JOBS Survey:
Advancing Professional Development in the University of California's Post Graduate Programs

Introduction

There has been nothing short of a revolution in the nature and composition of the academic workforce in recent years. In 1987, the academic labor force was populated by a slight majority (**53%**) of tenured and tenure-track faculty. The remaining **47%** occupied part-time and full-time adjuncts and other non-tenure-track positions.[1] Today those proportions have shifted radically; in 2012 **75%** of faculty positions nationwide are either full- or part-time contingent positions with no access to the tenure track.[2] This dramatic shift has profound implications for the types of careers available to graduate students, particularly academic Master's and Doctoral students, in the UC system.

It is in this context that Debra Stewart, President of the Council of Graduate Schools, observed that "…in addition to preparation in research and scholarship in their disciplines, [graduate students] also feel that graduate schools should make available professional development opportunities for careers both inside and outside of academe." Given this dismal academic job market, it is little wonder that professional development is not only a graduate student concern, but is also "…one of the four key issues on the 'inner circle' of graduate deans' concerns."[3] At the 2014 annual meeting of the UC Council of Graduate Deans, graduate student professional development was identified as one of the four most pressing issues affecting graduate education and was discussed at length.

Understanding the Role of Post Graduate Education in California's workforce

In a recent interview with SF Gate, Regis Kelly, the senior adviser on innovation and entrepreneurship to UC's Office of the President, spoke about the success of his incubator projects,

> *"What was clear to me from my days as executive vice chancellor here is we don't really make it easy for people who have creative ideas to actually take them out into the marketplace and turn them into services and goods for the public. And not only that, we don't actually respect our students who go out and do that. Both of these things are wrong and both are linked. If we can make it a dignified, respected thing which is easy to do, for someone to move out from the university to start a company, then more of our students will think, 'Ah, that's an alternative career for me,' and they won't just think they have to be professors."* [4]

Mr. Kelly's experience with graduate education echoes the frustrations we have heard from Graduate Students who have come to the conclusion that they would prefer to pursue a career outside of academia. Students looking to translate their skills into the workplace and market their degree outside of the university are expected to utilize resources that don't meet their needs or address their specific career readiness gaps. While incubators for startup companies are one approach to creating more employment opportunities for researchers outside of academe, the variety of research programs offered in the UC system requires a cadre of options in order to make more career pathways available to our graduate students.

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[1] The American Federation of Teachers, Higher Education, *The Growth of Full-Time Nontenure-Track Faculty: Challenges of the Union* (August 2003): 9.

[2] The Coalition on the Academic Workforce, *A Portrait of Part-Time Faculty Members: A Summary of Findings on Part-Time Faculty Respondents to the Coalition on the Academic Workforce Survey of Contingent Faculty Members and Instructors* (June 2012): 1.

[3] Debra Stewart, ""Professional Development for Graduate Students: Reflections on the Demands, the Resources, and the Skills," *GradEdge*, Vol. 2 No. 7 (August/September 2013): 1.

[4] Lee, Stephanie. "UC Trumps Stanford in Pushing Entrepreneurship, QB3 Head Says." SF Gate, 14 Dec. 2014.

Policymakers should consider how the lack of these pathways affects the readiness of our workforce as a whole. If the mission of the University of California is to produce multiple forms of public good, then it is important to clearly define the role and responsibility of the UC graduate and professional programs in preparing a competitive workforce for California's economic future.

Why did UCSA conduct this survey?

The dialogue around graduate student professional development has remained largely at the administrative and faculty level. Though there are some notable exceptions—such as UC Irvine and UC Los Angeles—most campus administrations and other on-campus entities within the UC have not sought graduate student input on the question of professional development in any formal or systematic way. In January 2014, The Graduate and Professional Student Committee of UCSA made this input a top priority of their JOBS campaign.

Our survey was designed to be as useful as possible for the many administrations and campus entities engaged in the work of graduate student professional development. It is our hope that these findings will help inform existing efforts to provide graduate students with useful and relevant professional development resources.

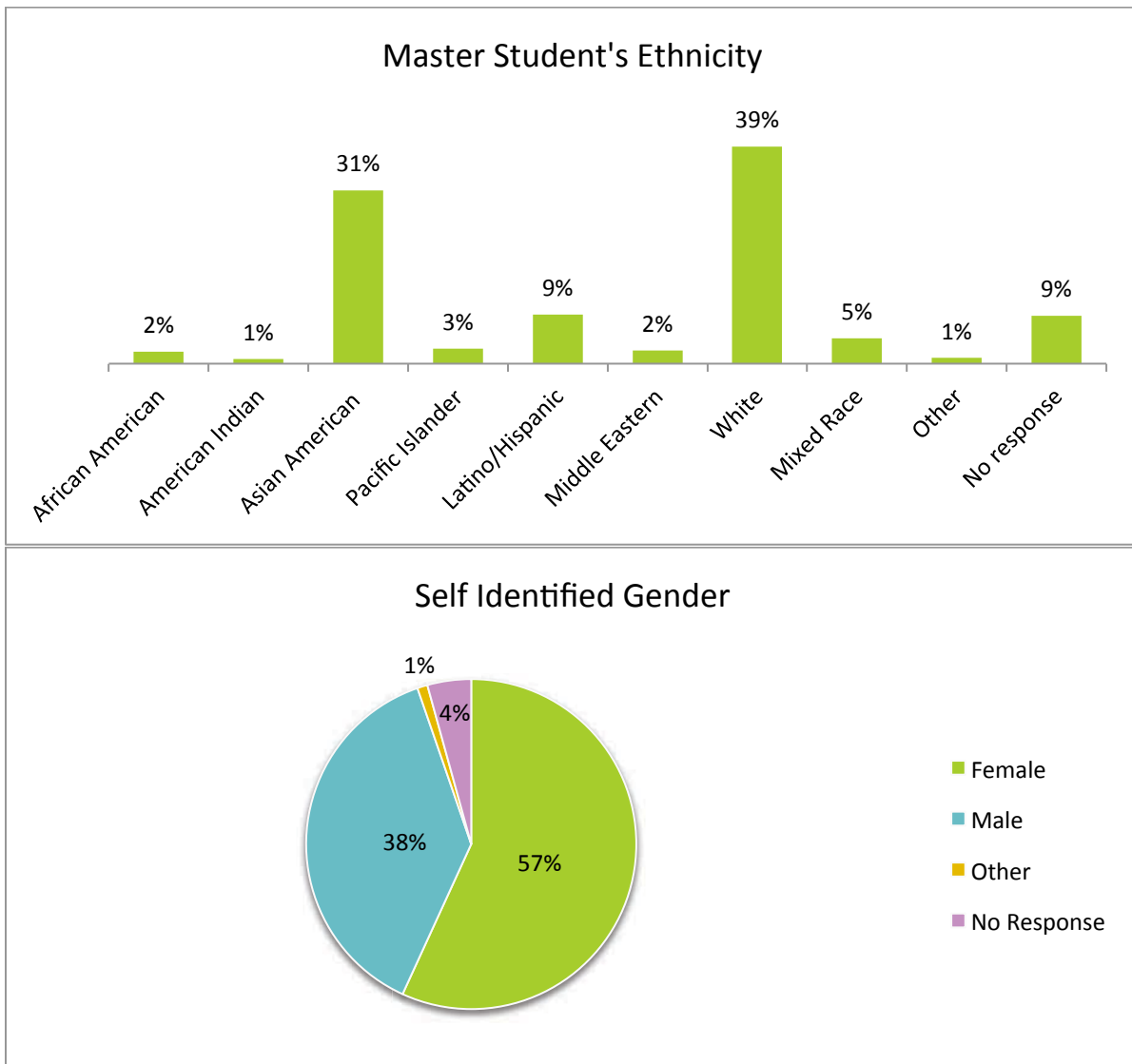Here are some of the major areas that our survey investigates:

- What do students feel they need for their own professional or academic career development?
- Who do students think is most responsible for providing the resources they require?
- How frequently do students use these resources, and how helpful have they found them to be?
- What kinds of development programming do students prefer?

Our survey was distributed to the following UC campuses: Berkeley, Santa Cruz, San Francisco, Davis, Merced, Irvine, Riverside, Santa Barbara, and San Diego. Due to a concurrent survey, we did not survey students at UCLA. A total of 3,670 graduate students responded to our questionnaire, which is roughly 10% of the 37,600 graduate student populations.

Our survey asked about professional development in two ways; the first approach aimed to discover who students believe is responsible for providing them with professional development resources. We then asked students to assign responsibility to specific offices for the different skills and activities they determined to be most important to their professional development.

Master's Students

We'll begin with UC Master's students. Five hundred (14%) of the 3,760 respondents identified themselves as academic Master's students. The chart below shows a breakdown of these students based upon their self-identified ethnicity and gender.

Master Student's Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Percentage
African American	2%
American Indian	1%
Asian American	31%
Pacific Islander	3%
Latino/Hispanic	9%
Middle Eastern	2%
White	39%
Mixed Race	5%
Other	1%
No response	9%

Self Identified Gender

Gender	Percentage
Female	57%
Male	38%
Other	1%
No Response	4%

What did we discover about UC Master's Students?

- **74%** of these students feel prepared or very prepared to enter their chosen field after graduation
- Just over **10%** of respondents are less likely to pursue the career plans they had when they first entered their program. **96%** of these individuals do not plan to pursue an academic career
- **35%** of all respondents do not intend to pursue an academic career
- About **13%** entered their programs with no definitive career plans; now just **7%** don't have any definitive career plans

Master's students' top five preferred formats for academic career and professional development programming are:
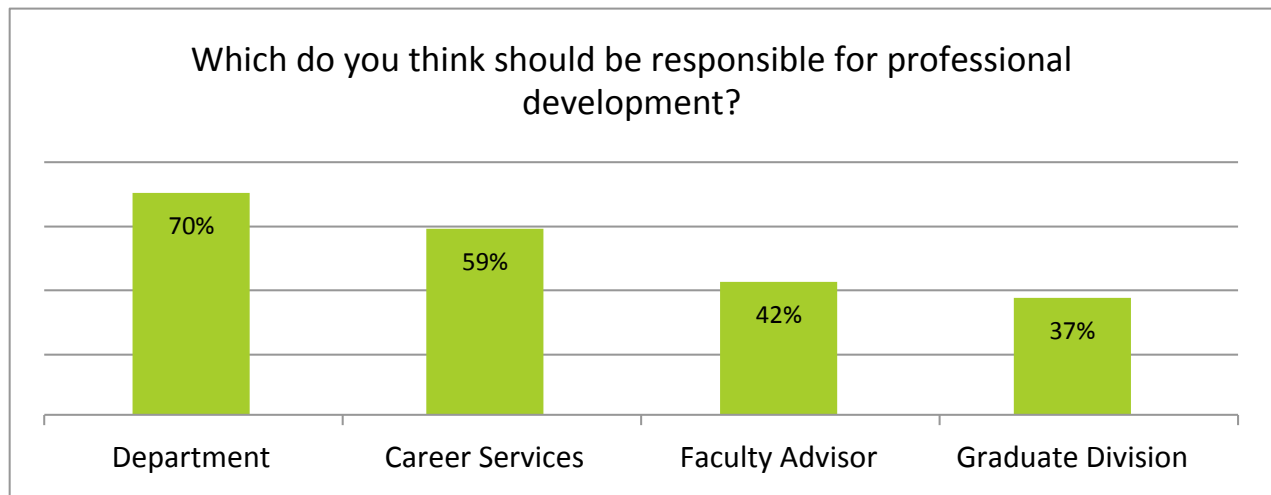
- o **Workshops & Seminars**
- o **Internships**
- o **One-on-One Meetings**
- o **Networking Events**
- o **Brown Bag Lunches**

What happens when Master's students change career goals?

