made a big impact on my success after university.”

Cassaria Edwards,
WKU Senior Criminology and Sociology, minor in
Social Work, and a Certificate in Family Home Visiting



Career Student Ambassadors



Olivia Bellow

Referral Methods:

- ACDC website
- ACDC emails
- Social media posts
- Parent/Relative/Friend
- Class assignments
- Faculty/Staff

Appointment Topics:

- Resume/CV review
- Cover letter review
- Job search assistance
- Career/Major Choice
- Job Fair Prep
- Professionalism
- Internship Assistance

Our student staff completed:

130

appointment and email
resume reviews.

16.13%

of all appointments & resume
reviews completed by our office was
with peer level staff.



Ziah Anderson

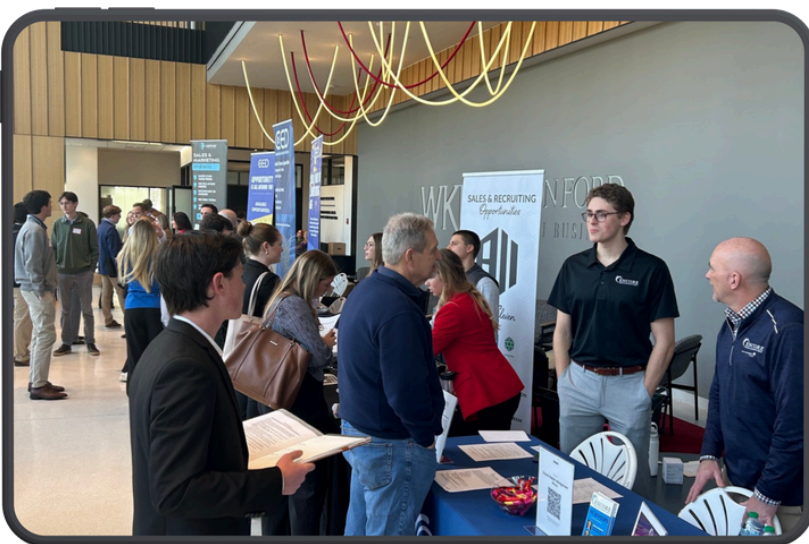


Shania Wood

"Working in career services has taught me how important it is to take advantage of every opportunity and invest time in finding a good mentor. Knowing when to reach out for help and having someone to push you forces you to be the best version of yourself."

-Olivia Bellow, Senior

Connecting Students w/ Employers



Most Applications Received (from Handshake)



Number of Handshake Opportunities Posted By Type:

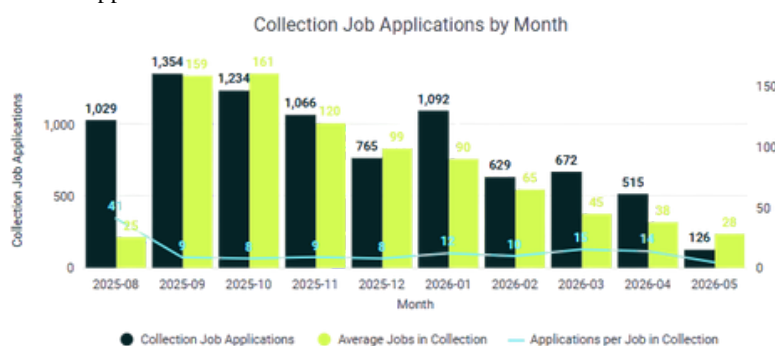
25,401	full & part-time jobs
3,415	internships
200	fellowships
30	cooperative education
90	volunteer jobs
31	experiential learning jobs
72	on-campus employment
29,239	total opportunities

30,730 students with an
activated Handshake account

“WKU’s nursing career fair is one of my favorite recruiting events of the semester. The students are engaged and enthusiastic every time. The Career Team is responsive and helpful, and they are clearly preparing the students for the hiring process.”

–Kathleen Ninke,
Talent Acquisition Specialist
UL Health

Student Applications:



“The WKU Career Fair played a big role in my professional development. I researched the companies that would be there and focused on the ones looking for students in my major, then used the skills I’ve learned in my classes to connect with them and earn an interview. That experience helped me stand out and gave me a real foot in the door with a major company in my field.”

