Bonni: [00:00:00] Today on episode number 220 of the Teaching in Higher Ed podcast, Jeremy Podany discusses Career Leadership and Learning.

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Bonni: [00:00:19] Hello and welcome to this episode of Teaching in Higher Ed. I'm Bonni Stachowiak and this is the place where we explore the art and science of being more effective at facilitating learning. We also share ways to improve our productivity approaches so we can have more peace in our lives and be even more present for our students.

Bonni: [00:00:47] If you've been listening for a while, you probably recognize that every month or so, ACUE, The Association of College and University Educators brings to me a wonderful guest and today is no different. ACUE has a course in effective teaching practices and they're continually working to grow that content and also to support faculty from all over the world. And so today's guest is representative of them emerging into looking at Career Education for our students.

Bonni: [00:01:22] Today's guest is Jeremy Podany. He's the CEO and founder of the Career Leadership Collective. And they have worked with over 300 universities, saw over twenty thousand people from 30 countries engaged in their online blog and video content. He is an innovation, leadership, and orientation growth connoisseur who enjoyed a 17 year career in higher education leading career services offices and has helped build six unique startups inside and outside of higher education. Jeremy regularly writes, speaks, trains, invents, and consults for universities, businesses, and tech startups. He has a Bachelor's in English Education from Western Michigan University and a Master's in Higher Education Administration from Indiana University. Jeremy lives in Fort Collins, Colorado with his wife and four children. He loves hiking in and gazing at the Rocky Mountains. Jeremy, welcome to Teaching in Higher Ed.

Jeremy: [00:02:30] Thanks for having me Bonni.

Bonni: [00:02:31] We are going to start from almost the beginning. What did you want to do when you grew up, when you were a boy?

Jeremy: [00:02:41] Well I early aspired to be a singer and my mother sent me straight and told me that I could not sing. And this may have been a good thing because it might have been a futile effort. However growing up- I was a low income first generation of college student- trying to think about careers, I really had no vision of the future. It's a bit ironic that I went on to be a career coach and then to run a career center and now lead a movement for career leaders everywhere. It's kind of a pinch me moment for me to think about my career is helping others with theirs when I didn't really even have a concept of what a major was until after I got to college.

Bonni: [00:03:25] One of the things I struggle with a lot is that it's human nature for us to recommend, have a perception that is built around those things that are familiar to us. So for me, in my own career journey, I had always wanted to be a teacher. And as soon as I knew what high school was, I wanted to be a high school teacher. And I didn't have any broader universe than that to even think that college teaching would ever be a possibility for me. And then I'm sure now that I'm still so limited in my own capacity for- as students, they're limited just as I am with- I have students "I want to go into fashion" because they know fashion. "I want to go into sports marketing." It's hard for us, as wanting to be career leaders. And then it's also hard for our students- like it's hard not to be limited in our perspectives.

Bonni: [00:04:19] What do you think in terms of helping people explore those early career aspirations and really valuing that without limiting ourselves in terms of our perspective?

Jeremy: [00:04:32] Yeah I think you really hit the nail on the head in that diverse immersive experiences are really shaping for students cognitively, socially, they get to see different cultures, understand who are my people? What are the types of activities that I really value? And it is unfolding as we see in the college student experience of "Who am I?" And "how do I think?" And "how do I interact in society and be a great citizen?" And these are all the things that faculty and staff are hoping that students will grow in, putting intentionality around those is really a beautiful thing.

Bonni: [00:05:14] I was recently trained to clear out a lateral file cabinet going through with all these memories and getting things scanned and documented, electronically. And if we talked even a few days ago, I would have told you that I never accessed my college's Career Center. And lo and behold it turns out that I did. I just have absolutely no memory for it.

Bonni: [00:05:41] If you can talk for a few minutes, how have things changed from back when some of us were in college? How is it different today that we may not be as aware of? And then also what is a glimpse of what's happening in the future?

Jeremy: [00:05:54] I think it's really important to understand kind of the the eras and the paradigm shifts over time. Even if you go back to pre 1900s, faculty did everything. Right. They were the academic adviser, the career adviser, the instructor, the professor. They were really the center point of the institution.

Jeremy: [00:06:15] And in the early 1990s career guidance came on the scene and all of a sudden there was this "well I can outsource that to an expert" and the GI Bill happened and there were these "How do we help our veterans get jobs?" Movements. And it kind of turned into this new paradigm of placement and that is really a 1970s term, the word "placement" of how do we help our veterans, our military personnel, our teachers? And then what became our students and is mostly alive in business colleges or technical degrees of how we place them into a job? And that was an era really built this faculty or the circle of trust. And how can we do better career guidance? And how do we have placement?