10% of Master's students are less likely to pursue the career goals they had when they entered their program. This group was diverse, and roughly representative of the broader demographics cited above. More than **90%** of these students have a new career objective. While survey responses show that **74%** of Master's students feel prepared or very prepared for their career path, only **50%** of those who have switched their career objectives feel prepared or very prepared. This is a marked drop off, and indicates that students who have become less likely to pursue their original career plans could benefit from special attention and resources.
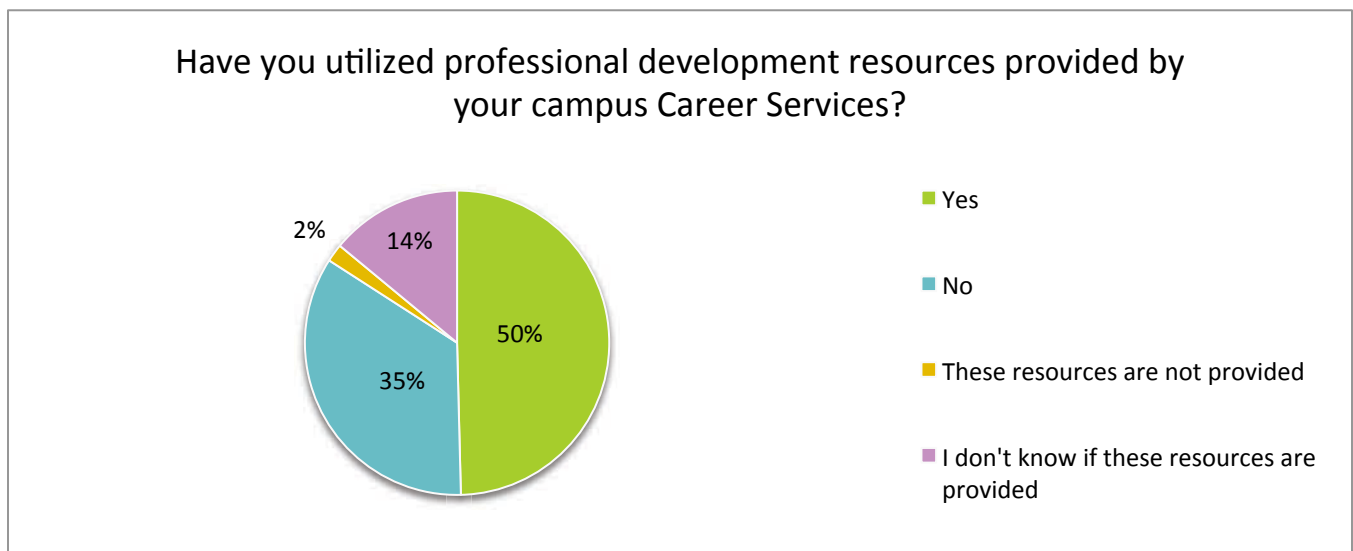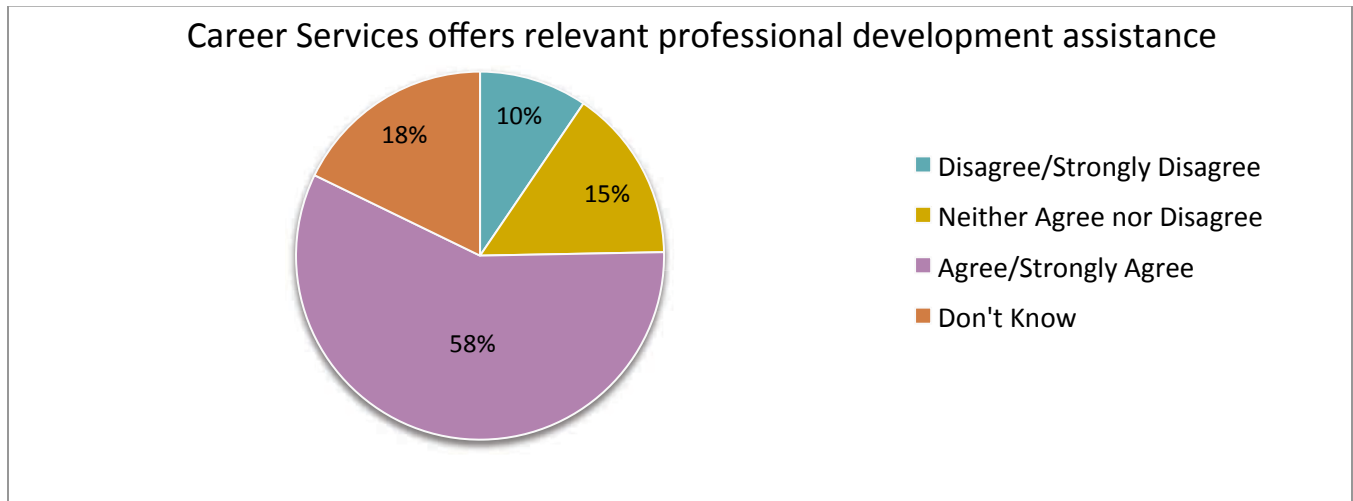
Half of the students less likely to pursue their original career plans have discovered more interesting careers. **41%** report that they changed their plans due to the lack of jobs in their originally chosen field. Other respondents cited reasons that point to systematic deficits in the supports available to Master's students; **30%** of students surveyed reported that the lack of faculty advisor or departmental support has left them less likely to pursue their original goals. Another **22%** reported difficulty in securing funding as the reason for their change in career objective.

Where do Master's students look for professional development opportunities?

Which do you think should be responsible for professional development?

70%	59%	42%	37%
Department	Career Services	Faculty Advisor	Graduate Division

70% of student respondents believe that their department should be responsible for their professional development needs. **59%** of respondents ascribed this responsibility to Career Services.
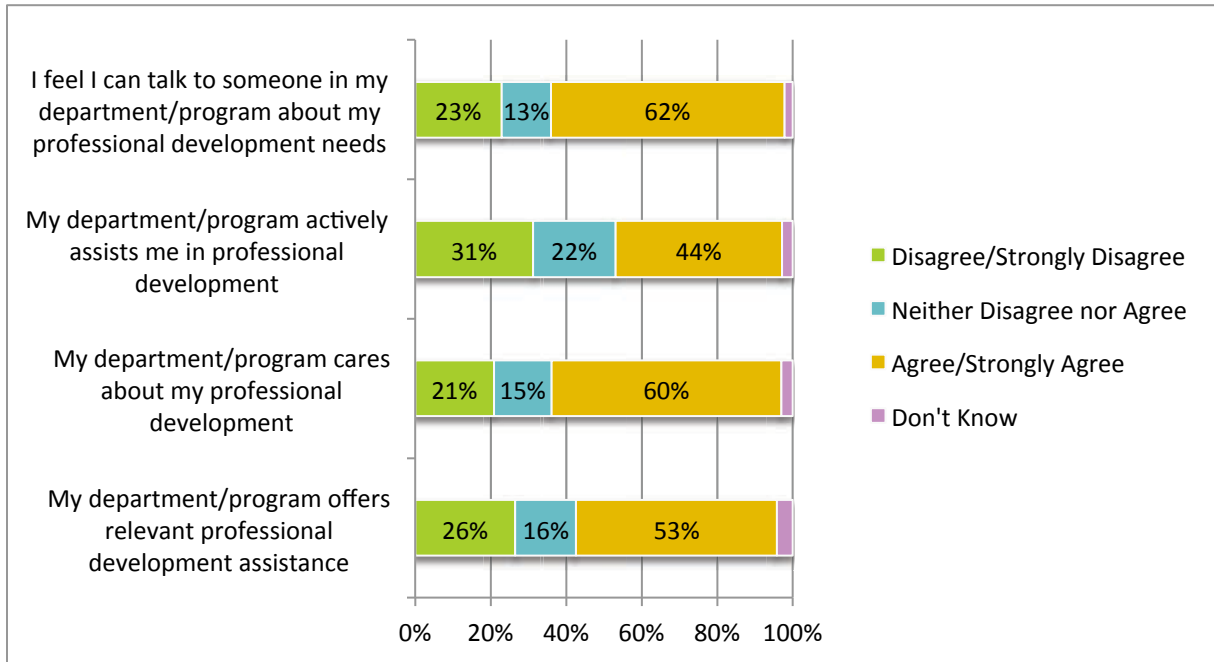
Career Services

Career Services offers relevant professional development assistance

- 10% Disagree/Strongly Disagree
- 18%
- 15% Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 58% Agree/Strongly Agree
- Don't Know

Legend:
- Disagree/Strongly Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree/Strongly Agree
- Don't Know

Have you utilized professional development resources provided by your campus Career Services?

- 2%
- 14%
- 50%
- 35%

Legend:
- Yes
- No
- These resources are not provided
- I don't know if these resources are provided

The previous graph indicates that students who ascribe responsibility to Career Services agree that their campus Career Services center is available to assist them with their professional development needs. Note that **18%** of students do not know what resources Career Services provides.

While half of students have used the professional development resources at Career Services, the other half have not. **35%** reported not using their campus Career Centers at all, of these **20%** indicated that this was because programming took place at an inconvenient time for them. **10%** reported that the location of the programming was inconvenient. Other reasons included **26%** who have access to other resources for professional development and **20%** who are not interested in programming. **22%** felt that resources provided by their Career Center were either unhelpful or very unhelpful.
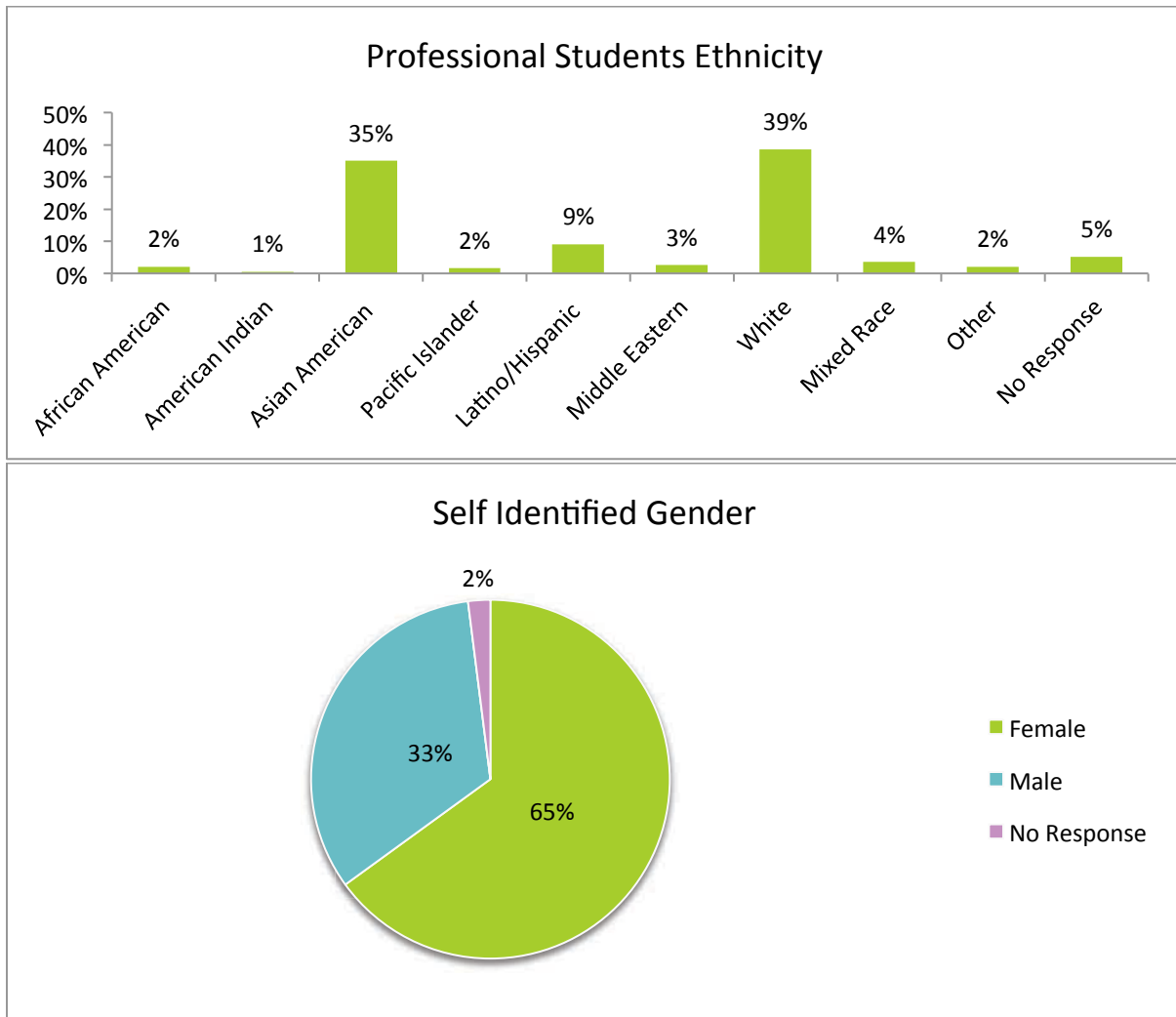
Department Support

Statement	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree/Strongly Agree
I feel I can talk to someone in my department/program about my professional development needs	23%	13%	62%
My department/program actively assists me in professional development	31%	22%	44%
My department/program cares about my professional development	21%	15%	60%
My department/program offers relevant professional development assistance	26%	16%	53%

Legend:
- Disagree/Strongly Disagree
- Neither Disagree nor Agree
- Agree/Strongly Agree
- Don't Know

Most students feel that their department is a good source of professional development assistance. However, when asked whether students feel that their department actively assists with their professional development the response was much less enthusiastic; **31%** of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with that statement.

