

# EY Center for Careers

## Career Success Road Map and Planning Guide



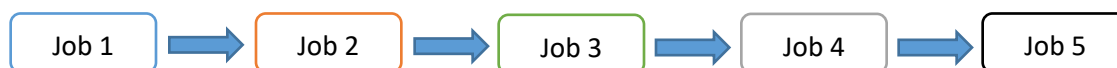
What is the difference between career planning and job search?

A career plan is a long-term path, based on your short-term and long-term goals with a series of planned steps to achieve those goals, such as to learn, grow, take on new and more challenging responsibilities, achieve promotions, contribute more to your employers, and more likely increase your earning potential - all with the hope and intention of enjoying job satisfaction throughout.



What is a job? It is work that you perform, typically 8 hours a day (for full-time), and at the end of the day / shift, you go home not thinking about it. A job, without a career plan, lacks direction, long-term growth and intention. Consider most of the part-time (or even full-time) jobs that you have while attending school. They provide you with skills and experience, but they are typically not the roles you are seeking after you graduate. They are short-term (temporary) to earn \$\$ and gain experience until you graduate and start your career.

### Career Path vs. Job



Why develop a career plan? Consider the major investment (the time, money and effort) you are making to attend and graduate from CSUN. While you can most likely find a job with or without a degree, your CSUN degree will help you launch your career.

**\*\* You most likely would not make a major purchase such as buying a home or car without doing your research first - determining what you want, evaluating your choices, and then making your decision. Career planning is a similar process, and probably even more important to your long-term success and satisfaction.**

- *Imagine driving up to the curb in front of a house, stepping out of the car, looking at the house from a distance (but not going inside or even to the back yard), and deciding to buy it! No way!!! Most likely, you will create a list of must-haves and desires and look for a house that closely matches that list before investing your hard-earned \$\$.*



- *Imagine walking into a car dealership and the sales rep says, “I have a great car for you”, and you buy it without knowing the features & price or doing a test drive...*



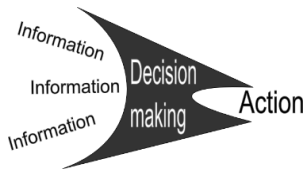
What are the Benefits of Career Planning?



- The more informed you are about yourself and the marketplace, the better will be your decision in choosing a path and employer, both now and in the future.



- The more likely you will enjoy your initial career path and employer, perform at and above expectations, and the longer you will stay and grow with that employer.



- The more likely your career path will be in line with who you are and what you want to do, and the greater will be your satisfaction throughout.



- Your career planning process is in sync with the interest of the employer. Many employers want to know and match a student’s career goals with the company - what the company has to offer - increasing the probability that new hires will **perform better**, experience **greater work satisfaction**, and **grow and stay longer**.

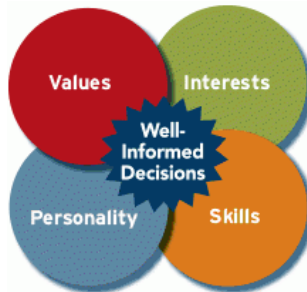
## What Do You Need to Do to Create and Implement a Career Plan?

### 1. Learn Who You Are (Self-Assessment) and What You Want

- a. Personality
- b. Values (Career Values Self-Assessment on EY Center website)
- c. Interests (Interest Profiler on CSUN Career Center CareerLink website)
- d. Strengths (Strengths Application on CareerLink)
- e. Determine what values and interests are required and what are preferences
- f. Use your list of factors to evaluate majors and career options



The first and most important step and what YOU want to do. To type (Myers-Briggs) and is the fit, and where you will need the expectations of the employer core motivations (values) - e.g., leadership, autonomy, status, others, recognition, money, etc. the actual activities you enjoy doing at work), your strengths (the skills you currently possess and/or can realistically develop or improve) and which strengths you want to utilize in your work. Note: There may be activities that you enjoy and/or skills that you prefer for outside interests instead of during work.



is to know yourself - who YOU are start, consider your personality personality traits, how comfortable to stretch and work harder to meet and position. Next, identify your challenge, learning, growth, helping others, working with

Then, identify your interests (the actual activities you enjoy doing at work), your strengths (the skills you currently possess and/or can realistically develop or improve) and which strengths you want to utilize in your work. Note: There may be activities that you enjoy and/or skills that you prefer for outside interests instead of during work.

