# 2011-2012 MPA Career Handbook

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SECTION 1: POLICIES FOR MPA STUDENTS

Career Experience Requirement

The career experience requirement may be satisfied by the following relevant experiences in the public or nonprofit sector: 1) concurrent full-time employment related to public affairs, 2) two years of prior full-time employment related to public affairs, or 3) 560 hours (two semesters) of service in an approved, supervised internship. The manner in which the career experience has been satisfied must be noted on the Completed Degree Program sheet and approved by the Director of Internships and Career Services, your faculty advisor, and the Department Chair. A copy of the Completed Degree Program sheet can be downloaded from the Graduate Gateway on the Rockefeller College website.

Most students are eligible to participate in the Internship Program as early as their second semester, though international students must wait until they finish their second semester due to visa restrictions. Prior to taking an internship, students are required to schedule an individual advisement appointment with the Director of Internships and Career Services. The Office of Career and Alumni Programs assists students in identifying internship opportunities. The Director of Internships and Career Services must approve all internships prior to a student starting his/her hours of service.

To be eligible for an internship, students must maintain a satisfactory grade point average. Students with a GPA below 2.85 will not be eligible to participate in an internship. Students with a GPA between 2.85 and 2.99 will be eligible for internships with the approval of the Committee on Academic Standing and Retention.

Completing the Internship Requirement

In order to fulfill the 560 hour internship requirement for the MPA program, students must submit an Internship Placement Contract to the Rockefeller College Office of Career & Alumni Programs at the beginning of their internship. The Director of Internships and Career Programs must approve the position prior to the start of the internship; failure to do so may lead to rejection of hours. Note: All graduate level internship positions posted on Symplicity are pre-approved. Students must submit a new Internship Placement Contract whenever there is a change in hours, job responsibility, supervisor, or internship site.

Students must keep a log of all hours worked in order to receive credit towards the 560 hour requirement. A paper copy of the Internship Hours Log, signed by both the student and the internship supervisor, must be submitted to the Rockefeller College Office of Career & Alumni Programs by the following dates:

- Fall internship hours must be submitted no later than January 15th.
- Spring internship hours must be submitted no later than June 15th.
- Summer internship hours must be submitted no later than September 15th.

Students who do not fulfill the 560 hour requirement OR who do not have Internship Placement Contracts OR Internship Hours Logs on file at the Rockefeller College Office of Career & Alumni Programs will not be eligible for graduation.

Tentative Degree Program Planning (TDPP)

A Tentative Degree Program Planning sheet is a planning document to be completed by the student and the advisor concerning how the MPA requirements will be met. It must be signed by the student, the advisor, the Director of Internships and Career Programs, and the Department Chair and becomes part of the permanent student record. A copy of the TDPP sheet can be downloaded from the Graduate Gateway on the Rockefeller College website.

In order to obtain the signature of the Director of Internships and Career Programs, students must do the following:

1. Register on Symplicity, Rockefeller’s career management system: https://albanyrockefeller-csm.symplicity.com/students/ including filling out the personal and academic information sections
   - It is necessary to select at least 1 graduate concentration on Symplicity
2. Schedule an hour-long appointment with the Director to discuss his/her plans to complete an internship or waive the career experience
   o If a student wishes to waive the internship requirement, s/he must submit a résumé and an Internship Waiver Form, available on the Rockefeller College Office of Career & Alumni Programs website.
3. Have a copy of his/her résumé reviewed by the Director and have it approved on Symplicity

The Director of Internships & Career Programs is available for TDPP appointments from Thursday, September 22 – Thursday, November 17, 2011.

**Completed Degree Program (CDP)**

The Completed Degree Program sheet is a final document outlining how the student has met the requirements of the MPA degree. It must be signed by the student, the advisor, the Director of Internships and Career Programs, and the Department Chair by the end of the fifth week of the student’s last semester in the MPA program. The Completed Degree Program sheet is used by the Office of Graduate Studies to review the student’s credentials for degree clearance. A copy of the Completed Degree Program sheet can be found online.

In order to obtain the signature of the Director of Internships and Career Programs, students must:

- Have on file at the Rockefeller College Office of Career & Alumni Programs either an approved Internship Waiver or an Internship Placement Contract for each internship completed (must total 560 hours of internship service)
- Meet with the Director to discuss his/her post-graduate plans
- Complete a Student Graduation Form, available from the Director at the time of the meeting

Students who do not fulfill the 560 hour requirement OR who do not have Internship Placement Contracts OR who do not have an internship waiver on file at the Rockefeller College Office of Career & Alumni Programs will not be eligible for graduation.

**PAD 509 – Career Capstone Experience (1 credit)**

This capstone project helps students connect their professional career experience and the academic components of the MPA program. A written paper connects a set of chosen readings, issues, and themes from the student’s coursework to their internship and/or career experience. This course is usually taken while the student is doing an internship or is involved in some other career experience, preferably in the last semester of the program.

The Rockefeller College Office of Career & Alumni Programs does not administer PAD 509. Students may select any faculty member (it may or may not be your advisor) to supervise the course. A permission number is required to register for the course and it should be obtained from the supervising faculty member.

**BA/MPA STUDENTS**

Students enrolled in the BA/MPA program at the University at Albany must complete all undergraduate requirements before starting the MPA internship requirement. Candidates should consult the Director of Internships and Career Programs for further information about when they will be eligible to start their MPA internship experience.
EXPECTEDATIONS OF GRADUATE STUDENTS USING THE ROCKEFELLER COLLEGE OFFICE OF CAREER & ALUMNI PROGRAMS

The Rockefeller College Office of Career & Alumni Programs strives to find quality experiential learning and career opportunities for students in the Political Science and Public Administration & Policy departments. In return, students are expected to uphold the following standards:

- Maintain a 3.0 GPA in order to be eligible for an internship or a job.
- Represent themselves in an honest and accurate manner at all times.*
- Return all phone calls and emails from employers and Rockefeller College Office of Career & Alumni Programs staff in a timely manner, but no later than 2 days after the message was left.
- Conduct themselves in a professional and polite manner at all times knowing that their behavior reflects that of the College, the University, and their peers.*
- Arrive at all interviews early or on time, dressed professionally, and prepared for the interview; interviews should be cancelled via phone and email if a student cannot attend for any reason.
- Send thank you letters to all interviewers after the interview.
- Communicate with the Career Director when an internship or job offer is made. Offers need not be accepted, but should be declined in a courteous manner.
- Fulfill all job responsibilities as laid out in the initial employment offer; you should not accept an internship offer if you do not intend to finish the agreed upon responsibilities.
- Notify the employer as far in advance as possible when you are unable to attend work due to illness, vacation, or class obligations.
- Give 2 weeks notice before leaving the internship (unless a predetermined end date has been set).
- Submit an Internship Placement Contract and Internship Hours Log to the Rockefeller College Office of Career & Alumni Programs in a timely fashion, but no later January 15th for fall internships, June 15th for spring internships, and September 15th for summer internships.
- Discuss any issues or problems regarding employment with the Career Director.
- Willingly accept constructive criticism and adjust your behavior accordingly.
- Notify the Career Director upon departure from the internship or job.

Failure to comply with any of these policies may result in reduction or loss of services from the Office of Career & Alumni Programs.

Students should use caution and discretion when applying for any job on Symplicity or otherwise. Rockefeller College of Public Affairs & Policy and the University at Albany are not responsible for and/or liable for any misconduct on the behalf of any employer and/or prospective employer. Students use the Symplicity system at their own risk.

*Please see the MPA Code of Conduct for more information.
Suggested Career Timeline for Full-time MPA Students

First Semester (in no specific order):
- Begin the MPA core courses
- Discuss your academic plan for completion with your faculty advisor; have your TDPP signed
- Meet with the Director of Internships & Career Programs to discuss your intention to complete an internship or waive the career experience; have your TDPP signed
- Become a member of the Public Affairs Student Association (PASA)
- Register for Symplicity
- Draft a copy of your resume and have it approved by the Rockefeller College Office of Career & Alumni Programs
- Begin applying to internships for the spring and summer
- Research fellowships for the summer and post-graduation
- Join the American Society of Public Administrators (ASPA) or other professional associations related to your field
- Explore concentration area(s) of interest, and speak with faculty members from those areas; identify your interests, skills and values for your career
- Attend career seminars and workshops hosted by the Rockefeller College Office of Career & Alumni Programs and other on-campus organizations

Second Semester (in no specific order):
- Begin planning your summer internship, especially if you plan on going to DC, NYC, or a location outside of Albany; apply to internships via Symplicity and other sites
- Work with your faculty advisor to select your concentration(s) and to choose courses
- Research organizations and job titles that are of interest for full-time employment; determine the types of skills and experience desired
- Complete a mock interview with the Director or during Mock Interview Days
- Attend career seminars and workshops hosted by the Rockefeller College Office of Career & Alumni Programs and other on-campus organizations
- Update your resume and other internship search materials as needed
- Compile a list of contacts and begin conducting informational interviews to learn more about career options
- Become actively involved with the community and professional organizations on and off campus

Third Semester (in no specific order):
- Schedule a meeting with the Director of Internships & Career Programs to discuss your post-graduation plans
- Begin applying to jobs and post-graduate fellowships through Symplicity and other sources
- Ensure you are working in an internship to meet the 560 hour requirement
- Identify target organizations and jobs that you would like to actively pursue for employment
- Attend career seminars and workshops hosted by the Rockefeller College Office of Career & Alumni Programs and other on-campus organizations
- Update your resume and other job search materials as needed
- Continue conducting informational interviews with professionals in your area of career interest

Last Semester (in no specific order):
- Apply for graduation via MyUAlbany
- Discuss your academic plan for completion with your faculty advisor; have your CDP signed
- Meet with the Director of Internships & Career Programs to fill out a Student Graduation Form; have your CDP signed
- Submit your Completed Degree Program (CDP) sheet to the Chair of the Public Administration Department
• Attend career seminars and workshops hosted by the Rockefeller College Office of Career & Alumni Programs and other on-campus organizations
• Update your resume and other job search materials as needed
• If you have not yet secured a job, continue applying for full-time post-graduate jobs and fellowships
• Continue conducting informational interviews with professionals in your area of career interest
• Accept a job offer and notify the Director of your plans after graduation
• Graduate!

