Job/Internship Search Advice and Tips for Luther College International Students

The Career Center provides tools, resources, contacts and staff members that can help all students as they go through the job/internship search. The job/internship search is not easy for anyone, but it can be especially challenging for international students, so the Career Center wants to provide some advice and tips especially for the international students that wants to start their career in the United States. As an international student, two basic steps are critical:

1) take ownership of your own job search,
2) Work closely with Diversity Center staff because they know the various rules and regulations governing different work circumstances. To maintain your immigration status, your employment must comply with immigration law.

Ways to find jobs and internships.
In many sectors of the economy, there is intense competition for limited jobs. There are also a limited number of employers who will hire international students. The good news is that employers are seeking candidates that know themselves and are able to represent their companies well. Employers are also interested in candidates that have strengths that will add value to the company and experiences that will diversify the employment pool. While you are at Luther, remember that employers are interested in knowing about your academic accomplishments and extracurricular activities, especially in leadership positions as these show that you can lead a team. Activities also show that you are self-motivated, organized and have excellent time management skills. When you are convincing an employer that you are the best candidate for the job, they will need to know your career goals and interests.

Remember that hiring someone is a huge investment so it’s your job to convince the employer that you are invested in your personal growth and development and will be committed to their company/organization.

Some of the ways to locate jobs/internships include:

CareerConnection
Create an account and seek opportunities through the Luther College CareerConnection site (https://luther-csm.symplicity.com/students/). The site allows you to filter job and internship opportunities so you can send your resume and other required paperwork to just the companies that potentially hire international students. For login details and any other questions you can contact a Career Counselor in the Luther College Career Center (2nd Floor Union or by calling 563-387-1025) and they can advise you accordingly.

ICoRN (the Iowa College Recruiting Network)
This is a network of 19 colleges Luther College collaborates with to attract employers. Jobs and internships offered through this network is another way some students have landed interviews and have been offered jobs. Be sure to have your paperwork ready so you can apply when companies start recruiting.
Career Fairs
Luther College has a Fall Career Fair and a Spring Career Fair. Attending the Career Fairs provides - good practice for interacting with employers. While many companies that attend the fair do not hire international students, there are companies that do. Before each Career fair, check with the Career Center to find out which companies are willing to hire international students. Also, the employer attending the Career Fair may not hire international students, but they may know other companies that do and they can refer you to them.

Network in person and on-line
Approximately 70% of U. S. job openings are in the “hidden” job market, never advertised and filled by word of mouth. It is important therefore to talk to as many people as possible to gather information about the job openings they might be aware of. Networking can be initiated with classmates, friends, professors, and work supervisors, and alumni who can introduce you to people working in fields you are interested in. People are generally willing to give advice to students seeking job/internship opportunities, especially in their area of specialty. Having a hard copy of one’s resume is advisable as well so that if an opportunity arises, you can give it to whoever is interested in looking at it. Remember to be diplomatic as you approach different people to talk about your interests.

It is crucial to have a clean, updated LinkedIn account as some employers look for candidates via LinkedIn. Employers filter through many accounts so you want yours to stand out. You want employers to be drawn to your page, resulting in potential scheduling for interviews. Make sure your account is professional. If you need a professional picture taken, the Luther College Photo Bureau can take a photo of you. Also, recommendations from past instructors and supervisors are good endorsements that can assure employers you are a good hire. Customizing the URL makes the account look good. If there is some professional work you have that can enhance your chances of landing a job/internship, be sure to include that as well. If you need help, the Career Center can help with this.

Note: The Career Center has a LinkedIn Luther College Alumni-Student Network group. Consider joining this group to connect with alumni that are committing to help students develop strategies to locate jobs and internships in their fields of interest.

Applying for Jobs/Internships
Having a general knowledge of companies that could potentially hire international students is crucial. It will save you the disappointment of spending time applying to companies that will not consider you in their candidate pool. Sites such as http://www.myvisajobs.com/; http://www.goingglobal.com/ and http://h1b-visas.findthebest.com/ list the organizations that have in the past requested the H1B visas for their employees for different positions. Note, however, that companies can request visas under different circumstances depending on work needs so not all companies will continue to sponsor the H1B visas.
When you have an idea of the companies to apply to, you can check for job openings on sites such as [http://www.indeed.com/](http://www.indeed.com/), [http://www.glassdoor.com/](http://www.glassdoor.com/), [http://www.idealist.org/](http://www.idealist.org/), [www.monster.com](http://www.monster.com). The listings on these sites usually include information to indicate if applications from non-U.S. citizens requiring work authorization will be accepted or not.