### 2. Begin the Career Exploration Process

- a. What is important to you? (see above)
- b. Do you have any specific short and long term career goals?
- c. What field and what kind of work do you want to do within that field?
- d. Where do you want to work - e.g., public accounting, consulting, corporate, government, not-for-profit, or in your own business?
- e. What kind of employer - large, medium or small; established, fast growing, or start-up?
- f. What are your short-term and long-term career goals?
  - i. Ambitious growth - move up the ladder toward and into management
  - ii. Less ambitious, but steady growth - continue learning and taking on new responsibilities
  - iii. Start / own a business by yourself or with others
  - iv. Work in a job short-term with the intention of going back to school for an advanced degree
  - v. Same / routine job for the foreseeable future
- g. Use your factors to evaluate positions, employers and career paths
- h. Consider technology and especially Artificial Intelligence (AI) - how will it impact your career choice?

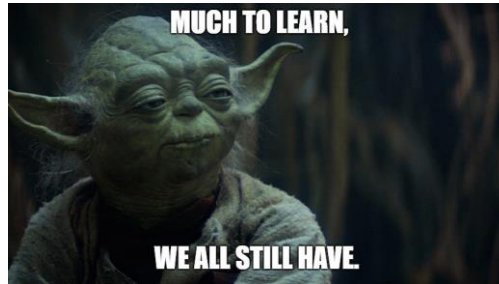




### 3. Identify a Major (can include Double Major, Minor or Option)

- a. Research majors, minors and options, and evaluate based on the self-assessment variables above
- b. Meet with the Academic Advisor (Dr. Vedd for Accounting or Dr. Liu for IS)
- c. Map out your academic plan
- d. Determine your expected graduation date

### 4. Conduct Extensive Research



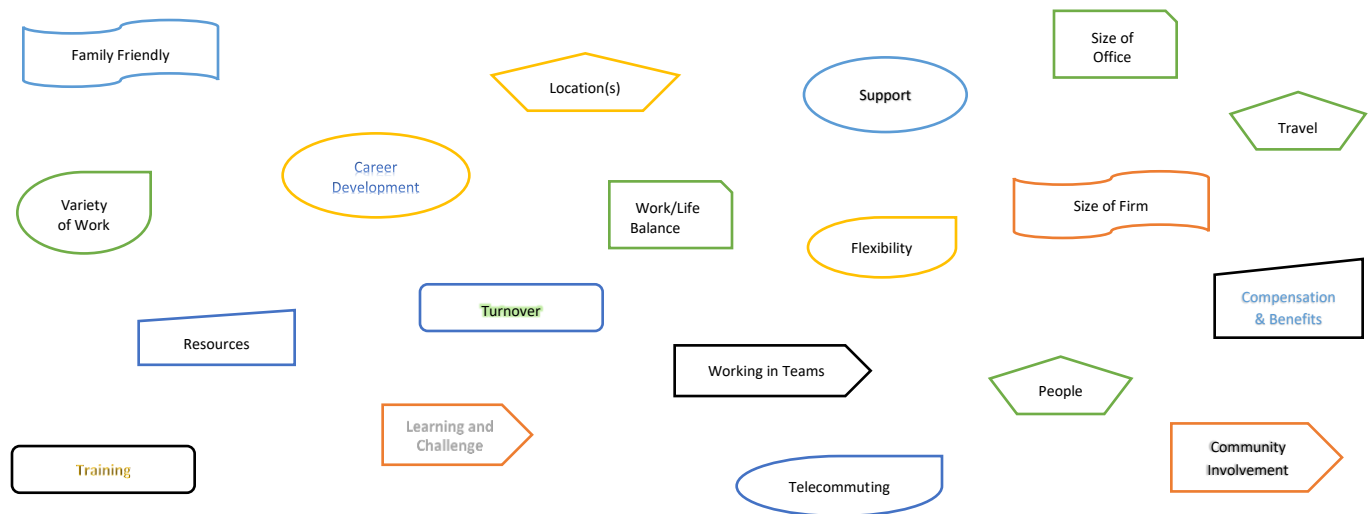
- a. Start with the internet (company websites, financial news, other news, Glassdoor, etc.)
- b. Attend meetings, workshops, panels, and various events (on and off campus)
- c. EY Center "Career Success Programme" (formerly Recruiting Boot Camp)
- d. AIS (and other) Student Organizations
- e. Career Fairs - see what employers are attending, do research in advance, and prepare questions based on your goals and interests
  - i. Meet the Firms (EY Center / AIS Department)
  - ii. Industry Night (CEPD)
  - iii. Tech Fest and other campus career fairs (Career Center)
- f. Firm Tours (organized by student orgs and Alumni office)
- g. Firm Learning Events
- h. Professional Associations (CalCPA, ISACA, IISA, etc.)
- i. Network with professionals and ask questions (see below)! Networking is an essential part of research as it extends far beyond the general and sales-oriented information on company websites.
- j. Identify professionals in roles and with employers of interest - learn from them about what their roles and employers are really like
- k. Look at job postings online to learn about specific responsibilities and requirements, and how they vary
- l. Don't make any assumptions or pay attention to "myths" or mis- or incomplete information. If you do your own research, you will be able to separate facts from myths and others' opinions, and make your own decision, a decision that is right for YOU.