Suggested Career Timeline for Part-time MPA Students

First Semester (in no specific order):
• Begin the MPA core courses
• Discuss your academic plan for completion with your faculty advisor; have your TDP signed
• Meet with the Director of Internships & Career Programs to discuss your intention to complete an internship or waive the career experience; have your TDP signed
• Become a member of the Public Affairs Student Association (PASA)
• Register for Symplicity
• Draft a copy of your resume and have it approved by the Rockefeller College Office of Career & Alumni Programs
• Join the American Society of Public Administrators (ASPA) or other professional associations related to your field
• Explore concentration area(s) of interest, and speak with faculty members from those areas; identify your interests, skills and values for your career
• Attend career seminars and workshops hosted by the Rockefeller College Office of Career & Alumni Programs and other on-campus organizations

Middle Semesters (in no specific order):
• Continue with/complete the MPA core courses
• Complete a mock interview with the Director or during Mock Interview Days
• Attend career seminars and workshops hosted by the Rockefeller College Office of Career & Alumni Programs and other on-campus organizations
• Update your resume and other internship/job search materials as needed
• Compile a list of contacts and begin conducting informational interviews to learn more about career options
• Become actively involved with the community and professional organizations on and off campus
• Identify target organizations and jobs that you would like to actively pursue

Last Semester (in no specific order):
• Apply for graduation via MyUAlbany
• Discuss your academic plan for completion with your faculty advisor; have your CDP signed
• Meet with the Director of Internships & Career Programs to fill out a Student Graduation Form; have your CDP signed
• Submit your Completed Degree Program (CDP) sheet to the Chair of the Public Administration Department
• Attend career seminars and workshops hosted by the Rockefeller College Office of Career & Alumni Programs and other on-campus organizations
• Update your resume and other job search materials as needed
• If you have not yet secured a job, continue applying for full-time post-graduate jobs and fellowships
• Continue conducting informational interviews with professionals in your area of career interest
• Accept a job offer and notify the Director of your plans after graduation
• Graduate!
FAQS FOR MPA STUDENTS

Am I eligible for an Internship Waiver?
If you are working concurrently in a position related to public affairs, or if you have 2 years of previous work experience in public affairs, then you may be eligible for an internship waiver. Please visit the Director of Internships & Career Programs to determine if you are eligible. If so, you will need to submit an Internship Waiver Form and resume.

Do I have to complete all hours at one internship?
No, you can spread your hours over multiple internship sites, though most students complete their hours at 1-2 sites.

How many hours must I work at my internship?
Over the course your program, you must complete 560 hours of internship service. Most students work 20 hours a week for 2 semesters (14 weeks each semester); however, some students work more or less hours, depending upon their schedule. Each student will establish a schedule of hours at the onset of his/her internship. Some internship sites are more flexible than others, so be sure to ask about hours during the interview process, or at the time of the offer.

Will I be paid?
The majority of internships are paid, but each internship site is different. If an internship is unpaid, many students supplement their income by working at a part-time job.

Do I get to choose my internship location?
While the Director of Internships and Career Programs is available to assist with students’ internship searches, it is ultimately the responsibility of each student to secure an internship. Students should be proactive in their search and start the process as early as possible.

I’ve been offered an internship position – what do I do?
If you have been offered an internship, visit the Director of Internships & Career Programs to discuss the offer and to determine if you would like to accept. If you do accept the offer, you will need to fill out an Internship Placement Contract.

Where can I find the Internship Placement Contract?
All Internship Forms are available in the Rockefeller College Office of Career & Alumni Programs in Milne 105, and are also available online at http://www.albany.edu/rockefeller/career_internships.shtml#forms.
Policies regarding Certificate Students

Students enrolled in a certificate program are eligible for limited services, due to the short nature of the certificate programs. A certificate program offers a specialized alternative for those with degrees in other fields who seek to supplement their education with graduate training in public administration and policy. Typically, a certificate program should complement a graduate degree in Public Health, Social Welfare, Criminal Justice, Political Science, or Public Administration.

The Rockefeller College Office of Career & Alumni Programs provides limited career assistance to students and alumni of the certificate programs. The following rules apply:

- To be eligible for career assistance through the Office of Career & Alumni Programs, students and alumni must:
  - Successfully complete or will complete a graduate certificate program in Public Sector Management, Women & Public Policy, or Nonprofit Management & Leadership
  - Successfully enroll in and pass at least two RPAD or RPOS courses during their certificate program
- Certificate students are limited to 2 advising appointments – one at the beginning and one at the completion of the certificate program
- Certificate students who are not enrolled in a master’s program at Rockefeller College are not eligible for an internship provided by the Rockefeller College Office of Career & Alumni Programs*
- Students and alumni whose primary department is outside of Rockefeller College are not eligible for services via the Rockefeller College Office of Career & Alumni Programs and should seek career assistance through their primary department
- Certificate students who are not enrolled in a master’s program at Rockefeller College are not permitted access to the Rockefeller College Office of Career & Alumni Programs' Symplicity Career Management System
- Alumni of the certificate program may receive additional services based on consultation with the Director of Career & Alumni Programs and the designated Certificate Program Director
- Career assistance is available through the UAlbany Career Services Office – www.albany.edu/cdc and through the designated Certificate Program Director

*Students who wish to pursue the MPA or other degrees at Rockefeller College upon completion of the certificate should speak with the Director of Internships & Career Programs.
SECTION 2: RESUME AND COVER LETTER WRITING

Résumé, C.V., or both?

When reading through job descriptions, you notice that some jobs require a résumé, while others require a C.V. Often these two terms may be used interchangeably, but there is a distinct difference between the two documents.

Résumé

A résumé is a brief document that summarizes your education, experience, and qualifications. Typically, a résumé provides a snapshot of your experience and should be contained to one page, though in certain cases, two pages may be acceptable. A résumé is appropriate when you are applying for a job in the private, public, or nonprofit sector. Most students pursuing a master’s degree will need a résumé; Ph.D students who are pursuing an internship or job outside of academia should have a résumé.

Résumés come in 2 different formats: reverse chronological and functional.

Reverse Chronological: the most widely used, and in most cases, is the most appropriate version. A reverse chronological résumé lists your most recent experience first, and your oldest experience last. This type of résumé highlights the experience you have, which may include internships, jobs, or extracurricular activities. For most students, this will be the most appropriate format to choose.

Functional: this type of résumé is not as widely used as it highlights skill sets as opposed to experience. This format is best for career changers or individuals who have extensive experience outside of their desired career field. The functional résumé focuses on transferable skills, such as communication, leadership, or technical, that will be useful in a new career path.

C.V. – Curriculum Vitae

A curriculum vitae or C.V. is a type of résumé that is used mainly for academic or research based positions; many fellowships or grants may also require a C.V. A C.V. is a more detailed explanation of research, teaching, publications, presentations, and academic related materials. There is more flexibility on the length of a C.V., although you should try to be concise. Typically, a C.V. should be between 2-4 pages.

Both

At times it may be necessary to have both a résumé and a C.V. If you are applying for an internship or position within local, state, or the federal government, a résumé is appropriate. However, if you are applying for grants or fellowships where academics are emphasized, then a C.V. would be appropriate. If you are unsure about what format to use, consult the Rockefeller College Office of Career & Alumni Programs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Résumé</th>
<th>C.V.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Used to apply for internships or non-academic jobs</td>
<td>Used to apply for academic jobs or grants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typically used by Master’s students</td>
<td>Typically used by Ph.D students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit length to 1 page, 2 maximum</td>
<td>No length limit, though typically between 2-4 pages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What to Include on a Résumé/C.V.

Heading
Include your current address, e-mail, and phone (home and/or cell); be sure your voicemail and e-mail addresses are professional

Objective (optional)
Objectives are usually recommended because they help define what you’re seeking. If appropriate, add special interests or skills that you offer, such as communication or technical abilities. Remember that “objective” is another word for goal, so you should briefly state what type of position you are seeking, reflecting what you have to offer, not what you want. Usually an objective is one line. Objectives are particularly helpful if you are attending a career fair or other networking event where recruiters might be speaking with numerous candidates.

Professional Profile (optional)
A profile highlighting specific qualifications and transferable skills can be effective for career changers or students with significant experience – it should not be used for entry level candidates.

Education
School, location, degree, expected date of graduation, major, minor, concentration
Overall GPA if higher than 3.0; include your major GPA if higher than overall GPA
Previous college, degree, dates of attendance or graduation, major, and GPA (if applicable)

Honors, Awards and Accomplishments
Any academic, extracurricular or job-related achievements (can also be listed under Experience)
For example: scholarships, Dean’s List, etc.

Relevant Courses
List 4 to 8 courses related to your major and/or objective

Special/Related Academic Projects
Any significant projects (class or outside activities) that relate to your major and/or career objective

Computer Skills
Hardware, software, programs, languages, operating systems, and internet applications

Experience/Employment History
Full-time or part-time jobs, internships, consulting, self-employment, entrepreneurial ventures
Volunteer work (include in this section or list as separate category)

Extracurricular Activities/Volunteer/Leadership Activities
Clubs (indicate role if other than member, e.g. Treasurer) where appropriate describe involvement
Professional Association memberships
Community organizations
Tutoring (include in this section or under “Experience” section)
Fraternity/Sorority or Athletic Groups

Interests (optional)
Any genuine interest, expertise, or unique hobby (do not include general areas such as “reading”)
Language(s)
Fluency, proficiency, or knowledge of a language(s) other than English

Military Experience
Military service or ROTC or Reserves

Certification(s)/Licensure(s)/Trainings & Workshops
An entry that could substantiate your professional development.

Presentations*
If you have presented at a conference, you should include the name of your presentation, the conference, location, and date.

Publications*
If you have been published in a professional journal or magazine (electronic or print), include the details here, in the appropriate MLA or APA format.

Teaching Experience*
Most doctoral students have experience teaching as a graduate teaching assistant or as an adjunct faculty member for the department or other institutions. Include the name of the class, the terms you taught, and a brief synopsis of your teaching responsibilities.

Research Interests*
If you are interested in going into a research organization, think tank, or academia, include some areas of research interest. In this case, a list will suffice.

Research Experience*
Similar to your work experience, you should write a brief summary of any research experience you possess.

Grants*
If you have received grants, list the title, amount, term, role, lead institution, funder, and any additional information that might be pertinent.

Academic Appointments*
If you have served on an academic committee, or had a graduate assistantship, this might be the appropriate place to list those activities.

