Collegiate Employment Research Brief 2012 - 01

Campus Partnerships: From Affiliates to Deep Investors

Phil Gardner
Director, CERI

Introduction

Corporate support for higher education has a long and esteemed track record with generous gifts for facilities (named buildings), faculty (endowed chairs), curricular programs (STEM), research and athletics. Career Services is not always the recipient of major donor monies though this office often services as the conduit for some of the funds that departments or programs receive. I remember being with the Institute less a month (circa 1985) when I was required to be at a presentation, along with the Career Services staff, where the VP of Human Resources at a Fortune 100 company was making a gift to a college program. What struck me where the VP's comments. He praised Career Services for the fine work the staff did to connect graduates with his company and essentially bestowed a $50,000 gift to the department on behalf of Career Services. Career Services received not a penny of this gift. This pattern has repeated itself over much of the next two decades. But times have changed.

Recent forces have impacted both institutions and corporations on the solicitation of and the donation of funds between the two parties with the specific focus on talent development. Budget reductions have plagued most Career Service operations, especially public institutions. Directors have become more proactive in identifying funding sources outside of traditional options, such as career fair fees. They have approached companies with strong ties to their campuses for direct donations to support specific programs or personnel. Workforce succession (or absence of) issues caused by pending retirements and unfilled positions from prior to the 2008 recession has motivated companies to strengthen their talent pipelines into key functions prior to any total disruption of their workforce. By providing financial resources directly to Career Services, these companies hope to advance their employment brand to students and to identify a potential pool of young talent ahead of their competitors. Positioning resources in such a manner runs counter to the long standing rule of "unrestricted gifts" to a new perspective of "guided expectations."

Both parties need each other more than ever. Several recent large corporate "gifts" to career centers has raised the interest of corporate partnerships in general. Unfortunately, little information is available on corporate partnerships. This apparent void emerged when CERI solicited questions for the 2011-2012 Recruiting Trends survey. Corporate college relation managers and career center directors both suggested examining this topic. Their hope was to set out some benchmarks on the type of partnerships, the amount of money involved, the expectations of employers, and the success of these partnerships in gaining access to talent. Jeff Beavers, then the Global Hiring Manager for Whirlpool Corp., assisted me in drafting questions for this portion of the Trends survey.

Key Findings

- **40% of respondents indicated that they partnered with at least one college or university**
- **Health Services and Mining & Oil reported the highest levels of partnership involvement.**
- **9% financially contributed $50,000 or more to their partner institutions.**
- **Approximately 1/3 of partnership financial support comes directly from recruiting budgets.**
- **The most important goals of these partnerships involve development and access to talent.**
- **Corporate partners would prefer to see the Career Services Director, Deans and faculty of targeted programs at the table to discussion conditions of the partnership.**
- **Most partnerships appear to be meeting expectations the organizations with 42% considering options to expand partnerships over the next 5 years.**

Extent of Partnerships

Of the approximately 3600 employer representatives who responded to the question about whether their organization partnered with an institution(s), 40% (1437 respondents) indicated that their organization had a special arrangement or partnership with at least one college or university campus. Employers, on average, had arrangements with five campuses while the median was two campuses. Nearly three-quarters of respondents (73%) reported having arrangements with 1 to 3 campuses; 22% had arrangements with 4 to 10 campuses; and 5% indicated arrangements with 11 or more campuses.

Approximately one-third of companies with 500 employees or less had partnerships, averaging between 2 and 3 campuses per organization. Larger organizations were more likely to have partnerships with 45% of mid-size and 60% of large organizations reporting partnerships. Large organizations partner with an average of 11 campuses.

Size	Percentage Holding Partnership	Average Number of Partnerships	Median Number of Partnerships	Range of Partnerships
Very Small (9 or fewer employees)	28	2.0	1	1 – 12
Fast Growth (10 to 100 employees)	31	2.3	2	1 – 19
Small (101 to 500 employees)	39	2.7	2	1 – 27
Mid-size (501 to 4000 employees)	45	4.5	2	1 – 75
Large (4000 plus employees)	60	10.9	3	1 – 500

Economic sector also influenced the level of participation in partnerships:

- Health Services, Transportation, Wholesale and Arts& Entertainment held the highest levels of participation.
- Real Estate/Leasing reported the lowest level of participation.
- Government, Financial Services, Arts & Entertainment, and Wholesale sectors had the highest average number of partnerships, ranging from 5.8 to 12.6.

