Freeman hosts national career services workshop

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Career services directors from more than a dozen leading business schools converged on New Orleans in August to take part in a special workshop organized by the A. B. Freeman School of Business.



Career services directors from more than a dozen top business schools visited the Freeman School in August for the first Career Services Roundtable.

Freeman School Dean Ira Solomon and Associate Dean Peggy Babin conceived the Career Services Roundtable to enable career management professionals from top business schools to discuss issues and collaborate in an intimate workshop setting. While the MBA Career Services Council sponsors a number of conferences for career services personnel, those meetings tend to be large national events with little opportunity for one-on-one interaction and dialogue.

“From student services to technology to corporate outreach, we’re all dealing with the same issues,” said Babin, who oversees the Freeman School’s Career Management Center. “The roundtable was a chance for us to get together and share experiences and best practices in a casual, business-school-focused environment.”

“I had very high expectations for the roundtable,” added Dean Solomon, “and those expectations were exceeded.”

The daylong workshop included sessions on how to build a high-performance career services center, ways to improve the stature and influence of career services within a business school, and strategies to better serve the growing population of international students. The roundtable also included an open session to allow participants to discuss topics not covered in the earlier sessions.

The Freeman School led the nation with a 98.1 percent employment rate for MBA graduates in 2011, but according to Leonard Williams, director of Freeman’s Career Management Center, there’s still room for improvement.

“Some of those in attendance were interested in learning what we did to achieve that level of employment, but I was just as interested in learning their processes and practices,” Williams says. “I think everyone came away from the workshop with new ideas and insights.”

Among the colleges and universities represented at the roundtable were Rice University, Ohio State University, Washington University in St. Louis, University of Washington, University of California San Diego, Emory University, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Southern Methodist University, Dartmouth College, University of Michigan, University of Virginia and Yale University.

The event earned universal praise from participants, and Babin says she’s already talking with attendees about trying to make it an annual event with hosting duties rotating among the participating institutions.

“Connecting students with employment opportunities is an increasingly important job at most business schools, so developing new resources to improve that process is something we’re all interested in and excited about,” Babin said.