*Indicates information that is appropriate for a C.V. only.
General Résumé/C.V. Guidelines

• Font should be in a readable, professional format between 10-12 point size, the heading may be larger
• Margins should be between 0.5-1.0 inches all around
• Use bold, italics, underlining, and CAPITALS to highlight important information
• Be consistent!
• Avoid abbreviations, unless it is a universally known abbreviation, such as the NAACP. If an abbreviation is necessary, write out the phrase once, and the abbreviation in parentheses after. For example: New York State (NYS)
• Do not include references on your résumé or C.V.; they should be included on a separate page
• Sell yourself by highlighting the skills/experiences most relevant to the job you are seeking
• Every sentence should start with an action verb; do not use “responsible for” or “duties included”
• Verbs should be in the correct tense according to when you performed the work – if you are still working for the company, your verbs should be in the present tense; if you finished the job, your verbs should be in the past tense
• Use the question words: who, what, where, when, why, how, and how many to expand upon your job descriptions – emphasize your accomplishments and actions
• Do not use any personal pronouns, such as I, me, or my
• Do not include any personal information, such as age, race, marital status, religion, etc.
• Do NOT lie or exaggerate
• Use jargon and language appropriate for the job to which you are applying
• Avoid too much white space on your résumé – fill up the spaces, but don’t overcrowd your résumé
• Proofread your document for errors, typos, and grammatical mistakes. All documents MUST be approved before students can start to apply for internships and jobs
• References should be included on a separate page. Ask potential recommenders that they will provide you with a positive reference before listing them
**Action Verbs**

You should always begin your bullet points with action verbs, never with “I.” Below is a list of verbs that may be useful in describing the duties, skills and special projects of previous jobs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acted</th>
<th>Classified</th>
<th>Drafted</th>
<th>Improved</th>
<th>Operated</th>
<th>Repaired</th>
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<td>Adapted</td>
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<td>Informed</td>
<td>Overhauled</td>
<td>Retrieved</td>
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Sara Smith
135 Western Avenue • Albany, NY 12203 • (518) 442-5253 • SaraSmith@albany.edu

Education
Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy, University at Albany, Albany, NY
Master of Public Administration, expected May 20xx
Concentration: Local Government
GPA: 3.94 • Honors: Received partial tuition scholarship

Pace University, New York, NY
Bachelor of Arts in Communication, June 2010
GPA: 3.46 • Honors: Member of Pforzheimer Honors College, Dean’s List

Experience
Office of Mayor Michael Bloomberg, New York, NY
Intern for Mayor Michael Bloomberg, September 20xx-December 20xx
• Promoted special events, such as town hall meetings, as part of the public relations team
• Facilitated communication by translating for Spanish speaking constituents
• Oversaw office operations in absence of head secretary

Greg Seabury, State Representative Campaign, Danbury, CT
Assistant to Campaign Manager, September 20xx-November 20xx
• Aided with creation of campaign slogan and publicity materials
• Translated campaign messages into Portuguese and Spanish
• Assisted in production and made guest appearance on local TV show, “Celebrating Danbury”

Additional Experience
Banana Republic Inc., Albany, NY
Sales Representative, February 20xx-Present
• Assist customers with clothing selection and merchandise returns
• Perform as one of the top merchandise sellers with sales reaching $2000 per day

Skills
Computers: MS (Word, Excel and PowerPoint); completed course in Information Systems
Languages: Fluent in Portuguese, proficient in Spanish and French, knowledge of Italian

Activities
University at Albany Public Affairs Student Association (PASA), Albany, NY
Vice President, January 20xx-Present
• Coordinate activities for graduate students in the Public Administration program
• Invite guest speakers to meetings to discuss issues relevant to state and local government, nonprofit management, and the private sector
• Organized members to participate in community service in celebration of Earth Day
DANÉ ROCKEFELLER
1400 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12203
Cell: (518) 442-5253 • Home: (518) 123-4567 • Email: Dane@albany.edu

OBJECTIVE
To obtain an internship in governmental finance utilizing demonstrated budgeting and computer skills

EDUCATION
Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy, University at Albany
Master of Public Administration
Concentrations: Public Economics & Finance
GPA: 3.61
Albany, NY
May 20xx

Manhattan College
Bachelor of Arts in Economics
Dean’s List Fall 20xx
Riverdale, NY
May 20xx

HONORS, AWARDS, & ACCOMPLISHMENTS
Dean’s List, Manhattan College, Fall 20xx-Spring 20xx
Elizabeth Moniz Memorial Scholarship for Outstanding Academic Achievement
Selected as the Student Graduation Speaker at Manhattan College

COURSEWORK
Public Budgeting
Nonprofit Financial Management
Cost Management for Government & Nonprofit Organizations
Principles of Public Economics

PROJECTS
Institutional Foundations of Public Administration
- Participated as member of 6 person team to evaluate institutional foundations of public service
- Conducted extensive research to examine characteristics of institutional settings, history of field, environmental context, and functions, roles, behaviors, and structures
- Presented results to a class of 35 using PowerPoint

WORK EXPERIENCE
Transcontinental Trading Corporation
Trading Assistant Intern
Albany, NY
May 20xx – July 20xx
- Worked with team of brokers who manage over $150M in assets
- Prepared asset-allocation models which were used to review portfolio performance and determined whether different mixes would be appropriate
- Conducted research on companies not widely covered in the portfolio

St. Sebastian Softball League
Little League Umpire
Latham, NY
June 20xx – August 20xx
- Umpired two games per week for teams varying in ages from 6-12
- Attended training in order to be updated regularly on all rules and regulations

COMPUTER SKILLS
Proficient in MS Office (Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint), knowledge of HTML.
Laura McCarthy
1400 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12222
518.555.5555 • LM@albany.edu

Professional Profile

- Highly motivated and analytical MPA candidate with over three years of successful lobbying experience
- Excellent knowledge of New York State government and policy writing
- Strong work ethic along with outstanding research, interpersonal, and communication skills
- Trained in the use of Microsoft office programs, including Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Access and Excel

Education

Rockefeller College of Public Affairs & Policy, University at Albany, Albany, NY
Master of Public Administration, expected May 20xx
Concentration: Environmental Policy; Public Economics

Smith College, Northampton, MA
Bachelor of Arts, May 2008
Major: Government; Major: Italian Studies

Università di Firenze, Florence, Italy
Study abroad 2007-2008

Experience

United University Professions (UUP), Latham, NY
John M. Reilly Legislative Intern, (February 20xx – Present)
- Assist in organizing regional and statewide legislative meetings on union issues.
- Organize UUP Outreach Committee events in cooperation with the UUP Research & Legislation Department.
- Aid in the preparation of legislative newsletters and bulletins distributed monthly to 5000 constituents.
- Conduct quantitative and qualitative research on related union issues for the Research Department.

New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG), Albany, NY
Environmental Analyst, (June 2008 – September 2011)
- Researched the administration of the Pesticide Neighbor Notification Law.
- Performed Freedom of Information Law requests.
- Compiled scientific information regarding the expected effects of climate change.
- Wrote public hearing testimony for presentation by NYPIRG’s Senior Environmental Associate regarding support of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation’s proposed Burn Barrel Ban.

Legislative Intern, (May 2007 – September 2007)
- Organized a press conference commemorating the 25th anniversary of the New York State Recyclable Container Act and promoting the passage of the Bigger Better Bottle Bill.
- Designed visual aids for press conferences and events advocating for the Bigger Better Bottle Bill.
- Conducted two independent research projects regarding the cost-benefit of recycling bins in hotel rooms and health safety standards for public water fountains, respectively.

Smith College Facilities Management, Northampton, MA
- Conducted a sustainability project in coordination with the Smith College Sustainability Director.
- Researched potential sustainable practices for the College, including the reduction of electricity use in academic buildings and the development of an integrated pest management program.
- Conducted recycling awareness workshops in coordination with the Smith College Facilities Management Director.
SAMPLE C.V.

PETER PHILLIPS

Department of Political Science, Rockefeller College of Public Affairs & Policy
University at Albany – State University of New York
Milne Hall 106 • 135 Western Avenue • Albany, New York 12222
Phone: (518) 442-3112 • Fax: (518) 442-5298 • peterp@albany.edu

EDUCATION

University at Albany, Rockefeller College of Public Affairs & Policy, Albany, New York
Ph.D. in Political Science, Expected May 2016
Dissertation: Popular Vote vs. Electoral College: An Inquiry into the 2000 Presidential Election
Dissertation Committee: David Rousseau (Chair), Bruce Miroff, Sally Friedman
Honors: Outstanding Teaching Assistant

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, New Brunswick, New Jersey
M.A. in Political Science, May 2010
Concentration: American Politics
Thesis: Implications of Early Resignation in Congress
Honors: Honorable Mention for Outstanding Thesis, Student Leadership Award for Class of 2010
Coursework: Comparative Politics; Theories in Political Economy; Political Thought; Research Design in Political Science; Emerging Trends in Political Science; Foundations of Capitalism

Emerson College, Boston, Massachusetts
B.S. in Political Communication, May 2008
Concentration: Leadership, Politics, and Social Advocacy
Coursework: The Public Affairs Matrix: Media, Politics, & Advocacy; Leadership; American Government & Politics; Politics, Advertising, and Society

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Legislative Processes
Congressional Health Care Policy
Legislative Studies
Race and Politics
Contemporary Issues in Law and Society

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University at Albany, State University of New York, Albany, New York
Lecturer, Rockefeller College of Public Affairs & Policy

RPOS 204: Current Controversies in American Politics (Undergraduate), January 20xx-present
Developed a syllabus and planned course content addressing current controversial issues in American government; alter course every semester to accommodate the topics relevant to the political environment. Researched relevant political theorists for student assignments and readings. Evaluated student performance and encouraged students to engage in class discussions and extracurricular activities associated with class content.

