

College2Career Forum: How To Guide

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Essential Question(s)

- What steps do I need to take to create a College2Career Forum?
- How can I help apply the career information to my student's current postsecondary plans and academic opportunities?

Summary

College2Career Forums (C2CF), a series of focused, career-specific explorations, have been planned for the top requested careers. In these day-long experiences, students will travel to a Postsecondary Institution (PSI) to explore a common aspect of the career through hands-on activities. Armed with these experiences, students will be transported to a business and have the opportunity for job shadowing and mentoring with a practicing professional. Each school will be invited to identify students who are interested in the targeted career and transport them to a local partnering PSI, where they will engage in a hands-on activity that exemplifies the career.

Learning Goals

- Create and facilitate a College2Career Forum.
- Explore career options in a postsecondary institution (PSI).
- Develop relationships with postsecondary education (PSE) staff or career-specific professionals.

Attachments

- Email Templates—College2Career Forum_ How to Guide - Spanish.docx
- Email Templates—College2Career Forum_ How to Guide - Spanish.pdf
- Email Templates—College2Career Forum_ How to Guide.docx
- Email Templates—College2Career Forum_ How to Guide.pdf
- Sample Agendas—College2Career Forum_How to Guide - Spanish.docx
- Sample Agendas—College2Career Forum_How to Guide - Spanish.pdf
- Sample Agendas—College2Career Forum_How to Guide.docx
- Sample Agendas—College2Career Forum_How to Guide.pdf

Materials

- Email Templates (attached)
- Sample Agendas (attached)
- 16 Ways to Survey Your Career (linked)
- Career Cluster survey (linked)
- Career Professional Volunteer Referral (linked)
- Off-campus forms (as needed and provided by school)
- Name badges (optional)
- School T-shirt (optional)

5 minutes

What is a College Forum?

Making connections with community partners is crucial for career exploration as they bring real-world insights and opportunities directly to participants. These partnerships enable students and job seekers to engage with professionals, fostering a deeper understanding of various career paths and industries. Additionally, community partners can provide valuable resources, mentorship, potential job placements, and PSI programs, significantly enhancing the overall impact and success of a College2Career Forum. By collaborating, both the organizers and participants benefit from a richer, more comprehensive exploration experience.

Using career interest surveys and feedback from participating students, schools will strategically coordinate a site-based learning event where professionals will engage students in hands-on activities. College2Career Forums (C2CF) will (a) introduce students to new careers they may not otherwise have access to; (b) help raise students' career aspirations and personal goals; and (c) provide students with a road map to achieve those goals. Career professionals enrich learning by offering real-world insights, expertise, and diverse perspectives. College2Career Forums inspire, motivate, and provide unique opportunities for students to connect with professionals and gain practical knowledge.

College2Career Forums occur at a place of business or a PSI's (Postsecondary Institution) program. The following locations are previous sites where GEAR UP has completed College2Career Forums:

ELA	Electives	Math	Science	Social Studies
OU College of Law	UCO's Academy of Contemporary Music	OU College of Construction and Engineering	UCO's Forensic Science Institute	OKC National Memorial and Museum
OU SoonerVision	OSU-OKC Police & Fire Safety	iFLY	National Weather Center	OU College of Social Work
Gaylord College of Journalism	OCCC Visual Arts	OSU-OKC CAD	OSU-OKC Vet Tech	Sam Noble Museum

180 minutes

How to Get Started?

Before crafting your career forum event, first it is necessary to collect data on what interests your students and what local resources are available to you.

To help find relevant community partners, you need to gather data on what careers interest your students. These interest surveys may be conducted in a number of ways. You are free to use your own survey material or try out our K20 resources featured below:

- 16 Ways to Survey Your Career—This is a lesson teachers or school staff can facilitate with their students to collect paper results reflecting students' career interests.
- Career Cluster survey—This online survey is the same as the previous resource, yet it provides quick results and can be done independently by students. Note: Results are seen by students. It is up to the facilitator to determine how to gather the results from students (i.e. students can submit a screenshot in an LMS platform).

Additionally, the K20 Center's Career Cluster Activities are available as next steps following the C2CF for additional career cluster information, extension, and enrichment.

Now that you have your students' data, gather what community resources are available to you. This can be done in multiple ways but consider using the following resource which can pool contacts from your peers:

Career Professional Volunteer Referral—Use this resource to collect information from your colleagues and other local organizations. Be sure to make a "copy" and insert the specific details related to your school.

15 minutes

How to Contact People?

Once you have collected contact information for potential career partners, you can use the following attached **Email Templates** (seen below as well) to assist in the recruitment of volunteers. If your contact was provided by a peer, be sure to include them in the email, or allow them to make the first contact to get your foot in the door.