Professional Students

430 (11.4%) of the 3,760 student respondents identified themselves as academic Professional students. The chart below shows a breakdown of these students based upon their self-identified ethnicity and gender.
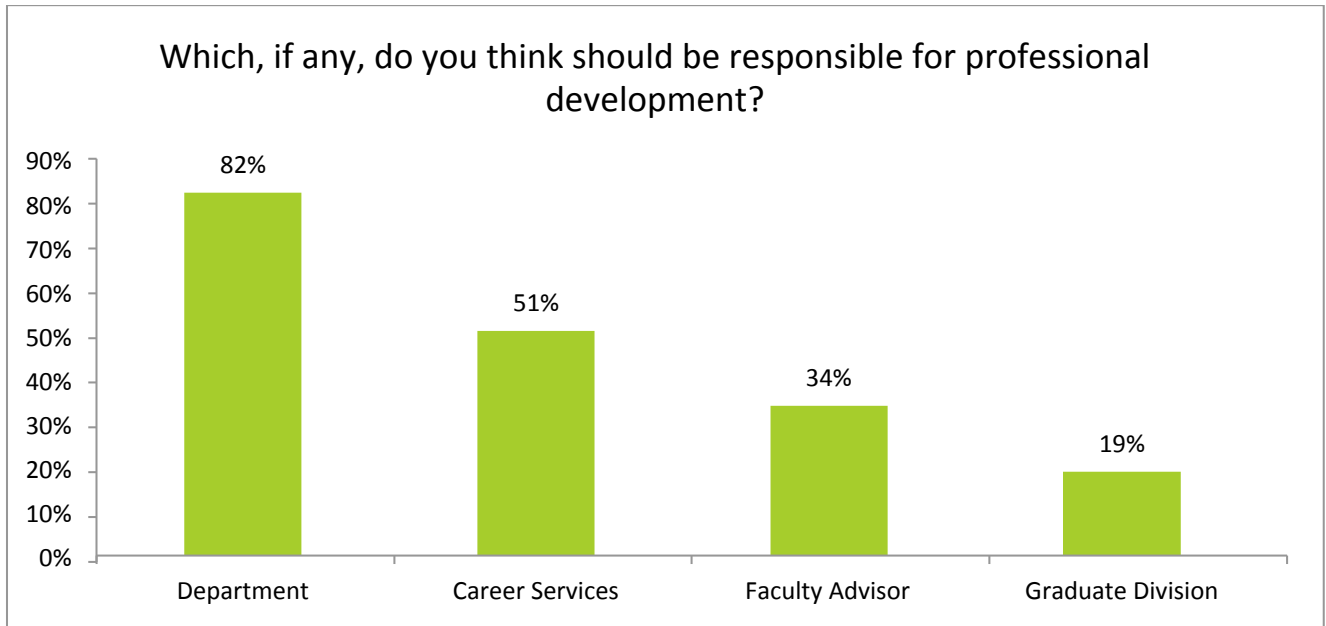
Professional Students Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Percentage
African American	2%
American Indian	1%
Asian American	35%
Pacific Islander	2%
Latino/Hispanic	9%
Middle Eastern	3%
White	39%
Mixed Race	4%
Other	2%
No Response	5%

Self Identified Gender

- Female: 65%
- Male: 33%
- No Response: 2%

What did we discover about Professional Students?

- **85%** of Professional students feel prepared or very prepared to enter their field after graduation. Less than **5%** feel either unprepared or very unprepared.
- Less than **10%** are less likely to pursue the career plans they had when they first entered their program.
- **41%** have no intention to pursue an academic career, while only **3%** have ruled out the possibility of pursuing a non-academic career after graduation. This is roughly similar to the Masters'students' responses.
- **None** of the respondents entered their program without a definitive career goal, and all of them are leaving with definitive plans for their career post-graduation.
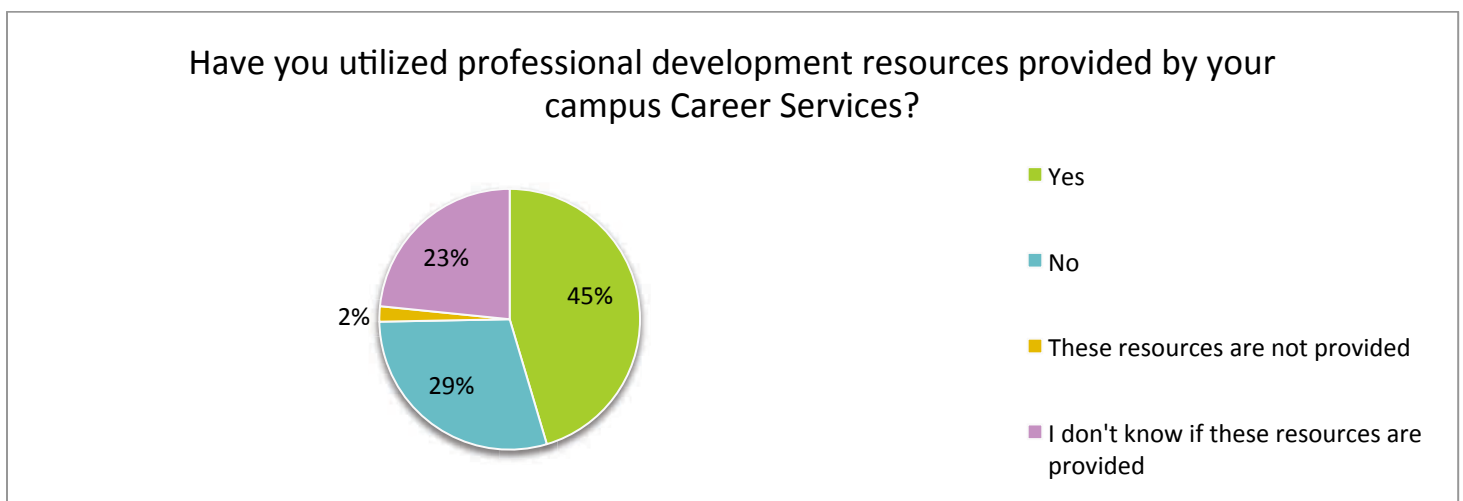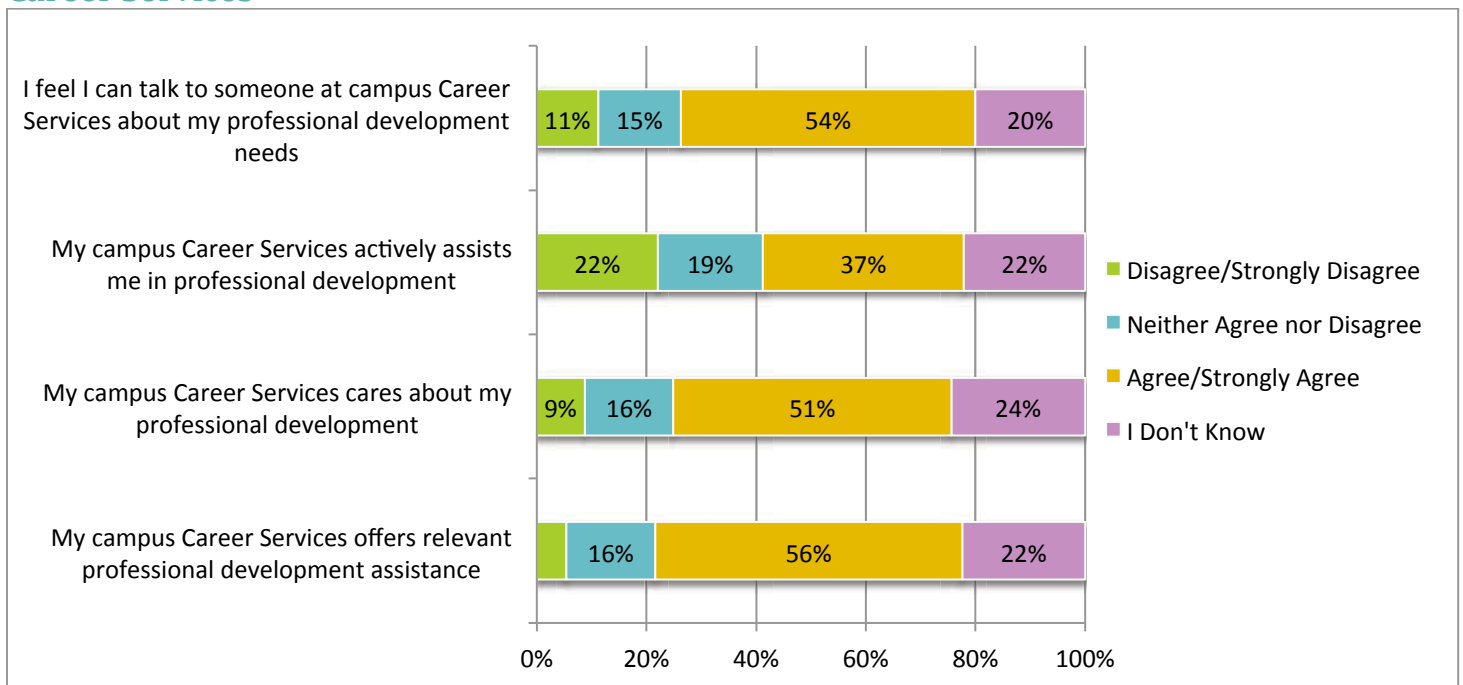
Professional 'students' top five preferred formats for academic career and professional development programming are:

- **One-on-One Meetings**
- **Workshops & Seminars**
- **Internships**
- **Networking Events**
- **Panel Discussions**

Which, if any, do you think should be responsible for professional development?

Category	Percentage
Department	82%
Career Services	51%
Faculty Advisor	34%
Graduate Division	19%

82% of students believe that their department is responsible for their professional development needs. Of the **34%** who attributed responsibility for professional development programming to their faculty advisor, **90%** indicated that their department should also be responsible. **51%** of respondents ascribed responsibility to Career Services.

Career Services

I feel I can talk to someone at campus Career Services about my professional development needs
- Disagree/Strongly Disagree: 11%
- Neither Agree nor Disagree: 15%
- Agree/Strongly Agree: 54%
- I Don't Know: 20%

My campus Career Services actively assists me in professional development
- Disagree/Strongly Disagree: 22%
- Neither Agree nor Disagree: 19%
- Agree/Strongly Agree: 37%
- I Don't Know: 22%

My campus Career Services cares about my professional development
- Disagree/Strongly Disagree: 9%
- Neither Agree nor Disagree: 16%
- Agree/Strongly Agree: 51%
- I Don't Know: 24%

My campus Career Services offers relevant professional development assistance
- Disagree/Strongly Disagree: (not labeled)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree: 16%
- Agree/Strongly Agree: 56%
- I Don't Know: 22%

Legend:
- Disagree/Strongly Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree/Strongly Agree
- I Don't Know

Have you utilized professional development resources provided by your campus Career Services?