Sector	Percentage Holding Partnership	Average Number of Partnerships	Median Number of Partnerships	Range of Partnerships
Agriculture	38	3.5	2.5	1 – 12
Mining & Oil	48	4.5	2	1 – 10
Utilities	40	2.3	2	1 – 5
Construction	38	3.1	2	1 – 10
Manufacturing	41	4.1	2	1 – 10
Wholesale	46	5.8	2	1 – 90
Retail	45	4.8	3	1 – 100
Transportation	47	3.4	2	1 – 15
Information Services	43	1.9	1	1 – 15
Financial Services	43	8.3	2	1 – 500
Real Estate/Leasing	28	2.6	2	1 – 5
Professional & Scientific Services	35	3.6	2	1 – 75
Administrative Services	37	2.6	1	1 – 10
Education	41	3.1	2	1 – 27
Health Services	56	4.2	2.5	1 – 25

Arts & Entertainment	46	6.9	2	1 – 100
Accommodations (Food & Lodging)	40	2.3	1	1 – 7
Non-profits	38	4.4	2	1 – 90
Government	36	12.5	3	1 – 435

For the vast majority of companies with whom universities partner the number of partnerships is small. These partners may be considered one's peer group in terms of "talent supplier status." If the same schools appear in different companies' core institution portfolio, it is a strong indicator of the institutions one ought to benchmark.

Financial Commitment

Many of the organizations reported that they had arrangements with their local campuses' internship programs and provided modest financial support for programming needs. Others reported making small donations to support events, such as career fairs, etiquette dinners, mock interviewing or speed interviewing sessions. While the average level of financial commitment was approximately $6500, the median range was $1000 to $5000. Overall, 47% indicated that they gave less than $1000. The level of donations was segmented into four groups: $1000 or less (47%); $1000 to $5000 (20%); $5000 to $50,000 (24%); and $50,000 to $500,000 (9%). The donation grouping will be important in later analyses; but these comparisons shed light on the level of donations:

- As organizational size increases, the level of partnership financial commitment increases with **Large** organizations giving an average of $13,000.
- For **Very Small**, **Fast Growth**, and **Small** organizations, typically more than 50% contribute a $1000 or less.
- A comparison of organizational size and donation group, using crosstabs procedure, found a significant difference (Chi-square = 178.399) with smaller companies more likely to contribute lower levels of funding than mid-size and large companies.

Size	Average Amount of Financial Contribution	Median Contribution	Range	Percent Committing $1000 or less
Very Small	~$2500	$1000 or less	$1K to $50K	75
Fast Growth	~$3500	$1000 or less	$1K to $300K	64
Small	~$5500	$1000 or less	$1K to $500K	51
Mid-size	~$9000	$1000 to $5000	$1K to $500K	35
Large	~$13000	$5000 to $10000	$1K to $500K	25

- Mining & Oil companies provided the highest average donation at approximately $57,500 followed by companies from the Utilities and Agriculture sectors.
- Education, Non-profits, Arts & Entertainment, and Accommodations are several of the sectors that contribute around $2000 on average.

Sector	Average Amount of Financial Contribution	Median Contribution	Range	Percent Committing $1000 or less
Agriculture	~$16,000	$1000 to $5000	$1K to $500K	20
Mining & Oil	~$57,500	$25K to $50K	$1K to $400K	8
Utilities	~$16,000	$5000 to $10000	$1K to $300K	19
Construction	~$7,500	$5000 to $10000	$1K to $400K	28
Manufacturing	~$5,500	$1000 to $5000	$1K to $500K	34
Wholesale	~$4,500	$1000 to $2000	$1K to $100K	50
Retail	~$6,000	$1000 to $5000	$1K to $100K	31
Transportation	~$4,500	$1000 to $5000	$1K to $25K	33
Information Services	~$5,000	$1000 to $5000	$1K to $500K	46
Financial Services	~$5,500	$1000 to $5000	$1K to $500K	36
Real Estate/Leasing	~$2,000	$1000 or less	$1K to $5K	50
Professional & Scientific Services	~$4,500	$1000 to $5000	$1K to $400K	46
Administrative Services	~$2,000	$1000 or less	$1K to $50K	60
Education	~$1,500	$1000 or less	$1K to $300K	69
Health Services	~$3,500			61
Arts & Entertainment	~$2,000	$1000 or less	$1K to $100K	70
Accommodations (Food & Lodging)	~$2,000	$1000 or less	$1K to $100K	67
Non-profits	~$2,000	$1000 or less	$1K to $50K	73
Government	~$4,500	$1000 or less	$1K to $500K	63

Further clarification on economic sector involvement in partnerships:

- Manufacturing organizations comprised 27% of the largest donor group with Professional & Scientific Services, the next highest sector, comprising 14%.