RPOS 101: Introduction to American Politics (Undergraduate), September 20xx-present
Taught undergraduate students about the study of politics, focusing on American national government. Developed a syllabus and planned course content using Blackboard and PowerPoint slides. Integrated lectures, group assignments, videos, and guest speakers.
RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

University at Albany, State University of New York, Albany, New York
Graduate Research Assistant to Dr. Meredith Weiss, August 20xx-present
- Conducted research on comparative politics and international political emergence
- Analyzed and coded information regarding processes and patterns of political development and mobilization
- Reviewed and edited material for Dr. Weiss’ book chapter on student activism and suppression in Malaysian universities

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, New Brunswick, New Jersey
Graduate Research Assistant to Dr. Millicent Ryan, August 2008-May 2010
- Performed qualitative research on voting behavior of males between the ages of 19-35, including researching using LexisNexis, and compiling the results into an Excel spreadsheet
- Conducted public opinion polls regarding political party affiliations and voting habits over the phone, completing a total of 319 in a 21 day period
- Recorded and transcribed the content of all polls using Microsoft Word

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

University at Albany, State University of New York, Albany, New York
- Elected as Rockefeller College Representative to UAlbany Graduate Student Senate, January 2011-present
- Tutored 8 master’s students for the Empirical Data Analysis class, September 20xx-December 20xx
- Served as the graduate student representative on a search committee for a visiting scholar, March 20xx

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, New Brunswick, New Jersey
- Represented the master’s students on the Political Science Advisory Board, consisting of alumni and community counterparts, aimed at furthering the mission of the school; resulted in the creation of a graduate student lounge, September 2009-May 2010
- Mentored a first year student in the MA in Political Science program, encouraging her to become involved with the school, and answering questions about coursework and graduate school in general

Emerson College, Boston, Massachusetts
- Served as an orientation leader to incoming freshmen and transfer students

GRANTS

Title: Gerald R. Ford Library Research Travel Grant
Amount: $2,000
Role: Fellow (grant author)
Term: June 1, 2011 – May 31, 2012
Lead Institution: University at Albany
Funder: Gerald R. Ford Foundation, in support of research conducted at the National Archives and Records Administration

PUBLICATIONS & PRESENTATIONS


Sara Smith
135 Western Avenue • Albany, NY 12203 • (518) 442-5253 • SaraSmith@albany.edu

Dr. Bob Purcell
Assistant Professor, Department of Public Administration & Policy
Rockefeller College of Public Affairs & Policy
University at Albany
135 Western Avenue, Milne 210
Albany, NY 12222
518-442-5276
RPurcell@albany.edu

Dr. Karl Rethemeyer
Associate Professor & Chair, Department of Public Administration & Policy
Rockefeller College of Public Affairs & Policy
University at Albany
135 Western Avenue, Milne 101A
Albany, NY 12222
518-442-5283
KRetheme@albany.edu

Josh Bauer
Trading Manager
Transcontinental Trading Corporation
89 Route 345
Albany, NY 12222
518-598-7569
JBauer@ttc.com
Cover Letters

What is a cover letter?
A cover letter is a letter that accompanies your résumé that serves as an introduction of your skills and qualifications. The most important thing about a cover letter is that it matches your experience and skills to the position criteria. Therefore, it’s necessary to write a specific cover letter for each position to which you apply. **DO NOT WRITE A GENERIC COVER LETTER.** Review the position, and determine the most important elements of the job, and try to match the skills and experience you possess to that specific job. You want to cite specific instances when you have used that experience on the job, rather than just providing a laundry list of your accomplishments. If you can prove your experience, rather than just state your experience, you will stand out to potential employers.

A cover letter should always be sent if you are applying to a full-time job, regardless of if the job announcement cites the need for a cover letter; for an internship, a cover letter may not always be necessary, so check the posting. If you are applying through Symplicity, all cover letters need to be approved by the Rockefeller College Office of Career & Alumni Programs.

In certain cases, you may not be applying to a specific position, but instead, inquiring if there are any available positions. If that is the situation, then you should focus on the organization’s mission or services and how you could contribute to their goals.

**Cover Letter Guidelines**

- Limit your cover letter to 1 page, single spaced.
- Always personalize your cover letter for a specific job – **DO NOT WRITE A GENERIC COVER LETTER.**
- Proofread your cover letter before sending it out! Any mistake or grammatical error can result in rejection.
- If you are emailing your cover letter, attach your cover letter and résumé to the email. Do not use the cover letter as the body of your email. Instead, write a brief message stating that your cover letter and résumé are attached.
- If you are mailing or printing your cover letter, use résumé paper.
- Address your cover letter to a specific person, whenever possible. Contact the organization and request the name of the appropriate contact person. If you absolutely cannot identify a person, use “Dear Hiring Manager” or “Dear Internship Coordinator”.
- Do not focus on what you would like to gain out of the internship, instead focus on what you have to offer to the organization and position.
- Use the active, not the passive tense.
- Do not staple your resume to your cover letter.
- Demonstrate your skills and qualifications through concrete examples. Use the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result) to discuss specific times when you have used that skill.
- Vary your sentence structure – avoid starting too many sentences with “I”.
- Sign your letters in blue or black ink if sending via postal mail.
- Keep copies of your letters for future reference.
- Include information about why you would want to work for that specific organization or in that specific position.
- Highlight the fit between your skills and the position requirements.
- Format your cover letter so that it matches your résumé – use the same font, headings, margins, etc.
- **Proofread your document and have the Rockefeller College Office of Career & Alumni Programs approve a copy before sending it out to employers.**
Sample Cover Letter Format

Street Address
City, State ZIP
Phone Number
Email Address
Date

Employer’s Name (include Mr./Ms.)
Title
Organization
Street Address
City, State ZIP

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name (try your best to find the name of a specific person):

The first sentence should address why you are writing to them – in other words, that you are applying to a specific position. Next, address how you found the position (if you were referred by someone, mention that here) and your interest and enthusiasm in that specific position and the organization as a whole. Indicate your degree and expected graduation date – explicitly mentioning that you are a student at Rockefeller College of Public Affairs & Policy at the University at Albany. The last sentence of your cover letter should be your thesis statement. In other words, what you are going to address in the rest of your letter. Remember that you need to focus on what you have to offer to the organization, not what you hope to gain out of the organization or position.

The body paragraphs (one or two paragraphs) should focus on the qualifications that you possess that match the specific position requirements or the mission of the organization. How can your background and experiences contribute to the organization’s goals and objectives? Read through the job description carefully to pinpoint the skill sets that the employer consistently mentions (i.e. analyzing data, lobbying, policy writing, researching, etc.). Select the skills you feel most confident of and match your skills and qualifications to those qualities. Do not laundry list the skills (I have good communication, analytical, writing, and researching skills), instead, pick one or two skills and describe them in depth.

When describing your specific skill sets, do not just reiterate what is on your résumé – give more in-depth detail. Target what they are seeking in a candidate and back it up with specific examples of times when you have used those skills. If you can prove your experience that is much more convincing than just stating that you have those skills. To give specific examples, use the STAR technique (Situation, Task, Action, Result) to describe the context of the example. The Situation and Task should give background information on the circumstances, the Action is what you did to complete the task, and the Result is the outcome of your effort.

The closing paragraph should again summarize your strengths in the position. You should also discuss some actions towards moving forward in the application process, such as your interest in interviewing with them, or you will be in DC over the summer, or that you would like to hear from them soon, or you will contact them in 2 weeks to follow up. You should thank the employer for their time and consideration.

Sincerely, (you can also use Best Regards, Sincere Regards, or some other closing)

Your full name, signed
(if you are sending your letter electronically, type in a script font)

Your full name, typed

Résumé Attached (if you are sending via postal mail, include Résumé Enclosed)
Dear Ms. McCarty:

I am writing to express my interest in the New York State Assembly Graduate Intern program. I learned about the position through Dr. Helen Desfosses and also through a posting on Rockefeller College’s online Symplicity site. Currently, I am pursuing my Master of Public Administration with a concentration in Local Government Management and will graduate in May 20xx. Growing up in New York, I have a strong interest in state politics, and have followed the Assembly’s legislation for quite some time. I believe I would be a good candidate for the Graduate Intern program, as I have substantial research and policy experience.

Recently, I earned my bachelor’s degree in public policy from Binghamton University. As part of my degree, I took several classes in policy writing, development, and analysis. In my “introduction to Policy Analysis” course, I completed a group project on higher education policy from 1960-2000. To accomplish the task, the group divided up the project, and each group member selected a decade. For my part of the project, I researched higher education policy from 1980-1990, including conducting research using Lexis-Nexis on Pell Grant initiatives. I found 10 articles on Pell Grants, and compiled a summary of the rulings and the implications on higher education loan assistance. As a team, we created a PowerPoint presentation comparing and contrasting the legislation in each of the decades; we presented it to a class of approximately 40 students. As a result, I feel confident that I could utilize my research skills in the Assembly Internship.

In addition to my research skills, I believe that I could contribute my experience in policy. During the spring semester, I completed a policy internship with the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) in Albany. In this role, I prepared legislative alerts, action alerts, updates, and communications with other local mental health service provider staff. Specifically, I researched and wrote documents about the recent health care bill passed by President Obama, and sent letters to local Congress and Senate representatives to voice NAMI’s support of the bills.

Thank you very much for your consideration for the Graduate Intern position with the New York State Assembly. I can be reached at the contact information listed above, and would welcome the opportunity to discuss the position in more depth in an interview.

Sincerely,

Nelson Rockefeller

Résumé Attached
Ms. Lisa Tovar  
Attn: Research Fellow, Energy and Policy Analysis  
Pew Center on Global Climate Change  
2101 Wilson Blvd., Suite 550  
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Ms. Tovar:

Please accept this letter and résumé in application for the Research Fellowship in Energy and Policy Analysis. I believe Pew serves the critical function of helping maintain the credibility of expertise and empiricism in civic discourses and the making of public policy. Given the urgency of taking steps to respond to climate change, the dual role of Pew as objective researcher and facilitator is an indispensable one. I have a deep academic and personal commitment to innovative environmental governance and the mitigation of climate change, and feel I am uniquely prepared to make the needed contributions at the Pew Center on Global Climate Change. I believe I would be an asset to your organization because of my ability to research and evaluate data and manage programs.

Currently, I am preparing my doctoral literature review, which addresses the theoretical and empirical dimensions of climate change mitigation and adaptation policies in the United States. For this review, I have critically examined and synthesized the scholarly literatures on U.S. environmental policy history, environmental federalism, rational choice theory and environmental policy, and future directions for environmental governance. This knowledge is readily applicable to the Research Fellow position, as I can synthesize and evaluate the data necessary to write legislation.

I will also bring to Pew the administrative and evaluative skills sets needed for a high level of job performance. I am currently the Research Associate for the Center for Change in Government (CCG) at the University at Albany – a promotion from the CCG’s doctoral student assistantship I previously held. My roles and responsibilities have grown accordingly, and I am now intimately involved in all phases of our projects and workshops. At CCG, I manage research logistics and support staff, build and manage data sets, coordinate seminars for state employees, liaise to a network of diverse stakeholders and partners, collect extensive qualitative and quantitative data, present at practitioner conferences, and write proposals, professional correspondence, and reports for public sector clients. My extensive training in analytic and evaluative methods – policy and cost-benefit analysis, program evaluation, statistical and econometric analysis, and qualitative research – have enabled me to bring a high level of rigor and precision to my various job tasks.

Thank you very much for your consideration, and for the work of your organization. I hope to have an opportunity to discuss this position in more depth in an interview, as I believe my core values and experience meet the position requirements. Please feel free to contact me to further discuss my qualifications. Additionally, I will be in Washington, DC area in mid-April, and would be available for an interview at that time. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincere Regards,

Barney Nelson

Barney Nelson
Enclosure: Résumé
Sample Letter of Inquiry

15 Great Dane Way
Albany, NY 12222
518.442-3112
Polly@albany.edu
April 16, 20xx

Human Resources Director
New York Public Interest Research Group
107 Washington Avenue
Albany, NY 12210

Dear Human Resources Director:

Please consider this letter of inquiry an expression of my interest in exploring employment opportunities with the New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG). Dr. Anne Hildreth suggested I contact you, citing your organization’s excellent reputation as an advocate for the citizens of New York.

