TWO – YEAR CAREER PLAN

The mission of the Office of Career Services (OCS) is to provide students and alumni with the necessary tools to successfully manage their professional development throughout their careers. We accomplish this through career advising, a Professional Development Career Conference, career events, employer recruitment and outreach programs, the SIPA Alumni and Student Network on LinkedIn, and the SIPA Career Coaches (SIPACC). Students and alumni are encouraged to partner with OCS and dedicate time to independent research and networking to build bridges with the professional world. We encourage you to dedicate time to your internship and job search during your two years at SIPA. Treat it like a class.

The following is a comprehensive list of activities that each student should consider during their two years of studies at SIPA. (Students in the one-year programs will want to consolidate this timeline to match their program’s dates.) Some activities are specific to the first- and second-year of graduate study while others should be reviewed on an ongoing basis throughout the two years. Please be aware that given the diversity of our student body, each student will need to tailor these activities to their personal strategic career goals.

**First Year of Graduate Study**

**September**

- Register for the Professional Development Career Conference, a requirement for your first semester, or apply to waive it at OCS. Although you may meet the requirement to waive, attending the conference may be beneficial.
- Log on to SIPAlink through the OCS website (www.sipa.columbia.edu/ocs) and register for your own account. SIPAlink is updated regularly with job opportunities, on-campus and off-campus networking events, the OCS adviser appointment schedule, and other job search information.
- Order business cards through Printing Services at the Journalism School. You need them for networking!
- Sign-up to receive nametags. You will use these for employer information sessions and networking events.
- Review our online weekly newsletter, OCS Weekly News, which lists OCS career events, schedules for upcoming employer information sessions, and current job and internship opportunities.
- Attend a Recruitment Orientation Session for your concentration to learn about hiring cycles and job and internship search strategies.
- Schedule an appointment with an OCS career adviser to have your resume critiqued and to develop a career strategy.
- Upload your revised resume onto SIPAlink.
- Join SIPA’s LinkedIn Group: SIPA Alumni and Student Network. Keep your LinkedIn profile up to date.

**October**

- Refer to the OCS Recurring Program Database listed in the Resources Library section of SIPAlink for opportunities regarding formal fellowships, internship opportunities, and important deadlines.
- Attend employer information sessions to learn more about organizations that may be of interest to you. For summer internships, including US State Department and some media organizations, application deadlines can be as early as October. Check SIPAlink for details.
### November
- Sign up for the Washington, DC Career Conference, which is held in January. If you are interested in living in DC, it is a perfect opportunity to network and research career opportunities!
- Begin researching summer internship funding opportunities, as many application deadlines occur in December – February.
- Where appropriate, make plans to visit long-distance prospective summer internship employers, and set up informational interviews for winter break.
- Prepare to apply for summer associate positions with banks and consulting firms through SIPAlink. These opportunities are often posted in late fall and early winter.
- If you have registered for and completed an internship during the fall, submit the internship paperwork to receive credit.

### December/Winter Break
- Begin setting up informational interviews for your time in DC.
- Attend the Washington, DC Career Conference Orientation.
- Research and apply to summer internship opportunities. Be sure to review private sector and international organization deadlines.
- Continue to research and apply for summer internship funding opportunities.

### January
- Attend the Washington, DC Career Conference and network while there. Attend site visits with DC-area employers, attend the DC Alumni Networking Reception, and conduct informational interviews. (Sign-up deadline is in December.)
- Register for internship credit if you have secured a spring internship.
- Check SIPAlink/OCS Weekly News for dates to attend the SIPA Summer Internship Funding information session.

### February
- International students: Begin applying for CPT for paid summer internships if you have secured an internship.

### March
- Spring Break: Conduct informational interviews. Apply for internships through SIPAlink and through the OCS subscriptions/publications listings found on the OCS website. Network!

### April/May
- If you had registered for and completed an internship in the spring, submit internship paperwork to receive credit.
- Applications for all SIPA summer internship grants are due.