Email Template - Recruiting Worksite Visits

Hi, _____

My name is _____, and I am a _____ at _____ in [city, state] _____. We are organizing a small-group Worksite visit, called a College2Career Forum, to help our students learn about potential career options through interactive activities.

We think that our students would benefit from hearing about your organization's work in the _____ career cluster as a _____. This is a great chance for you and other colleagues to share your knowledge with K12 students who are eager to know more about your profession!

If you are interested in receiving more information and would consider hosting a small group of students at your organization, please feel free to email me back at _____.

Sincerely,

Email Template - Confirming Worksite Visit Information

Hi, _____!

Thank you again for hosting our small-group worksite visit! We are so excited that you are interested in showing our students the ins and outs of the career opportunities within your organization.

Below is the date, time, and location we have scheduled the College2Career Forum:

Date: _____

Time: _____

Location: [include address, city, state, name of room (if available)] _____

In this email, we have included a sample event schedule. We are willing to workshop activity ideas and timelines with you as needed.

Let us know if you have questions and thank you again for volunteering your time! We will send more logistical information soon.

Sincerely,

Email Template - Event Details and Needed Info

Hi, _____

We hope this email finds you well. We are excited to visit your organization on _____.

We plan to arrive at least fifteen minutes early. Can you please provide us any parking and building instructions as needed? We are planning to bring a (school bus or district van). Will we need any parking passes?

Please respond to this email with the finalized schedule and agenda for the day. Our students are looking forward to your career talk!

Thank you again and let us know if you need anything.

Sincerely,

Email Template - Thank You

Hi, _____

Thank you for being a gracious host for our College2Career Forum event on _____! We know your time is valuable, and we are grateful that you spent some of it with us.

The students enjoyed hearing about the career opportunities at _____ and learned a lot from you. We look forward to working with you again in the future when the opportunity arises.

Thank you again!

Sincerely,

480 minutes

Create, Plan, and Facilitate

The facilitation of a College2Career Forum begins long before the day of the event. There are several steps the responsible parties need to consider during the creation and planning process. Below are considerations that the K20 Center focuses on when planning a College2Career Forum; however, your site may require more logistics when transporting students off campus.

Teacher's Note

The following pre-visit considerations are not sequential and can be completed in any order as needed.

Pre-Visit Considerations:

Key Stakeholders—Identifying your key stakeholders for your upcoming visit is the critical first step to attending and facilitating your upcoming College2Career Forum. This can include any chaperones, any front office staff that need to be involved in the check-out of the school process, bus drivers, school administrators, etc.

Example Schedules—This might be the first time the organization you are partnering with has hosted this type of event. To help guide them, include a sample agenda and schedule to help them better understand the timeline and objectives. Find the attached "College2Career Forum—Sample Agendas" for examples of previous GEAR UP schedules. From here, copy/paste the timeline and edit activities as needed. Work with your contact to create interactive activities for your students based on content areas that are relevant to them.

Teacher's Note

If you are a classroom teacher, try to make connections to any curriculum you have or plan to teach.

Materials and Supplies—Check with your C2CF contact and see if there are any materials or supplies you need to print or bring before the visit. These could include school t-shirts, name badges, or any note taking materials your students may want to use during the visit or for any reflection activities.

Student Preparation—Conduct pre-visit briefings or orientations, provide information about the host organization (e.g. background, dress code including closed-toed shoes, and behavior expectations), and prepare students with relevant questions or topics to explore.

Transportation—Most forum events include bus transportation to and from the event location. The number of students and chaperones attending will determine how many vehicles, drivers, and chaperones are needed. Make sure to close your sign-ups for your event early enough so that you can find adequate vehicles and drivers for your event.

Lunches—Depending on the timing of your Forum event, you may need to feed your students lunch while you're on site. Consult with your administrator on how to best provide lunch. Some options include: 1) Have students bring their own lunch; 2) distribute sack lunches provided by your school cafeteria; 3) eat lunch at a facility on-site if available; or 4) place a lunch order for delivery – such as pizza – a day before the event.

Substitute Teachers—Work with the appropriate administration at your school or district to ensure that should you need a substitute, you will have one to cover your classes while you are out of the building.

Off-campus Forms—There may be several off-campus, safety, or permission forms that your students need for their forum trip. Make sure to check with your school site administrator for any district-required forms as well as with your forum location for any safety or permission forms they may need.

Photo Releases—Check your school and district's photo/talent release protocols before taking or posting pictures from your event.

***OU MoC Form**—If you are visiting an OU campus program, you are required to fill out a Minors on Campus (MoC) form. Check with any other universities you plan to visit for similar forms.

On-Site Considerations:

Engagement and Facilitation—Ensure that all students participating in the C2CF engage with the staff and activities. All school chaperones should be willing to offer support during the facilitation of any hands-on activities and must monitor students throughout the day.

