



CICEP

INNOVATION AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY UNIVERSITIES
AWARDS PROGRAM

CASE
STUDY
2015

IEP CATEGORY • TALENT

The Clemson University Center for Career and Professional Development (CCPD)

A national model for building student talent in higher education

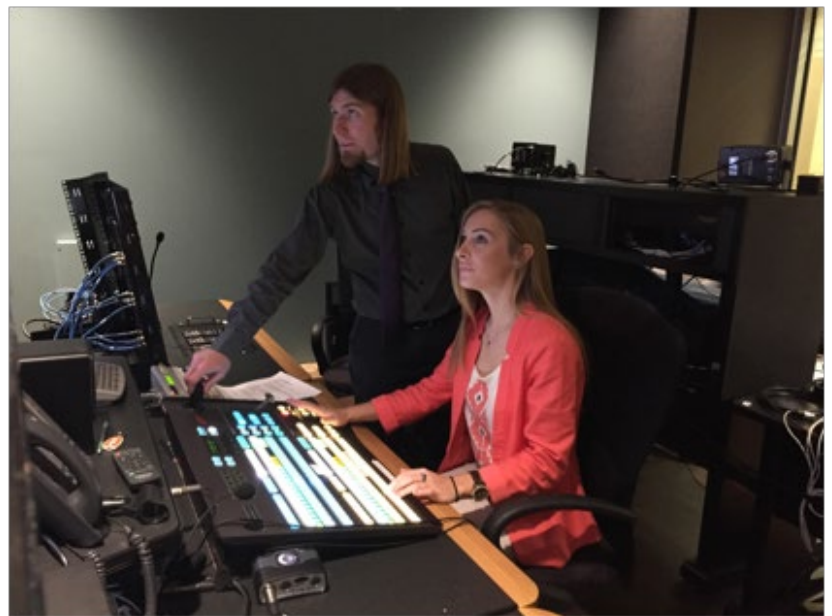
Over the last decade, Clemson has learned that sometimes the only way out of a challenging situation is to innovate. Reeling from state budget cuts of **\$45.7 million in 2009–10**, the university saw an opportunity to improve the structure of internal talent development despite a resource-limited environment. Clemson merged career services and cooperative education to form the Clemson University Center for Career and Professional Development (CCPD) in July 2011. CCPD established an unusual structure, with staff reporting lines almost equally divided between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs. The intent was to stimulate more integrated and effective partnerships between employers, faculty and the staff in CCPD while also reducing costs. This structure has proven successful, resulting in Clemson’s Career Services being ranked **#1 in the US by the 2015 Princeton Review**. This integrated approach has facilitated greater student participation in counseling, advising, interviewing, and experiential learning activities, as well as linking career-related experiences to the academic process.



2015 Princeton Review Career Services ranking

CCPD'S UNIVERSITY PROFESSIONAL INTERNSHIP AND CO-OP PROGRAM (UPIC)

After the 2008 recession, co-op placements in business and industry declined, as did paid student internships. Recognizing a need for students from a variety of backgrounds and majors to participate in real-world experiences as part of their education, Clemson created the **University Professional Internship and Co-op Program (UPIC) in 2012**. UPIC is a campus-based internship program where campus departments pay 50% of the interns’ salaries and the university itself covers 50%. Interns work in a variety of departments on campus and at off-campus sites including Cooperative Extension offices and innovation campuses in Greenville and Charleston.¹ Interns also work with companies and industries engaged in projects with Clemson faculty and staff. Annual participation has surged from 54 interns in 2012–13 to 849 in 2014–15. The immense success of UPIC led to a recurring annual funding allocation of \$1,000,000 from the SC Legislature in 2014 to support the program.²



UPIC sound engineering Intern

1. UPIC Magazine 1.0 http://career.clemson.edu/internship_programs/UPIC_program/documents/UPIC_Magazine_Issue1_D2.pdf; UPIC Magazine 2.0 http://career.clemson.edu/internship_programs/UPIC_program/documents/UPIC_Issue2_D.pdf