- Even though Mining & Oil provided the highest average amount of funding, they only comprised 6% of the largest donor group.

Partnership programs appear to favor certain types of institutions. When donation group was compared across different types of institutions (2 year colleges, 4 year publics, 4 year privates, advanced degree institutions, etc) these patterns were discerned:

- About 20% to 25% of organizations partnered with community colleges across all donor levels.
- Between 70% and 80% of organizations partnered with 4 year public institutions across all donor levels.
- Between 55% and 65% of organizations partnered with 4 year private institutions across all donor levels.
- Approximately 10% of organizations partnered with for-profit institutions.
- Organizations that fund their partnerships at $5000 or higher are more likely to partner with advanced degree institutions (about 50%).
- Organizations that fund their partnerships at $5000 or higher are more likely to be involved with Historically Black Colleges (23%).

Based on the level of financial support that organizations give to career services, two different types of donors can be identified. For those giving less than $5,000 can be considered affiliate partners while those giving more than $5,000 can be considered investors. For the 9% giving more than $50,000 the term deep investor is appropriate. Affiliate partners have a different stake than investor partners. The deep investor are directing their money with the expectations that it produce measurable performance; specifically (as we will see below) acquisition of talent. Affiliates may be more likely to provide their support without expectations of measurable performance but rather a sense of meeting their social responsibility or appreciation of services.

Source of Partnership Funds

Organizations may have several sources to fund their partnerships. An obvious source is directly from college recruiting budgets. Other sources could include the organization's foundation, the organization's general budget, or the organization's research and development budget. Respondents were asked the percentage of their partnership financial commitments came from the recruiting budget. Nearly half (49%) indicated that none of their partnership funds came from their recruiting budget. Nearly one-third (32%) indicated 100% of their partnership obligations were funded through their recruiting budgets.

- None of the funds from recruiting budget: 49%
- One percent to 25% funded from recruiting budget: 11%
- Twenty-six to 50% funded from recruiting budget: 2%
- Fifty-one to 75% funded from recruiting budget: 3%
- Seventy-six to 99% funded from recruiting budget: 2%
- Hundred percent funded from recruiting budget: 32%

Comparisons by organizational size and economic sector revealed:

- As size of the organization increased, the amount of funds extracted from recruiting budgets grew. Eighty percent of **Very Small** companies did not have to use recruiting budgets while only 38% of **Large** organizations did not have to use recruiting budget monies.
- **Wholesale**, **Real Estate/Leasing**, **Retail**, and **Transportation** sectors reported the highest percentage having to take 100% of partnership funds from recruiting budgets: approximately 50% or higher in each sector.
- **Education**, **Non-profits**, **Health Services**, **Government** and **Arts & Entertainment** reported the highest percentage of not having to use any recruiting budget funds to support partnership programs: approximately 60% or higher.

Donation level does influence the amount of funds extracted from recruiting budgets. Interestingly, organizations in the smallest and largest donation levels tend to receive their funds from outside sources. An organization that provides $1000 to $5000 usually takes this money directly from their recruiting budgets. Organizations funding partners from $5000 to $50000 report slightly more than one-third (38%) fund completely outside their recruiting budget; 35% draw totally upon their recruiting budget; and 27% use a mix of sources.

	Funds of $1000 or less	**Funds of $1000 to $5000**	**Funds of $5000 to $50000**	**Funds of $50000 to $500000**
Percent with none of the funds from recruiting budget	60	29	38	51
Percent with 100% of the funds from recruiting budget	27	51	35	19

With between 20% and 35% of the largest corporate donors (over $5,000) funding their gifts directly through their recruiting budgets, it is clear that the "gift money" is really investment money with high expectations of returns. Foundations may be measured on the quality of the initiatives they help set in motion, but recruiting units are measured on talent acquisition. So, if a company fails to achieve their expected return on investment, will they pull their funds and look elsewhere?