Post-Visit Considerations:

Debrief and Reflections—During post-visit class periods, complete a debrief and reflection activity with the students who attended the C2CF. Consider using the following instructional strategies:

- 3-2-1
- I Used to Think... But Now I Know
- Mirror, Microscope, Binoculars
- POMS: Point of Most Significance
- What? So What? Now What?

Teacher's Note

Using the LEARN filter feature, you can search for more Instructional Strategies under the "Intention or Purpose" box by selecting "Reflection" on the drop-down menu.

Completing this activity will solidify the knowledge gained during the visit and enable you to connect instructional theory to career practice. If you are teaching a curriculum that directly relates to the topics learned during the C2CF, be sure to engage the students' new understanding of real-world connections. The reflection should also enable students to consider how they might fit into that career. Lastly, students should be able to give feedback on the event.

"Thank You" Notes and Follow-Up—Using the "4. Email Template—Thank You" (see above), be sure to follow-up with the site staff and thank them for their time. This will also give you the chance to ask any follow-up questions, collect any newly gained contacts, and see if there are any next steps for future visits.

120 minutes

Links to More Specific Resources

Now that you have a better understanding about what a C2CF is and the logistics required to plan one, you can view a collection that houses all previously published C2CFs for more site-specific information. These educator resources go more in depth about the content and learning outcomes for a site-specific C2CF. You can use these resources as a starting point and adjust any of the materials, learning objectives, and content covered as needed.

Research Rationale

As research continues, it is becoming increasingly evident that simply telling students about PSI opportunities or career fields isn't enough. Teachers need to give students impactful, relatable, and engaging experiences so that students can actively explore these options. Not only do these opportunities help students explore future opportunities, but they can also lead to career success later in life. Research shows a strong correlation between job shadowing and workplace visits as a teen to career success later in life. One study found that Canadian students who made a workplace visit by age 15 were 4% less likely to be NEET (Not being in Education, Employment, or Training) than their peers at age 25 (Covacevich et al. 2021). The same study found that Korean students who made the same type of workplace visits were 1.23 times more likely not to be NEET than those who did not take a visit.

Work-Based Learning

In making college and career decisions Work-Based Learning (WBL) opportunities can provide secondary students with experience, clarity, and increased self-efficacy. Field-based learning is a powerful tool in helping students to better understand the core concepts and raising their enthusiasm (Janovy & Major, 2009; Manzanal et al., 1999, as cited in Pereira & Gheisari, 2017). These experiences also enable students to interact with professionals and perceive fieldwork in a way that is unattainable in a traditional school setting. A research project by Pereira and Gheisari (2017) studied the effectiveness of construction site visits as perceived by the faculty of construction courses. The researchers found that faculty members believe observing the construction environment is critical for the students (Pereira & Gheisari, 2017). With student benefits and faculty acknowledgment, WBL can provide a compelling experience for students.

Another WBL study of eleven low-income ethnic minority secondary students aimed to gauge the impact of a school's WBL program. Through data analysis of student interviews, the study revealed that the WBL program promoted hope for their future academic and career success and support and mentorship through workplace supervisors within the program (Medvide et al.; M. E., 2020). This hope, support, and mentorship give students – especially low-income students whose backgrounds and lived experiences may hinder them – the self-efficacy to reach their full potential.

Hands-on Educational Experiences

Several research projects prove that hands-on educational experiences can positively impact students' academic and work-related outcomes. One such study followed a group of Australian secondary school students through a year-long science program. This program aimed to strengthen students' science skills in data analysis, experimentation, and scientific writing through current, hands-on research within the context of a significant worldwide health issue (Puslednik & Brennan, 2020). The research team found that the intervention reflected in students' mean score of knowledge growth – per a self-assessment survey – rose considerably. They also found, through VALID 10 testing, that 84% of intervention students would have scored lower on their tested science knowledge, problem-solving, communication, and planning skills than the control group's mean score (Puslednik & Brennan, 2020).

Another similar study evaluated the effectiveness of a hands-on learning experience in cancer research for 20 secondary students. After a two-week science summer camp at The University of the Pacific, the researcher found that 83.33% of the students were interested in participating in another hands-on science learning experience, and the same number reported increased interest in attending The University of the Pacific as their Post Secondary Institution (PSI) (Argueta et al, 2020). These results showcased the impact and importance of hands-on learning for high school-aged students in their interest in future academic and career endeavors.

Resources

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- Eiris Pereira, R., & Gheisari, M. (2017). Site visit application in construction education: A descriptive study of faculty members. *International Journal of Construction Education and Research*, 15(2), 83–99. https://doi.org/10.1080/15578771.2017.1375050
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