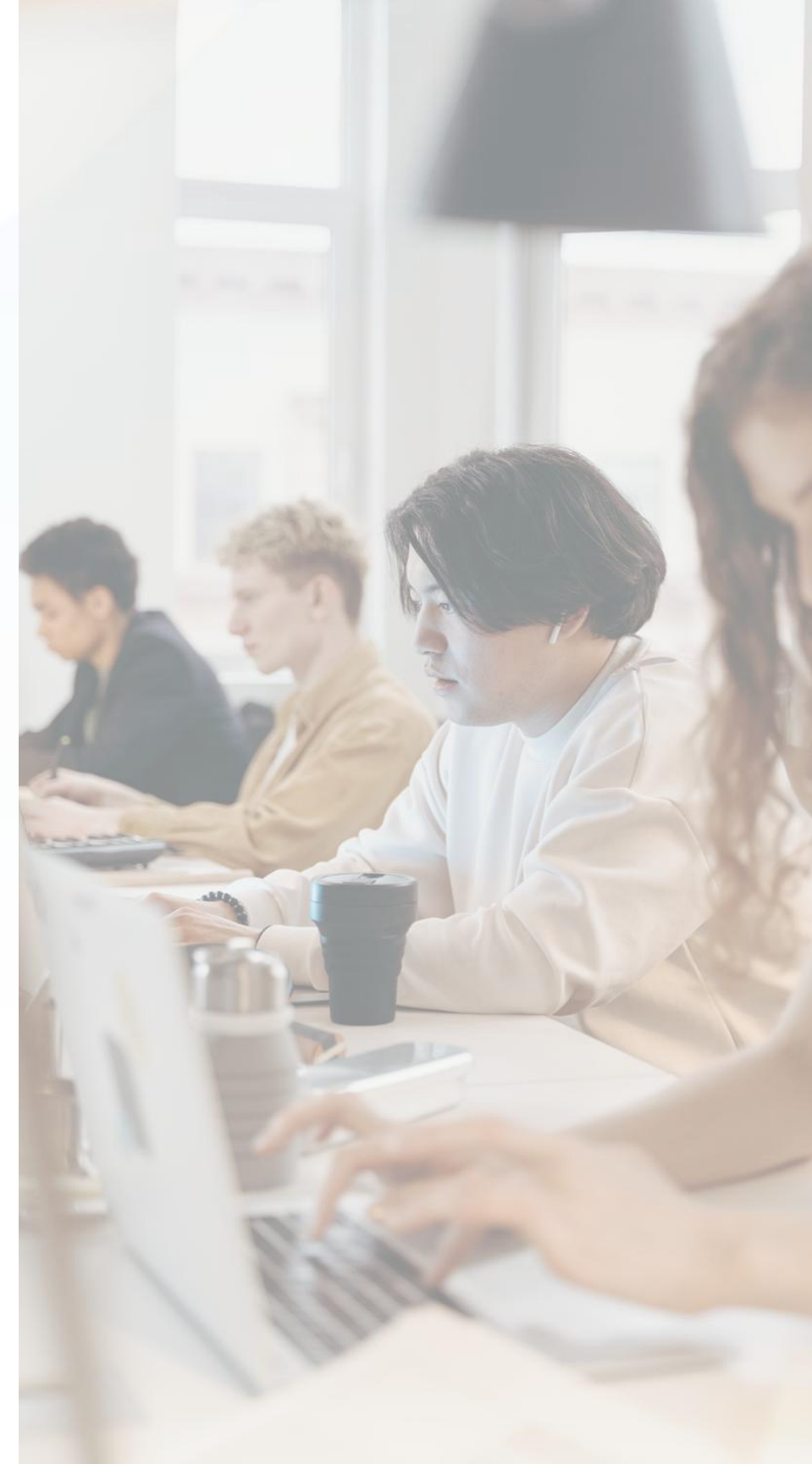# Steppingblocks

Strategies to Communicate Graduate Outcomes Data

User Conference

March 2025

Strategies to Communicate Graduate Outcomes Data

Session Overview

- Introduction
- Part One: Communicating Data at the University Level
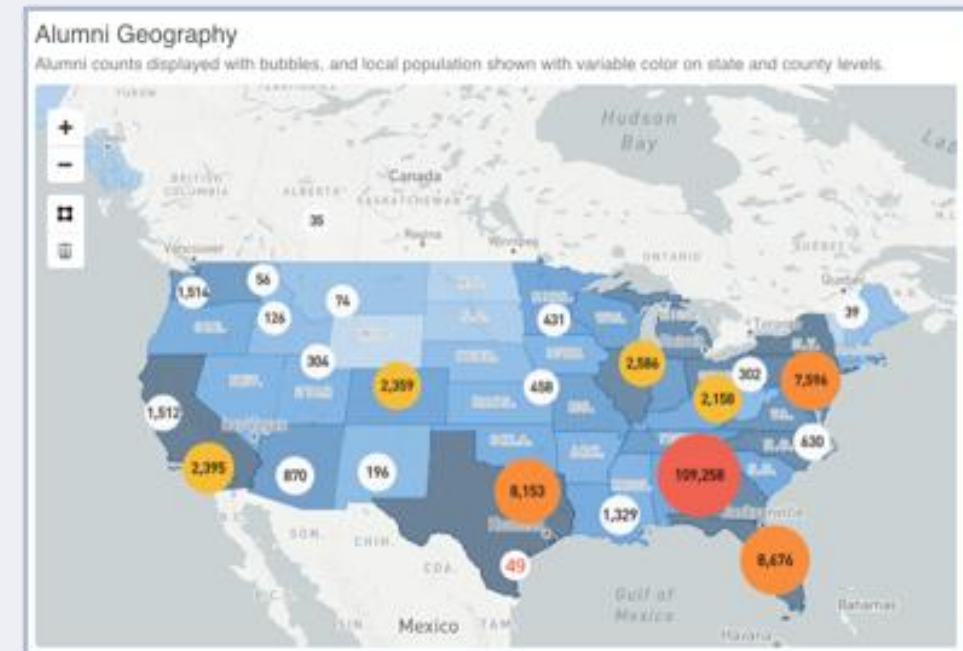- Part Two: Communicating Data to Demonstrate Value & Progress
- Q&A

Who is Steppingblocks?

Our mission is to build career confidence for students and drive success for institutions.

