

Making the Most of Your Semester Break

The break between semesters is a time to relax, rejuvenate, and have some holiday fun. It is also an excellent time to implement aspects of your job/internship search that you were unable to focus on or accomplish during the Fall semester. In fact, the break may give you the spare time you need to prepare your materials, research, and apply for promising employment opportunities. Here are a few suggested action items for using the break to get ahead on your search:

1. Spend Time on eRecruiting

All postings that employers send to Graduate Career Services are entered into eRecruiting.

- Browse through the postings on a regular basis
- Set up my preferences in eRecruiting so opportunities that match my geographic location or policy areas of interest are emailed to me

2. Create a Job/Internship Search Toolkit

- Update resume and double check for errors
- Draft cover letters and statements of interest
- Create my “elevator speech” and prepare to deliver it to those who ask about my search
- Contact my references and update them about my job/internship prospects
- Select and edit writing samples
- Evaluate my professional wardrobe and take advantage of the holidays to update it (if needed)

3. Create a Job/Internship Search Notebook

Keep track of your job search activities:

- Create a target list of employers
- Search for and save printouts of interesting positions
- Keep copies of correspondence sent to employers, notes on phone calls/interviews with employers, etc.

4. Create an Action Plan

Map out a plan for the Winter term:

- Set SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time Bound) goals
- Share my goals with my support system for added accountability

5. Talk About Your Search and Your Interests

You'd be surprised how many leads you can get by just opening your mouth and talking about your interests at parties and family gatherings.

- Make a list of all the people I know including former colleagues, classmates, friends at other policy schools, employers, neighbors, friends, alums, faculty, etc.
- Map out a plan to contact them about my interests and job search

6. Conduct Informational Interviews

Conducting an informational interview has proven to be a very successful job/internship search strategy. See the Ford School's Internship Search Guide for tips on initiating an interview and questions to ask.

- Create a list of organizations/alums with whom I would like to conduct informational interviews
- Create a list of questions that I would ask during an informational interview

7. Prepare for the Ford School DC Trip

If you are interested in working in DC, plan to participate in the Ford School DC Trip on Jan. 29 & 30. This trip will provide you with a formal opportunity to meet with various Ford School alums and employers.

- Arrange my transportation and lodging
- Research the organizations that have been scheduled for visits and organize my own visits

We look forward to hearing about your job and internship search updates after the break.

Happy Holidays from Graduate Career Services