Length of Partnership Agreements

Typically partnership agreements are for one year (61%).

- **Very Small** organizations are more likely to have one year agreements (76%) than **Large** organizations (52%).
- Organizations that contribute $50,000 or more to the campus are more likely to be in multiple year arrangements with 40% covering a two to four year period.

Length of Agreement	All Respondents (%)	Funds of $1000 or less	Funds of $1000 to $5000	Funds of $5000 to $50000	Funds of $50000 to $500000
One Year Agreement	61	72	69	52	31
Two to Four Year Agreement	22	14	28	28	40
Five to Seven Year Agreement	7	5	11	11	13
Eight or More Year Agreement	10	9	9	9	16

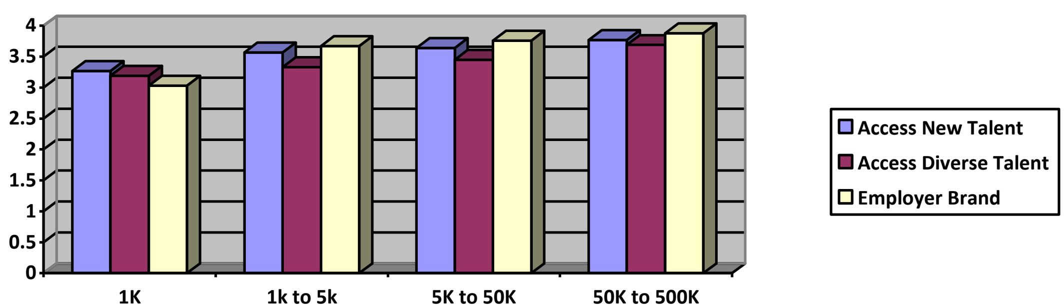
Corporation or Organizational Goals for Campus Partnerships

Organizations enter into partnerships with colleges and universities for a variety of reasons. A list of fourteen potential partnership goals were presented to respondents who were asked to rate each goal's importance to their organizations from a 5-point scale where 1 = not at all essential to 5 = extremely essential goal. The four most important goals all centered on the acquisition of talent for their organizations, including expanding student awareness of the organization as an employer. Only three goals, access to new talent, access to diverse talent, and expanding organization's employer brand, received more than 50% ratings at the very essential to extremely essential levels.

Goal	All Respondent Mean	Funds of $1000 or less	Funds of $1000 to $5000	Funds of $5000 to $50000	Funds of $50000 to $500000
Gain early access to new talent	3.48	3.27	3.57	3.64	3.77
Expend employer brand	3.45	3.03	3.67	3.76	3.88
Gain access to diverse talent	3.35	3.19	3.33	3.45	3.69
Develop contacts with student org.	3.05	2.73	3.20	3.32	3.35
Gain access to experienced talent	2.91	2.90	2.91	2.91	2.85
Extend consumer brand	2.78	2.53	2.82	3.01	3.01
Receive preferential services	2.69	2.38	2.87	2.97	2.92
Gain access to faculty	2.67	2.53	2.66	2.80	2.97
Reduce processing time for recruiting	2.58	2.55	2.59	2.64	2.51
Continuing education for employees	2.54	2.42	2.51	2.65	2.84

Reduce recruiting budget	2.53	2.58	2.43	2.48	2.51
Support research and innovation	2.49	2.32	2.40	2.61	2.96
Fulfill social initiatives	2.42	2.24	2.38	2.51	2.90
Expand executive education	2.20	2.14	2.19	2.21	2.36

Statistical comparisons were made for each goal between donation levels. For only four goals the ANOVA statistic was insignificant: reducing recruiting budgets, reducing processing time, access to experienced talent, and expanded executive education options. The remaining goals were statistically significant at the .01 level of less. The following graph illustrates the differences for the three items were the difference between the lowest donation and the largest donation groups were the largest.