## Factors to Consider - What is Important to YOU?



Remember that the first and most important step in career planning is to know who YOU are and what YOU want. There are a multitude of career assessments and tools (at the main campus career center and online) to help you identify your personality, values, interests and skills. Whether or not you utilize a formal career assessment process, it will be very beneficial for you to consider the above career-related components and learn as much about yourself as possible. Then, use your self-assessment as a framework to create a list of factors that are most important to you. Here are some ideas to get started - however, this is not a complete list. Use this list as a starting point, add any factors that are missing, and rank the factors in order of importance to YOU to make YOUR list of wants and preferences.



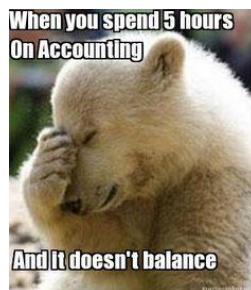
Examples of Factors (Variables): (as with the house purchase example - what factors will determine your choice(s) for career path, industry and employer?)

- Size of employer - large, medium, small; national, regional, local; size of local office(s)
- Career Development - growth within a practice or department | feasibility to transfer to another practice or department - and Career Path (how will this first role help you achieve your longer term career goals/path?)
- Career advisement / mentoring program - how is it implemented, are the advisers/mentors trained and held accountable, and how effective is it
- Who will you work with - peers, management and support staff
- On-boarding and training - classroom, on-the-job, web-based, workshops, conferences, and other activities to provide the technical skills and assimilate you into the culture
- Post-training support - who will answer your questions and correct your mistakes, and how responsive will they be? Is it a supportive environment? How do they respond to mistakes - are they constructive or punitive? Are they open to suggestions and new ideas? Are they innovative?
- Public Accounting: what interests you, and how much variety are you seeking?
  - Practice Areas: Audit, Tax, Advisory/Consulting, M&A, Business Management, Forensics, Litigation Support, Family Office, Financial Planning, other