How we can help:

- Data-driven tools to promote career readiness and institutional success.
- Comprehensive Solutions designed for students, faculty, staff, and campus leadership.
- Key Features allow you to explore alumni profiles, employer trends, average salaries, relevant skills, and more.

Alumni Geography
Alumni counts displayed with bubbles, and local population shown with variable color on state and county levels.
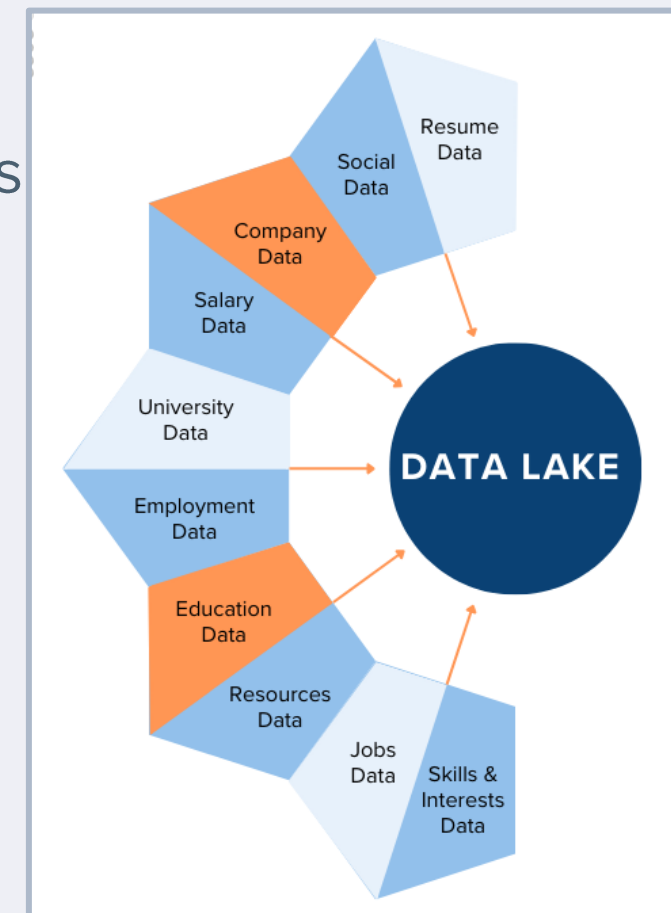
How We Do It