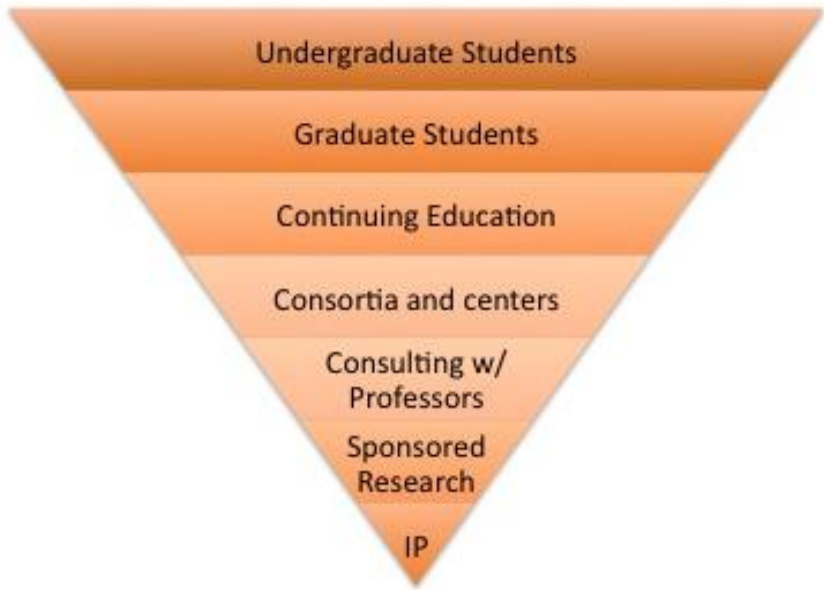
An examination was also made by organizational size. Because there is a high correlation between size and level of donation, smaller organizations were expected to differ from large organizations on most of the items. This assumption proved to be true. Size proved significant on 10 goals with these goals. No differences were found for: access to experienced talent, reduce processing time, access to faculty, and executive educational opportunities. For the other goals **Large** organizations rated the ten generally higher than the other size categories. Three interesting observations can be pulled from these comparisons:

- **Larger** organizations felt it was much more important to have contact with student organizations than smaller employers.
- **Larger** organizations felt it was much more important to have access to diverse talent than smaller companies.
- **Larger** organizations felt that they should receive preferential services at career fairs and campus events compared to smaller companies.

Comparisons between economic sectors found only a few differences in goal ratings:

- **Educational needs of employees**: Manufacturing, Finance. Health Services, Agriculture, and Education rated this goal higher.
- **Research support and innovation**: Health Services, Government, Mining & Oil, and Wholesale rated this goal higher.
- **Reduce processing time**: Professional & Scientific Services, Finance Arts & Entertainment, Wholesale, Administrative Services, and Real Estate/Leasing rated this higher.
- **Receive preferential services**: Retail, Transportation and Mining & Oil rated highest while Accommodations and Health Services rated lowest.
- **Gain access to new talent**: Non-profits rated lowest.
- **Extend employer brand for talent**: Finance and Mining & Oil rated this goal highest.
- **Extend consumer brand**: Retail and Finance rated this goal highest.
- **Gain access to faculty**: Finance and Government rated this goal highest.
- **Social responsibility**: Finance rated this goal highest.

A recent component on university – employer expectations was included in economic development plan for the greater Minneapolis – St. Paul area. Employers shared their expectations for the universities in the region. The inverted triangle, shown below, summarizes their findings. The order of their expectations in many ways mirrors the expectations laid out above. Clearly the major need for employers from higher education today is TALENT.



Companies were asked to rank in importance to your company each University service from 1-5:

- Hiring undergraduate students
- Hiring graduate students
- Sponsored research
- Purchasing IP
- Participation in consortia and centers
- Professors as Consultants
- Continuing ed. for employees

Source: *U. Minnesota ITASCA survey of companies from small business to Fortune 500*

Representatives Present at Partnership Discussions

Depending on the objective the organization is trying to meet through their donation, may influence who is represented around the table during negotiations around the use of the gift. In most cases, development officers, faculty, and key administrators are gathered at the table. But, in the case of ***talent focused initiatives***, the corporation or organization may want a different group of institutional representatives at the table. When asked who they would like to see around the table when discussing the arrangements for the partnership, these employers would like see the Career Service Director, Deans of targeted programs, and faculty from these programs. They are less likely to want to see directors from corporate relations, research and innovation, and diversity programs.

At low funding levels, the organizations want to simply deal with the career services director. As funding increases student organizations, faculty and deans would be expected. Even at the highest funding levels, only about one-third of these organizations want a representative from corporate relations at the table.

