

## **Job Shadowing within a University System: A Faculty and Administration Partnership**

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### **ABSTRACT**

There is little research on job shadowing that combines college coursework and internal college partnerships. The extant research focuses on the private sector. This paper shares the experience of a public university system partnering with faculty teaching business courses and provides a case study of how a partnership with one campus and one functional division, human resources, expanded to include finance and informational technology divisions and three different campuses. This program survived a pivot to an entirely virtual job shadowing program during the pandemic. Currently, the collaboration is expanding to include more campuses and departments in the coming academic year.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Job shadowing is an excellent opportunity for students to gain valuable insight through real and relevant learning to determine their career paths after graduating. The goal, for students, is to gain a better understanding of their field of interest related to their current or future majors/minors, as well as the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to be successful in their field of choice. The students may shadow as many professionals as they would like, depending on the availability of the staff and their professional relevance to their career interests.

The job shadow pilot program's suggested length is three to five days, equating to 16-24 hours a semester depending on the student's and the host's schedule. The pilot program completed Spring 2020 with three CSUDH students shadowing Systemwide and Chancellor's Office HR professionals. The 2021 program was created from the lessons learned during the pilot. It has expanded to seven students, including students from CSU Fullerton and CSU Dominguez Hills. The host list has also expanded to include Information Technology Services and Financing and Investments.

Overall, the students met with approximately 50 Chancellors Office and campus HR, IT, and Finance professionals and completed 196.5 hours of job shadowing from January through May 2021. Students were able to attend an average of 22 events each. The job shadow experience included a meet-and-greet with various professionals, attending a Board of Trustees meeting, and various training events.

## **Establishing the Partnership**

The idea of establishing a job shadow program started with a conversation between Dr. Thomas Norman, and Dr. Joan Torne, during a campus visit to CSU Dominguez Hills, in Carson, California in 2018. Both thought it would be great to partner and create opportunities for the students to learn outside the classroom while harnessing the resources that the university already had throughout the system. When discussed with Vice Chancellor of Human Resources Dr. Evelyn Nazario, full support was expressed. She truly believed the project would be a fantastic opportunity for all students and professionals at the Chancellor's Office to learn from each other and something that could be made available systemwide in the future.

“As the program administrator, HR host, and mentor, it was a joy to work directly with the students to gain experience and insight into the higher education industry, particularly careers in human resources, finance, and IT at the CSU. The Chancellor’s Office Job Shadow Program enhances a student’s CSU experience directly in the alignment of Graduation Initiative 2025 by providing student career exposure, mentorship opportunities, knowledge of professional expectations, and workplace skills. It was wonderful to see that the program’s objectives were met based on the reflections of the ten students who have participated in the program since 2020. They all noted knowledge increase in career pathways, job functions, higher education industry, establishing a professional network and are very grateful in receiving mentorship. We are looking forward to growing this program with faculty and staff partners across the CSU system to expand the reach of this program to serve more CSU students.” ~ *Dr. Joan Torne, Assistant Vice Chancellor Workforce Strategies and Chancellor’s Office Human Resources.*

## **Program Participant Feedback**

“I had a very educational and rewarding experience sitting in on this meeting and seeing how business professionals coordinate with each other virtually to complete projects.” ~ *Student 1*

“The Job Shadow Program is an invigorating reminder why we work for the California State University—to help students achieve their dreams.” ~ *Robert Eaton, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Finance, Treasury & Risk Management*

## **Future Plans**

We are looking forward to growing this program with faculty and staff partners across the CSU system to expand the reach and serve more CSU students through new partnerships and creating a framework that each campus can use to create their job shadow programs. Also planned is a mentorship component to conclude the job shadow program. Both students and hosts will be allowed to participate in the mentorship program, and as the job shadow program concludes, students will have an assigned mentor for six months. There are several types of mentors, and each of them plays a vital role in an individual’s personal and professional development. In addition, we will continue to work together with faculty and all our partners on how we can embed these high-impact practices as part of the CSU culture in retaining students, not only increasing

graduation rates but creating well-prepared new graduates to join the workforce and ready to make a difference.