–Kaleb Vashon – Business Data Analytics Senior



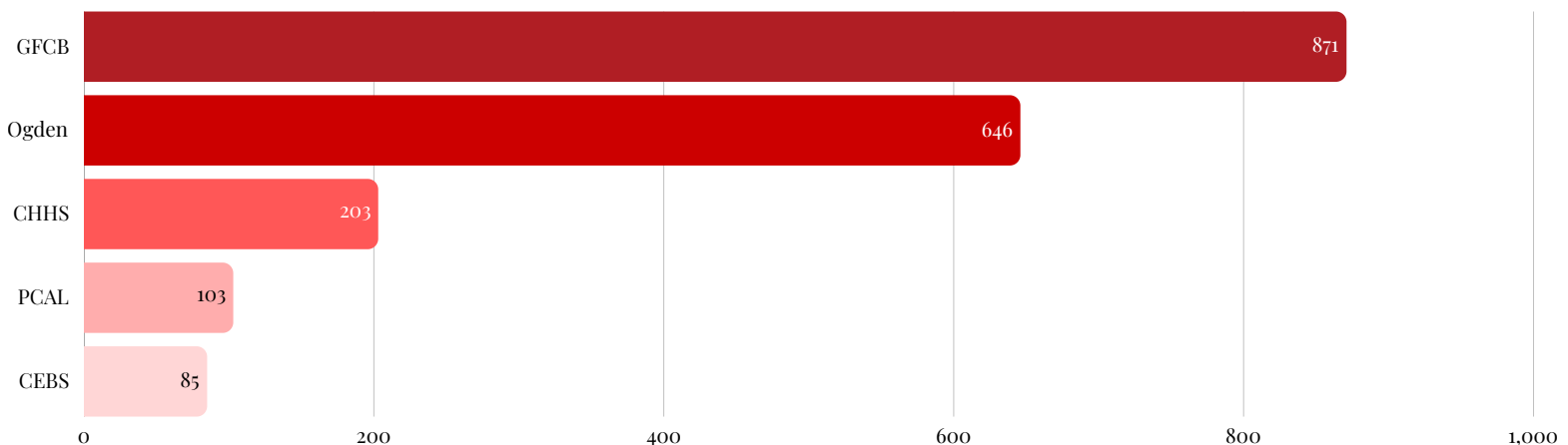
11 Career Fairs were held this year

2001 **&** **314**
Students Employers
attended the career fairs



Career Fairs:

- Business Internship Fair
- SEAS Mechatronics Fair
- SEAS Construction Fair
- Nursing Recruitment Fair
- Business Career Fair
- Physical Therapy Fair
- Student-Athlete & NIL Fair
- Agriculture Career Fair



“Western Kentucky University is a wonderful partner for our company. The university plays an important role in shaping future leaders across civil engineering, land surveying, and architecture. Their strong academic programs, organized career fairs and practical training create a valuable pipeline of future skilled professionals. We’re grateful for our partnership with the university, which continues to benefit our organization.”

–Mark Silen, Relations Manager
 **MORLEY**
ARCHITECTS | ENGINEERS | SURVEYORS



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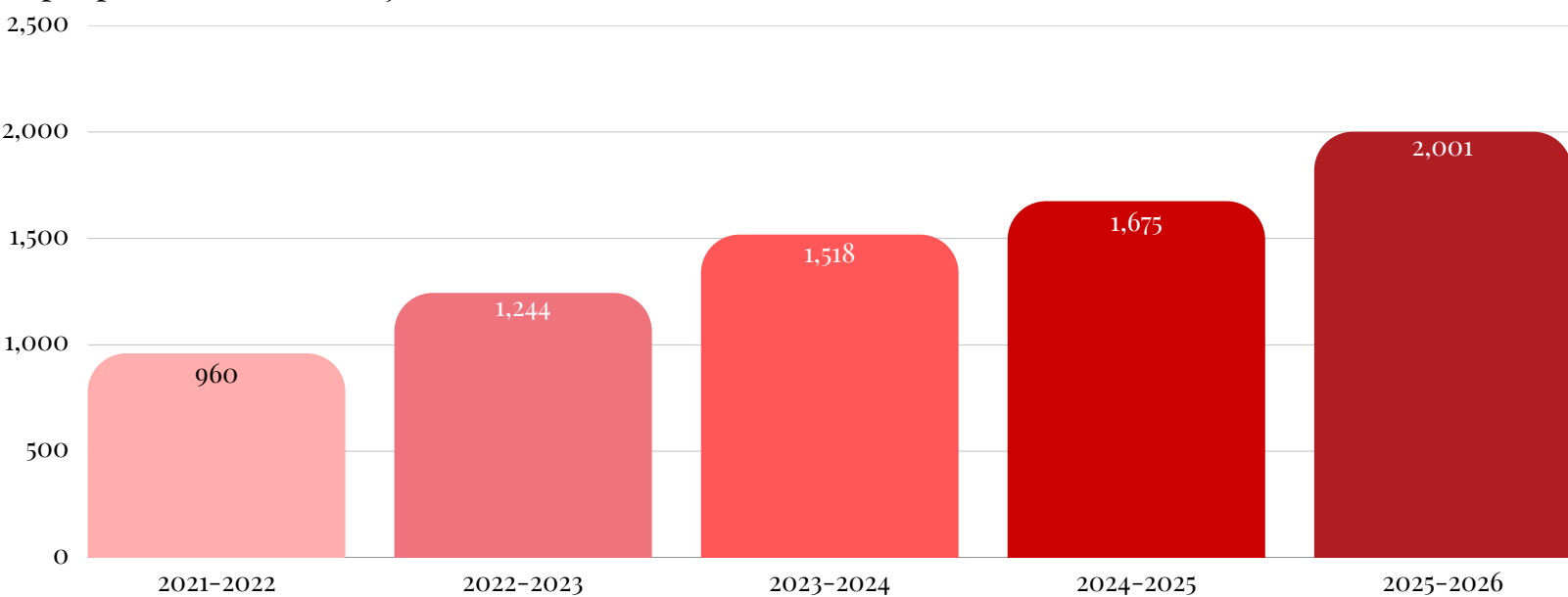
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CAREER FAIR GROWTH OVER THE YEARS