- Yes: 45%
- No: 29%
- These resources are not provided: 2%
- I don't know if these resources are provided: 23%

54.6% of respondents who believed their campus Career Services are responsible for providing professional development resources have never used, do not know about, or do not believe that relevant professional development resources are offered. Of those who reported not using the resources Career Services provides at all, nearly a third reported that they had other sources of professional development. **23%** claim that programming is offered at inconvenient times. **37%** of all respondents input their own reasons for not using Career Services; **27%** report not yet needing these services and **36%** cited the lack of any advertising or outreach.

Responses show that while half of all students found the Career Center resources helpful, few of them use the Center with any regularity.

Department Support
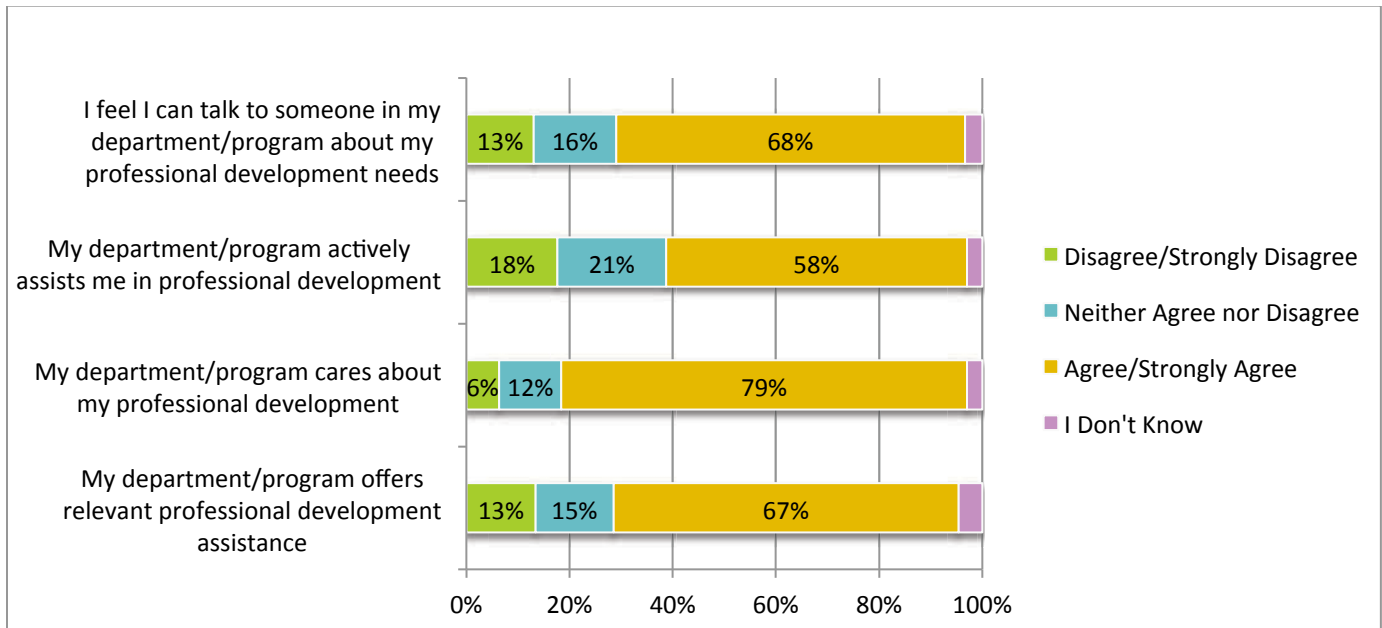
Professional students generally agree with the statements above. Nearly **70%** of respondents felt that their Department/Program provides professional development assistance that is relevant to their goals, and **79%** feel that their Department/Program cares about their professional development. Similar to the Master's students, **18%** do not feel that their department is *actively* assisting them with their professional development needs.

In a series of follow up questions, students were asked if they have ever utilized the professional development resources Career Services provides and if yes, how often and how helpful was it and if they hadn't used these resources, why not?
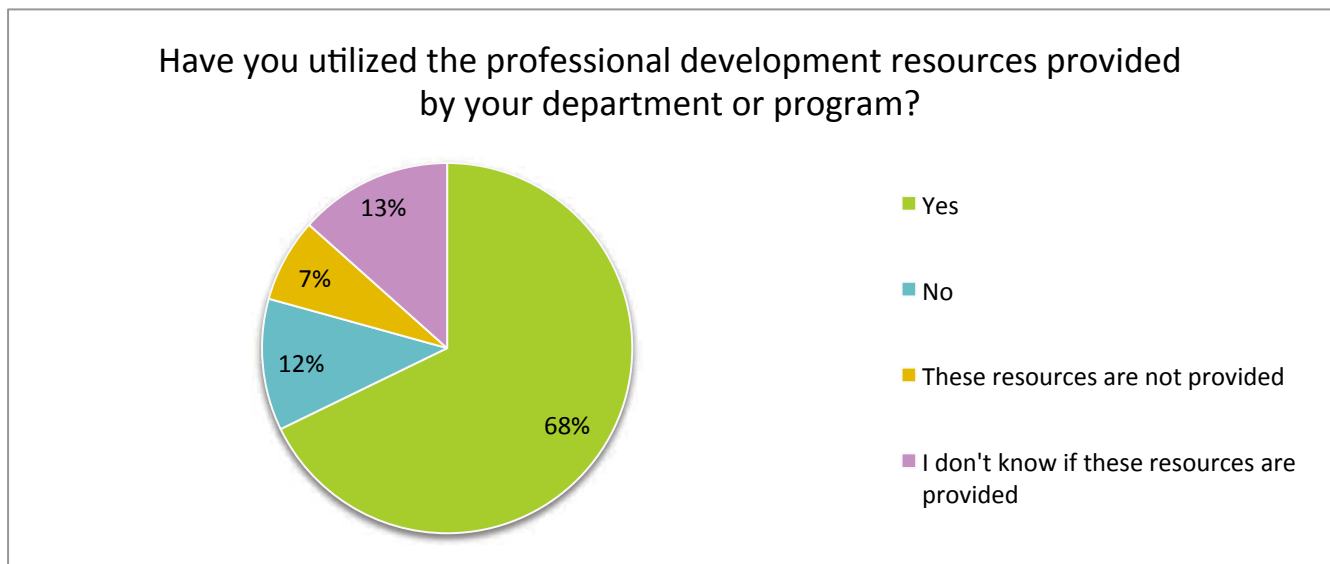
A striking **68%** of professional students have utilized the professional development resources provided by their department. Of the professional students who used their Department/Program's resources, half of them found them either helpful or very helpful. **13%** found them to be either unhelpful or very unhelpful.

Only **12%** report never having used the resources available in their Department/Program, and another **13%** indicate that they are not aware of what is available. **42%** of those who hadn't used the professional development resources their department offers indicated that programming is provided at inconvenient times. Even when they are aware of these resources and find them helpful, less than **8%** of professional students utilize these resources regularly.

Faculty Advisors
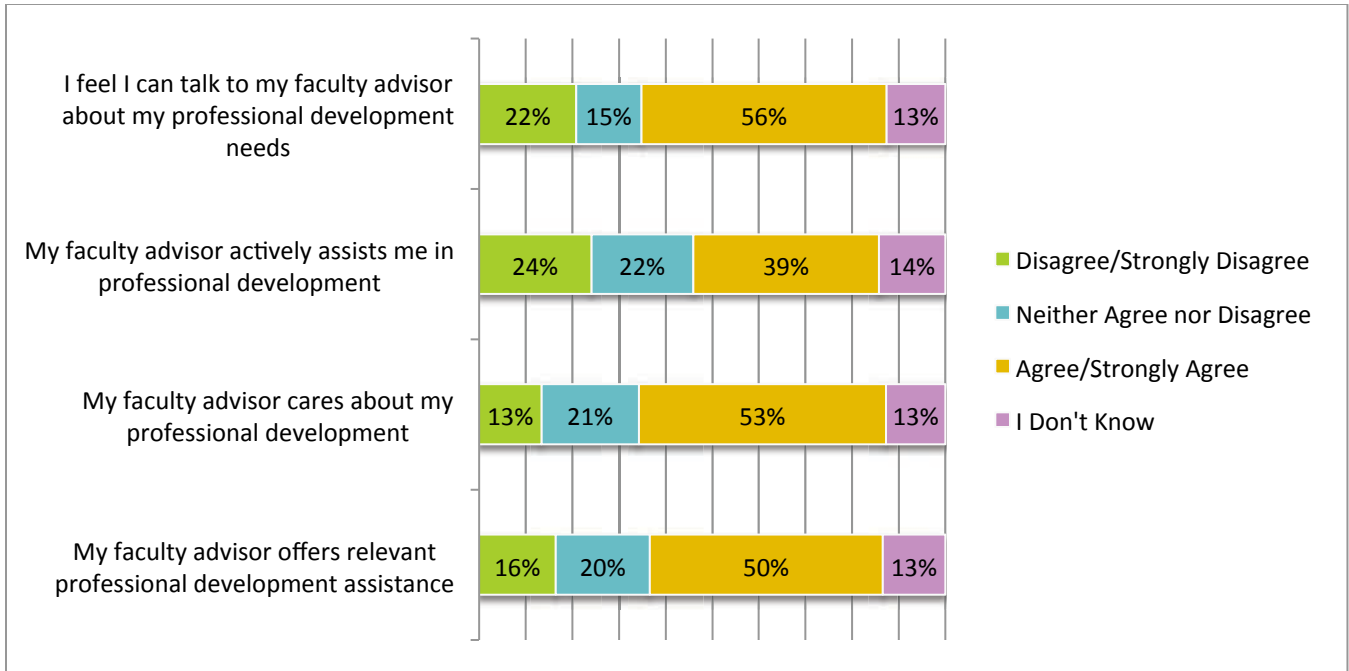
A majority of students agreed or strongly agreed with the above statements; the percentage of professional students in agreement with these statements is lower than those of the academic Master's students. Like the academic Master's students, roughly **20%** disagree or strongly disagreed with the above statements.
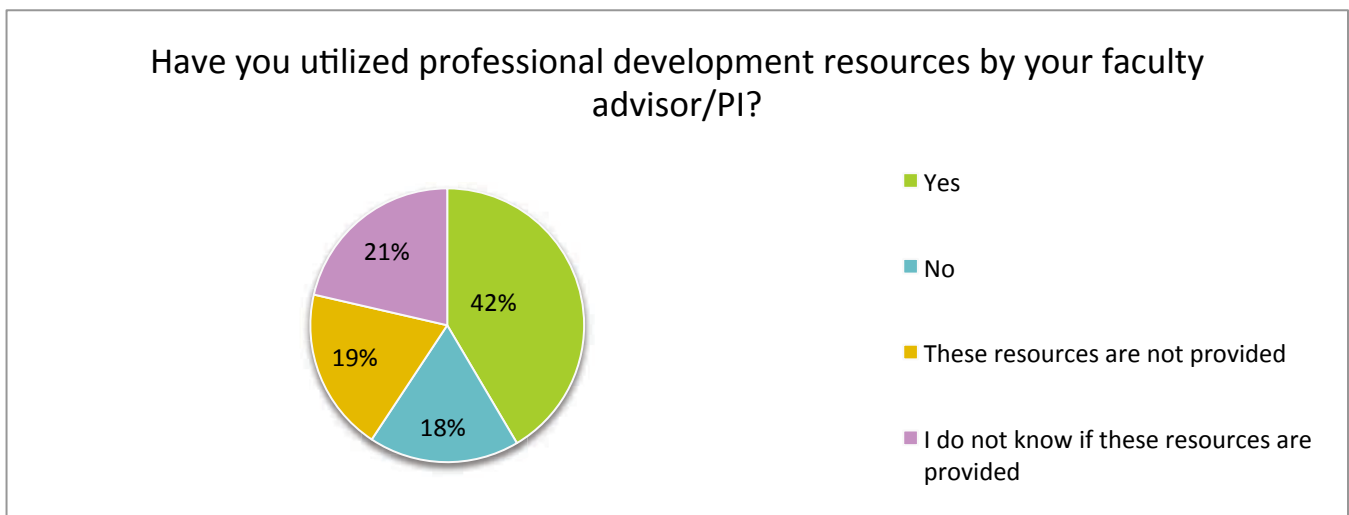
42% of professional students who believe their faculty mentor should be responsible for offering professional development resources have utilized those resources. **70%** found these resources to be either helpful or very helpful. **13%** found these resources to be either unhelpful or very unhelpful. Half of these students utilized these resources often or somewhat frequently. The remainder of respondents have never used the resources available, do not know what their faculty mentor provides, or feel that their faculty mentor does not provide the resources they need.