How does Steppingblocks generate graduate outcomes data?

Phase One: Data Acquisition

We acquire data from hundreds of publicly available online sources

- Publicly posted resumes
- Public social media updates
- Public company data
- And more!

The result? Over 1 billion career milestones in our data.

How We Do It

How does Steppingblocks generate graduate outcomes data?

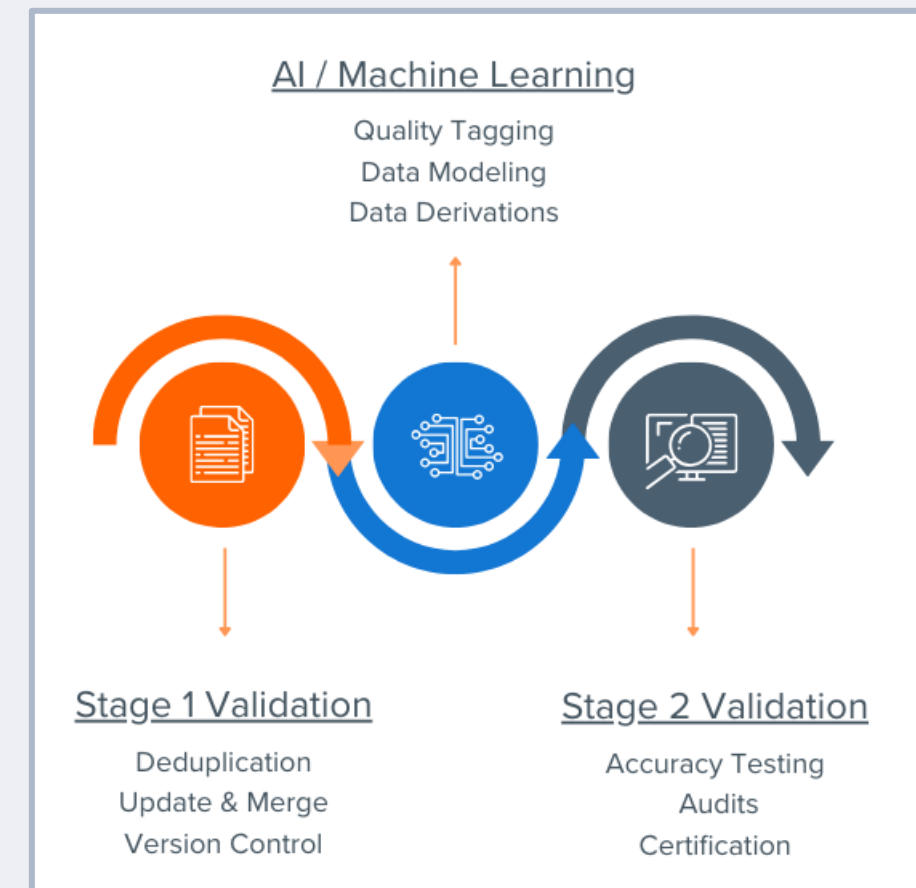## Phase Two: AI / Machine Learning

Making sense of the data
- Deduplicating, updating, and merging data points.
- Checking for the most recent version of the data.
- Flagging anything that seems incorrect or inconsistent.

Data Modeling & Data Derivations
- For example, deriving salary information.

After thorough accuracy testing and auditing by our team, the data is certified and ready for use by our partners.

