

ABOUT CCWT

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CCWT

CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON
College-Workforce Transitions



WISCONSIN
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON



Continuing Studies
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

History

The CCWT was launched in early 2017 at a time when student employability, skills gaps, changes in the labor market, the future of higher education, and lifelong learning were being discussed and debated around the world.

Underlying these debates, which continue to this day, is a growing consensus that the postsecondary system needs to pay closer attention to ensuring students learn up-to-date competencies and career guidance so they can thrive in the workplace. While the committee that helped to design CCWT felt that the increasing focus on the role of higher education in vocational preparation should not supersede the traditional functions of education to cultivate students' intellects or sense of civic engagement, there was agreement that employability was an essential issue for many students, parents, and policymakers. Thus, a key issue facing colleges, universities, and other providers of postsecondary education is how to best design the educational experience to prepare learners for long term success in their careers.

Yet absent from many of these debates were the voices and experiences of those most implicated in the future direction of higher education-workforce dynamics: those of the students themselves. Documenting students' experiences with teaching and training, career advising, and the hiring process are essential in order to inform the design and improvement of postsecondary programs aimed at helping them make the transition from college to the workforce. In fact, ensuring that new programs, policies, and practices are grounded in the experiences of "users" and feature student voices and interests, was one of the central motivations for creating CCWT.

As the Center's portfolio of activities continues to grow and evolve, this dedication to students' voices and perspectives remains a cornerstone of our programs and activities.



Nidia Bañuelos



Missy Clemens



Pa Her



Matthew Hora



Mindi Thompson

See more of our team at www.ccwt.wisc.edu/who

CCWT's mission is to promote the wellness and career development of students by centering and amplifying the voices and interests of all students, including those historically marginalized in higher education and the labor market.

Our team's research generates evidence-based educational programs and tools that are shared with scholars & practitioners.

In this work, we seek to facilitate institutional and societal change.



TWO PRIMARY AREAS OF EXPERTISE



College Internships & Work-Integrated Learning

College internships and other forms of Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) are widely considered to be high impact practices (HIP) that contribute to students' social and economic mobility post-graduation. CCWT conducts empirical research to understand issues related to access and effectiveness of college internships and other forms of WIL. We routinely review the literature on college internships across national and disciplinary boundaries to inform our own work and to offer as a service to scholars and practitioners. At CCWT, we utilize findings from this research to develop resources, tools, and programming to help post-secondary institutions, employers, and students improve practices and gain skills to smooth students' transition into the workforce.



Career Readiness & Wellness

Aligned with CCWT's mission to conduct research and develop tools, resources, and educational programming to improve career wellness and development outcomes for students, we leverage our expertise in career development, career exploration, work-integrated learning, mental health and assets to develop and test resources, tools, and curricula aimed to support students' career readiness and career wellness skills to navigate the transition to the workforce.



CCWT PROJECTS:



The [Networks and Cultural Assets \(NCA\)](#) Project

emphasizes the cultural assets students bring to their college experience and counters deficit-based narratives that are often used to explain the underrepresentation of students of color in the workforce. The NCA Project maps students' social networks, measuring their [community cultural wealth](#), and tracking changes in their professional identities instead of focusing on skills or resources they may lack. NCA is led by Dr. Nidia Bañuelos, Dr. Ross Benbow, and Kyoungjin Jang-Tucci in collaboration with the University of Texas System Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (LSAMP)



[Tune In to Strive Out Career Wellness Program](#)

The goal of the Tune In to Strive Out Career Wellness Program is to empower students with the skills, self-knowledge, and know-how to cultivate a career and a lifestyle that aligns with their cultures and values. Designed for students, by students, we bridge the gap between theory and practice. The [Tune In to Strive Out](#) curriculum trains students in career development, navigating the world of work, and engaging in wellness management. We also have designed and tested research-based [resources](#) and [train facilitators](#) to deliver the program to support their students. Tune In to Strive Out is led by Drs. Mindi Thompson and Pa Her, along with student scholars.