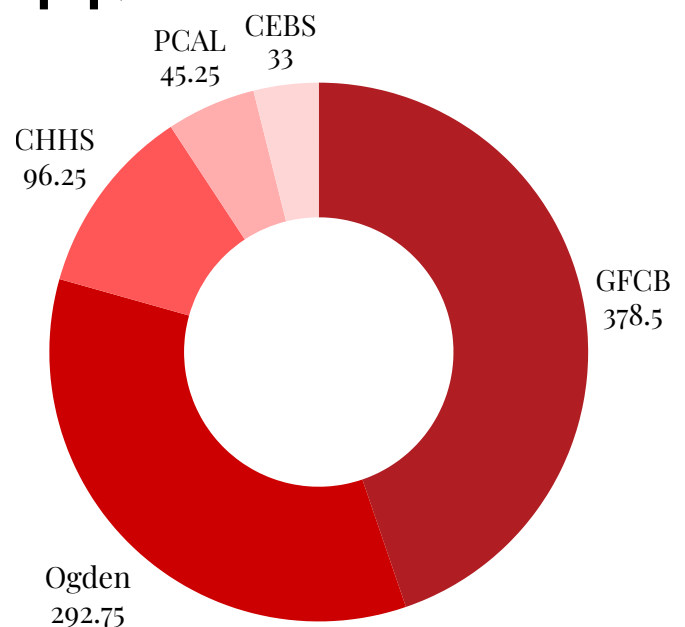
Student engagement with career fairs has steadily increased over the past five years. Attendance trends demonstrate growing awareness of career readiness opportunities and stronger connections between students and employers. This growth has been driven by increased student outreach efforts, marketing campaigns, increased social media engagement, enhanced partnerships with faculty and academic colleges, and more. We are thankful for the opportunity to grow and build student-employer connections and preparedness for the job search.



Student attendance has grown **108.44%** over the past five years.

10.66% Higher Average
Attendance in Spring Career Fairs
Compared to Fall Career Fairs

Highest attended career fair:
Fall 25 Business Career Fair
with 432 students





Student Engagement

**10 Career Events
&
12 Tabling Events**
were held this year



**Top Employers Based
on Student Engagement**

Career Events:

- Disney College Program
- JCPenney Suit-Up
- Professional Headshots
- CED Spotlight
- WKU Global - Ohanami
- Employer Tabling



ATTENDANCE

866

students, faculty, and
staff attended our
career events this year



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Social Media Presence

<https://linktr.ee/wkuacdc>



Instagram: **↑ 3.31%**

Total: 3,847
Increase: 130



Threads: **↑ 12.67%**

Total: 489
Increase: 55

LinkTr.ee Insights

Lifetime Totals

Views:	5.29k
Clicks:	2.47k
Click Rate:	46.6%



Facebook: **↑ 13.52%**

Total: 1,117
Increase: 133



LinkedIn:

Total: 880+
New Account!
Go Follow Us!

Job Justice League

The Job Justice League is a recurring social media series designed to empower students with quick, actionable career tips. Through engaging and relatable content, the series covers topics like resumes, interviewing, job searching, and professional etiquette, helping students build confidence and take the next step in their career journey.

Videos we have created so far include:

- [CED Internship Event](#)
- [Resume Creation with Resume Ranger](#)
- [Choose Your Character: JJJ Introductions](#)
- [Interview Prep with Communication Commander](#)
- [Internship Help with The Closer](#)



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Monthly Career Insiders

The WKU Career Center produces a monthly newsletter to share timely career resources, events, and employer insights with students, alumni, and campus partners. Created to increase awareness and access, it extends our reach beyond appointments and consistently connects a broad audience with valuable career development information. We have successfully reached approximately:

15000 **&** **2600**
Students Faculty/Staff

Career Insider Links:

- [August 2025](#) – Who We Are
- [September 2025](#) – Resume/Cover Letter & Handshake
- [October 2025](#) – Internship & Job Searching Strategies
- [November 2025](#) – Interviews: What to Expect
- [January 2026](#) – S.M.A.R.T. Goal Setting
- [February 2026](#) – Professionalism
- [March 2026](#) – Steppingblocks & Interview Confidence
- [April 2026](#) – Exploring Your Path & Internship Success
- [All Things Resume](#)



Career Guides

The WKU Career Center develops a collection of over 40 Career Guides to provide students with accessible, on-demand resources covering a variety of career development topics. Designed to support career readiness beyond appointments and workshops, these guides offer practical information and strategies on resumes, interviews, career exploration, graduate school, and more. They serve as valuable resources for students through every stage of their career journey. Click on any example below to go to our career guides page!