AI / Machine Learning
Quality Tagging
Data Modeling
Data Derivations

Stage 1 Validation
Deduplication
Update & Merge
Version Control

Stage 2 Validation
Accuracy Testing
Audits
Certification

How We Do It

How does Steppingblocks generate graduate outcomes data?

Phase Three: Accessing the Data
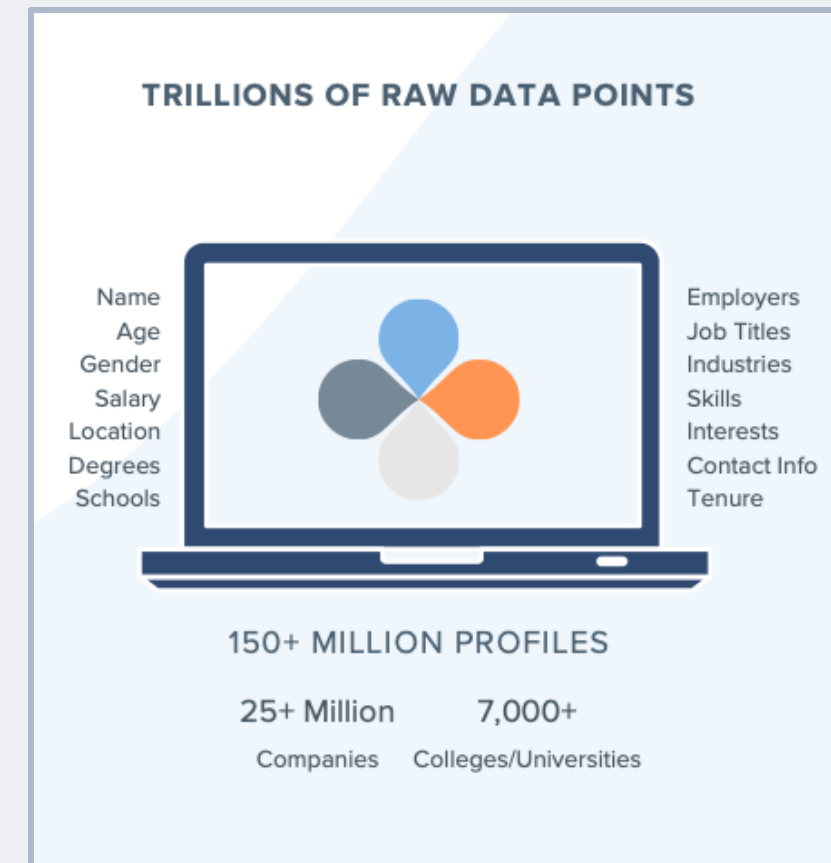
Data Coverage
- Over 150+ million individual profiles
- Approximately 90% of the active U.S. workforce

Platform Access:
- Graduate Insights (for university faculty / staff)
- Digital Career Counselor (for students)

New data is available four times per year.

TRILLIONS OF RAW DATA POINTS

Name
Age
Gender
Salary
Location
Degrees
Schools

Employers
Job Titles
Industries
Skills
Interests
Contact Info
Tenure

150+ MILLION PROFILES

25+ Million
Companies

7,000+
Colleges/Universities

The Value of Data-Driven Storytelling

Data Empowers Institutions to:

- Share impactful alumni stories that highlight real-world success
- Shape strategic decisions by identifying patterns and gaps
- Demonstrate Institutional success to stakeholders, donors, and prospective students