Jeremy: [00:06:59] And then it really moved into this era of networking and how do we actually connect the world that they're going to engage in back to the campus and bring that back into the fold? And now what we're seeing is almost a full circle movement, as you said. You may not have known your Career Center. The model of Career Services has largely been built on counseling as of late and it's not scalable. There are many students at the ratio's aren't there. They're not as good of a ratio as an academic advising or as a faculty ratio.

Jeremy: [00:07:33] And so the question is how do we think about career development or the future of our students in a way that makes sense for who we are as a faculty body, who we are as an institution? And how we put systems around that that are bigger than a career office, but that are saying we have this holistic commitment to help our students be engaged citizens, to help them thrive in their future. And let's be intentional around that.

Jeremy: [00:08:00] And so what's kind of happened today is we're seeing this shift- more and more career centers themselves are reporting to provosts. It's been the biggest change out of student affairs and into the academic side so that it can be a little bit more closely woven into the academic experience.

Jeremy: [00:08:19] We're also seeing movements of campuses where there are faculty champions, Faculty Career champions. UTS Sydney in Australia has 300 in a Faculty Career champion's network. George Mason University, a big public in D.C. has 200 trained faculty and staff that have went through modules to learn how to have good career conversations. And this is because faculty are saying, "we're getting all these questions. Students are asking us a lot about this. How do we do this? Help us not just be a pass along. Because if we pass everybody along to the career center, the model doesn't work. It doesn't scale. So what's with the village effort that we can lean into together?".

Jeremy: [00:08:58] So I think we're at an interesting point in history where we realize that it's not placement. We realize that it's not counseling. We realize that faculty are involved. And they have to do that in a way that's thoughtful and in accordance with who they want to be and how they're training students.

Bonni: [00:09:14] I'm fascinated by your use of the word "systems." And I know that you both meant systems in terms of policies, but I know you also meant broader thinking with systems. With systems thinking approach, could you paint a picture for me- because I don't sense that if I go google and look at UTS in Sydney, Australia, that they're going to have completely done away with a career centre of some way shape or form. It's not an all or nothing thing. Could you talk about the different ways in which that shift- and it might be symbolic of them reporting into their Provost, but that there's probably so much more to it. What does that look like when it's done well?

Jeremy: [00:09:54] I think Career Centres have had a little bit of a philosophy shift as well. And their action steps used to be, "come in and see us." Everything was built around "come in and see us." They would present in a class and say, "Come see us. Stop by the Career Center." And they realised that that system- they don't want to market their services because they know if their marketing plan works, they're dead in the water. They don't have enough staff. Come in and see us as a model doesn't work.

Jeremy: [00:10:26] So what they're doing is saying let's have quarterly meetings of faculty where we can dialogue about what's important to them, what their

students are asking them, and how we can help them. So their bigger percentages of career staff jobs are becoming facilitators to their peers, their faculty and staff peers on campus to help them think through types of career conversations that are just happening everywhere.

Jeremy: [00:10:51] And the reason for that is students trust their biology professor. They trust their humanities professor. They trust their basketball coach. They trust their dining hall employee. And so they're trying to say okay, circle of trust matter to students, they're not just drawn to the career guidance expert. So how do we help people in those circles of trust that care about the students to just be more equipped to have those conversations?

Jeremy: [00:11:15] I think it also looks like there's a little bit of technology built in here. So we've seen a pretty good movement in online career learning modules that are five to eight minutes of video training on a key micro topic like how do I attend a career fair? How do I negotiate for salary? How do I apply what I've learned in the classroom in an interview?

Jeremy: [00:11:37] And so these are modules that faculty don't want to teach, but they would love to have as add ons that help illuminate some of their assignments or activities. And we've seen a couple of universities that have had upwards of 30,000 completed online career modules in a year because 10 or 12 classes adopted them. And that's starting to take form a little more. So that's more systemic and more able to scale apart from just one to five career counsellors.

Bonni: [00:12:10] I'm really impressed by this idea because it reminds me- I come early in my career from the training industry. And that's what would be referred to as "just in time training," JIT. When I want to know about how to write a cover letter or what that looks like when it's not really an actual cover letter, when I want to know that is when I'm asked to provide one. And when I want to know about negotiating the salary, it's much lighter and it's too much, even for me. It's too much to try to absorb all of it. We're already asking our students who have served so much in terms of their learning about a particular discipline. I can see why that's really successful.

Bonni: [00:12:58] I'm curious about another aspect of technology that I've seen certainly wrestled with in institutions I'm familiar with. And that is how or why to use a technology that would sort of be like an electronic job board? Because it felt like I think- I mean you can tell me better than I can tell myself- but I think I was like well the big universe of job boards out there are too big and we have

relationships with employers right here in our community. But then I'm finding that our students are really, that's not clicking. I don't know if it's something we're doing wrong or that we're moving away from that.