I am particularly interested in the combination of political initiatives and community education in which your organization specializes. As a political science major at Rockefeller College of Public Affairs & Policy at the University at Albany, I have focused my studies on American Politics. In my Current Controversies in American Politics, which I took last semester with Professor Friedman, we examined a myriad of issues plaguing the current political environment, such as healthcare, financial bailouts, reproductive ethics, and Second Amendment rights. Specifically, I prepared a debate on campaign financing, where I took the position that corporations should not be able to sponsor candidates. To prepare my arguments, I researched the recent legislation via online sources, such as The New York Times and The Washington Post. Additionally, I contacted a local Congressman’s office to get his position on the topic. The debate was successful, and I won the award for best debater, as voted by the class. I believe this experience meshes seamlessly with NYPIRG’s stand on good government, especially in regards to campaign finance reform, research, and advocacy.

In addition, I believe that I would be an asset to NYPIRG, as I have extensive experience in organizing college students, which fits in with your mission as a student-directed consumer, environmental, and government reform organization. As Vice President of the College Democrats, I organized weekly meetings for a group of 40 students. During the meetings, we organized events, such as a voter registration table, to educate college students on their rights as a voter and encourage more college students to vote. Lastly, we recruited new members through tabling during the semi-annual activities fair.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration. I would be interested in learning more about your organization and determining how I could contribute to the mission of NYPIRG in a full-time position. If I meet the values and qualifications of the organization, please feel free to contact me to schedule an interview.

Sincerely,

Polly Lyman

Polly Lyman
Résumé Attached
SECTION 3: INTERVIEWING

Interviewing can be an intimidating experience, especially for individuals with limited experience. However, there are a couple of things to remember, which should make the interview process a little bit easier.

- **PREPARE!** Preparation is the key to a good interview – you never want to “wing it”. Instead, prepare yourself with the knowledge to succeed in the interview, which includes knowledge about you and about the organization.
- Consider the interview to be a time when you get to sell yourself to the company. Think of the interview as an opportunity to talk about yourself, and explain why you are the best candidate. If there is something that makes you qualified for the job, be sure to mention it in the interview – regardless if the employer asks you a question about that experience. Assume that the interviewer knows nothing about you (i.e. they have not read your résumé and cover letter), and if you do not tell them important information about your application, then they will not know.
- The interview is a two-way process: you are trying to impress them as much as they are trying to impress you. You need to present yourself in an honest, straightforward manner, and you need to evaluate potential job opportunities. After the interview, you may decide that the organization is not the right fit for you, and you should indicate that you wish to withdraw your application in your thank you note.

STEP 1: ANALYZE YOURSELF

This is the most critical stage in the interview process, but it is also the most overlooked stage. The interview is a time for you to talk about your skills and experiences, which on the surface sounds pretty easy – after all, you talk about yourself every day, right? Well, an interview is different, because you are trying to communicate skill sets and experiences that you probably don’t relay in day to day life – such as an example of your organizational skills or a time that you encountered a difficult team member. Therefore, it is essential that you prepare yourself for the interview. Does this mean that you should memorize some answers? Absolutely not! In fact, you should never memorize any of your answers – first, you don’t want to sound rehearsed, and second, if you forget what you memorized, then you will focus on trying to remember the exact wording of the answer rather than coming up with an alternate response.

The first step in understanding the skills you can offer to an organization is to take an inventory of your different personal characteristics. There are 3 types of skills:

1. **Work Content Skills**: those which relate specifically to being able to do a certain job. These skills are gained through work, education, and personal experience. Typically, these will be specific to a particular career field and will be noted in a position description. For students interested in Public Administration/Policy and Political Science, some examples may be:
   - Researching using open sources
   - Writing policy memos
   - Analyzing data sets to make policy decisions
2. **Self-Management Skills**: those personal characteristics related to your personality and to how you work within an organization or perform tasks. For example:
   - Creative
   - Accurate
   - Responsible
3. **Transferable Skills**: those general skills that can be applied to a wide variety of settings and have been developed naturally or through education, training, and experience.
   - Communication skills
   - Leadership skills
   - Interpersonal skills
**Self-Management Skills:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accurate</th>
<th>Driven</th>
<th>Leader</th>
<th>Sensitive</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good Listener</td>
<td>Dynamic</td>
<td>Motivated</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adept</td>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>Sophisticated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anticipatory</td>
<td>Empathic</td>
<td>Optimistic</td>
<td>Self-motivated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aware</td>
<td>Exceptional</td>
<td>Perceptive</td>
<td>Self-confident</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creative</td>
<td>Flexible</td>
<td>Planner</td>
<td>tactful</td>
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<tr>
<td>Competent</td>
<td>Goal oriented</td>
<td>Problem Solver</td>
<td>Team player</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decisive</td>
<td>Humorous</td>
<td>Quick</td>
<td>Trained</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dedicated</td>
<td>Initiative</td>
<td>Reliable</td>
<td>Unique</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deft</td>
<td>Innovative</td>
<td>Responsive</td>
<td>Versatile</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dependable</td>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>Responsible</td>
<td>Willing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diplomatic</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Respectful</td>
<td>Theoretical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discreet</td>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>Successful</td>
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**Transferable Skills:**

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<tr>
<th>Account</th>
<th>Debate</th>
<th>Interview</th>
<th>Reconcile</th>
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<tr>
<td>Advocate</td>
<td>Decide</td>
<td>Investigate</td>
<td>Redesign</td>
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<tr>
<td>Allocate</td>
<td>Define</td>
<td>Listen</td>
<td>Reflect</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analyze</td>
<td>Delegate</td>
<td>Locate</td>
<td>Report</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analyze costs</td>
<td>Demonstrate</td>
<td>Manage</td>
<td>Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ask</td>
<td>Design</td>
<td>Manage time</td>
<td>Resolve</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assess</td>
<td>Develop</td>
<td>Mediate</td>
<td>Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bid</td>
<td>Diagnose</td>
<td>Motivate</td>
<td>Sell</td>
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<td>Budget</td>
<td>Edit</td>
<td>Negotiate</td>
<td>Sense</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calculate</td>
<td>Estimate</td>
<td>Observe</td>
<td>Set priorities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clarify</td>
<td>Evaluate</td>
<td>Organize</td>
<td>Speak</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaborate</td>
<td>Explain</td>
<td>Persuade</td>
<td>Summarize</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communicate</td>
<td>Facilitate</td>
<td>Plan</td>
<td>Supervise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compile</td>
<td>Forecast</td>
<td>Prepare</td>
<td>Systematize</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compute</td>
<td>Illustrate</td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>Teach</td>
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<tr>
<td>Converse</td>
<td>Implement</td>
<td>Project</td>
<td>Train</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cooperate</td>
<td>Influence</td>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Write</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinate</td>
<td>Initiate</td>
<td>Read</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Counsel</td>
<td>Innovate</td>
<td>Reason</td>
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**Top 10 Qualities Employers Seek in Job/Internship Candidates:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Team Work</th>
<th>Technical</th>
<th>Work Experience</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>Academic Record</td>
<td>Motivation/Initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analytical</td>
<td>Honesty/Integrity/Ethics</td>
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The next step is to take your skills/characteristics and relate them to the position to which you are applying. The best way to do that is to read through the position description and pick out the skills that are mentioned, especially those that are mentioned multiple times. Let's take this job description as an example:

Seeking an Intergovernmental Affairs Liaison to be part of an energetic, collaborative and innovative team to implement a shared vision of progressive policies and community-based planning. Prospective staff members must be committed to seeking out new and better ways for the Manhattan Borough President’s Office (MBPO) to connect with, and deliver to, the borough’s diverse neighborhoods, communities, and constituents.

Major responsibilities of this position will include, but are not limited to:

- Assist in advancing the Borough President’s policy and legislative priorities throughout all levels of government with special emphasis on the City Council;
- Represent the Borough President and communicate the goals of the office with key stakeholders as well as act as an intergovernmental liaison to all elected officials and government agencies at the city, state and federal level;
- Monitor relevant pending legislation and government regulations on City, State and Federal levels, and conduct research to develop the Borough President’s legislative priorities and recommendations that will be presented to other governmental entities for partnership and support;
- Strategize on outreach to government entities for office events, mailings, and the upkeep of databases;
- Help monitor and stay informed of all office staffs’ projects and interactions that involve elected officials and government agencies, and assist all staff with the navigation at all levels of government to ensure quality service delivery and government accountability;
- Assist the Deputy Chief of Staff with administrative duties as needed, such as outreach to government entities and mailings.

Specific job requirements include:

- Familiarity with the inner-workings of government and the legislative process at the city, state, and federal levels;
- Familiarity with policy and legislative issues facing New Yorkers;
- Comfortable with flexible, sometimes long work hours;
- Possess exceptional research, writing, interpersonal and organizational skills; and
- Work well under pressure and deadlines.

The relevant skill sets (work-content, self-management, and transferable) are highlighted. More than likely, there would be some interview questions surrounding these skills, and it would be best to provide examples of some times when you have used these skills. For example, you might have taken the course “State & Local Government” and this would be a great example to prove your knowledge of government and the legislative process on the city, state, and federal levels.

When preparing for an interview, it is best to think of times when you have used a particular skill set. Your responses do not need to be all work based; actually, most employers like to hire candidates who take part in extra-curricular activities, volunteer work, and academic projects, so you should vary your responses.
Please use these charts which can help you to brainstorm some examples of relevant skills and experiences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Papers, Exams, Presentations, Projects</th>
<th>Extracurricular Activities</th>
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<tbody>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Internships</th>
<th>Summer Jobs/Work Experience</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hobbies/General Life</th>
<th>Other</th>
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</table>
STEP 2: RESEARCHING THE EMPLOYER

Ideally, you should know something about the organization before you submit your application. Upon interviewing, you need to have more in-depth knowledge of the employer and how you can fit in with the organization. Again, knowing how you can fit in with the organization will help you to feel confident and prepared for the interview.

The quickest and most efficient way to research an organization is to visit their website (a quick Google search should bring up their website). There are a number of places you should visit on their website:

- **Careers** – this section will help you to understand the job opportunities available, as well as the environment and type of people that work in the organization. Information like employee benefits or perks can also be found.
- **About Us** – this section will give you insight about the mission and history of the organization. It may include a staff directory with biographies of the employees.
- **Clients/Services** – this section will allow you to understand what services they provide and who they serve.
- **New/Events/Media** – this section lists any newsworthy information.

Remember that the employer’s website will only detail the information that they want you to know, so it is best to research other sources, such as newspapers.