Industry Hiring Trends

The industries of the companies your graduates work for, as a percentage of total graduates. (20 year trend)
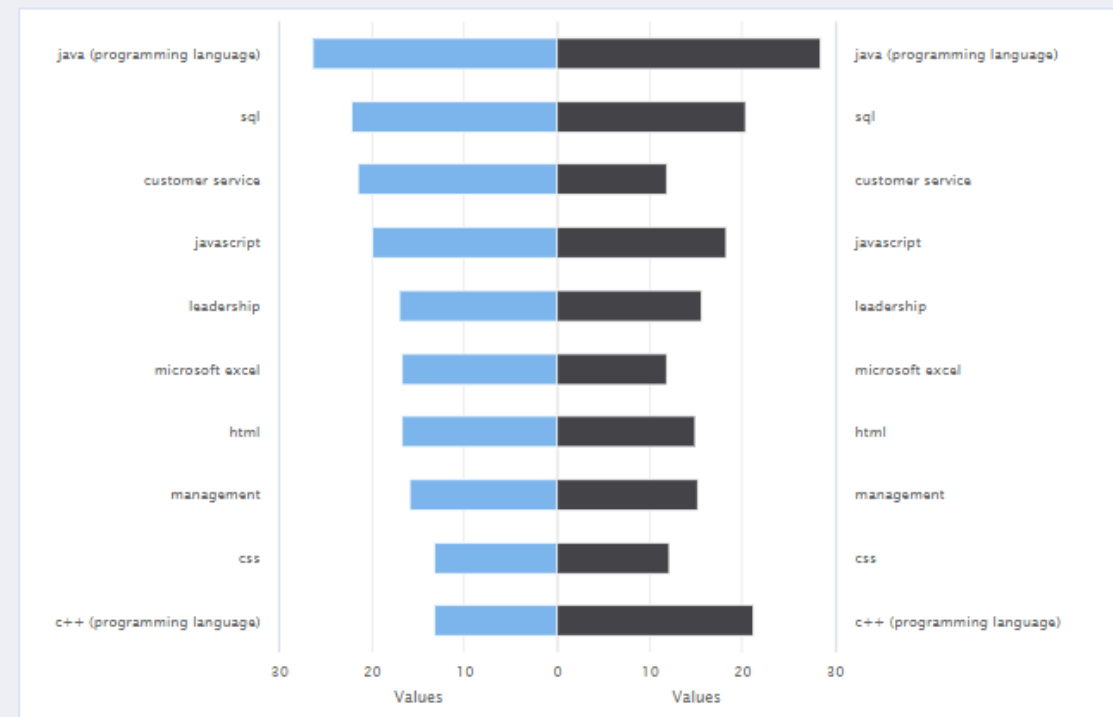
Sample University

The Value of Data-Driven Storytelling

Challenges of Telling Cohesive Stories of Alumni Outcomes

- Data Silos in Higher Education
- Data Literacy in Higher Education
- Anecdotes vs. Data-Driven Narratives
- Sample Sizes and Survey Fatigue

When Everyone has Access to Data

- Cohesive Storytelling
- Data Transparency
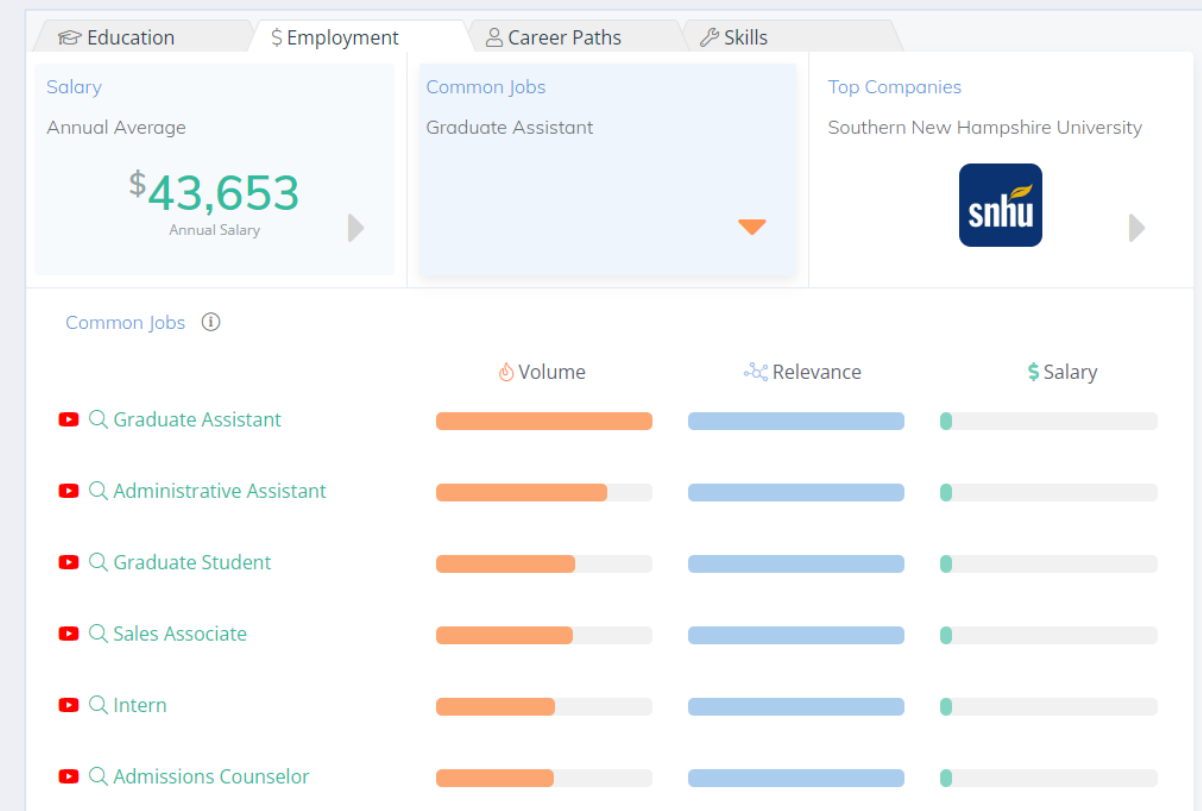- The Power to Tell the Story of Your Graduates & Institution