- Industries: types, how varied, what is the opportunity for exposure
- Clients: size, type, location and variety; publicly held and/or privately held; start-up, growing and/or stable
- Private and Government: what are the various functions and roles within Accounting and IS/IT, and the respective career options and paths
- What is the variety of work assignments and will you gain more breadth or depth
- What knowledge, experience and skills will you learn within each role, and at each level
- What is the flexibility for you to change clients, industry, practice area, function or department
- Does the employer provide financial support and time for the CPA, CISA or other certification(s); and financial support and time for other professional development
- Will you more often work in teams (and what kind of teams) or work independently
- What is the management style - do you have a preference or need?
- What resources does the employer have (e.g., research teams, specialists, experts, other)
- Location: where is/are the office(s) and clients - and how far is your commute (to the office(s) and/or clients)
- Is there travel | when, where and how much | what is the employer's travel policy
- Work/life balance - busy season and non-busy season; quarter and year-end; projects; other cycles
- Does the employer offer flex time or telecommuting
- Compensation: salary and benefits (bonus, healthcare, retirement, PTO, parking, tuition reimbursement, other)
- What is the level of social consciousness (e.g., environment, community service)
- Is the employer "family friendly" (how specifically)
- Are there social and/or sporting groups/events/activities with colleagues
- Turnover: how much and why; how might it affect you
- What else is important to you? (add any other factors that are important to you)

### **Questions to Evaluate Industries, Employers and Career Options**

(What do you need to know to find a good fit and make an informed decision?)



#### a. Accounting

- i. Why did you choose Accounting?
- ii. What are the many different career paths in Accounting?
- iii. Public Accounting - Big 4, Mid-Tier, Regional or Local
  1. What are the various practice / service lines and roles within public accounting, i.e., Audit (External, Internal, IS/IT), Tax, Advisory, Forensics + Litigation Support, M+A, Consulting (Financial, Management, Marketing, IS/IT, other), Business Management, Bookkeeping, Family Office, Financial Planning, other?

- a. What are the specific tasks and activities related to each?
  - b. What specific skills, education and experience are required and how are they utilized? Can you start out of school in any of these practice areas and/or how can you transition from another practice area?
  - c. What are the relationships with clients?
  - d. What is the travel?
  - e. What are the career paths from each of these areas?
2. How does the size of the firm and/or office impact the onboarding and training, range of clients, scope of work, how projects are assigned, overall resources, growth (especially from a senior to a manager role)?
  3. How does size influence the various aspects of culture such as support systems, access to partners and other specialized resources?
  4. Is the work challenging? What is your learning curve (3 months, 6 months, 1 year, 2 years, beyond)? What experience and skills will you develop over time? What is the range of experience with industries, clients, type of work?
  5. What are the responsibilities and expectations at each position level?
  6. How does busy season vary based on the service line, the client base and the firm? Is there a difference between “targeted” hours and “actual” hours worked?
  7. Does the employer have a career adviser/mentor program? Do the career advisers/mentors respond and help you when needed? Do they receive training and guidance? Are they held accountable? What if they are too busy?
  8. Do you get compensated for overtime?
  9. What other benefits such as CPA review course, CPA exam incentives, parking, etc.?
  10. What is the expected chargeability at each level?
  11. What are the restrictions for personal investments?
  12. Can you transfer to another client/industry group, service line or location? What are the potential challenges?
  13. What will be your exposure to and relationship with clients? How will it vary from firm to firm?
  14. Do you want to and will you get involved with other aspects of the business?
  15. What other factors will help you differentiate service lines, client/industry groups and firms?
  16. Are you considering opening your own practice some day? How does this influence your choices as to where to start?
  17. How will your choice help you obtain your longer term career goals?
  18. What are the differences between public accounting and consulting firms?

iv. Private Industry

1. What are the differences between large, medium and small businesses? How does the size and structure impact the scope of the work (breadth vs. depth), onboarding and training, resources, culture and career growth?
2. What are the various roles within private industry? (and use the same questions in the public accounting section)
3. What are the differences between publicly-held and privately-held businesses?
4. Is the work challenging? What is your learning curve? What experience and skills will you develop over time?
5. Does the organization train and promote from within?
6. Can you move across departments, divisions, subsidiaries and locations? What are the potential challenges?
7. What are the “normal”, “busy season”, or “special projects” hours?
8. What is the income growth potential?

v. Government

1. What are the differences between various branches of government?
2. What are the various roles and career opportunities? (and use the same questions in the public accounting section)
3. What are the differences in terms of organization structure, promotional opportunities, and other aspects of culture?
4. How does government compare to public accounting and private industry?
5. Is the work challenging? What is your learning curve? What skills will you develop over time?
6. Does the organization train and promote from within?
7. What are the normal hours? Is there overtime? If so, how much and when? Do they pay overtime?
8. How does the compensation and benefits compare to public accounting and private industry?
9. Are there any specific requirements for citizenship or green card status? Does it differ within the Federal, State, and local governments?



b. Information Systems and Information Technology (questions)

- i. Why did you choose Information Systems or Information Technology?