STEP 3: DRESSING PROFESSIONALLY

The first impression does count, so you should be dressed professionally, but also comfortably. It is best to try to buy professional clothing early in your college career so you can accumulate a wardrobe over time. You should always present yourself in a professional manner, and groom yourself appropriately.

**Image Tips for Women**

- **Suit**: a conservative colored suit (black, grey, navy blue) is always appropriate for an interview, and it is the preferred interview attire of most employers. It is always best to be overdressed than underdressed, and you can never go wrong in a suit. A skirt suit or a pants suit is acceptable, though a skirt suit is considered to be a little bit more formal. If you choose to wear a skirt, it should be knee length, not too tight, and not have any high slits (a moderate slit is appropriate to allow you to walk). Pants should be freshly pressed, and match your blazer.
- **Blouse**: a business-like blouse is appropriate as long as it looks neat under a blazer. Ensure that it fits appropriately and has a conservative neckline. A button-down shirt is preferred, but it should fit appropriately.
- **Shoes**: mid-heel pumps in black, brown, or navy are preferred. Shoes should not be too high or too low. You should be comfortable in your shoes, and they should be well-polished and in good repair. Sandals, sneakers, or boots are not considered professional, and should not be worn during an interview.
- **Hose**: should always be worn under a skirt suit, preferably in a neutral color. Avoid patterns and textures. A pair of knee-high hose are appropriate to wear with a pants suit and pumps. Carry an extra pair of hose in case you get a run or a snag.
- **Accessories**: jewelry can help to accent your features and make you memorable, but you should err on the conservative side. Stick with the rule of one: 1 pair of earrings, 1 necklace, 1 bracelet or watch, etc. Avoid oversized jewelry that can distract employers from what you are saying. In addition, carry a professional looking pocketbook or briefcase, including a portfolio with extra copies of your resume, a notepad, and a pen.
- **Grooming**: you should be well-groomed for every interview, and at the workplace in general. Hair should be clean and brushed, and may be worn either up or down, as long as the employer can clearly see your face. Make-up should be natural looking – avoid heavy make-up that can distract the interviewer. Fingernails should be
clean and not too long; polish is acceptable as long as it is conservative. Ensure your clothes are clean and lint-free. Freshen your breath before the interview.

Image Tips for Men

- **Suit:** a conservative colored suit (black, grey, navy blue) is always appropriate for an interview, and it is the preferred interview attire of most employers. It is always best to be overdressed than underdressed, and you can never go wrong in a suit. A single breasted suit is preferred, in a wool or wool blend. The suit should be tailored to fit appropriately in the shoulders and sleeves. Additionally, you should not button the last button (unless it is a 1 button jacket).

- **Shirt:** long-sleeved button down, collared shirts in white are recommended. The collar and sleeves should fit appropriately – you don’t want to look like you’re wearing your father’s shirt. Ensure it is well-pressed.

- **Ties:** should be a conservative stripe or a small pattern – no bright colors or distracting patterns.

- **Shoes:** laced oxfords or leather dress slip-ons are appropriate in dark colors, like black, brown, or navy blue. Shoes should be polished and in good repair.

- **Socks:** should be solid and dark to match the shoes, and high enough to cover your calf. **DO NOT** wear white socks!

- **Accessories:** Limit the amount of jewelry you wear – a watch, cufflinks, or a tie pin is acceptable. A leather belt, matching your shoes, should be worn (even if it is not necessary). In addition, carry a professional looking briefcase, including a portfolio with extra copies of your resume, a notepad, and a pen.

- **Grooming:** Make sure your hair is brushed and neat, your nails are clean, and you are polished and professional looking. Clothes should be clean and lint-free. For facial hair, you should follow the rule of all or nothing – that means you are either clean-shaven or you have a full beard/mustache/goatee/soul patch. Freshen your breath before the interview. Do not wear strong smelling cologne.

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**STEP 4: UNDERSTANDING INTERVIEWS**

Once you have a sense of your strengths and weakness, and what you can offer to the organization, you need to understand the different types of interviews. In general, you will probably encounter 6 different types of interviews – but keep in mind that your interview will be dictated by your interviewer, and some interviewers are more comfortable interviewing than others.

Also, remember that your interview begins when you submit your application materials. Ensure that you are professional in all communications, including your email message, which should be grammatically correct and formal (make sure your email address is appropriate; you may want to consider making an email address specifically for job applications – but be sure to check it!). If you receive a call from a number you do not recognize, please make sure that you are in an appropriate location to take the call and that you have the time to talk. If not, let the call go to voicemail (which should be appropriate, and should include your name), and return the call as soon as possible.

When scheduling the interview, ask for a confirmation email with the date, time, location, names, and job titles of all interviewers and contact information of within least one person at the organization. With this information, you can properly prepare for the interview.

**The 6 types of interviews:**

1. **Telephone Interview:** typically, this will be a “screening” interview where you speak with a human resource professional who will determine if you meet the basic qualifications. If so, then you will be recommended to interview with a hiring manager or committee. The phone interview is typically very short – between 15-30
minutes. You will mostly be asked questions about your background – including education, coursework, internships, and extracurricular activities.

The nice thing about a phone interview is that you can have all of your materials in front of you, including your résumé, notes, and job description, which should help to answer questions. Here are a couple of tips for phone interviews:

- If you are not expecting the call, ask if you can call back in five minutes, or at a mutually agreed upon time; you are under no obligation to do a phone interview on the spot.
- Turn off all external sources of distraction, including music, television, and Facebook – you need to stay focused on the interview.
- Consider standing while talking, as it improves the quality of your voice, and projects enthusiasm.
- Smile when you talk! Looking in a mirror also helps.
- Speak slowly and articulate your ideas clearly. You do not have visual cues to guide the conversation.

2. **Structured/Traditional Interview**: this is the most common format of interview. The discussion is guided by the interviewer, who will ask you questions, and you will answer. At the end of the interview, you will have the opportunity to ask questions about the job or organization.

3. **Behavioral Interview**: this format is very popular, and is being used more, especially for full-time jobs. The premise of this format is that your past behavior will likely predict future behavior. Questions are targeted to reveal details of past performance with specific examples. The employer is looking for specific information about your approach to a situation and the result of your efforts. It is essential that you relay information in a clear, concise manner – the best approach to this is to use the STAR technique, which will be discussed later.

4. **Non-Directive Interview**: this type of interview is unstructured, and more like a conversation. The employer may not ask any questions, or will ask very open-ended questions, like “Tell me about yourself”, and expects the candidate to direct the conversation. A non-directive interview separates those students who have prepared for an interview, and those who have not, as you must be self-assured for this type of interview. You will be expected to lead the conversation for about 75% of the interview.

5. **High-Stress Interview**: this format is designed to determine how you deal with stress. Typically, this type of interview will be used for high-stress types of jobs, and is probably the least common type of interview. You will be evaluated based upon your ability to remain composed in a tense situation; interviewers are often very aggressive and may have unusual questions.

6. **Case-Style Interview**: this type of interview is most common for group interviews, although you may encounter this approach in an individual interview as well. In this method, the employer presents a potential job scenario and you will be evaluated on your ability to analyze, formulate, and present an outcome. Often, there is no “correct” response, but the interviewer is examining the process of how you came to a conclusion.

**The Interview Format:**

**Stage 1: Arrival**

- ALWAYS arrive 10-15 minutes early for the interview. Remember that you may have to go through security so leave extra time. If you arrive too early, sit in your car or find a bench or café where you can review your notes. If you have never been to the office location before, you may want to find the building the day before to know where you are going.
- Greet the receptionist in a friendly manner, and let her know who you are there to see. While you are waiting, observe the office interactions to determine the environment.
Stage 2: Breaking the Ice

- First impressions count and this is the moment! Convey confidence by standing up, shaking hands with the interviewer, and looking him/her in the eye. You can then gather your belongings to be escorted to your interview location. Express that you are happy to be there.
- Expect some small talk for a couple of minutes — the weather, office locations, news stories, sports victories — it is recommended that you read the newspaper or watch the news a couple of days before your interview.

Stage 3: Information Exchange

- The beginning part of the interview will be an introduction to you and the organization, and you will be asked questions to determine if you have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to effectively perform the job. You need to verbalize your ability to do the job by giving examples using the STAR technique (more information to follow).

Stage 4: Expanding the Focus

- This is really the “sales pitch” portion of the interview — where you are going to narrow in on detailed information about yourself and how you fit in with the job, and the organization. You want to show enthusiasm and interest in the position. Additionally this is the time when you need to address anything that has not been covered thus far in the interview. Remember: if you have not told the interviewer something, then they will not know! Don’t assume that they have read your resume and cover letter. If you have an experience that directly relates to the position or the organization, you need to clearly articulate that message. You do not have to wait for a question regarding that quality; instead, you can bring up the topic and steer the interview in that way. The best time to expand the focus is towards the end of the interview, perhaps when the employer has finished asking questions and wants to know if you have questions. You can reply with: “I do have a couple of questions, but first I wanted to reiterate my interest in the position, and let you know about…”

Stage 5: The Wrap Up

- The last part of the interview allows you to ask questions of the employer (you should have some prepared). State your interest in the position. Ask about the next step in the interview process and when you can anticipate notification regarding an employment decision or a second interview. Obtain a business card from all interviewers. Thank the interviewer(s), shake hands, and state that you enjoyed the meeting. Write a thank you email upon return to your home.

STEP 5: ACING THE INTERVIEW!

General Interview Tips

Now that you are prepared for the interview, it’s time to ace the interview! Here are a couple of tips to remember during your interview:

- Convey a positive tone of voice. Sound happy to be at the interview - smile. Also, check your volume so you are neither too quiet nor too loud.
- Use correct grammar and a strong vocabulary. Preferably, try to use jargon from your career field.
- Have good posture — your back should be straight, feet on the floor and knees bent at 90˚ angles. Ladies, if you are wearing a skirt, your legs should be together and crossed at the ankle. Hands should be folded in your lap or on the table, though you can use your hands to emphasize specific points.
• Maintain good eye contact with all interviews. If you are interviewing with only 1 person, then you should look at them in the eye about 66% of the time, and the rest of the time you can glance behind them or to either side. Try to avoid looking down if possible. If you are interviewing with multiple interviewers, then you should look around the room at everyone and try to maintain eye contact.

• Avoid “um” and “ahs” and phrases like “okay”, “like”, and “you know”.

• Practice relaxation and breathing techniques to stay calm.

• Ask for clarification if you do not understand a question.

• Answer all parts of the question – especially if there are multiple answers to the question.

• Stop and think about an answer to a question. If you are not sure of a response, then look down at your resume for suggestions, or paraphrase the question before answering. If after careful thought, you cannot answer the question, then admit you don’t know.