Communicating Outcomes at the University Level

Current Students – Leveraging Career Outcome Data for Career Development

Why Career Outcome Data Matters for Students

- Empower students to make informed career decisions
- Helps them align academic choices with future career paths
- Builds confidence in the institutions ability to support post-graduation success

Students today are ROI-focused: How does their education translates into career opportunities.

Communicating Outcomes at the University Level

Current Students – Leveraging Career Outcome Data for Career Development

Best Practices for Integrating Career Outcome Data

- Classroom Integration
  - Use the Digital Career Counselor to provide students with real-time insights into career pathways, and salary expectations
  - Embed alumni success stories and pathways into course content
- Student-Facing Resources
  - Use Digital Career Counselor data in advising sessions to personalize career planning
- Marketing Materials
  - Highlight positive outcomes with brochures, websites, one-pagers, and social media
  - Example: Georgia State University
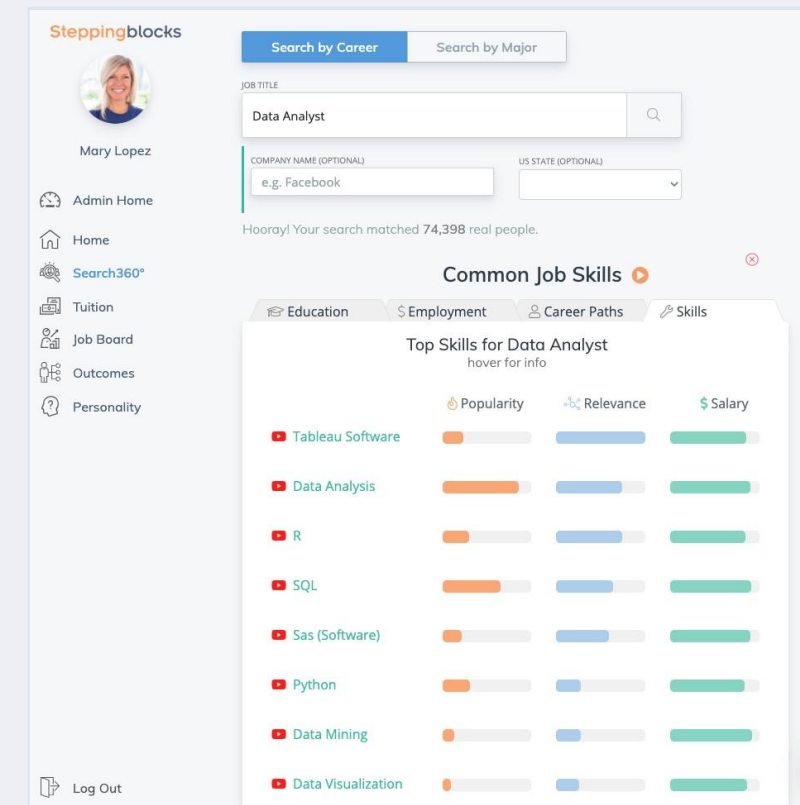 - Example: University of Wisconsin-Madison