The College Internship Study is a mixed-methods, [longitudinal study](#) designed to capture the prevalence, quality, and equitable access of college internships. Launched in 2018, the College Internship Study amassed a large dataset of student experiences, yielding critical insights into this “high-impact” practice. The [National Survey of College Internships](#) and the National Survey of Work-Based Learning are led by Dr. Matthew Hora in collaboration with the Strada Education Network and Dr. Mindi Thompson.

Career Readiness Across the Curriculum

One of the hottest topics in higher education is the value of competencies that are called “soft skills,” “career readiness skills” or “21st century skills,” for students’ success in school, life, and work. Dr. Matthew Hora provides an [online faculty development program](#) based on over 15 years of research by CCWT investigators regarding active learning, skills gaps, workforce needs, internships, and institutional change in higher education that teach instructors how to incorporate transferable skills into their courses, and how institutional stakeholders can embed these skills and experiential learning across the curriculum in a student-centered way. This is a comprehensive approach to embedding career readiness across a college student’s entire experience.



WELL Project

Work-integrated & Experiential Learning Lab



Mission

The mission of CCWT's Work-based & Experiential Learning Lab (WELL) is to ensure that all students will have access to work-integrated learning experiences, the tools to optimize these experiences, and the soft skills to effectively navigate their transition into the workplace.

Aligned with CCWT's [mission](#), the WELL Project centers student voices and uses systematic literature reviews and findings as well as CCWT empirical data and the [Internship Scorecard framework](#) to develop and evaluate objectives and activities.



Goals

Design resources to assist students, career support staff, and employers to :

- Learn critical career readiness skills
- Prompt student self-reflection to facilitate career development
- Develop and evaluate learning plans & task goals
- Employ strategies to develop & sustain effective supervision & mentoring relationships
- Demystify common challenges to career readiness
- Facilitate collaboration among the primary stakeholders: career service professionals, employers, & students
- Implement tested curriculum that supports employers in developing & sustaining internship programs



Other Tools & Resources

A key aspect of CCWT's mission is facilitating institutional and societal change and creating tools and resources to share. With that goal in mind, CCWT hosts, conducts, and/or sponsors evidence-based programs that center the interests and voices of students. These provide an opportunity for CCWT to share data and insights as well as the tools and frameworks that were used in our projects broadly with individuals, institutions, and organizations.

CCWT Affiliate Program

The [Affiliate Program](#) brings together individuals who share a commitment to CCWT's mission of improving outcomes for people transitioning from education to the workforce. Students, faculty, staff, and community members are eligible to participate. Affiliates contribute to furthering CCWT's mission by collaborating through co-investigation, presenting best practices, or partnering on a project or another activity that aligns with CCWT's work.

CCWT Newsletters and Updates

Three times per year, CCWT sends a [newsletter](#) with project updates to share upcoming events, new research insights, exciting achievements, and to welcome new staff to the Center. Additional emails to the newsletter listserv occasionally announce upcoming [professional development opportunities](#) and events.

CCWT Publications

CCWT Investigators and student scholars are continually seeking, analyzing, and preparing data to share with the community. Each project aims to publish reports, tools, and resources. Publications are available on CCWT's searchable [publication browser](#) and on project webpages. Users can search by keyword, author, or date.

CCWT Videos

As often as possible, CCWT records webinars and seminars and other educational programming that feature scholars and/or practitioners who share research and best practices. These resources are posted on our website. Users can search CCWT's [video browser](#) by speaker, keyword, or date.

CCWT Webinars

CCWT hosts a series of webinars and seminars each semesters that feature scholars and/or practitioners who share research and best practices. We [seek to feature](#) early-career scholars and practitioners as well as seasoned experts to share knowledge with our CCWT community.

To stay updated on all of CCWT's
projects, subscribe to our newsletter!



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