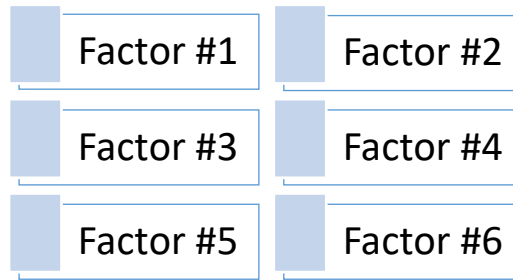
- ii. What are the many different career paths in Information Systems and Information Technology?
- iii. How does one stay current with the rapid changes in technology? Does an employer invest in new technology and new business processes?
- iv. What are the trends? How will they impact your career choice?
- v. Will you need ongoing education and training? Will your employer support training? What are the best learning and training resources?
- vi. Public Accounting - see above for more questions
  - 1. What are the service lines and career paths in public accounting for IS and IT? How do the service lines and actual work from firm to firm?
  - 2. Are there unique opportunities within public accounting firms in terms of training, industry/client exposure, variety of systems and processes?
  - 3. How does the compensation, career growth, hours, etc. compare to consulting, firms, private industry and government?
- vii. Private Industry - see above for more questions
  - 1. What is the difference between Information Systems and Information Technology? Is there an overlap?
  - 2. What are the different types of roles, what are the requirements (education, experience, technical skills), and what are the potential career paths?
  - 3. Is it better to be a generalist or a specialist?
  - 4. How does one develop into a management role?
- viii. Government - see above for more questions
  - 1. Similar questions as above
  - 2. Compare career opportunities between government, public accounting, consulting and private industry



## 5. Identify Career Options | Weigh Feasibility and Risk

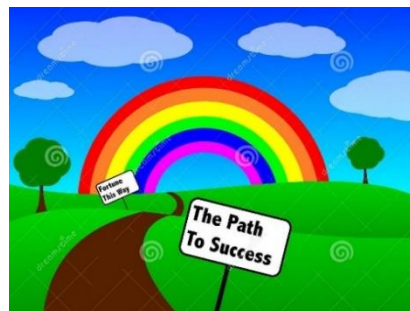
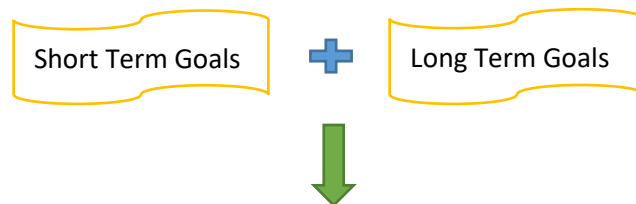
Based on your research, identify potential career paths and employers. Select ~6 to 8 of the most important factors (values, interests, other factors) in order of importance, identify any “must haves” (factors that are required by YOU), and then evaluate each career path and employer using these factors.

If you have any “must haves”, you may eliminate a career path or employer because they do not match. (If you still want to pursue that path or employer, then the factor is “highly preferred” and not a “must have”). This is YOUR list, so you should determine what are YOUR top factors and what is required vs. preferred for YOU, based on your specific needs and interests, and not what someone else thinks should be important to you.



Consider: What do you think you want to do both short-term & long-term? Where you start can have a major influence on where you go next and beyond. Remember the difference between “job” and “career”. Your initial choice of career path and employer should be linked to your longer term goals.