Doctoral Students

2,750 (**75%**) of the 3,670 survey respondents identified themselves as Doctoral Students. Below are graphs of their self-reported Ethnicity and Gender.

Doctoral Student's Ethnicity

Self Identified Gender
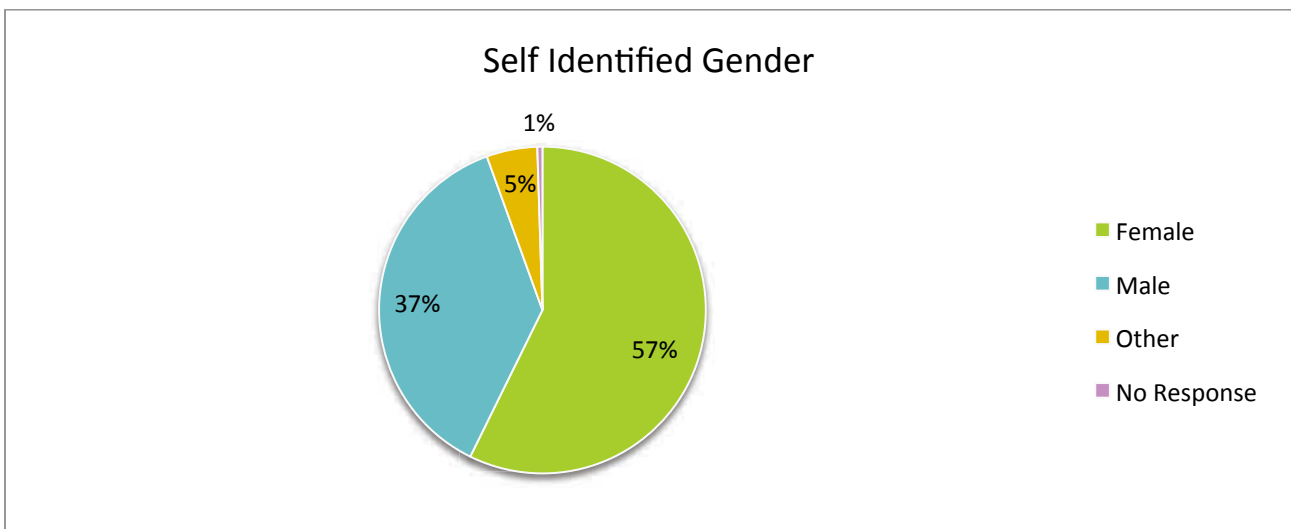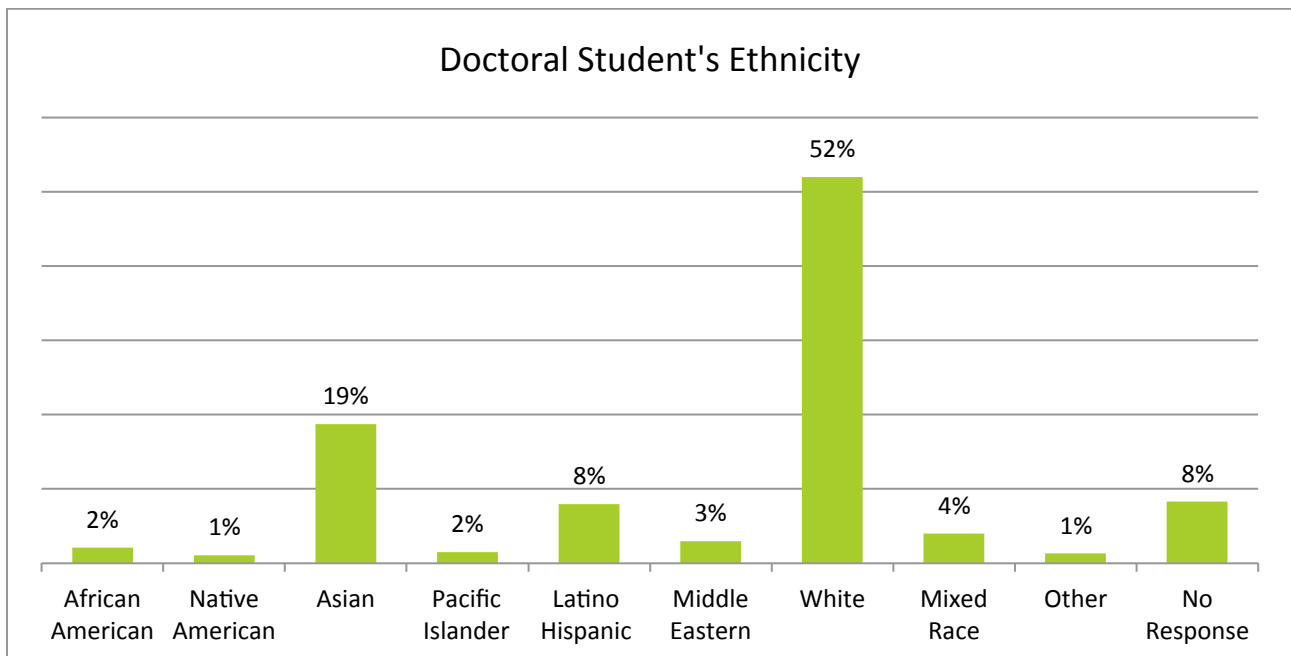
What did we discover about UC Doctoral Students?

- **78%** of these students feel either prepared or very prepared to enter their chosen field after graduation. Of those planning to begin non-academic careers **73%** feel either prepared or very prepared to enter their chosen field after graduation.
- **12%** have ruled out the possibility of pursuing a non-academic career after graduation.
- **17%** of Doctoral students do not plan to pursue an academic career.

Approximately **15%** of Graduate students do not have any definitive career plans. Respondents' top five preferred formats for both academic career and professional development programming are:

- ○ **Workshops & Seminars**
- ○ **One-on-One Meetings**
- ○ **Networking Events**
- ○ **Conferences & Symposia**
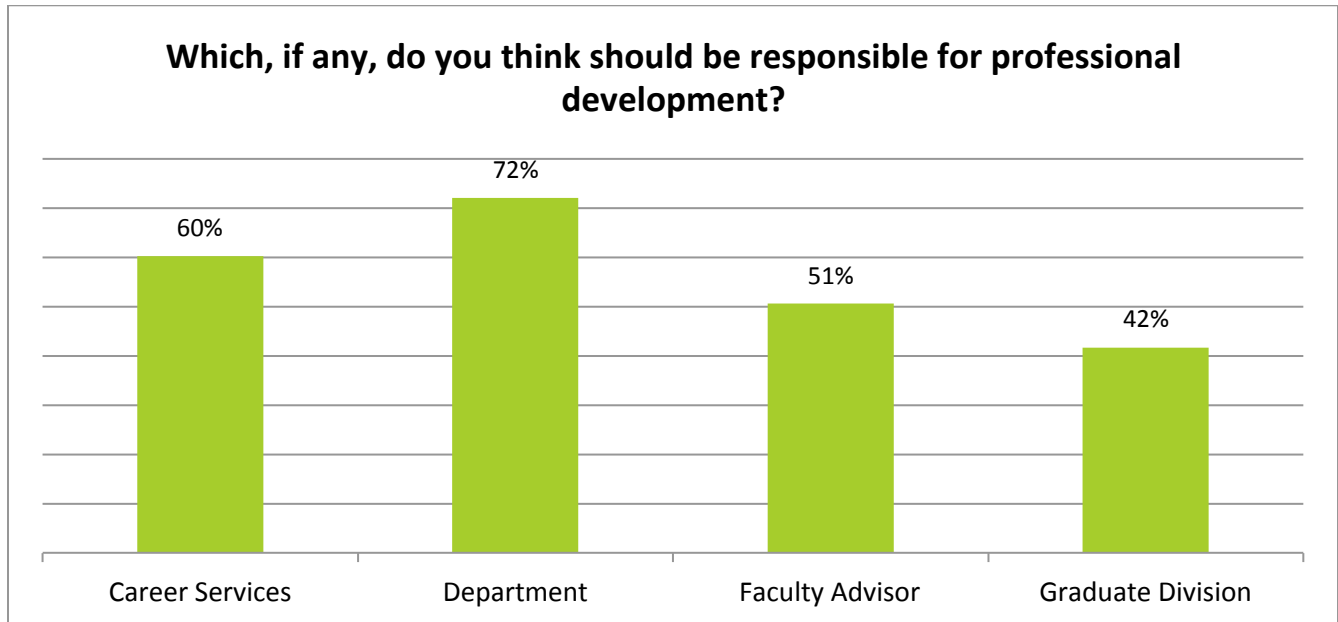- ○ **Brown Bag Lunches**

What happens when Doctoral students change career goals?

We should take note of those students who are now less likely to pursue the career goals they had in mind when they entered their program; nearly a third of our Doctoral student respondents placed themselves in this category. This group was roughly representative of the broader group demographics cited above. Just over **70%** of these students have identified new career objectives.

While **78%** of Doctoral students feel either prepared or very prepared for their career path, less than half of the students who have switched their career objectives feel prepared to begin their career. This is a marked drop off, and indicates that students who become less likely to pursue their original career plans could benefit from additional resources and support.

When Doctoral students were asked why they changed career paths, responses varied; **43%** had discovered more interesting careers, and **71%** cited the lack of jobs in their original field. Other students referred to issues that may be mitigated by an institutional response; **45%** reported difficulty in securing funding, **21%** reported that the lack of faculty advisor/departmental support left them less likely to pursue their original goals.
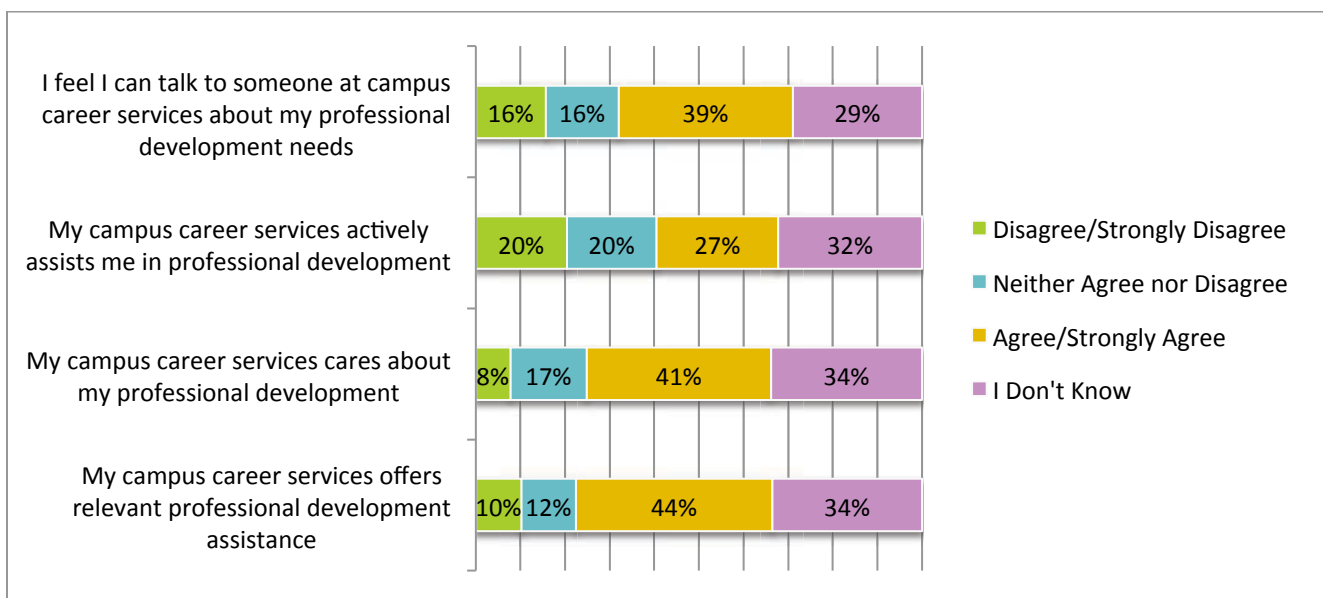
Where do Doctoral Students look for professional development resources?