### June/July/August
- Network!
Second Year of Graduate Study

**September**
- Register for internship credit if you have completed a summer internship or will undertake a fall internship, and submit internship paperwork for summer internships.
- Order business cards through Printing Services at SIPA or the Journalism School. You need them for networking!
- If you have not done so, sign up for nametags to be used for information sessions and networking events.
- Attend an information session about the Presidential Management Fellows Program (PMF) and other employer information sessions.
- Apply for private sector jobs and attend a case interview preparation workshop as relevant.

**October**
- Check SIPAlink and OCS Career News for information about the Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) Program application.

**November**
- Sign up for the Washington, DC Career Conference that is held in January. It’s a perfect opportunity to gather information and network!
- Submit internship paperwork for fall or prior semester internships.
- Apply for positions through SIPAlink. By November, most full-time associate recruitment in business and finance will be completed. You will start to see more of a mix of public, nonprofit, and other private sector positions in the coming months.

**December/Winter Break**
- Last chance to register for the Washington, DC Career Conference! Begin setting up informational interviews in DC.
- Attend the Washington, DC Career Conference Orientation.
- Network! Network! Network! Conduct informational interviews with prospective full-time employers and alumni. (Get informed and find out the inside scoop on salaries, working conditions, corporate culture, etc.)

**January**
- Attend the Washington, DC Career Conference and DC Alumni Networking Reception. Register and attend site visits with various DC-area employers. Conduct informational interviews and network.
- Register for internship credit for a spring or prior semester internship if you have not already done so. Graduating students must undertake an internship and submit internship paperwork or apply for a waiver in order to graduate!

**February**
- For those interested in the nonprofit or public sectors, this is your most active recruitment time. Pay close attention to OCS events and job postings by logging into SIPAlink daily and reading OCS Career News every week.
- Sign up for and attend the New York City Career Series panels.
March

- Attend OCS workshops to improve your job search and career development skills.
- Attend all employer information sessions that interest you. Continue to network and conduct informational interviews. Seek out new contacts through the SIPA Alumni and Student Network on LinkedIn, the Student Directory, and career events.

April

- Attend OCS workshops, especially workshops on Salary Negotiation. Learn how to negotiate salaries and other job conditions before you go into an interview. OCS career advisers are available to assist you in negotiating job offers.
- Please complete the employment survey online.

June/July/August

- Continue to read OCS Career News and keep checking SIPAlink for relevant positions.
- Meet with an OCS adviser to brainstorm new ideas and strategies for your job search.
- Please remember that SIPA alumni have lifelong access to the Office of Career Services and SIPA link.

Ongoing Activities

Check SIPAlink daily for internship postings, current employer information sessions, resume book collections, interviews and other career-related events.

- Schedule an appointment with an OCS career adviser, SIPA Career Coach (SIPACC Program), or industry expert to discuss your job search.
- Have your resume(s) and cover letter(s) critiqued by an OCS career adviser.
- Sign up for a mock interview with an OCS career adviser in order to practice your interviewing skills.
- Review our weekly email newsletter, OCS Weekly News, which lists OCS career events, schedules for upcoming employer information sessions, current job and internship opportunities, and scholarship deadlines.
- Sign up for the New York City Career Series panels, which will be ongoing throughout the course of the academic year.
- Attend internship debriefings, career panels, and brown bag lunches organized by OCS, student groups, or concentrations.
- Attend OCS workshops listed on SIPAlink, such as the Interviewing Skills, Salary Negotiations, and United Nations workshops.
- Conduct occupational research. Make a list of organizations and personal contacts from faculty, family, friends, and previous jobs/internships and begin networking by conducting three to five informational interviews per month.
- Use the Student Directory and the SIPA Alumni and Student Network group on LinkedIn to gather information and network! Your peers and alumni are excellent networking groups.
- Use the Alumni Directory, accessible via the SIPA website on the top right corner under Alumni, to contact and informationally interview with alumni.
- Utilize all the resources available through OCS including the WetFeet Press and online Vault guides, periodicals, trade magazine lists (which often list jobs), job-board and association subscriptions, books on interviewing techniques as well as concentration-specific books, OCS fact sheets, and employer organization websites.
- Update your resume with relevant coursework, extracurricular involvement, and internship experience.
- Network!