Finding Job and Internship Opportunities for International Students

- Places to network for opportunities:
  - Friends & family
  - Alumni and guest speaker panels
  - Employer information sessions
  - Business networking websites such as LinkedIn
  - Contacts from prior employment or internships
  - Faculty contacts
  - Professional associations/organizations
  - Off-campus networking events
  - Student organizations
  - Informational Interviews
  - LinkedIn alumni feature (www.linkedin.com/alumni)
  - ConnectSC
  - Going Global (accessed through connectSC portal)
  - Annenberg career resources (i.e. Annenberg Career Link, one-on-one career counseling, alumni panels, workshops, etc.)

- If limited work experience, highlight academic project skill sets you can bring to an employer
- In developing networks, do not forget clubs, classmates, professors, and alumni
- Learn how your values of assertiveness, body language, sense of time, and self-promotion fit in or class with expectations of potential employers

The Hidden Job Market

- Most (75-80%) job openings are not advertised
- Employers prefer to fill positions by referral
  - People they already know
  - People recommended by trusted colleagues
- Build a network of contacts in target companies/industries
- Informational interviews
  - Network and gather information simultaneously

Job Searching Tips for International Students
Before beginning your internship or job search consider meeting with a career services advisor to help begin analyzing your skills, interests and values as they relate to your career decision making process.

Experience your career choice through internships, research, or volunteering.

Focus on your attributes:
- Foreign students bring with them many skills that Americans may not possess. Show the employer that your qualifications are unique and go beyond what the other candidates can offer (many international students know more than 1 language, have been exposed to different cultures and systems, are mature, adaptable, and deal well with change). These are all qualities that employers value highly.

Strengthen communication skills:
- Communication (verbal and written) is one of the top qualities desired by employers in job candidates. If your English needs improvement, take ESL, English Composition, or Public Speaking classes.

Start your search early—according to the U.S. Department of Labor, it takes an average of five months to find a good paying job so don’t wait until you graduate to start looking for a position. As an international student you should also be aware that it takes 90 days for the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to process and approve your OPT application.

Research the reality of your career choice as it relates to allowing you to remain in the US for employment. According to the US Department of Labor, there are careers which create a greater likelihood of being employed in the US and gaining sponsorship for a H1B Visa.

Understand what documents you will need to apply to your targeted internship or job (Note: Know the difference between a US style resume and a CV)

Challenges in the International Student Job Search

- **Hiring complexities:** many employers may be unfamiliar with the process of hiring an international student. This is as new to them as it is to you. After an optional one year practical training, employers may sponsor you to obtain an H1-B visa to continue working in the U.S. They may believe that it is too complicated an expensive. As a result, some companies may hire you for the optional one year practical training with the understanding that they may not be able to sponsor you.

- **Lack of commitment:** Some employers fear international employees will return to their home country after only a year or two and therefore are reluctant to invest time and resources into training them.

- **Communication:** Employers may be concerned with the international employee’s ability to communicate effectively in both written and verbal English.

Adapted from:

The Job Search for International Students, Florida State University Career Center
International Students and the Job Search, University Career Services, University of Virginia
Job Search for International Students, Case Western Reserve University