Which, if any, do you think should be responsible for professional development?

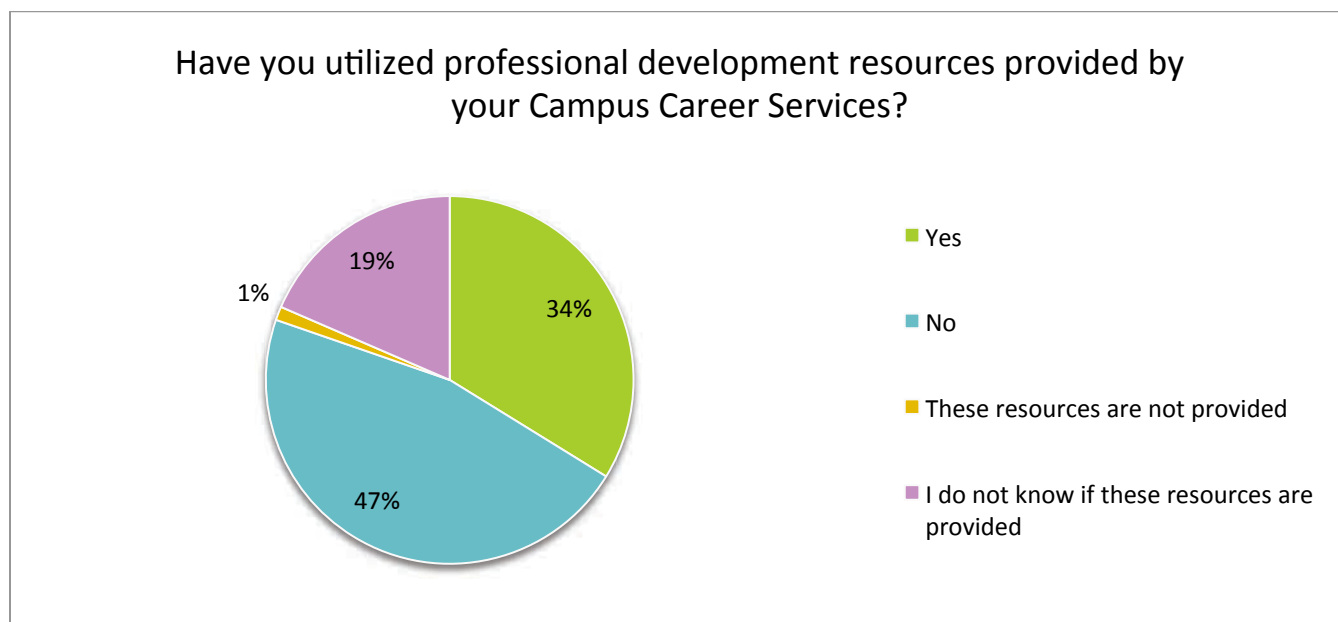| Career Services	Department	Faculty Advisor	Graduate Division
60%	72%	51%	42%

Doctoral students overwhelmingly ascribed responsibility to their departments/programs for their professional development needs. Of the **50%** who attributed responsibility for professional development programming to their faculty advisor, **90%** indicated that their Department/Program should also be responsible.

Student respondents were asked a series of questions about the relevance and quality of the resources provided by the offices and entities they identified. Students were then asked how often they have used the professional development resources made available by each office or entity.

Career Services

	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree/Strongly Agree	I Don't Know
I feel I can talk to someone at campus career services about my professional development needs	16%	16%	39%	29%
My campus career services actively assists me in professional development	20%	20%	27%	32%
My campus career services cares about my professional development	8%	17%	41%	34%
My campus career services offers relevant professional development assistance	10%	12%	44%	34%

While students were more likely to agree or strongly agree with the statements above, we should note that a third of students do not know how Career Services performs on these points. Another figure worth highlighting is the 8% to 20% of students who either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the above statements. From these responses it's safe to say that Doctoral Students have mixed feelings about Career Services, and that institutions should consider how to better meet the needs of Doctoral students, as well as raise awareness of resources available for this population.

Have you utilized professional development resources provided by your Campus Career Services?

- Yes — 34%
- No — 47%
- These resources are not provided — 1%
- I do not know if these resources are provided — 19%

Over a third of Doctoral students have used Career Services for their professional development needs. The remaining **66%** have either never used Career Services, don't know what is provided, or believe that the resources they need are not provided. These are striking figures, given that **60%** of doctoral students interested in pursuing non-academic careers after graduation assigned responsibility for professional development programming to Career Services.

Of those who reported not using Career Services at all, **37%** indicated that this was because programming took place at an inconvenient time for them. **26%** reported that they felt available programming was not geared toward their needs. In addition, over half of respondents provided their own reasons, including:

- It is not the appropriate time to think about post-graduation plans
- They don't have enough time
- They believe Career Services is too general and focused on undergraduates
- Their department or advisor discourages exploring professional development
- They are too scared of consequences from their department or advisor to seek out assistance
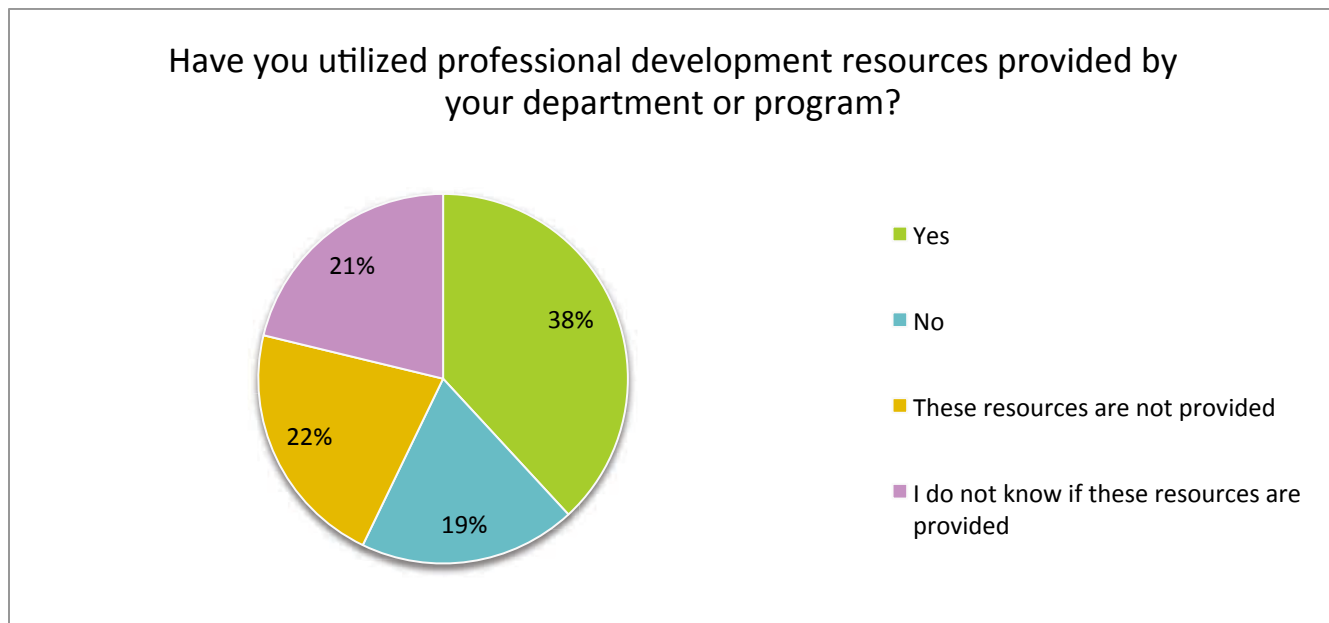- They are not aware of what is available

Students also highlighted other reasons, including having other resources for professional development (**23%**) and lack of interest (**30%**).

42% of students who reported having used the professional development resources indicated that these resources were either helpful or very helpful. In contrast, **25%** felt that these resources were either unhelpful or very unhelpful.

Even for those students who found these resources helpful or very helpful, repeat utilization of the centers' resources was very low; only **13.8%** reported taking advantage of these resources often or somewhat often. **61%** use these resources rarely or somewhat infrequently indicating that while utilization of these resources is low, sustained attendance and utilization of Career Services' resources is even lower.

Department Support

The "disagree and strongly disagree" responses above represent the highest disagreement figures of the degree types surveyed. That said, **54%** of Doctoral students agreed or strongly agreed that they felt they could speak with someone in their department about professional development and **53%** agree that their department cares about their professional development. While the **72%** of doctoral students look to their departments for their professional development resources, survey responses indicate that Doctoral students think their departments are performing poorly in this area.

Have you utilized professional development resources provided by your department or program?

- Yes — 38%
- No — 19%
- These resources are not provided — 22%
- I do not know if these resources are provided — 21%

From the above we can see that **38%** have actually used their departments' available professional development resources. The remaining **62%** is split evenly between those who have either never used their departments' resources (**19%**), don't know what is provided (**22%**), or believe that the resources they need are not provided (**21%**).

Of those who reported not using their departments' resources at all, **27%** indicated that programming took place at an inconvenient time for them. Another **23%** reported that they felt available programming was not geared toward their needs, which is somewhat surprising given these students are referring to their home departments. Over half of respondents provided their own reasons, including;

- It is not the appropriate time for them to think about post-graduation
- They don't have enough time

24% of students who have not utilized their department's resources state that they simply are not interested in attending.
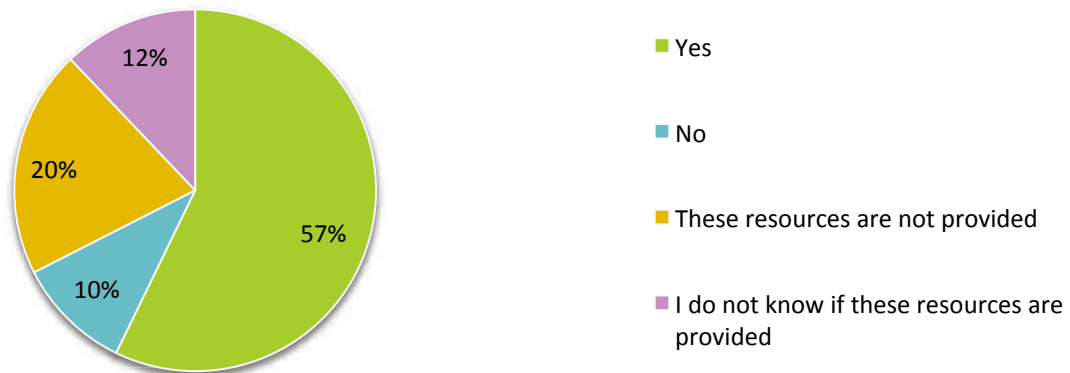
For those students who have used the professional development resources provided by their Department/Program, **45%** reported that these resources were either helpful or very helpful; only **13%** felt that these resources were either unhelpful or very unhelpful. Similar to the use of Career Services, sustained attendance and utilization of departmental resources is very low.