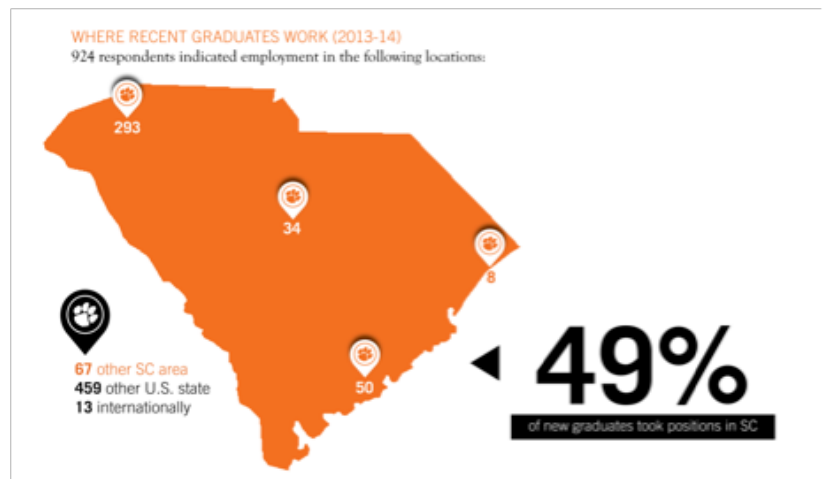
2. <http://blogs.clemson.edu/inside-clemson/inside-news/budget-house-and-senate-reach-compromise-on-state-budget/>

CCPD has created several innovative initiatives in conjunction with faculty, staff and employers to address career-related challenges, reach underserved populations and promote economic development. Students from the Liberal Arts in Clemson’s College of Arts, Architecture & Humanities fill 21% of UPIC assignments, giving these students opportunities for paid internships in a variety of career fields. To better serve individuals with high need or in high risk situations, 5-10% of the general university funds allocated for UPIC intern salaries are used cover these students at 100%, removing the financial match requirement from departments as an incentive for mentors to take on students who might have difficulty securing an internship. Through partnerships with the Institute for Economic & Community Development, CCIT Enterprise and the School of Computing, a number of UPIC interns have worked with start-up companies, on entrepreneurial projects and in economic incubators like [NEXT](#) in Greenville, SC. Clemson alumnus [Ryan DeMattia](#) credits his UPIC internship experience with start-up companies at Clemson’s Regional Entrepreneurial Development Center with helping him develop his own start-up business, [Voice the App](#). Ryan now assists and mentors other entrepreneurs in SC through Clemson’s [Technology Villages](#) program.

CCPD: CLEMSON COOPERATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM (CO-OP)

While Clemson’s Cooperative Education Program has been in operation for decades, it has also experienced growth recently, with a 42% percent increase in overall participation since 2010, and a 75% increase in co-op opportunities for liberal arts and bioengineering majors since 2012. The program currently works in partnership with 300 employers to provide co-op assignments for students from 25 different major areas.

Clemson’s co-op program also works closely with corporate teaching partners, company mentors and academic departments to ensure that the co-op experience links back to the academic growth of the student. Student experiences in industry environments are often used to inform academic curricula revisions, feeding into the continual improvement and relevance of academic programs. Employers of students participating in UPIC and Cooperative Education evaluate students on skills related to Clemson learning outcomes, such as interdisciplinary teamwork, critical and creative thinking, communication and professional and ethical responsibility. In 2013–14, organizations employing Clemson interns and co-op students rated them on average a 4.5 out of possible 5.0 in critical thinking, creative thinking and communication skills.³



3. Center for Career and Professional Development’s Annual Report http://career.clemson.edu/documents/13-14AnnualReport_Web.pdf

Perhaps most importantly, the recent increase in the availability of co-op experiences has been a significant catalyst in keeping 49% of Clemson graduates in 2013-2014 employed in SC after graduation. 52% of Clemson's cooperative education opportunities are in SC. This represents over 100 companies in SC that are hiring Clemson co-op students for rotations. Given that 65% of co-op students will actually receive full-time offers from their employers, this program plays a key role in helping SC retain the talent cultivated at Clemson. While quantitative metrics speak to CCPD's overall success, it is their focus on the unique professional development needs of each student that has resulted in the #1 national ranking from Princeton Review in Career Services for 2015. Students seeking assistance from CCPD report a 99.8% satisfaction rate, meaning their needs are being met on an individual basis.

One Alumnus' Story: Overcoming a criminal record with help from CCPD

"I entered the electrical engineering program but did not know how I was going to get a job when all applications asked about my prior criminal background. I scheduled an appointment and met with Dr. Neal in the Co-op program, and explained to him my past situation. (He) assured me that most students graduating from Clemson, especially in engineering, are sought after.

"Dr. Neal personally took his time to speak with many companies about interviewing me for a co-op assignment. I interviewed with about 10-12 companies. I did not get my top choice assignment but I did get an assignment that turned out to be the best fit for me. The greatest thing was being offered a position as a full-time engineer by my co-op company when I graduated. As an employee of my current company, I now work with and mentor other students from Clemson's Co-op Program. I cannot thank everyone enough who helped me in the program."

— Letter from a Clemson alumnus who, with help from the Co-op program, overcame a criminal record to build a successful career and serve as a mentor to others