How to Get a Job in Four Years or Less: Fall Edition

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College provides a safe haven for students all over the world where they are able to experience new degrees of freedom, responsibility and individuality. They have four amazing years to figure out who they are and what they want to do with their life. Many students tend to put their career-search on the backburner while they acclimate to college and focus on everything else the college experience offers. This article will serve as a guide for what you should do each year and what specific steps and goals you should aspire to Leslie Stevenson, the Director of Career services, and she is quoted throughout this article.

**Freshman: Build a Network**

To all freshman, congratulations. You are now officially Richmond Spider. Believe it or not, it is time to start figuring out what you want to do during your college career and beyond. One of the most important steps is to meet as many people as you can, including both students and professors. One way to do this is to acquire an on-campus job, which provides an opportunity to dramatically increase the number of people in your network. It is never too early to start thinking about potential majors and what your passions are. The primary goals of freshman year are to figure out how to navigate the college landscape and to build a solid foundation.

**Sophomores: Refine the Resume**

Once you enter your second year of college, you know what’s up. You’ve established a solid friend group and have figured out how to fill your free time. Now it’s important to select a major. This decision will affect your career path and open doors to potential opportunities. Once you decide on a major, the next important step is to start preparing a resume. Many students have some form of resume that they used for the college application process... get rid of it. Employers want to see what you are doing with your time outside of class in college, and a little bit of your high-school senior year activities, but not much.

**Juniors: Prove Yourself**

Junior year is the first year where people start to understand and value what it means to be an upperclassman. They know how to dress, who to call for the apartment numbers, which professors to take and when it’s less than ideal to go to D-hall. Now it’s game time. This year is when students need to start taking their careers seriously. Stevenson suggests: “Students need to look for ways to get more experience through research, externships, internships or jobs. They need to start to understand how their classes may fit future career goals.” It’s crucial to understand that every person will take their own unique path. There are literally thousands of things to do that could be resume boosters, including internships, research, and individualized projects. A great resource to utilize is the UR summer fellowship program. This provides students with funding to pursue almost any experience that they propose. Another resource to utilize is the Corporate Careers Expo, which unfortunately will not happen again until next spring. If the Expo isn’t your thing, you can utilize connections that you have made so far in order to have a productive and meaningful summer. The summer after Junior year is critical as it is the first summer when employers start to expect “grown-up” pursuits.

**Seniors: Divide and Conquer**

If you were lucky (and sure, smart as well), you are coming into your final year with a job offer. We are all jealous of these lucky few, however, there is still plenty of time to figure out what you want to do and how you are going to do it. Senior year is a time of transition, and as Stevenson advises, seniors need to focus on “how they can use their education in grad school or in the job search by putting your plan into place.” Meet with advisors on a regular basis to not only network, but to determine precisely what job position you would like to hold. Instead of sending out thousands of random job applications, devise a plan and focus your search. Decide on an industry and then determine when the prime recruiting period is. In general, corporate positions tend to recruit in the fall and academic research positions in the spring. Apply to a select few that you would be interested in working for and go above and beyond to connect with each company.

Keep in mind; every single person will have different experiences and continue on their own unique career journey.

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