Other Advice

If you are still in your first or second year of college you can also consider majoring or taking courses in a **high demand subject area**. Areas such as computer science, information technology, engineering, medicine, science, or mathematics have fewer students and the job demand is very high. It therefore makes one’s chances of getting a job higher once you have graduated from college. The Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) subjects also allow a graduate more years to stay and work in the U.S. without the need for work authorization, making these graduates more marketable to employers.

**Job Shadow Program**

Around February, the Career Center will send out emails to students promoting the Job Shadow Program. This matches students interested in exploring different careers with local business men and women in a wide variety fields (i.e. medicine, education, technology, law, social work, etc.) Consider signing up with the Career Center to **job shadow** in your area of interest. This experience will help you have a glimpse of the work you could potentially do when you have completed school. If the experience does not appeal to you or meet your needs, then you can still switch areas of interest while you are still a student at Luther College.

If possible try to secure and complete an **internship** at some point between your sophomore and senior year. Companies tend to consider applicants that have had prior hands-on work outside of classroom knowledge. The internship does not necessarily have to be completed in the U.S. so if you are home for a break, try and arrange work experience in your field of interest in your home country.

Each Friday the Career Center sends an **e-newsletter** (via email) with job openings from different parts of the nation. While these listings may include a lot of opportunities for natives there are some for international students as well.

Join **professional organizations** such as the National Society of Professional Engineers or the American Accounting Association online to get different information in your area of interest. You might have to subscribe to some of these because in the long run, landing a job will outweigh today’s $30-$40 subscription cost to join the organization. If possible, consider attending one of their conferences because live interactions are important to network with people in your field.

Make **business cards** that you can give out during career fairs and conferences. Not many students will have business cards so by having these will indicate to the
employers that you mean business and again you leave a memorable picture of how organized and different you are. If an employer wants to reach out to you, they will have your contact information handy, making it easy for them to contact you. Business cards are inexpensive and can be ordered through the Luther College Print Shop. Stop by the Career Center for help in designing your card.

**Other options:**
While your main desire may be to work in the U.S., this might not happen because as mentioned earlier there are many reasons companies will not hire international students. There are a number of multinational companies that can hire you in your native country and upon request they can transfer you back to work in the U.S. A number of these big companies have exchange programs that could work to your advantage later.

**Volunteer programs** are another way to give back to society while building yourself up to enhance your skills and chances to get a good job in the future. Organizations such as the United Nations, Peace Corps, and the Red Cross among others, often have positions for students, especially international students that are bilingual. Companies have a high affinity to add candidates that have been involved with work in these big organizations.

**Self checks in your journey towards getting an internship/job**
1. Always have a **resume** ready and update it whenever you have a new job or achievement. Never say I have nothing to put on a resume because to land an interview, employers want to see your work, including your volunteer and leadership experience and skills. Often employers will understand you may not have had as many opportunities to work in your field of interest but if you can show them you have knowledge and skills from the classroom that relate to their field, they may be interested in you.
2. Participate in multiple **mock interviews** through the Career Center so you can be confident when talking to employers. Employers expect concise, clear, ‘elevator speech’ answers. The only way to be good at this is to practice with friends, in front of the mirror and/or with Joni Rollinger in the Career Center.
3. Familiarize yourself with the different cultural **expectations and etiquette** in the work place. As an international student the mannerisms and interactions with employers can be different so you want to always be aware of this and do what is expected of you as you are looking for a job.
4. Save up and invest in a **suit** to wear to interviews even if it is a phone interview. First impressions count so you want to look smart if you land an interview. Also be aware that the corporate attire in the U.S. can be different from your native one so shop accordingly.
5. **Keep track** of your “stuff” in a diary or google document. This could include an email list of people you have written to related to jobs/internship opportunities or information, jobs you have applied to, and/or a checklist of the things you hope to accomplish. This helps you measure and see the progress you are making as you begin looking for jobs and/or internships.
6. It is essential to always visit with the Designated School Officials Amy
Webber or Wintlett Taylor-Brown to talk through all the requirements before
you put final words to doing an internship/job.

The job search is a lengthy process. It is not easy but you can be successful. It is
important to have a solid foundation for your career. You can start to think about laying
this foundation when you start college. If you try to acquire the skills employers are
looking for, you will increase your chances of landing a job or internship. Be patient as
rejection is part of the process but if you keep pressing, your chance will come and you
will land something. When you work smart and hard the universe will always conspire.

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