Communicating Outcomes at the University Level

Faculty & Staff – Building a Culture of Data Transparency

Why Faculty & Staff Need Access to Career Outcomes Data

- Supports curriculum development that aligns with workforce demands and industry trends
- Informs academic advising, helping students make better course and career decisions
- Fosters a shared understanding of the institution's impact on alumni success

Faculty and staff play a large role in shaping student outcomes.

Communicating Outcomes at the University Level

Faculty & Staff – Building a Culture of Data Transparency

Engaging Faculty and Staff with Data

- Provide hands-on data exploration opportunities through Graduate Insights, enabling faculty to tailor curricula based on real alumni outcomes
- Highlight how data can help improve student support through enhanced advising and curriculum development

Campus-Wide Strategy for Data Transparency

- Include all key stakeholders: academics, career services, institutional research, alumni relations, admissions/enrollment
- Make data part of the institutional culture, not just the responsibility of specific departments

Communicating Outcomes at the University Level

Faculty & Staff – Building a Culture of Data Transparency

Best Practices

- Grant Faculty & Staff Access to Graduate Outcomes Data
  - Encourage widespread use of Graduate Insights
  - Train staff to navigate and utilize the platform to its full potential
- Integrate Data into University Communications
  - Incorporate Graduate Insights data into top-down announcements and institutional reports
  - Use data to tell success stories, highlight trends, and identify areas for growth
- Create Data-Driven Decision-Making Opportunities
  - Host workshops and roundtables for faculty and staff to collaboratively explore Graduate Insights data and strategize improvements

Communicating Outcomes at the University Level

Key Campus Stakeholders – Using Data for Institutional Planning and Resource Allocation

Who Are the Key Stakeholders? **(and how can they leverage outcomes data?)**

- Advisory Boards
  - o Use career outcomes data to align institutional goals with market needs and employer expectations
- Campus Leadership (Provost, Deans, Department Chairs)
  - o Incorporate data for Graduate Insights into strategic planning and use it to advocate for funding and resources
- Institutional Committees
  - o Guide policy decisions, accreditation efforts, and resource allocation based on data insights

University of California Irvine

Leigh Poirier- Director, Strategic Services, Division of Career Pathways

Creating Data Transparency with Anteater Gradstats

With the help of Steppingblocks, UC Irvine launched their Anteater Gradstats page this Fall, which includes information for all audiences on:

- Top employers & cities by college
- Salary outcomes by college

This page has bolstered data transparency and encourages students to log into Digital Career Counselor to learn more.

Leigh Poirier - UCI

Part Two: Communicating Value & Progress

Why Career Outcome Data Matters Beyond the University

Higher Education is Accountable to Multiple External Stakeholders

- Government Bodies & Legislatures
  - Expect universities to demonstrate workforce alignment and ROI
- Accrediting Agencies
  - Use career outcomes data to assess institutional effectiveness
- Prospective Students & Families
  - Want proof of graduate employability before choosing the university
- The Broader Community
  - Seeks to understand how universities contribute to the local economy and workforce development

Accreditation Organizations & Rankings

Why Career Outcomes Matter for Institutional Recognition

Career Outcomes in Accreditation, Program Reviews, & Rankings

- Accreditation agencies are increasingly prioritizing post-graduate employment outcomes
- Transparency in career data enhances institutional credibility and demonstrates educational effectiveness
- Rankings want alumni employment rates, salary outcomes, and employer engagement

Maintaining Data Integrity

- Use standardized, repeatable sources
- Ensure career outcomes data is consistently updated and accurately reflects graduate success

