Optional Practical Training (OPT) for International Students & Finding Employment
Define “career” for me?

What do you know about the U.S. job search?

What would you like to learn today?
Program Evaluation

• Check email for a link to evaluation or go.gwu.edu/ccsprogrameval
• Should take approximately 2 minutes
  – Professional Development
  – Marketing
  – About You
• Comments & Ideas
• Career Services at GW
• U.S. Employers’ Top 10 Skills
• Challenges/Solutions
• Research/Target Employers
• Resources
• Networking – 80%
Career Services for GW International Students

• **Center for Career Services**
  – Undergraduates in CCAS, ESIA, SEAS, SMPA, SMHS, SoN, MISPH
  – Graduate students CCAS, SMPA, SMHS, SoN
    • All fairs, special events, workshops, online open to graduate students

• **Graduate School Specialized Programs**
  – ESIA, GSEHD, SEAS, LAW, SMHS, MISPH have in-school centers

• **Visit your career center’s website!!**
Career Services
(Visit your campus career center)

• Career Coaching (CCS)
  — One-to-one Appointments
  — Daily Drop Ins (11am-2pm)

• International Student Career Ambassadors (ISCAs)
  — Mon. -Thurs. 10am-7pm
  — Fri. 10am-3pm
  — Science-Engineering Hall, 1230/1240

• Intl Students’ Career Skills Workshop Series

• Career and Internship Fairs

• International Student-Alumni Network Nights

• GWork (careerservices.gwu.edu)
  — Online Job &Internship Listings/Resources
  — Mock Interviews
  — Interview Stream
  — Resume/Letter Critiques
  — Employer Information Sessions/Site Visits

• International Student Assistance
  — careerservices.gwu.edu/international-student-assistance-0

go.gwu.edu/careerservices
Top 10 Skills Sought by U.S. Employers*

• Ability to verbally communicate with persons inside/outside organization
• Ability to work in a team structure
• Ability to make decisions and solve problems
• Ability to plan, organize, and prioritize work
• Ability to obtain and process information
• Ability to analyze quantitative data
• Technical knowledge related to the job
• Proficiency with computer software programs
• Ability to create and/or edit written reports
• Ability to sell or influence others

* National Association of College and Employers, Annual Survey of Employers, December 2013
Challenges: U.S. Job Search

- **U.S. Immigration Laws**
  - Severely limits options; lack understanding/information

- **U.S. Employer Preferences and Traditions**
  - Unfamiliar with IS regulations/hire process
  - New to understand new culture/people

- **IS’s Lack English Proficiency**
  - Limits team engagement; No language = No culture understanding
  - How do you compete against a native speaker?

- **IS’s Lack Cultural Adaptability and Knowledge**
  - U.S. job search and the work force reflect U.S. cultures and values
  - U.S. employers target goal-directed and focused hires
Solutions: U.S. Job Search

• **U.S. Immigration Laws**
  – Understand U.S. immigration laws
  – Follow the rules and create a “Plan B”

• **U.S. Employer Preferences and Traditions**
  – **Network (80%)** and research options, target and educate employers
  – Know your visa status; know what employer needs to hire

• **IS’s Lack of English Proficiency**
  – Practice English daily with native speakers; Join GW groups; Engage
  – Be uncomfortable enough to learn

• **IS’s Cultural Adaptability and Knowledge**
  – Experience U.S. culture and workplace firsthand *(discomfort)*
Research/Target/Meet Employers

• Identify employers who hire OPT/sponsor H1B
• Identify employers “who may consider” IS
  – Say “no” officially, but have hired for “right person”
• Research employers needing your skills
• Network & Network
  – GW international alumni (Linked In)
  – Student organizations
  – Intl student with jobs in U.S.
• Consider international organizations
• Avoid U.S. federal, state or local governments
Resources

• MyVisaJobs www.myvisajobs.com
  – Free listing of employers accepting H1B Visa holders
• GoingGlobal, gwu-csm.symplicity.com/students (via GWork)
  – US employers who sponsor H-1B visas/H-1B PLUS employer search www.h1base.com/visa/work (alternative)
• Foreign Labor Certification Data Center
  – www.foreignlaborcert.doleta.gov
• *Job Listing Services
  – www.idealist.org (Job listings that may include OPT jobs)
• Foreign Firms Operating in the U.S.
  • www.nypl.org/collections/articles-databases/directory-foreign-firms-operating-united-states
• *International Student
  – www.internationalstudent.com/jobsearch/
Network & Marketing

• Visit your career center
• Start your search early
• **Meet people who share your career interests**
  – Most of your jobs will not be from career fairs or online job listings
  – For every job you apply for online/meet a new person
  – Join on campus groups and network on and off campus
  – Informational interviews
• **Attend October 4, 2016 Networking Workshop**
• Market Yourself
  – Resumes, Cover Letters
  – Networking
  – Interview, Presentation, Attire
Today

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