Career Guide Topics:

- Career Readiness Guide
- Career Planning
- Soft Skills
 - Personal Competence
 - Communication
 - Professionalism
 - Teamwork
 - Leadership
- Exploring Graduate School Options
- Job Search Essentials
- Professional Documents
- Career Conversations
- Building Your Personal Brand
- Interview Preparation

Partnerships

WKU partners with a wide range of campus and community organizations throughout the year to collaboratively host events and initiatives that enhance student career readiness. These partnerships strengthen our impact by bringing diverse resources, expertise, and opportunities directly to students.



First Gen

Designed to support first generation college students through structured mentorship, goal setting, and reflective journaling. The program included a mentor match event, five structured mentor meetings, and guided reflections submitted via Blackboard. The goal being to build connections between students and WKU faculty/staff.



TRIO

Group of federally funded college opportunity programs that motivate and support students from disadvantaged backgrounds in their pursuit of a college degree. TRIO programs provide academic tutoring and advising, counseling, mentoring, financial guidance, and other assistance necessary for educational success.



SGA

WKU Career partners with the Student Government Association to strengthen student outreach and engagement, helping promote career initiatives and ensure student voices are represented in our programming.



Master Plan

Master Plan serves as a long term vision for the university's physical campus, guiding future development to support academic excellence, student engagement, and community connection. It outlines strategic priorities for campus spaces, facilities, and infrastructure. Master Plan ensures WKU continues to evolve in alignment with its mission.

Partnerships



Alumni Association

The Alumni Association partners with us by attending career fairs to connect with employers and support networking opportunities for students. We are also exploring future collaborative projects to further enhance career readiness and alumni engagement.

ISEC

Promotes a culturally inclusive campus environment, cultural awareness, and competence, inter-group dialogue, engagement and intercultural interaction, and supports lifelong learning about self and others. Hands-on recruitment and retention resources for the various groups within the WKU community.



Career Launch



Emphasizes the importance of networking and relationship building in today's competitive job landscape. Through hands-on exercises and connection to the WKU Alumni Association's Career Consultants program, students gained the confidence and skills necessary to navigate professional interactions successfully, and develop relationships with new professional contacts.

Ohanami

WKU's Ohanami Day celebrates the Japanese tradition of cherry blossom viewing, bringing students, faculty, and community members together to experience Japanese culture through performances, food, and hands-on activities. This spring event promotes cultural appreciation & community engagement on campus.



Graduate Outcomes

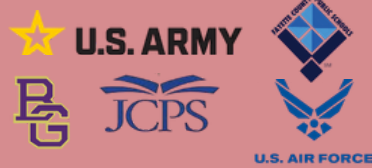
Steppingblocks Grad Outcomes for WKU Alumni from 2022-2025

College of Educational and Behavioral Sciences

1,049 alumni
avg. salary: \$57,115

43% M - 57% F
avg. age: 30

Top 5 Employers Hiring:



College of Health and Human Services

1,066 alumni
avg. salary: \$57,018

32% M - 68% F
avg. age: 28

Top 5 Employers Hiring:



Gordon Ford College of Business

1,509 alumni
avg. salary: \$57,467

57% M - 43% F
avg. age: 27

Top 5 Employers Hiring:



Ogden College of Science and Engineering

933 alumni
avg. salary: \$58,137

67% M - 33% F
avg. age: 27

Top 5 Employers Hiring:



Potter College of Arts and Letters

800 alumni
avg. salary: \$51,868

39% M - 61% F
avg. age: 26

Top 5 Employers Hiring:



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

As we reflect on another incredible year, we want to extend our sincere gratitude to everyone who has supported the WKU Career Team and the students we serve. Your partnership and commitment have helped create meaningful opportunities for Hilltoppers to grow, connect, and prepare for their futures. From career fairs and workshops to employer partnerships and student success stories, your support continues to make a lasting impact across our campus community.

We are proud of all that has been accomplished this year and are even more excited for what is ahead. Stay tuned for next year as we continue to expand our programs and create even more opportunities to support student success. Thank you for being part of our journey and for helping us make a difference every step of the way.

-The Career Development Team



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