Program Marketing & Enrollment

Aligning Outcomes Data with Prospective Student Messaging

Why Career Outcomes Matter for Student Recruitment

- Today's students and families are ROI-focused – they want proof of career success before committing to a degree
- Alumni success stories influence enrollment decisions and build confidence in program value
- Universities can differentiate themselves by showcasing top industries, salaries, and job placement rates per program

Best Practices for Marketing Career Outcomes

- Use data in recruitment materials
- Highlight key success stories
- Example: Northern Illinois University

Alumni & Advancement

Using Data to Strengthen Engagement & Fundraising

How Career Outcomes Data Enhances Alumni Relations

- Demonstrates institutional impact by showcasing alumni success
- Builds affinity with graduates by keeping them connected to their alma mater
- Strengthens fundraising efforts by aligning giving opportunities with career success

Best Practices for Using Career Outcomes in Advancement

- Use geographic alumni data to plan
  - Regional networking events that align with employment hubs
  - Targeted fundraising campaigns based on alumni career trajectories
- Highlight alumni success stories
  - Feature graduate stories in newsletters, social media, and advancement campaigns

Employer Relations

Strengthening Industry Partnerships

How Universities Can Use Outcomes Data to Connect with Employers

- Identify top hiring employers for graduates
- Track industry hiring trends to inform academic programs
- Recognize new opportunities for relationship-building with key employers
- Present career outcomes data at career fairs, employer advisory board meetings, and corporate outreach sessions

What Employers Want to See

- Skills Alignment: Are graduates equipped for the demands of today's job market?
- Workforce Readiness: How well-prepared are students for entry-level roles?
- Hiring Trends: What industries and regions are experiencing growth?

Corporate & Community Relations

Using Career Outcomes to Build Strategic Partnerships

How Outcomes Data Strengthens Community Partnerships

- Helps universities demonstrate their impact on the local economy
- Highlights how students contribute to workforce pipelines and community development
- Supports funding and sponsorship opportunities for internships and co-ops

Best Practices for Leveraging Career Outcomes in Partnerships

- Use data to secure partnerships with key industry and community organizations
- Highlight success stories from community-based internships and initiatives
- Showcase how graduates contribute to regional economic growth

Think beyond campus and focus on regional impact storytelling.

New Mexico State University

Calixto Melero – Director, Office of Institutional Analysis

Leveraging Outcomes Data at NMSU & Beyond

Using data from Steppingblocks Graduate Insights, Calixto and his team [have communicated graduate outcomes data](#) to multiple internal and external audiences:

- Faculty & Staff
- Employer Relations
- New Mexico State Legislators
- New Mexico Workforce Development

Next Steps

How will you communicate outcomes?

- What data needs to be shared?
- Which stakeholders need this data?
- What is the timeframe?
- Who on campus could you collaborate with to communicate these outcomes?

What Can I Do With a Communication Studies Degree From NIU?

Our graduates launch careers in many settings in roles that highlight their leadership skills and ability to fluently communicate with a range of audiences.

Top skills reported by alumni:

- Customer service
- Leadership
- Social media
- Marketing
- Strategic planning
- Team-building

Top fields alumni work in:

- Information technology
- Finance
- Health care
- Hospitality
- Transportation and logistics

Other Programs to Consider

English

History

Philosophy

Career Potential for NIU Communication Studies Majors

Average mid-career salary:

$82,420

Top employers include:

- Allstate
- Baird & Warner
- Aldi USA
- Amazon
- CDW
- JP Morgan Chase & Co.
- Walgreens

Job titles include:

- Account executive
- General manager
- Marketing director
- Operations manager
- Talent acquisition manager
- Vice president

Source: Steppingblocks, 2023

Next Steps

Access your data

- Digital Career Counselor: Single Sign On
- Graduate Insights: Invitation only by university administrator

Check out our other conference sessions

- [Visit our conference webpage](#)
- Share with others on campus

Learn more and ask questions

- [Visit our Help Center](#)
- [Contact a member of our partner success team](#)