

University of San Diego Becomes the Exception in Academia with McQuaig Assessment

300 +

Students assessed per year

95%

Grad student participation rate

98%

Response rate agreeing with accuracy of assessments

The Challenge

Practical Career Direction to Drive Employment

The Burnham-Moores Center for Real Estate (BMC), at the University of San Diego's (USD) Knauss School of Business, offers guidance to students to help them launch and hone their careers. In 2015, Burnham-Moores implemented a Career Services program. The program was developed to:

- Point students towards career options that would lead to gainful employment
- Offer resources to support students on their chosen career paths

In order to achieve these goals, the University of San Diego brought in Stath Karras, executive director of the BMC, and Jacqueline Greulich, associate director of real estate student and career services. Previously, Karras was CEO of Burnham Real Estate, a 250-person commercial real estate company. Together, they set out to find a solution that could support USD's undergraduate and graduate real-estate students.

The Solution

The McQuaig Behavioral Assessments

Karras says that for more than 17 years, Burnham Real Estate had found McQuaig reports to be "spot on" in describing an individual's behavior and predicting on-the-job performance. In order to meet the University of San Diego's challenges, the BMC turned to a solution that leveraged the power of McQuaig tools.

Karras and Greulich drew on behavioral profiles best-in-class performers within the world of real estate, established during their time at Burnham Real Estate. They solidified benchmarks for roles such as brokers, property managers, financial analysts and researchers—a diverse collection of career paths that all fell within the real estate industry.

Next, real estate students would take the McQuaig Word Survey. After completing the survey and with guidance by Greulich and Karras, students would compare their profile to benchmarks for a number of roles to determine where in the spectrum of real-estate opportunities they best fit.

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~ Jackie Greulich

“If there's not a reasonably good match, you're probably going to last at most three years in a job,” says Greulich. “In year one, you will be saying ‘I don't like it.’ In year two, you will be thinking ‘how can I get out of here?’ And, in year three, even if you don't have a job, you may be leaving.”

The project undertaken by Greulich and Karras offers significant career guidance for real estate graduates and undergraduates, including:

- ✓ Career profiling to map out a student's recommended real estate career path
- ✓ An individual behavioral assessment
- ✓ One-on-one personalized consultation to uncover natural personal strengths and accelerate the career journey
- ✓ A mentorship program that matches students with seasoned professionals, based on the behavioral assessment

The Results

Increased Engagement and Improved Employment Opportunities

“This assessment can be as important as grades, where you went to high school or what your GMAT or SAT score is...maybe even more important.”

~ Stath Karras

Determining which behavioral traits lead to success in a position is one-half of the puzzle. The other half involves being able to match individuals to that benchmark. At the University of San Diego, Greulich and Karras created a way to do both, which is what makes the University of San Diego's solution so powerful. In partnership with McQuaig, the Burnham-Moores Center for Real Estate developed a program that allowed students to obtain practical career direction AND to increase the probability of employment in roles that stimulate long-term retention.

The response has been outstanding. Since implementation, Greulich and Karras' program has produced:

- A 95% participation rate from graduate students
- A 45% participation rate from undergraduates, which continues to increase
- A 98% response rate from students indicating that they strongly believe the results of the assessment provide a very good representation of them

“This assessment tool can be as important as grades, where you went to high school, what your GMAT or SAT score is,” says Karras—maybe even more important.”

Student success stories are already rolling in, but one student's story stood out in particular. A graduate before McQuaig's involvement with the University of San Diego was unable to find a job for an entire year. Eventually, the alumnus came back to the BMC center for guidance and participated in the newly established program. After being debriefed on his behavioral assessment, he discovered that he was pursuing a career that did not match well with his profile.

“We implemented this program because we know it's the right thing to do for the students.”

~ Stath Karras

Equipped with new insight, he left the center to pursue a career direction consistent with his behavioral traits. Thirty days later, he had a job. Karras refers to the Burnham-Moores Center at the University of San Diego as “the exception in academia,” and emphasizes his mission for student success.

We implemented this program because we know it's the right thing for the students,” says Karras. “My desire would be to assess every real-estate student at USD before they leave the university to give each student the best opportunity to succeed within the industry.”

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