Based on your research, evaluate options for the level of feasibility based on the requirements and potential career paths as compared to your education (and possibly GPA), experience, skills, availability and location of opportunities, and potential competition; identify where you have gaps, and whether or not you can and want to fill in those gaps. For example, if more education is required, can and will you pursue that additional degree, certification, training, etc.? What if opportunities exist, but they require relocation? What if you do not possess the requisite skills - can you improve your current skill level(s) to what is required?



**Ideal vs. Real**

*Start with the “ideal” - what you really want, and then compare with the “real” - what is likely. Weigh the risks and benefits of pursuing the “ideal” vs. pursuing the “real”, within your own level of risk tolerance. (Each person has a different level of risk tolerance.)*



*Consider the costs vs. benefits of pursuing your dreams vs. pursuing reality. Based on the marketplace and how well you match the requirements of a career path and employer, you*

**may have to make some choices that are less than ideal. If you do enough self-assessment and marketplace research, you will be in a better position to make an informed decision as to which path to pursue, what are the possibilities, and what are the potential risks and challenges.**

## 6. Choose a Career Path

Make a decision as to which course you will pursue, and then begin to map out the path to achieve your career goal(s)

- a. What are the best options for where to start?
- b. Do you need additional education and/or training?
- c. What steps will you need to take to achieve your goal(s)?

Focus your efforts on your choices, network with professionals who work in the career paths and employers of interest, apply for opportunities, and prepare well for your interviews. If you have done your research and networking, if you are a good fit for what they are looking for, and if you prepare well for your interviews, you increase the chances of getting one or more offers. There are no guarantees; you may do everything well and not always land. However, you should continue to learn from your experiences and keep doing what you can to succeed. Some succeed easily; others have to work at it, but ultimately it is about you and your efforts, and no one else.

**\*\* It is not in your best interest to just accept any offer without knowing if it is a good fit for you, both short-term and long-term. You run the risk of going in a different direction, not gaining the experience and skills you need for your next position, and even disliking going to work each day.**

**\*\* Also, don't plan to exit your first employer within the first one or two years just to "stamp" your resume. You may be losing out on the benefits of staying longer, may jump into a role that is not what you expected, and it may slow down your career growth.**



**\*\* Remember the home purchase example: making a list of key factors and evaluating career options and employers is similar to a home purchase. For a home, you make a list of required and desired features (location, price, square footage, layout, # of bedrooms and bathrooms, kitchen amenities, pool, landscaping, etc.) and then you research the market to find potential houses.**

**You do thorough walk-throughs, and when you find the house that best matches your must-haves and strong desires, you make an offer. You are not likely to purchase a home without conducting a thorough research and evaluation process. Neither should you do so with your career evaluation and planning process.**



When you select a career path, determine the steps you need to take to achieve both your short-term and long-term goals. Identify the best option(s) as to where you start.



**\*\* Career planning requires initiative and a commitment of time and effort. You are very busy in school with classes, work (some part-time, some full-time), student organization involvement, volunteer activities, family, friends, etc. With all of these competing priorities, finding the time and energy needed to effectively explore and plan a career path is a window into your professional life ahead during which you will have to continuously juggle and**

***balance competing demands and priorities. (See Donald Super's Life Career Rainbow on the EY Center website.) Therefore, don't let your busy life be a reason (or excuse) to avoid career planning. The earlier you start and the more you invest in career planning, the better your choices, the better your decisions, and the more you will benefit and achieve.***

Career planning is an ongoing, life-long process. It is very much to your benefit to keep learning and to keep networking (i.e., LinkedIn, professional organizations, coffee chats, phone calls and emails) as you never know what will transpire in the future. Too often, professionals get comfortable and assume that they will never look for another position, won't need to look for another position, or can easily rev up their network if something unexpected happens. Companies move, companies get acquired or merged, companies down-size and companies go out of business. Professionals at all levels and at any age get laid off or terminated.

