Supporting Your Bruins’ Career Development at UCLA

Sheila provides an overview of the many ways your Bruin can utilize summer for career development and the resources available to students through the UCLA Career Center.

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Summer months can have a critical influence on one’s life after college. Whether a student’s goal is employment, graduate school, or professional school, summer presents the opportunity to develop new skills, gain experience, and establish or clarify a career direction.

The UCLA Career Center is a great place to start! The resources available to all students include career counseling, assessments, career publications and directories, workshops, job and internship search strategies and postings, as well as employer events, including on-campus recruitment, career fairs, information sessions, and much more. The sooner students utilize these resources, the better prepared they will be to successfully gain employment or admission to graduate or professional school.

Parents play an integral role in helping students find their way into careers. At UCLA, students have competing academic responsibilities and social activities that take their immediate attention. Future plans usually take a back seat. More often than not, students have no idea where to begin. The UCLA Career Center has developed a few tips that you can weave into a conversation with your Bruin.

Getting started:

- Encourage them to create a BruinView™ account through the Career Center website. BruinView™ is the career management portal where students make appointments with counselors, register for workshops, employer information sessions, and on-campus recruiting, as well as search and apply for job and internship opportunities. BruinView™ presents additional resources including the “Opportunities List” and Going Global, both of which are resources for a successful job and internship search.

- Have them become familiar with the UCLA Career Center website. Search through the extensive resources for students, especially the student tab, where the Fairs and Targeted Events page details the career and graduate/professional school fairs that are held throughout the year. This is their opportunity to meet the employers and graduate schools who are recruiting UCLA students.

- For graduate school and pre-professional school advice, they can check out the link on the Career Center website for application timelines and statistics. Counselors are available to help!

- Talk with your student about their career ideas and goals as soon as you can. Help them make it a part of their university experience, and suggest they do the following:
Talk to people who are doing what they would like to do. This is called an informational interview. The UCLA Career Guide lends tips on getting started. A hard copy is available for free in the Career Center Library as well as in an online version.

Attend sessions of The Jumpstart Series© and Career Week during the school year. These are panel discussions, mini-conferences, and workshops where career counselors and professionals from a variety of careers share their career experiences and advice.

Attend employer information sessions during the school year. Register through BruinView™. This is a great way to learn about companies, careers, and meet employers.

Visit the Career Library and Lab. There are 2500+ career publications and electronic resources on almost every topic. The Career Library and Lab is open Monday through Friday, 9am – 5pm.

Look through the O*NET (onetonline.org/) to research careers; find job postings on indeed.com and see what qualifications are expected so you can prepare.

Encourage your student to meet with a career counselor, to find out about services offered. Appointments can be made through their BruinView™ account.

Summer Plans:

Parents can further support their students by encouraging them to take advantage of the summer months to explore part-time work, internships, training resources or volunteering, as a way to be more strategic about their career path. Career development and planning is a process and takes time. The summer after sophomore and junior years are integral for preparing for graduate school and fall employment recruitment, (which begins immediately at the start of the fall quarter). However, all of the following points are applicable for all years in school, beginning in their First Year. The sooner students begin focusing on career discovery, the more opportunities they will have. While they do not need to know their passion or career path, they do need to start exploring. It is no longer enough to be a top student academically; employers seek candidates with internships experience (at least one and sometimes more) and leadership experience. Students, even after the first year, can participate in an internship. Ultimately, more and more graduating students actually secure their first full-time employment with their early internship employers.

The following will provide you with information about how to assist your student to have a meaningful summer experience.

- Internships and summer jobs in a career field of interest are an ideal way to spend summer. Internships can be full-time or part-time, paid or unpaid (for academic credit), and last from eight to twelve weeks. An internship does not need to be related to one’s major; many students choose internships to get some professional work experience and build their resume.
  - Recruitment for many summer internships takes place as early as the prior fall quarter, especially those available through the UCLA Career Center and Career Fairs. Advise your student to plan accordingly.
  - A detailed ‘How to’ can be found on the Career Center website.
- Encourage your student to undertake coursework that builds new skills and/or knowledge. Fields of business and accounting might require expertise in Excel. Careers in non-profit might seek grant writing skills. These are just two examples where students can be proactive about seeking additional training to increase their competitive edge and demonstrate initiative to potential employers. Both UCLA and UCLA Extension offer a number of career-specific courses including marketing, human resources, and business. Additionally, all students have access to Lynda.com, a software training program funded by UCLA.
Your student could explore coursework that reduces the number of units needed in junior and senior years, allowing time for internships during the school year.

If applicable, suggest your student enroll in language study. Whether one takes courses here or studies abroad, the ability to speak another language and/or gain experience in another culture is becoming increasingly important. If your student has an interest in an international career, a study abroad program will be an advantage.

Your student might consider internships in Washington DC. These are not limited to students interested in careers in politics and law. There are countless opportunities to participate in an internship and experience another part of the country. Applications are usually due in early fall so students need to plan ahead. Summer is a great time to prepare your application materials.

Thinking about graduate school? If this is in your student’s plan, summer is the perfect time to compile a list of programs and note the requirements, deadlines, and costs. The required standardized exams will need to be taken well in advance. Sophomore year is not too soon to develop this list.

If your student is considering graduate school, recommend that they review a list of fellowships and national scholarship opportunities and note the deadlines. Many post-graduation scholarships and fellowships are available to students in a variety of fields. The deadlines tend to be very early in the school year with a very comprehensive application process. Starting early is key! Summer of junior year, or earlier, is an ideal time to review the list and note the deadlines and requirements. For information, go to BruinView™>Resources>Opportunities List> Fellowships

Remind your students that career planning, as well as finding one’s passion, are developed through experiences. Summer is a time to gain those experiences which can influence the rest of their life. Go Bruins!

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