



Does One Size Fit All? Rethinking Career Fairs in Diverse Academic Colleges

 **HERBERT**
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, KNOXVILLE



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Live Poll – No Wrong Answers Here

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Does One Size Fit All? Rethinking Career Fairs in Diverse Academic Colleges

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The Challenges of Diverse Colleges

- Different employer needs
- Varying career paths
- Industry expectations



Three Career Fair Models

Centralized

One large, college-wide event
serving all majors and
disciplines simultaneously

Decentralized

Department – specific fairs
tailored to fields and industries

Hybrid

Combination of centralized +
decentralized events for max
reach and relevance



Key Question:



**Is a single model effective
across all disciplines?**

Three Career Fair Models Visualized

	Centralized	Decentralized	Hybrid ★
Scale	College-wide	Department	Both
Employer Turnout	High volume	Targeted & relevant	Broad + focused
Student Fit	Broad, less precise	High alignment	Best of both
Faculty Role	Minimal	Active involvement	Shared ownership
Resource Need	Low (centralized)	High (per unit)	Moderate
Niche Industry Reach	Limited	Strong	Strong

Centralized Model

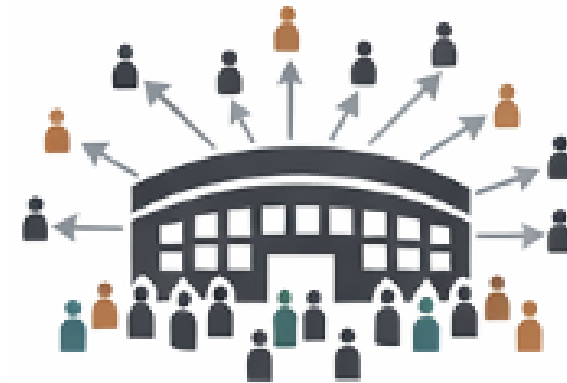
Pros:

- High employer presence
- Efficient
- Strong visibility

Cons:

- Less tailored to specific majors
- Relevancy of employers
- Niche industries underrepresented

Centralized



Decentralized Model

Pros:

- Targeted
- Strong alignment
- Faculty involvement

Cons:

- Resource intensive
- Duplication of effort
- Smaller scale

Decentralized



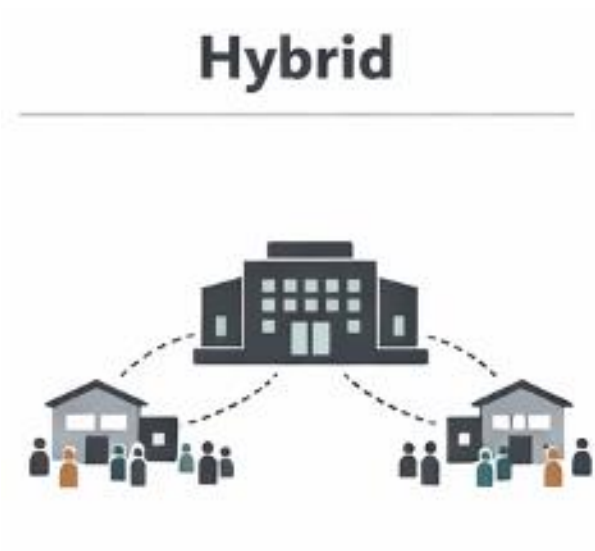
Hybrid Model

Pros:

- Balances scale and specificity
- Broader employer reach
- Targeted engagement
- Flexible for diverse majors

Cons:

- Requires coordination
- More complex logistics



Discussion Questions (10 Min)

1. Which model are you currently using?
2. What populations are being served well?
3. What students or employers may be underserved?
4. What barriers prevent change?
5. What would an ideal model look like at your institution?