***A partner with a Big 4 firm, who had a long career of success, was laid off after 30 years; he had not conducted a job search during the span of his career and was suddenly out of work and uncertain what to do. He was not prepared, his LinkedIn network was thin, his resume was poorly prepared, and he had no idea what he wanted to do next.***

Career planning is a proactive process involving periodic reviews and revisions as you learn more about yourself, and as your values, interests, experience and skills change. You will never learn and know everything about yourself or the marketplace, but the more you know, the more likely you will be successful in pursuing and achieving your goals. You will be better prepared in the event that the unexpected happens. That unexpected can include a new opportunity finding you.

## **7. Schedule an appointment with the EY Center for Careers to get started!**

### **Addendum**

#### **Networking: Continue to Learn - Attend Events & Activities & Do Coffee Chats**

Take advantage of the many opportunities available to continue learning through networking, not only with professionals, but also with other students. The purpose of networking is not just to have an employer "like" or "know" you, or to get an offer and land a job, but for you to research and evaluate your options to make the best decision as explained above.



Set up a free profile on LinkedIn - the largest professional networking site with more than 500 million members worldwide - you can find professionals who work in the fields, roles and employers that interest you, you can find CSUN alumni, and you can be found by professionals and recruiters who are looking to hire for part-time, internship and full-time positions.

- When you meet professionals at various networking events, and when you apply for positions and they review your resume, they will often look for you on LinkedIn.
- It is expected that you have a presence on LinkedIn, and how your profile is presented is important to the impression you want to make.
- Your resume, a good photo, and your career goals and interests provide the basis for your LinkedIn profile.
- There is a LinkedIn guide on the EY Center website, and there are LinkedIn workshops each semester.

## Some Networking Events & Activities

- EY Center for Careers “Career Success Programme” (August & January)
- EY Center for Careers workshops (Resume & Cover Letter; Interview; LinkedIn; other)
- Accounting Association Networking & Mock Interview Workshops
- Student organization meetings, technical sessions, panels and events (Accounting Association, Beta Alpha Psi, ALPFA, MISA) – learn about the profession(s) and employers and meet professionals and students
- EY Center Firm Office Hours – meet with Big 4 and Mid-tier firm representatives on an informal basis - either brief one-on-one chats, or at Table Sitting (in front of the EY Center)
- **\*\*Meet the Firms\*\*** (65 to 70+ employers and organizations attend) – largest career fair for accounting & IS/IT students and alumni in So Cal - network with professionals and learn about employers and organizations, make connections, and begin to build professional relationships
- Firm Tours and other company events – learn more about employers and their work environment and culture, and meet more professionals to build your relationships with employers of interest
- “Coffee Chats” (in-person and on the phone) - conversations with professionals provide more in-depth opportunities to learn (see the “Coffee Chat” guide on the EY Center website - <http://csun.edu/acctis/ey-center>)
- **Do NOT skip class to attend meetings and events!!!**

## Get Involved on Campus

Get involved with student organizations and attend meetings and events. Start out by volunteering, move up into leadership roles, and develop your leadership, teamwork, customer service, time management and communication/interpersonal skills - the skills that employers are looking for. You will learn about professions, career paths and employers. You will learn about yourself. You will meet and network with professionals, and you will make new friends.



- Join student organizations and attend meetings and events
- Volunteer and help out
- Move up into a leadership role (and follow-through on your commitment)

***\*\* Don't take on leadership roles just to enhance your resume - doing so is a real disservice to the student organization and the other students to whom you have committed, and you miss out on the real value of getting involved.***

## Summary: Explore your Options



- Get to know yourself - your personality, values, interests and skills
- Identify what factors are most important for you to consider when selecting a career path and employer

## explore

- Do your research - the more you learn and network, the more choices you will have!
- Determine what is feasible, and weigh the benefits and risks
- Don't make any assumptions about a tier / type of employer re: hours, work assignments, culture, growth opportunity, \$\$ - find out for yourself
- Don't take bad advice or listen to mis-information from anyone!



- Make the investment to be proactive in identifying career goals and path, develop and implement a career plan, and you will more likely make the best decision(s) for YOU and achieve the success you desire!



\*\* You are encouraged to make an appointment or stop by to meet with me at the EY Center for Careers (BB 2224) to discuss your career goals and work on a long term career plan \*\*

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