• Remain positive, and never volunteer negative information. Avoid negative phrases like “No, I have not” or “No, I cannot”. Try to phrase your answers in a positive manner.

• Don’t discuss salary unless the employer brings it up first.

The STAR Technique

The STAR technique has been mentioned a couple of times already, but it is an essential part of succeeding in a job interview. All interview questions are geared towards understanding your knowledge and experience as it relates to the position, and the best way to do that is to give specific examples. After all, anyone can say that they have good organizational skills, but if you can give an example of a time when you have used that skill, then it demonstrates that you can be organized on the job.

S = Situation (background information)

T = Task (what did you have to do?)

A = Action (what you did, and how you did it)

R = Result (the outcome of your effort)

Here’s an example of how to use the STAR technique:

**Question:** Give me an example of a time when you used your organizational skills?

**Situation:** In my State and Local Government class at the University at Albany,

**Task:** I had to work in a 4 member group on a case study surrounding the proposed closing of a town park.

**Action:** I took the initiative to serve as team leader of the group, so I organized weekly meetings for the team members to discuss the progress of the project. I made a list of all of the necessary components of the case study, and delegated each task. I followed up with each team member to clarify responsibilities and ensure that the task was being completed in a timely fashion. Personally, I managed the budget aspect of the project, which included organizing all of the fiscal information into an Excel spreadsheet, and analyzing the funds to determine where cuts could be made. Lastly, I compiled all of the components into a written report.

**Result:** The group made a presentation of our findings to the class, and we received an “A” on the project.

By providing an example, you clearly demonstrate organizational skills, but we also find other skill sets mentioned as well, such as computer skills, leadership ability, team work skills, analytical skills, and budgeting. The STAR approach can be used to answer all kinds of interview questions, but specifically should be used for behavioral based questions/interviews.
Commonly Asked Interview Questions

• **Tell me about yourself.** This is a very open-ended question and you should use it to make a brief statement about your education and professional background, why you’re interested in the position, and how you are qualified for it.

• **Why did you choose this major/career?** Indicate a particular skill or interest. Tell a story about it.

• **What courses/subjects did you like best or least?** Talk about the courses in your major and the ones in which you performed best.

• **What are your long and short term career goals?** You need not be specific but you must show knowledge of career paths and opportunities in the industry.

• **What do you consider your greatest strength?** Pick one that relates to the position and give an example using the STAR method.

• **What do you consider your greatest weakness?** Choose a weakness not related to the position, but indicate that you are working to strengthen it. Avoid personal weaknesses by focusing more on a technical skill or area of knowledge. You could also discuss a negative which the interviewer already knows or one which you have clearly improved upon that was a former weakness.

• **What motivates you?** Tell a story about your accomplishments and what was personally satisfying.

• **Why should we hire you?** Use this question to review the major key points of your interview outline. Stress your strengths.

• **Why do you want to work for our company?** Show your knowledge of the company, what you’ve learned at the interview, and discuss your personal goals and values.

• **What have been your most significant achievements?** Tell a STAR story!

• **What qualities do you possess that make you think you’d be successful in this job/industry?** Use your research to back up the personal qualities that make you their best candidate.

• **What do you do in your free time?** Talk about a hobby, sport, or special interest, but don't fake it.

• **In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our organization?** Reiterate contributions made in the past and relate them to this organization.
The following are behavioral based questions, and should be answered using the STAR technique.

- Describe a situation where you had to coordinate the activities of other people.
- Describe a time when you successfully balanced several competing priorities.
- Tell me about a time when you worked the hardest and had the greatest sense of achievement.

- How do you go about organizing your work and scheduling your time?
- Give me an example of a goal you set and how you achieved it.
- Describe a successful project you completed which required long hours.
- Describe a time when you had to work with someone who was uncooperative.
- What is the greatest decision you’ve had to make within the last 6 months?
- Describe a time when you had to adapt to a variety of people or situations.
- Give me an example of where you had difficulty in a course and what steps you took to remedy it.
- Give me an example of a time where you took on a leadership role.
- Tell me about a time you had to handle a difficult situation with a co-worker.
- Tell me about a time when you failed and what you learned from that experience.
- What did you do in your last position to contribute toward team success?

**Sample Questions to Ask in an Interview**

- Could you describe more fully the duties and responsibilities of the position?
- Is this a newly created position or are you filling a vacancy?
- How are new hires trained and developed?
- How many employees are in the department and will I be working as part of a team?
- Who would be my immediate supervisor?
- What is the management style of the organization? The department? The supervisor?
- What new projects or initiatives are planned for the near future?
- What major projects could I expect within the first six months/year on the job?
- How would you describe the work environment?
- Could you describe the career paths of people in this job/department?
- What are the opportunities for advancement or professional growth?
- How and when will my performance be evaluated?
- What do you see as the strengths of this department/division?
- What are the priorities of the organization over the next year?
- What is the greatest challenge currently facing the department/organization?
- Could you describe a typical day for someone in this position?
- What does it take to be highly successful in this organization?
- What percentage of employees pursue advanced degrees?
- What skills are most valuable in performing this job?
- How are important decisions made in this department?
STEP 6: FOLLOW UP

Congratulations! You have gotten through the interview process, but now the hard part comes - waiting. While you are waiting there are a couple of things you should do to assess your interview performance and improve for the next time.

First, you want to analyze your interview. Note your areas of strength and weakness, and determine how you can incorporate your areas of strength into your next interview, and how you can improve upon your weaknesses. Ask yourself: Was I prepared? Which questions were difficult to answer? How would I answer those questions in the future? Did I cover my “selling points”? Did I do enough research about the job and the employer? Create a list of interview questions – if you were asked those questions once, you will probably be asked them again. Next, assess whether you want the job and would like to work for that organization. Think about potential areas of concern, and if necessary, address them with the employer before you accept an offer. Discuss the interview with a staff member from the Rockefeller College Office of Career & Alumni Programs to gain further insight and to determine the next steps.

Next, you should write a thank you letter/email within 24 hours of the interview. A thank you letter should be written regardless of how the interview went. If, after some reflection, you determine that the position and/or the organization is not a right fit for you, then a thank you letter is the appropriate time to withdraw your application (see sample below).

**Thank You Letters/Emails**

**Why do I need a thank you email?**

- Expresses appreciation for the interview.
- Reiterates your interest in the position, department, and company.
- Reminds the employer of your relevant skills and qualifications.
- Provides additional information that did not get covered in the interview.
- Failure to provide a thank you letter can be regarded as lack of interest in the position.

**Guidelines:**

- A thank you email should be sent after every interview.
- Everyone who interviews you or helps you in any way should get a thank you letter.
- Personalize the thank you letter/email, do not write the same email to multiple people.
- Emphasize additional information that didn’t get covered in the interview, such as a project you worked on or a relevant experience that relates to the job. You can also use the email to clarify or expand upon something discussed in the interview.
- Send an email within 24 hours OR a letter within 48 hours; in most cases an email is acceptable, and should be written in the body of the email (not as an attachment).
- PROOFREAD!

**Sample Thank You Email**

Dear Ms. McCarty:

Thank you for meeting with me on Thursday, May 29th to discuss the Graduate Internship program at the New York State Assembly. I enjoyed talking with you and Bob Jones about the direction and goals of the program.

As you described, the New York State Assembly is looking for individuals to conduct research and develop policies. I am confident that my experience working with Congressman Tonko’s campaign assisting in writing and revising policy will enable me to fulfill the requirements of the Assembly internship. At the same time, I was happy to learn that there are ample opportunities for me to continue to grow professionally.

Once again, it was a pleasure meeting with you. I look forward to hearing from you soon. If there is additional information you need from me, please do not hesitate to call me at (555) 555-5555.

Sincerely,

John Doe
Sample Thank You Email – Withdrawing Application

Dear Ms. McCarty:
Thank you for meeting with me on Thursday, May 29th to discuss the Graduate Internship program at the New York State Assembly. I enjoyed talking with you and Bob Jones about the direction and goals of the program.

After learning more about the New York State Assembly and the Graduate Internship program, I do not think that the opportunity matches my career goals. Therefore, I would like to withdraw my application.

Once again, it was a pleasure meeting with you and I thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
John Doe

Following Up

After you have written your thank you email, you have to sit back and wait for a response from the employer. During the interview, you should have asked about when you will receive notification regarding employment or a second interview, and you should have a timeline of when you should hear a response from the employer. You should wait to hear from the employer, but you should not wait too long. For example, if the interviewer told you that they should have a decision within 2 weeks, and it has been 3 weeks, then you should send a follow up message. (If you did not ask about the employer’s timeline for hiring, then you should follow up after 2 weeks.) Here’s an example of a follow up message:

Dear Ms. McCarty:
Thank you for meeting with me on Thursday, May 29th to discuss the Graduate Internship program at the New York State Assembly. I enjoyed talking with you and Bob Jones about the direction and goals of the program.

I wanted to reiterate my interest in the position, and to determine where you are in the hiring process. Any information you can give me on the status of the position would be appreciated.

Once again, it was a pleasure meeting with you. I look forward to hearing from you soon. If there is additional information you need from me, please do not hesitate to call me at (555) 555-5555.

Sincerely,
John Doe

If you receive a rejection letter, follow up with a note expressing your interest in future positions for which you may qualify. If you are comfortable, ask for feedback on your interview and why you were not selected as a candidate.

STEP 7: EVALUATING JOB OFFERS, NEGOTIATING, AND ACCEPTING OFFERS

Congratulations! You have received a job offer, or perhaps several job offers! Do not feel pressured to accept a job on the spot – it’s important that you carefully evaluate the job offer. When you receive a job offer, either over the phone or via email, you should ask for some time to review the offer (even if you know that you will accept). The polite way to ask for time is to state, “Thank you very much for the offer. I would like some time to review the offer – can I get back to you tomorrow (you should ask for no more time than a week)?” Whenever possible, try to get the offer in writing. An offer should typically detail your salary and start date, though it may include information about benefits as well. You should share your offer information with the Rockefeller College Office of Career & Alumni Programs, who will help you to sort out the details of the offer, and determine if it fits in with your long-term career plans.
When evaluating a job offer, you should consider:

- **Job Content:** Do you fully understand the nature of the job? Will you be happy performing this job for an extended period of time (at least 1 year, if not 2)? Will this job make you marketable for future opportunities?

- **Your Manager/Supervisor:** When you interviewed for the position, did you meet with your immediate supervisor? What was your impression of him/her? Will s/he serve as a mentor? Does s/he have a management style conducive to a productive work environment?

- **Coworkers:** Even though you will be reporting directly to your supervisor, you will more than likely need to work collaboratively with your coworkers. You will be spending between 30-40 hours at work every week (if not more), and you should get along with those individuals.