Jeremy: [00:13:37] I think you're on to something there. And there's some actual pretty big societal issues that the job boards can interact with as well. So if you think about... If it's just a job board that is limited to only those companies that want to post at the institution, there are certain institutions that will lose and certain institutions that will win. Because of their popularity, because of their demand, because of their status. So how do you democratize that? So job boards today are starting to say if your student is in a small community, a small liberal arts institution, there's not a lot of employers around for them to have access to Silicon Valley companies. So job boards are starting to become a lot more sophisticated. They're actually starting to use predictive analytics to say based on your profile, based on your usage of different things, we are going to recommend internships or jobs to you. That's helpful as well.

Jeremy: [00:14:33] They're are also starting to allow faculty inside of them and say you need access to know what's out there, to be able to do a search within 30 seconds or less so that you can you can see oh wow there's actually all this availability to my students.

Bonni: [00:14:47] We know that faculty care so much about our students. We care about their futures and we want to get this right. We want to do better. Can you talk a little bit about the ways you're seeing faculty do better at supporting our students with their career education?

Jeremy: [00:15:04] Yeah. I absolutely agree. I think faculty are already doing career education. Taking that next step and intentionality is what really matters. We're seeing groups of different universities of faculty come together to say how can we insert future thoughtfulness into our syllabus? And they're having discussions about this. 60 faculty at the University of Utah came together recently to have a syllabus discussion about future readiness. And so they're doing that in their own way. They had all these unique syllabi coming together to do that.

Jeremy: [00:15:44] The other encouragement that I would have is have a conversation with students. Ask them about their future. Just simply display that care. It's there. They light up. They love it when people ask them about their future, even if they're totally clueless, just asking them how they're doing, what

they're thinking about. Not playing the career counselor role, just saying how are you doing with your future?

Jeremy: [00:16:07] Another thing is I would be very upfront about having high expectations for them in the same way that you would about classwork, coursework. So expect them to research their future. Expect them to present about it. Expect them to understand the best ways in which to do X, Y, and Z... interviewing, knowing about organizations they might like to work for. So this is a massive research project for them. So if faculty are saying hey, the same expectations we have for you in the class can be mapped to the idea of their future. It's very helpful to students.

Jeremy: [00:16:47] And I think the last encouragement would be build a relationship with the career staff or at minimal just get to know the the resources that are out there as far as when a student is exploring versus when they're searching for a job versus when they might be asking those more technical questions. Demand from the career office that they bring about content to you that is: What are the industry trends? What do companies want in such and such of a degree? Where did the graduates from your particular major go? Department specific data about where graduates go is extremely powerful, it's extremely helpful for faculty to understand. Many career centers have that today. Many campuses have that, even if it's not part of the career office. There should be something that's readily accessible, easily available online. Searchable, sortable, transparent. I think faculty being aware of that is really helpful.

Bonni: [00:17:44] And from what you were describing earlier, it also sounds like not just readily available online, but also that I could currate it and use it within my own context in a given class.

Jeremy: [00:17:54] Yeah that's right.

Bonni: [00:17:56] Before we go onto the recommendations segment, I did just want to circle back and have you talk a little bit about one of the myths that too many of us (probably me) subscribe to too much. And that's just too much emphasis on "the first job." So can you help educate us somehow- Yes that's that's a real issue. We do that too much. What does it look like when we don't do that too much?

Jeremy: [00:18:19] Yeah. I think we need to enter into that dialogue with our campus. You know the questions that need to be put on the table, that we've

spent time with Council of Deans and cabinets and groups of faculty are what they believe about future preparation? Who do they want to be? And how can they be more intentional about who they want to be?

Jeremy: [00:18:40] Often when we have that discussion with a broader group of people, the extremes go away. So the extremes are there. I've never heard an institution describe their mission as the mission of our university is to help students get their first job. It's just not there. It might be a helpful data point.

Jeremy: [00:18:59] And so if we say how do we talk about the first job? Well it's a very interesting data point to know where graduates go when they first graduate. We can discern trends from that. It's interesting is what it is. It's not the mission though.

Jeremy: [00:19:12] And nor is I think the mission to say we don't care at all about the future. They will just learn something for the sake of learning and something will happen is definitely not the case for first gen students. Definitely not the case for underrepresented students. So the extremes go away when we have that dialogue and when we say who you want to be? And what are our traditions that we want to keep? How do we be thoughtful in a way that's truly who we are as a faculty body in this department? Rather than feel some odd pressure to help students get the first job.

Jeremy: [00:19:48] Over the next three to five years, what are you seen about career education that we faculty might have as opportunities to help us in our own teaching?

Jeremy: [00:19:59] Yeah. I'm really excited about the future. I think we are seeing groups of staff and faculty come together to create libraries so to speak, online libraries of career reflection or future reflection assignments, or classroom activities where faculty can go to this library and say "wow that's going to enhance the way that I'm teaching on this specific discipline topic." It can add to the activities of the classroom. You can add to, you can bring supplemental assignments, it could be an assignment altogether.