University Representatives	All Respondents (%)	Funds of $1000 or less	Funds of $1000 to $5000	Funds of $5000 to $50000	Funds of $50000 to $500000
Director, Career Services	60	60	72	74	69
Faculty	40	39	45	51	67
Deans	37	30	45	58	69
Student Organization Reps.	28	24	39	41	42
Alumni Relations	22	22	31	24	31
Corporate Relations	17	11	18	28	36
Diversity Program Director	17	14	17	24	44
Research Office Rep.	6	4	7	6	14
Organization Representatives					
Talent Acquisition Director	37	31	50	53	56
Campus Recruiting Director	30	24	43	42	47
Executive Office Rep.	17	10	17	35	42
Engineering/Science Director	12	8	14	18	36
Director Diversity	5	3	6	7	16

Director Research	4	2	3	6	11
Director Innovation	3	3	3	6	10
Director Foundation	3	3	2	5	18

This evidence challenges existing protocols and procedures at many campuses where Career Services is seldom asked to the table. As these "talent focused gifts" become more common, traditional development officers are going to need to relinquish some of their control in order for these funds to make their way to campus. The use of these funds may mean reconsideration of unrestricted gifts as these funds are clearly marked for talent development activities that will eventually benefit the donor.

Except for the largest investor group, the absence of having the institution's diversity officer is puzzling. The puzzlement stems of the high level of importance placed on identifying and gaining access to diverse talent.

Success of Partnership Programs

The success of these partnerships was addressed in several ways. Respondents were asked to indicate what percentage of new college hires for the past year came from their partner institutions; to indicate their ability to attract diverse talent at their partner institutions; and to rate the success of their partnerships on seven of their stated goals.

Overall, organizations with partnership programs reported that 48% of their new college hires in 2010-2011 came from their partner institutions. The median was 50% and 19% reported a 100% of hires from their partner institutions.

	All Respondents	Funds of $1000 or less	Funds of $1000 to $5000	Funds of $5000 to $50000	Funds of $50000 to $500000
Mean (%)	48	41	54	58	54
Median (%)	50	30	50	70	57
100% Hires from partners	19	18	26	20	0

About one-third reported that they received a higher percentage of their diversity hires from their partner institutions while the majority indicated that the numbers were about the same between partner and non-partner institutions.

	All Respondents	Funds of $1000 or less	Funds of $1000 to $5000	Funds of $5000 to $50000	Funds of $50000 to $500000
Receive Higher Percentage from Partners	35	37	35	34	30
Receive About Same Percentage from Partners & non-partners	60	58	60	63	66
Receive Lower Percentage from Partners	5	5	5	4	4

Respondents were asked to rate the success of their partnership programs on seven dimensions. Overall, programs were viewed as somewhat to moderately successful with only one dimension, "identifying and attracting new talent," being considered moderately to very successful.

Dimensions	Mean	Not to Somewhat Successful (%)	Moderately Successful (%)	Very to Extremely Successful (%)
Identifying and attracting new talent	3.32	21	34	45
Expanding networks of faculty contacts and networks	2.78	44	28	28
Expanding network of student organization	2.59	47	30	22

contacts				
Reducing recruiting expenditures	2.52	51	29	20
Investing in research & innovation opportunities	2.19	63	23	14
Leveraging alumni networks	2.18	64	23	13
Developing executive education opportunities	1.96	70	21	9

Several significant differences were found upon a comparison between donation levels.

- Largest donors were more successful in expanding their networks among faculty (F=11.756, .000).
- The largest two donor groups reported more success in attracting new talent than the smaller two donor groups (F=10.020, .000).
- Large donors found more success, all be it only somewhat successful, in investing in research opportunities (F=9.487, .000).
- The largest two donor groups felt they were more successful in expanding networks among student organizations than smaller donors (F=9.871, .000).

A final test may well be whether organizations with partnership programs will be more active on partner campuses during the 2011-2012 academic year. The answer is probably – about one-third expect to increase hiring at partner schools with 43% of the largest donors planning to increase hiring.