Faculty Advisors
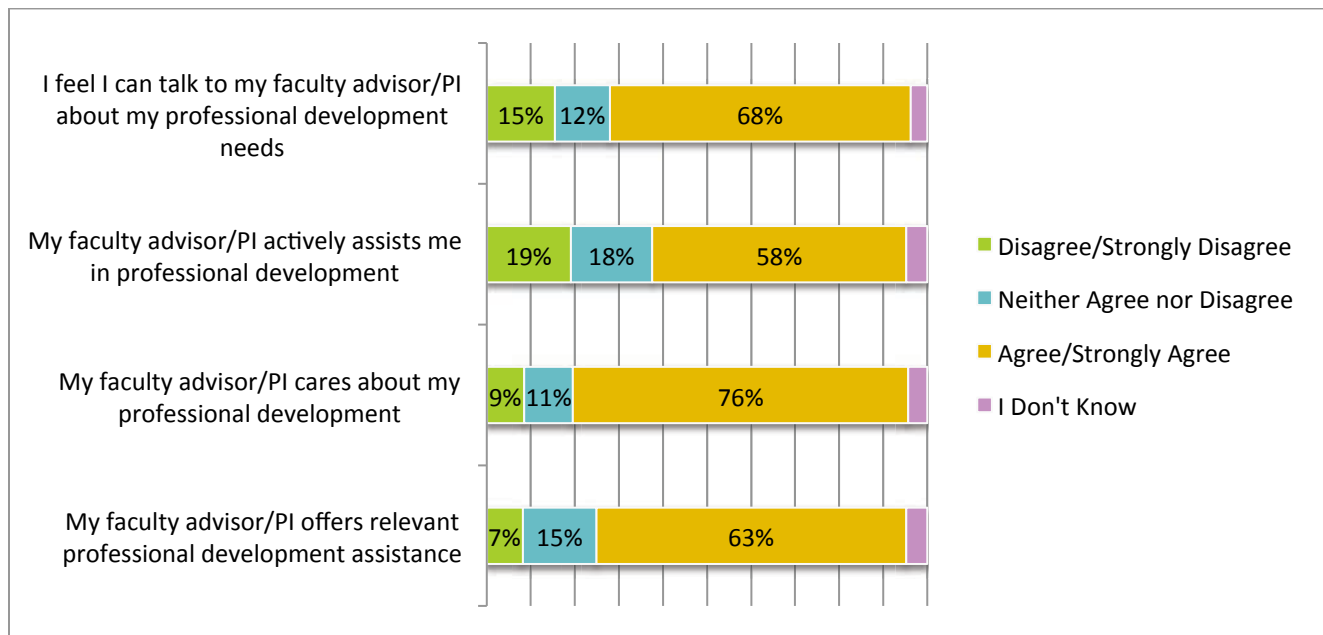
It is immediately apparent that doctoral students assess their faculty advisor/PI more generously than their department in general. Another noteworthy figure from above is the **12%** of doctoral students who either disagree or strongly disagree that they can speak with their advisor about their professional development needs. It is possible that these students feel that the topic of non-academic careers is taboo with or looked down upon by their advisor.

Have you utilized professional development resources provided by your faculty advisor/PI?

- Yes
- No
- These resources are not provided
- I do not know if these resources are provided

(Pie chart values: 57%, 10%, 20%, 12%)

57% of respondents have used the professional development resources their faculty advisors make available. The remaining responses are split between those who have either never used their departments' resources (**10%**), don't know what is provided (**12%**)**,** or believe that the resources they need are not provided (**20%**).

Of the **10%** who reported not using their departments' resources at all, **19%** indicated that this was because programming took place at an inconvenient time for them. **15%** reported that they felt available programming was not geared toward their needs, which is surprising given that respondents are referring to their own faculty within their own departments.
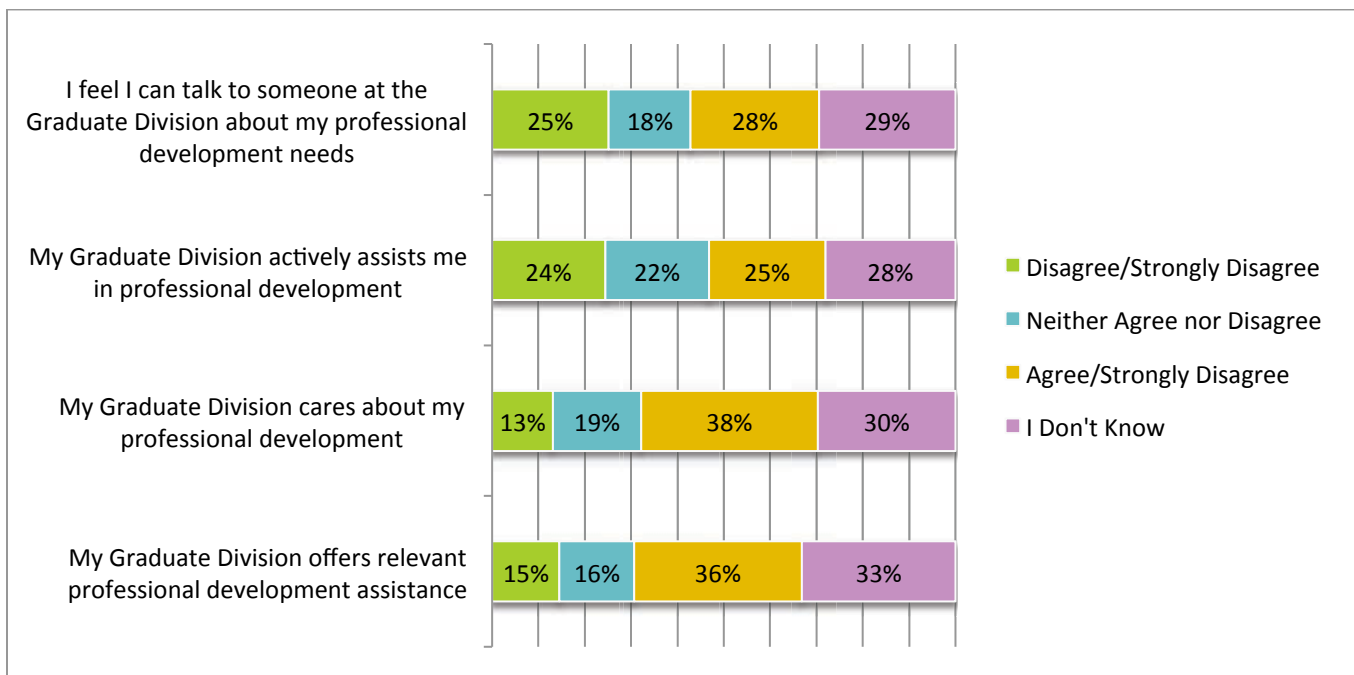
46% of respondents provided their own reasons for not using these resources, including:

- The topic has not yet come up
- I have not yet selected an advisor
- I am afraid to bring up my professional aspirations
- My advisor will not be receptive

For those students who reported having used the professional development resources provided by their faculty advisor, **64%** of them indicated that these resources were either helpful or very helpful; only **7%** felt that these resources were either unhelpful or very unhelpful.
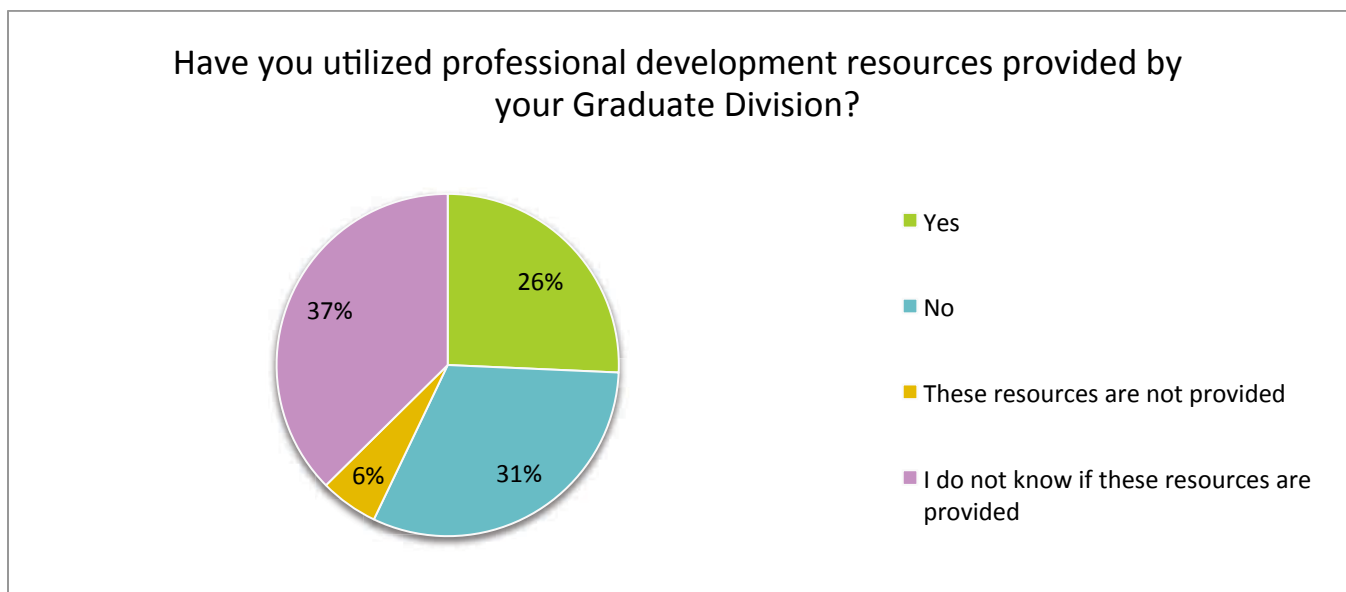
A plurality of students found the resources their faculty advisors offer to be either helpful or very helpful, and repeat utilization of faculty resources was higher than for other sources; **48%** reported taking advantage of these resources often or somewhat often. Only **21%** of doctoral students indicated that they utilized the professional development resources made available by faculty advisors rarely or somewhat infrequently.

Graduate Division

I feel I can talk to someone at the Graduate Division about my professional development needs
25% | 18% | 28% | 29%

My Graduate Division actively assists me in professional development
24% | 22% | 25% | 28%

My Graduate Division cares about my professional development
13% | 19% | 38% | 30%

My Graduate Division offers relevant professional development assistance
15% | 16% | 36% | 33%

Legend:
- Disagree/Strongly Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree/Strongly Disagree
- I Don't Know

Perhaps most noteworthy from the above is just how many doctoral students either disagree or strongly disagree with, or simply don't know what Graduate Division does on these points. With regard to the former, disagreement with the above statements ranged from 13-25%. Unfamiliarity with how the Graduate Division does on these points ranged from 28-33%. The levels of agreement are some of the lowest that we have seen of any degree type commenting on any particular office. Nevertheless, agreement was often equal to or in some proportion to disagreement and unfamiliarity: the range was from 25-38%.

In a series of follow up questions, students were asked: if they have ever utilized the professional development resources Career Services provides; if yes, how often and how helpful was it; if no, why not.

Have you utilized professional development resources provided by your Graduate Division?

