BOLD IDEAS Team #3 (03/28/14 workshop):

“Place all students on a positive career track journey, including mentoring connections with alums.”

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Procedure: Eight undergraduate students completed the closed-ended ratings as well as answered several open-ended follow-up questions. The results are summarized below.

-2 = Strongly Disagree; -1 = Disagree; 0 = Neither Agree nor Disagree; 1 = Agree; 2 = Strongly Agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NIU played a strong role in my career decision.</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>1.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIU provides opportunities for me to prepare for my career.</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIU prepares me to be competitive in my career.</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am confident that I will be successful in my career after graduating from NIU.</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My experiences at NIU will prepare me for my future career.</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would benefit from having a past graduate of NIU as a mentor to help me to succeed in my career.</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would benefit from having a past graduate of NIU as a mentor to help me to succeed in my courses at NIU.</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>0.70</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Interpretation of Ratings: The students generally agree that NIU plays a role in their career development and preparation for success, and that having a mentor would be valuable. However, in the context of the open-ended responses, scores indicate that steps can be taken by NIU to increase students’ confidence in career success.

From open-ended questions:

MOST HELPFUL CAREER EXPERIENCES AT NIU
--taking classes and talking with professors about career options
--independent study and internship experiences in the subject area
--meeting people who are similarly career oriented
--discussions with advisors
--Career Services and department websites with career information
--taking classes and workshops in career planning, professional skills
--professional associations for students
--attending talks by professionals in the career field

OBSTACLES TO CAREER SUCCESS
--financial support
--no specific program for my career choice
--no career-specific job fairs
--few/challenging internship opportunities
--needed more support with key courses
--courses not challenging enough
--some professors do not seem available/approachable

WHAT NIU COULD DO BETTER
--more challenging/rigorous courses
--making being a research assistant a requirement for a degree
--provide more internship opportunities
--more specialized programs (e.g., pre-med, music producing)
--implement a program for freshman to take classes and gen-eds that are specific to the career path
--provide more practical application classes and experiences with tools for the job market
--make connecting with a mentor part of the first or second year experience for networking, financial aid opportunities, course selection, and career advice