Case Insight

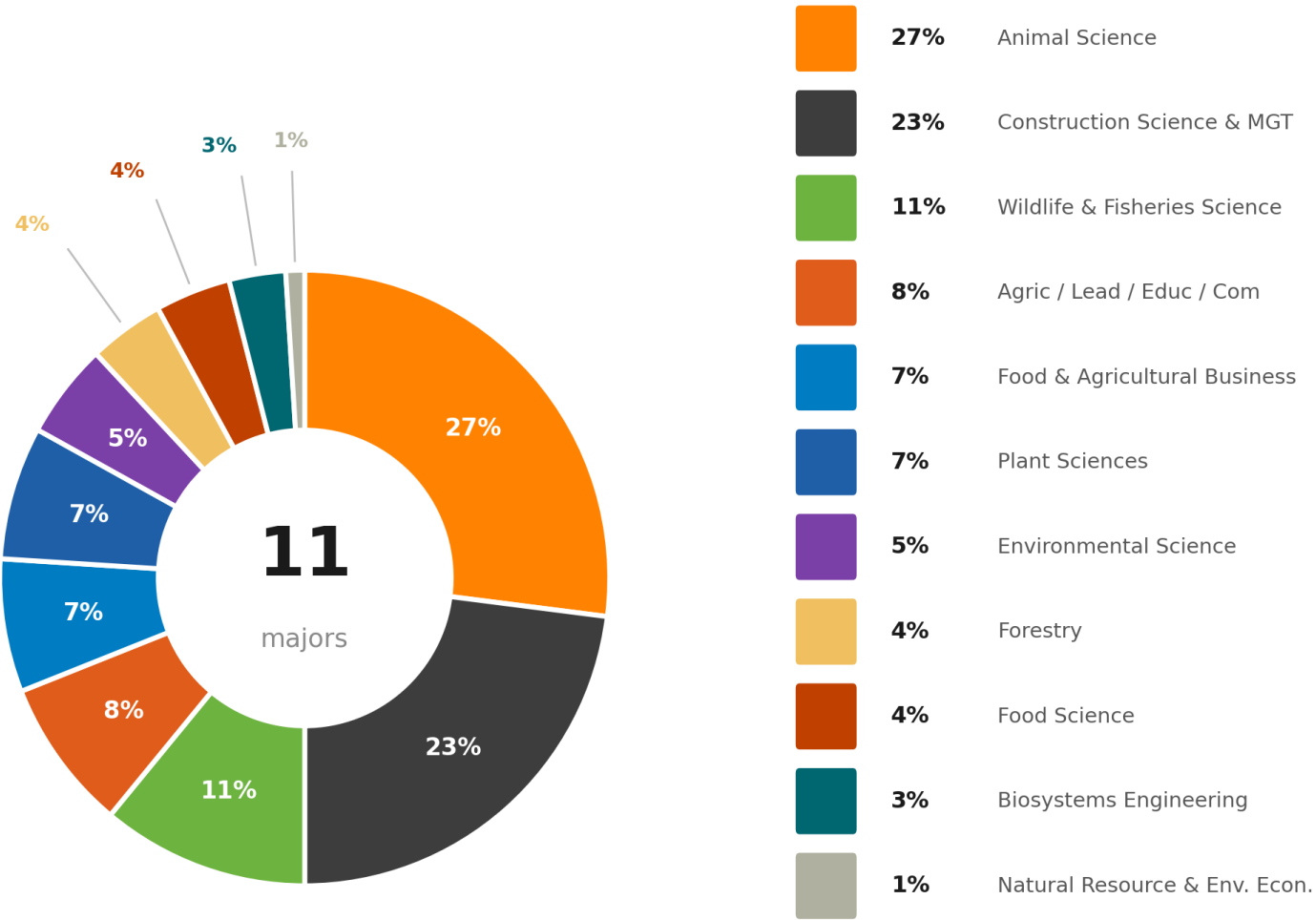


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Herbert Student Breakdown



Current Career Fair Breakdown



HCA Career Fair

Centralized

Greater Ag Industry

All Herbert Majors



CSM Career Fair

Decentralized

Construction Industry

CSM

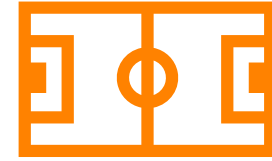


SNR Career Fair

Decentralized

Natural Resources Industry

WFS/FOR



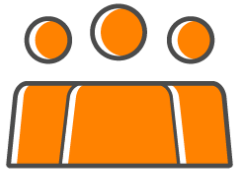
BEACON 2026

Decentralized

Sports Field/Green Industry

PLSC/Turfgrass

Successes



Employer Engagement

- Strong employer return rates
- Niche fields have a seat at the table



Administration

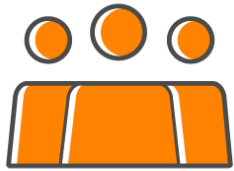
- Departmental ownership
- Hybrid model scalability
- Each fair serves a defined audience



Student Success

- Faculty buy in = deeper relationships, more professional opportunities
- Fair experience tailored by discipline

Challenges



Employer Engagement

- Employer burnout
- Employer confusion
- Employer distribution



Administration

- Coordination complexity
 - Duplication of effort
- Ownership ambiguity
- Data tracking challenges



Student Success

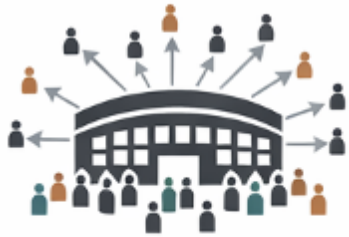
- Career fair fatigue
 - Unequal access
- Inconsistent student preparation

Our Why

“Student success is at the **center** of everything we do.”

Impact on Student Success

Centralized



Broad exposure, less precision
in employer matching

Decentralized



Stronger alignment, higher
student confidence

Hybrid



Internship placement, employer
follow-ups, student satisfaction

Live Poll – What's the Verdict

[Live Poll Mentimeter](#)

THEN

**Is a single model effective
across all disciplines?**

NOW

**What would it take to build
the right model at your
institution?**

**What would your students
say if you asked them the
same question?**

Key Takeaways

A single model **may not serve** every program equally

Each model offers different strengths and weaknesses

Collaboration is **critical**

Recommendations

- Assess needs by discipline
- Pilot specialized fairs
- Build toward your ideal model
- Foster shared ownership

Questions and discussion

Share Your Experience

What has your institution tried?
What worked, and what didn't?

Identify Your Challenges

What barriers, logistical,
financial, or cultural have you
encountered?

Explore Next Steps

What would it take to build the
right model at your institution?



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Please take one minute
to complete our session
evaluation and
committee interest form