26% | 31% | 6% | 37%

Legend:
- Yes
- No
- These resources are not provided
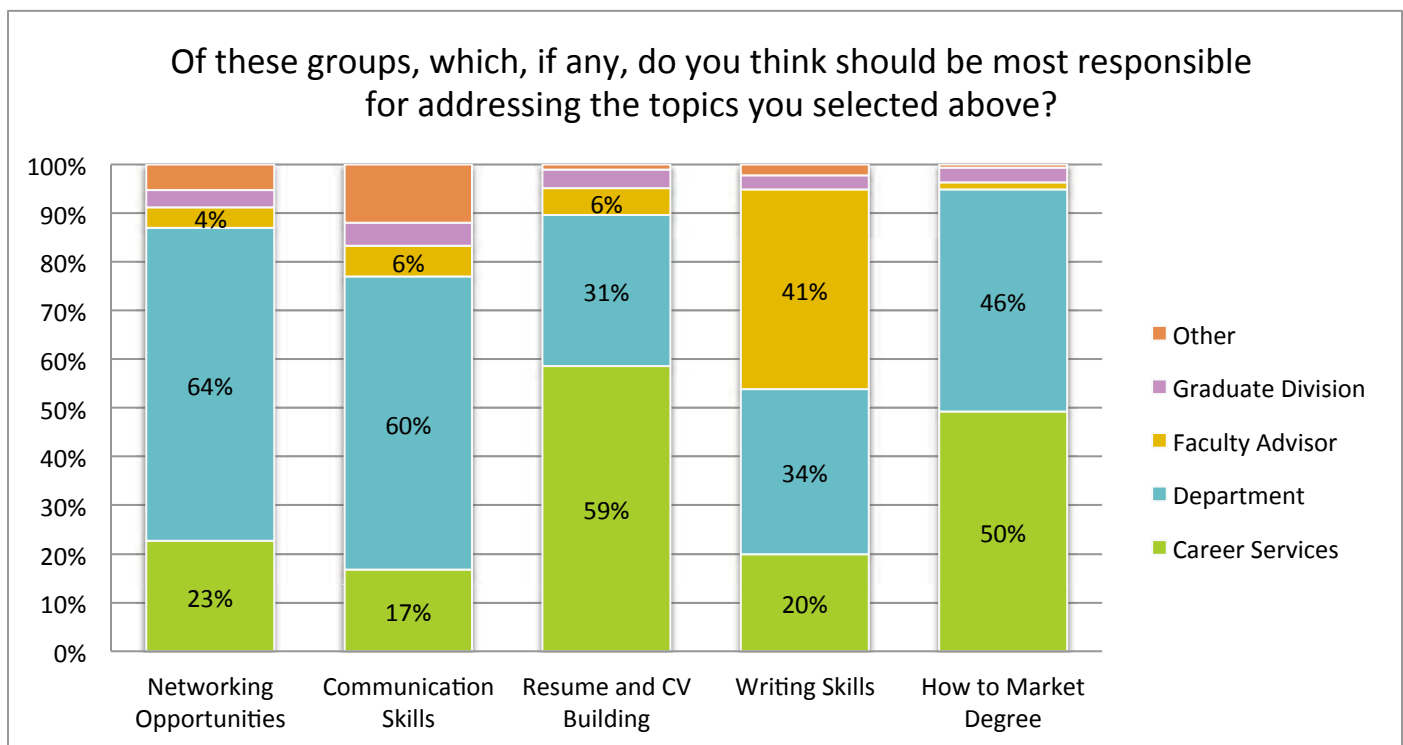- I do not know if these resources are provided

We can see that only a quarter of doctoral students who believe the Graduate Division is responsible for providing professional development programming have actually used the resources available. The remaining **75%** is split between those who have either never used the Graduate Division resources, don't know what is provided, or believe that the resources they need are not provided.

Although a plurality of students found their department's resources helpful or very helpful, repeat utilization of the Graduate Division's resources was very low: **21%** reported taking advantage of these resources often or somewhat often, while **47%** of doctoral students indicated that they utilized available professional development resources rarely or somewhat infrequently.

What are the components of Professional Development?

For more insight into what these student responses indicate, respondents were asked to identify the top five most important skills or activities for their professional development, and then to assign responsibility for providing those particular items to specific entities. While the question did not ask students to rank their choices, we can infer the order of importance for these skills and activities based upon the number of students who selected each option. Here are the top five skills and activities in order of importance:

- **Networking Opportunities**
- **General Communication Skills**
- **How to Market Degree**
- **Resume & CV Building**
- **Writing Skills**

Of these groups, which, if any, do you think should be most responsible for addressing the topics you selected above?

	Networking Opportunities	Communication Skills	Resume and CV Building	Writing Skills	How to Market Degree
Other					
Graduate Division					
Faculty Advisor	4%	6%	6%	41%	
Department	64%	60%	31%	34%	46%
Career Services	23%	17%	59%	20%	50%

Students identified Departments/Programs and Career Services as the two campus entities most responsible for these five skills. The remainder of this section will discuss how students evaluated the resources made available to them for the development of these skills.

Networking Opportunities

64% of respondents believe that their department or program is responsible for providing access to networking opportunities. **35%** of these individuals rated the networking opportunities their department offered as either good or very good. However **27%** rated their department's networking opportunities as either poor or very poor. Doctoral students deviate substantially from their Master's and professional student colleagues; their responses indicate significant dissatisfaction with the networking opportunities made available to them.

Communication Skills

60% of respondents identified their Department/Program as most responsible for providing resources for communication skills. **54%** of those individuals rated the programming and resources available within their department as either good or very good. **16%** rated their department's performance in this area as poor or very poor.

Resume and CV Building

53% of respondents believed that providing resources for Resume and CV Building fell within the purview of Career Services. Of these respondents, roughly **45%** believed that their Career Services' programming was either good or very good. Another near quarter indicated that they did not know about the quality or availability of Career Services' programming on this issue. Almost **10%** rated available programming as either poor or very poor.

Writing Skills

Students divided responsibility for Writing Skills between their departments and faculty advisors—though more students were inclined to indicate their advisors (**41%**) rather than their Department/Program (**34%**) as most responsible. Of those who held their faculty advisors most responsible, **71%** reported that available resources are good or very good. Only **8%** found these resources to be poor or very poor. Of those who considered their Department/Program most responsible for providing resources for this area of professional development, **52%** found available resources as either good or very good. Approximately **10%** reported these resources are poor or very poor.

How to Market a Degree

46% identified their Department/Program as most responsible for providing access to degree marketing skills. **14%** of those individuals rated the programming and resources available to address this skill within their department as either good or very good. Over half of respondents rated their department's performance in this area as poor or very poor.

Recommendations

What then must we do to advance professional development in the University of California system? We acknowledge that different fields of study require a variety of resources in order to prepare students to be career ready. Rather than lay out specific changes, these recommendations aim to sketch out a framework to be applied in order to improve the provision of professional development services on campuses and within departments.

Listen to Student Needs

Through our survey, students provided us with clear priorities for the professional development they want and need. Thus our first recommendation is that resource providers actively incorporate student input and priorities into resource offerings on each campus. Tailoring resources to the needs of the students who consume them is not only prudent, but also quite straightforward. Given that there are multiple providers of these resources on any given campus, it is vital that student input is solicited often, and shared among providers in a comprehensive manner.

Increase Collaboration

Our responses show that students ascribe responsibility for professional development resources to both their Department and the Career Center on their campus. Unfortunately these two providers tend to operate in their own silos. For the sake of quality, utility, and relevance, Career Centers and Departments should collaborate whenever possible. We encourage Career Centers and Department faculty to think critically about how to bring professional development resources to their students in collaboration with on campus and outside partners, including Alumni. Collaboration encourages more relevant content, as departments are often more familiar with the resources that their students need, and Career Centers have experience with how to best format and promote that content.

Gather and Share Best Practices

Reviewing our survey data indicates that students are overwhelmingly dissatisfied with their professional development options; luckily we can identify the occasional outlier. In our interviews with students we happened upon a few campuses and programs focused on offering development programming that is relevant and timely. While these interviews offer anecdotal evidence that best practices exist in the system, we request that the UC system work to collect and share models of successful programs and investigate how to build these programs to scale.

Tailor Programing to Fit Student Needs

Development needs vary from program to program, thus it is essential that resources be tailored to thoughtfully consider what career pathways are available in each field of study. Programing should be designed to take a student "from here to there"; that is, resources must address gaps in students' career preparedness in a way that is specific to their desired field. Additionally, 42% of Professional students cited time as being a primary reason for not utilizing existing resources; programing was offered at a time that was not convenient to their schedule. Increasing student utilization of existing resources depends on providers marketing their events well, but also on ensuring that events are well timed and in a convenient location for the target audience; whenever possible events should also be held in a space that is familiar to the attendees. This may seem intuitive, but given that an average of 20% of students did not know what resources are available via their own Career Center, we can stipulate that geography is just as important as programing when it comes to graduate student utilization of these services.

Additional Supports for Students Who Change Their Career Goals

As noted in the presentation of our survey data, students who change their career goals are less likely to feel well prepared for the workforce after graduation. Consider the 70% of Doctoral Students who have identified new career goals, and that 71% of those students have made a change due to a lack of jobs in their initially identified field. These students require solid guidance and resources in order to market themselves in venues outside of academia. Providing these resources may require a system to track changes in student goals and respond in a timely manner. We encourage the UC system, department chairs, and Career Services staff to consider the systems in place for reporting a change in either a student's course of study or career goals. Do students feel comfortable sharing these changes in intentions with their Faculty Advisor? If not, is there another avenue through which they can access professional development programing? If this information is reported to a Faculty Advisor we must ask: are Faculty Advisors aware of existing resources for students who make these changes? Again, the need for collaboration between groups is vital to ensuring that students can access resources that restore their confidence in their career readiness, particularly if that career path falls outside of the academic realm.

Moving Forward

Significant challenges stand between delivery methods as they are now and a future of intentional professional development across the UC system. Campuses must push past cultural barriers in academia that discourage the pursuit of career pathways outside the ivory tower. Best practices fostered on campuses such as UC Santa Barbara and UC Irvine point us towards a better path forward. These practices will require continued diligence from administrators and strong buy in from stakeholders. The UC System should listen to students, gather and share best practices, and increase collaboration between providers of these resources. Campuses should prioritize supports for students who change their career goals during their course of study, and programing should be narrowly tailored to address skill gaps in a student's career readiness. In order to ensure a verdant future for the citizens of California, it is vital that we set professional development in the UC System on a track of efficiency and effectiveness to better meet the needs of students and employers alike.

Methodology

Survey Overview

The online survey was a dynamic questionnaire responsive to the answers student respondents provided. The questionnaire was comprised of 90 possible questions. The vast majority of students did not answer all 90 possible questions, as the questions and options provided were circumscribed based upon their earlier answers. This was done with the goal that the survey would reflect the needs and interests of the students.

The questionnaire was designed to get student feedback and understand student needs regarding the following issues:

- Personal Characteristics and Goals: Their career plans upon entering their program, and any change in career goals (and why) during their time; an understanding of their perceived readiness upon graduation.
- Academic Development Programming: What they consider to be part of academic career development; who the responsible parties are for offering this kind of programming; and an assessment of current offerings by different campus groups.
- Professional Development Programming: What they consider to be part of professional career development; who the responsible parties are for offering this kind of programming; and an assessment of current offerings by different campus groups.
- Formal and Informal Networks: Who the student relies on for career development resources; where they get their information from; how responsive they are to messaging from different campus sources.

Depending on student priorities and career goals, they were sometimes not asked to answer questions about academic or professional development. In addition, students were asked to evaluate available resources only for those to which they ascribed responsibility for providing those resources. This kept the survey to an average length of 15 minutes for most respondents.

Professional development in this survey was defined as "programming that aims to assist students develop the skills necessary to successfully transition to a career in industry (i.e., outside of the academy)." Academic career development, in contrast, referred to "preparation for a career in academia as a higher-education faculty member or researcher."

Survey Release

The survey was released on April 2nd, 2014, with the Graduate Student Associations as the primary and first point of distribution. Our release ended up being somewhat staggered across the system.

In the month following the release of the survey approximately 5,300 student emails were collected across the system, with the goal of gathering email addresses for 10% of the graduate/professional student population of each campus. Emails to students were sent out in the first week of May 2014.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to the students of the UC System who took the time to complete our survey; we appreciate your participation. This report was made possible by the University of California Student Association. Special thanks to UCSA Graduate and Professional Committee chair Darcie McClelland Descalzo (UC Riverside), UCSA External Vice Presidents Lewis Luartz (UC Riverside) and Jennifer Jones (UC Irvine); Rumman Chowdhury, Survey Consultant (UC San Diego); and UCSA staff. Thank you to former Graduate and Professional Advocacy Director Paul Escobar for leading this project and completing the bulk of the data analysis published in this report.