	All Respondents	Funds of $1000 or less	Funds of $1000 to $5000	Funds of $5000 to $50000	Funds of $50000 to $500000
Increase hiring at partner campuses in 11-12	36	33	41	35	43
Maintain same level of hiring	59	61	55	61	50
Decrease hiring at partner campuses in 11-12	5	6	4	4	7

Future Partnership Agreements

Another indicator that the return from these partnership programs meets or exceeds organizations' return on investment (ROI) can be discerned from intentions to continue or even expand partnership agreements. Over the next five years 42% expect to increase the number of partnerships, 56% will maintain the same number of partnerships that they currently have, and only 3% will decrease the number of partnerships. Organizations who fund partnerships at lower levels expect to increase their partnership arrangements compared to organizations that fund at the highest level.

	All Respondents (%)	Funds of $1000 or less (%)	Funds of $1000 to $5000 (%)	Funds of $5000 to $50000 (%)	Funds of $50000 to $500000 (%)
Increase	42	40	42	40	33
Maintain Current Number	56	57	55	58	62
Decrease	3	3	3	2	5

Comparison of Organizations with Partnerships and Organizations without Partnerships

A quick comparison between organizations with and without partnerships found:

- Large organizations with more than 4,000 employees are significantly overrepresented in the partnership group while fast growth organizations (10 to 100 employees) are significantly underrepresented.
- Economic sector was fairly consistent between the two groups with Manufacturing being slightly overrepresented and government slightly underrepresented in the partnership group.
- Partner organizations were more active on campus than organizations without partnerships;
    - Internship programs: 74% of partner organizations, 58% of non-partner organizations
    - Career fairs: 76% of partners attended, 53% of non-partners attended.
- Both groups used alumni and social media about the same (though slightly more partners were likely to use these methods than non-partners).
- Partner organizations planned to hire 45 new graduates (average) in 11-12 for an increase of 7%.
- Non-partner organizations planned to hire 18 new graduates (average) in 11-12 for an increase of 9%.

Final Thoughts

Organizations have historically been financially generous to Career Service operations either from their own expression of appreciation or when approached by Career Services for support. This benchmark exercise provides an understanding of the *breadth of commitments* being made between educational institutions and corporations/organizations, ranging across all size categories and economic sectors. In addition, a glimpse of the depth of these partnerships is captured in terms of financial support being extended to education institutions. We have no previous information to determine whether we are witnessing a growth in partnerships; but, the willingness of nearly half of those organizations already in partnerships to consider expanding suggests that we can expect a continued growth in these types of relationships.

These partnerships appear to benefit to some degree each of the parties involved. Depending on the specific obligations stipulated in the agreements, behaviors and expectations will to be altered if partnership goals are to be met. One big change will be career service shifting from a neutral broker of the student – employer introduction to a proactive agent on behalf of partner organizations. With clearly stated objectives of accessing talent, corporate partners expect career services to help identify a potential pool of talent at various stages of readiness (first year to junior) that can be courted into their talent pipeline and developed through various pre-professional experiences (such as internships). This shift in approach may challenge values held by some (if not all) career centers; but it will also make explicit a strategy that has been going on for a long time. Conflicts will also surface when an institution with multiple corporate partners begin competing for access to the same pool of talent. How these conflicts are addressed will determine the long-term viability of these arrangements.

Another potential conflict could be with development officers. Fund raising is often the designated (and sole responsibility) territory of development officers whom may not like being left out of these type of arrangements. Given that the majority of the funds being given for career services are from the human resource function of the organization and not the foundation, an opportunity exists to coordinate different funding sources without negative confrontations. It is clear that organizations do not want development at the table during these arrangements. Besides tiptoeing through tulips when these opportunities come up, development and career services need to consider ways to allow the institution to capitalize on these sources of revenue.

This study was a simple benchmarking exercise. We are missing in-depth understanding of the details of these arrangements (obligations of both parties). In most cases arrangements are confidential and we may never know the true situation except anecdotally. We do need several detailed case studies, especially of the larger funded partnerships, to answer questions about “undesignated gifts” which is a condition many donors face; about “return on investment” or what are the true outcomes of these partnerships; and about how “talent pools” are assembled for partners in ways that meet FERPA.

From this analysis it appears that partnerships with larger and larger amounts of money attached to them are here to stay. They will have an impact on college recruiting, especially on campuses that have multiple partnerships. Educational institutions will also become more reliant on these partnerships as other sources of corporate funding slowly dwindle. Partnerships are just one of the several dynamics that are changing the career service landscape.