

## YOUNG ALUMNI JOB SEARCH ACTION PLAN

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Once you've graduated, your job search differs from the internship or job search you conducted as a student or recent graduate. There is no longer one dedicated job board, there aren't recruiters actively seeking Holy Cross-specific talent, and networking isn't optional; it's necessary. This resource will guide you through the 10 best practices for starting a job search.

- 1. Clarify Career Goals:** Reflect on your employment and experiences, and think critically about the skills you want to build. Consider what you are good at and where you might struggle. Feed your list of desired skills and talents into AI tools to receive a list of job titles. Use a prompt like, "What jobs utilize the following skills..." You can then prompt AI to identify organizations that hire for those jobs. Then, explore the results that interest you using Google, LinkedIn, job boards, O\*NET, informational interviews, etc.
- 2. Update Your LinkedIn Profile:** Once you know what you want to do next, ensure your LinkedIn profile is robust and reflects your best professional self. LinkedIn is the premier professional resource for job seekers to connect with professionals and be seen by recruiters, especially those using Applicant Tracking Software. Check out our [LinkedIn Profile handout](#) to learn more.
- 3. Update Your Resume:** Your resume should align with your LinkedIn profile and expand on your professional experience. Ensure that your resume uses strong action verbs to describe your experience and has measurable outcomes when possible. Add a skills section to identify soft and hard skills that align with your career interests. Remember to tailor your resume as you apply for each position. Check out our [Resume handout](#) to learn more.
- 4. Network:** Networking can help you gain career clarity and expand your professional connections. Building and maintaining relationships with professionals will allow you to learn about particular industries, roles, and current trends to help you narrow your search. When done effectively, networking can lead to hidden job opportunities or move you to the top of the pile as a referral.

While it takes time and may not seem "active" enough when looking for a job, networking can pay off immensely. Use LinkedIn to identify Holy Cross alumni and personal contacts to contact for informational interviews. During conversations, ask for actionable next steps and additional people to speak with. Remember that you're responsible for nurturing each connection and staying in touch. Create a spreadsheet to track your conversations, follow-up (including thank you emails), and next steps.

- 5. Identify Target Organizations:** Create a list of organizations where you would like to work based on a defined criterion, i.e., top engineering firms in the Boston area, mission-driven organizations in Chicago, mid-sized advertising agencies in Texas, etc. Then, look for connections at these organizations and contact them to discuss the company culture. If you don't have any direct connections, try to establish a connection to the organization by contacting HR or a second-degree connection who works there. Request an informational interview to learn more about the organization before applying for a role. As you narrow your

target list, visit the organization's career website regularly to identify recently posted roles. Follow them to stay informed on news and trends.

- 6. Research:** Job boards are great tools to research job titles, qualifications, and skills. LinkedIn is another great place to research companies and positions. Use the advanced search box at the top of the site to learn more about the people currently working in desired roles. Refine your profile and application materials to present yourself as a strong candidate.
- 7. Apply:** Whenever possible, apply for positions directly through an organization's career website rather than a job board or LinkedIn Jobs. Unfortunately, job boards often include "ghost roles," i.e., filled positions or posts that serve more as marketing tools. If you find a job on a job board, look for the role on the organization's website and apply there. Pay attention to the date posted if it's listed, and try to apply within the first few days. Take time on your applications and tailor your materials to ensure you come across as the best candidate for the job. If you aren't sure if or why you're qualified, they won't be sure either.
- 8. Follow Up:** Follow up on submitted applications within a day or two to express your interest and enthusiasm for the position. Let them know you look forward to a conversation to discuss your candidacy. This can be done via email or phone. These days, email is more common, but phone is perfectly acceptable. HR is typically your point of contact, but you can follow up with the hiring manager if you have their contact info. After your initial outreach, it's recommended to wait 1-2 weeks to follow up again. Send a concise email or make a brief phone call to express your continued interest in the role. This proactive approach continues to help you stand out from the crowd and demonstrate your enthusiasm for the position.
- 9. Interview:** Interviews are your opportunity to articulate your skills, personal attributes, and enthusiasm for a particular position. Preparation is key. Review the organization's website to understand what they do, their products, their competitors, and what the job entails. Research the industry and identify some of the challenges it faces today.  
  
During the interview, clearly connect your candidacy with the industry, employer, and position. Highlight your accomplishments and convey how your skills and experience will benefit the team and organization.
- 10. Say Thank You:** It's crucial to send a thank you email to each person on your interview panel within 24 hours of an interview. This conveys your continued enthusiasm for the role. Identify something specific from each conversation, why it interested or excited you, and mention how you will add value to the team.

**Bonus! Negotiate:** Write down the skills you bring to the table and how you will enhance the team. Create a list of all aspects of the total compensation package that are important to you (beyond the salary). For example, personal time, 401K, health insurance, vacation time, tuition reimbursement, ability to work remotely, etc. Research the market for similar jobs and decide on a salary range that would be acceptable to you. Then, use this data to negotiate a compensation package that feels good to you. Negotiation is expected. Make sure you start your next role feeling great about the compensation package you've accepted.