Jeremy: [00:20:35] And so the fact that there are emerging these repositories that faculty or staff could access, we're going to see that become more and more prevalent. I think we're going to see- as crazy as this may sound, Virtual Reality job site visits where students can actually on a VR headset tour organizations and talk with people about what it's like to work in a certain

discipline. How can they use the skills that they're learning in a humanities curriculum or in engineering curriculum.

Jeremy: [00:21:11] And I think we'll see the increased prevalence of online modules where the students can go and learn an interactive way through a 5-8 minute video, simulation based. And those three trends libraries, VR, and online learning I think will allow faculty to personalize because they'll be able to choose from different modules, allow them to be who they are. And so I feel like it's really exciting. It's a supplementary way where it is not pushing an agenda of "first jobs" or pushing an agenda of "do nothing." It's a really great way for faculty to be able to diversify into a customized manner.

Bonni: [00:21:50] I'm chuckling a little bit at your- it sounds simple. Sometimes we can oversimplify "five to eight minutes." There is something about keeping things low. But it's incredibly difficult to do, but it really does just revitalize the experience where they can really attune it to their unique needs. So that's really a wonderful outcome. And I hope as you have predicted, I hope we do see more of that in the future.

Bonni: [00:22:15] This is the point in the show where we each get to give recommendations. And as is often the case, mine has absolutely nothing to do with career education. I am going to recommend there is a website that has- some people might know it from getting access to graphics that you could use in blog posts and things like that.

Bonni: [00:22:34] It's called Un splash. But I have been finding a great use out of the Unsplash app that's on either windows or a Mac that lets you change out your wallpaper to different kinds of Unsplash photography. And I used to be the person who would leave the same screensaver on that came with the operating system. And I would never change my background on my desktop until the very next operating system came out and then just go to whatever came. It wasn't so much the default thing, but they really do find beautiful pictures. But I've been really enjoying having it change out a little bit.

Bonni: [00:23:11] And the other thing that's cool is that if I don't like the picture that it picked for me on a day, I can just go to a little icon that's right there on my main screen of the computer and pick a different one. And if I like that one, it will save a history of the ones that I have liked a lot in the past and have used so I can go back and find one that I like for the day. It's just been kind of fun to- it feels like I'm working on a different computer everyday. But not so much that I

can't get my work done. But enough that it's just a little piece, a slice of beauty from the world that comes on my desktop.

Bonni: [00:23:40] So that's my recommendation for today is to check out the Unsplash app. And again I will have links to that in the show notes. And I get to pass it over to you now for your recommendation.

Jeremy: [00:23:50] Terrific well I will make three brief recommendations. And the first is a book called Robot-Proof by Joseph Aoun. He's the president of Northeastern University, a former faculty member. And he talks about how do we deal with the upcoming automation of many many jobs? And how do we robot-proof our campuses with the way that we adapt our curriculums?

Jeremy: [00:24:18] The second is Gallup has released- a few years ago the Gallup perdu index, Great Jobs, Great Lives report. I think it's the most sophisticated survey that goes beyond the first job and they interviewed 30,000 alumni from different institutions and asked them a series of questions about their well-being. How they like their status in life? How they appreciate their job? And tie it back to how did they interact with their faculty while they were in college? How did they interact with their campus? So it's a really neat report.

Jeremy: [00:24:53] And the final is the World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report. It's a little bit edgy, but they interviewed 370 global human resources leaders extensively and came up with the competencies of tomorrow and how that's going to help with the future of work that we're facing.

Jeremy: [00:25:11] I think all three of those are really fascinating about future trends and what alumni think about their futures.

Bonni: [00:25:19] Jeremy, it is so great to be connected with you through ACUE and I am looking forward to seeing the work that you've been doing with them as it starts to emerge. Thank you so much for joining me today for this conversation.

Jeremy: [00:25:30] Thanks for having me. It's been delightful.

Bonni: [00:25:33] Thanks once again to Jeremy Podany for this invigorating conversation about career education and thanks to ACUE for connecting me with Jeremy.

Bonni: [00:25:45] For all of you listening, if you want to get the great links to all the things that we recommended and some of the things that Jeremy talked about during the episode, you can go to teachinginhighered.com/220. That's the episode number.

Bonni: [00:25:59] Or if you do not want to have to remember to do that every week, you'll get a single email from me if you subscribe to my email update. And also it comes included with a blog about either teaching or productivity. You can subscribe at teachinginhighered.com/subscribe.

Bonni: [00:26:15] Thank you so much for being a part of this community. It's absolutely so fun to be continually learning with you and I look forward to seeing you next time.

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