- **Time Commitment:** What is a typical work week? Are you required to work overtime? Will you have to travel?

- **Location:** How long is the commute? Is the office in a location where you feel comfortable? Is this an area where you would want to live?

- **Salary and Benefits:** Is the salary competitive? How are individual salary increases determined? When and how are salary/promotions determined? Evaluate vacation time, medical/dental insurance, retirement plans, and other fringe benefits.

**Negotiating**

After reviewing the full job offer, you may decide that you want to negotiate. You will need to prepare a strategy ahead of time and approach the negotiation with a positive attitude. You will also need to provide a reason why you are worthy of an increase in salary or benefits (not just because you think you deserve it). This is very similar to an interview – you must convince the employer that you possess skills or experience that they need. Follow these steps to help you with the negotiation:

- **Assess your budget:** Create a budget of your expenses, and determine if the salary will allow you to live comfortably. Estimate about 28% of your salary will go to taxes.

- **Research:** Determine typical salary ranges for someone of your educational background, experience level, and geographic location. You can find salary information on the NYS Bureau of Labor Statistics, www.salary.com, or you can ask the Rockefeller College Office of Career & Alumni Programs for the average salary of recent graduates.

- **Benefits:** Your salary is not the only compensation you will receive. Most companies will offer a retirement plan, health and dental insurance, and paid vacations. In addition, some organizations may also offer bonuses, increases, stock options, commissions, company cars, pensions, signing bonuses, and relocation expenses. You should factor these perks into your total offer.

After evaluating the total offer, you should then determine what factors you would like to negotiate. Typically, you will negotiate salary, and you should determine how much more you would like. The salary increase should not be much higher than what the original offer was – for example, if you were offered $40,000, then it would be inappropriate to ask for $65,000; instead, you may want to ask for $50,000. Keep in mind that the company may come back with a counter-offer, which will typically be in the middle of the two salaries. Therefore, if your budget is $45,000/year, you should ask for a higher rate, in case the organization counter-offers. After determining the salary amount you will ask for, you should start the salary negotiations by stating something like, “I’m very pleased to receive the offer, but given the responsibilities of the job and my qualifications, I wanted to determine if the salary is negotiable.” It is best to ask if the salary is negotiable first, as you do not want to offend the employer, and also, there may be set pay structures in place that don’t allow for room to negotiate. If the salary is not negotiable, you may want to consider negotiating other benefits, such as working from home/telecommuting, working a reduced schedule, or having the employer pay for transportation costs.
Accepting a Job Offer

When accepting a job offer, you should adhere to some ethical considerations.

- If you are not interested in the offer, you should decline as soon as possible.
- If you are waiting to hear back from other organizations regarding employment, be honest with the organization that gave you the offer. Indicate that you are flattered by their offer, but you would like time to consider additional offers. You should then contact the other organizations, and let them know that you have another offer, and when can you anticipate notification regarding the position.

  Accepting a job offer is a serious commitment. Once you accept, it is considered proper business ethics to discontinue all job search activities. In fact, you should inform employers that you have accepted an offer and are no longer eligible for consideration. It is unacceptable to reverse your decision. Once all negotiation has ended and you’ve agreed upon an offer, obtain written confirmation. Asking for an offer in writing prevents a possible future misunderstanding.
SECTION 4: NETWORKING

WHAT IS NETWORKING?
Networking is one of the most essential career development and job search tools that is often overlooked by students and job hunters. Networking involves developing and maintaining connections with individuals, then mutually benefitting from this developed relationship. In relation to career development, a well developed network provides you with a support system of individuals who can provide meaningful assistance to you as it may relate to your career/industry exploration, connections to other individuals and learning about potential job openings. Networking should be approached as an ongoing process that takes time, and nurturing and not something you do just when you are looking for a job. It is important to remember that networking is a two way process in which you provide beneficial support to those in your network as well.

WHY IS NETWORKING IMPORTANT?
Networking provides you with an opportunity to:

• Connect with individuals in your field of interest that can provide beneficial insight
• Gather information pertaining to a particular field or industry
• Increase your chances to find out about job openings otherwise not advertised

CONNECT WITH INDIVIDUALS
One of the best ways to learn about an industry, company or position that you are interested in is to learn about it from someone that is connected to it firsthand. Building your connections will provide you with an invaluable opportunity to best prepare for your career goals. It is important to remember that networking is a mutually beneficial process. You never know when your skills and resources can prove to be beneficial to others in your network. Promoting your skills and interest to an individual in your network can additionally lead to opportunities to collaborate with people on projects in which professional interests are shared.

GATHER INFORMATION
Gaining information about a specific career related topic can be most beneficial and inspiring when it comes from the personal experience of others. Learning about a specific field of interest and the various occupations within it from an individual in the field provides you with an opportunity to gain this knowledge. Participating in an informational interview will offer an opportunity to gather this information in a structured manner.

LEARN ABOUT JOB VACANCIES
Ever heard of the phrase “It’s not what you know, it’s who you know”? It fully applies here. Approximately 66% of job vacancies are never advertised to job seekers and are instead obtained through some form of personal and professional references! Employers prefer to hire candidates that have been referred by a trusted source. They are also inclined to hire recently met job seekers who have effectively demonstrated their qualifications and professional competence. By expanding your network to include individuals that have connections to these unknown positions, you greatly increase your chances of learning about opportunities.

HOW DO I ESTABLISH MY NETWORK?
Networking opportunities occur on a daily basis and can include partaking in a brief conversation with someone on an elevator to an arranged meeting with a professional. There are many ways to develop your list of potential networking contacts. Begin by identifying all the people that you come in contact with through your activities. These can include:

• Your friends, their parents, and family members
• Your relatives and extended family
• Former and current employers and co-workers
• Coaches, clergy
• Classmates, faculty, advisors
• Club and organization members
• Professional Associations
• University at Albany Alumni Association members and/or those of other schools you’ve attended
• Rockefeller Career Mentors
You will have a better chance of talking or meeting with someone when you have been referred by a mutual contact. Begin to develop your networking contacts by asking people if they know someone working in your field of interest. Once you have started to initiate contact, remember to thank and stay in touch with those who assisted. For example, a student that is considering a career in Public Policy might make a list that looks similar to this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RELATION TO YOU</th>
<th>CAREER INDUSTRY</th>
<th>CONNECTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sister</td>
<td>Social Services</td>
<td>Has a best friend that works in state government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>Public Administration</td>
<td>Knows several policy professionals from previous experience in lobbying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Friend</td>
<td>Accounting</td>
<td>Has a strong professional relationship with her local mayor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbor</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>Works for the NYS Assembly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HOW TO FURTHER DEVELOP YOUR NETWORK
ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKING
Online social networking has become the fastest growing form of networking amongst professionals. Networking through online resources provides individuals that usually would not have a chance to connect with one another to develop an association on a professional level. Many of these sites serve as a professional networking tool to millions of global users to reconnect with classmates and colleagues, discover new connections through users and obtain answers to industry related questions through both direct contact and discussion boards. It is important to maintain a professional appearance throughout your profile pages when using these social networking sites for career purposes. Some beneficial sites to utilize include:

LinkedIn.com
- Linkedin is a business-oriented social networking site mainly used for professional networking. As of July 2009, it had more than 43 million registered users, spanning 170 industries.

MyWorkster.com
- MyWorkster is an online database of alumni, employers, parents, and friends who have joined the community to share their career experiences with students and alumni. It enables students to connect with professionals within the world of work.

Meetup.com
- The world’s largest network of local groups that makes it easy for anyone to organize a local group or find one of the thousands already meeting up, face-to-face. More than 2,000 groups get together in local communities daily with the goal of improving themselves or their communities.

Facebook.com
- Facebook is a global social networking website with over 300 million members. In addition to finding friends and updating profile pages accessible to users, members can also join professional groups and connect with other group members.

Twitter.com
- Twitter is a social networking and micro-blogging service that enables its users to send and read messages. Many organizations post job opportunities and events through these “tweets”.

INTERNSHIPS
Working in an internship related to your field of interest will allow you to work directly with professionals. Building and maintaining strong relationships with employees and supervisors you work directly with will allow you to add to your network individuals who can attest to your work ability. Having connections at a company or knowing someone who can pass your resume along is extremely helpful as you begin your job search.

ROCKEFELLER ALUMNI CAREER ADVISORS
The Rockefeller College Office of Career & Alumni Programs has developed an excellent resource for building your network of professional contacts. Rockefeller Alumni Career Advisors are volunteers who have agreed to assist students and alumni with their careers. These alumni represent a variety of career fields and professions and are eager to provide
information about their field, industry, careers, and company. Students are advised to take advantage of this service early in their academic program. By reviewing the “Networking” tab on Symplicity, you may select those Career Advisors in your field or those who are working in organizations of interest to conduct an Informational Interview with (see below).

**CAREER EVENTS**
Participating in various career related events can provide valuable opportunities to meet new professional contacts. Some of these events offered through Rockefeller College include:

- Information Sessions
- Alumni Panels & Presentations
- Practice Interviews with ASPA
- Policy Conversations

**WHAT IS INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING?**
Informational interviewing provides a medium to learn about a specific industry firsthand from individuals that have worked in the field. It is the process of conducting exploratory informational conversations with persons who can provide you with career advice and introduce you to others who can assist you with your goals. For some people contacting and speaking to professionals in their field of interest can be intimidating. However, most people like to provide information to those breaking into the field, and enjoy talking about their own work. It is important to realize that the purpose of conducting informational interviews is two-fold.

The first purpose of informational interviews is to gather information to determine whether or not a potential career or company is a good match for your skills and interests. Talking with experienced professionals is the best way to get a realistic picture of the profession, industry or company. They can describe to you the particular culture of their organization, the type of jobs within it, typical career paths of employees and provide a clear description of their own career. These insiders can also serve as key contacts in your future job search. Considering that most job openings never make it to the classified ads, insiders can help lead you to that elusive “hidden” job market.

Making a lasting impression and developing long term relationships is the second goal of informational interviewing. Merely conducting a fifteen minute phone interview will not reap results. Sending thank you notes, maintaining contact, and following up are the keys to maintaining a network with the individuals with whom you conduct informational interviews. The more you build your network and nurture it, the more effective you will be.

**MAKING CONTACT**
One of the most efficient ways to initiate an informational interview is through email. If you have access to a person’s email address, compose a very brief note of introduction, stating how you obtained their name and outlining a few key issues that you would like to address. Ask the contact to reply with an appropriate time for you to speak with him/her. In some cases, you may not receive a response to your email. Unfortunately, people who are flooded with email each day often don’t open mail from unknown sources.

If you do not receive a response, follow up with a phone call. Whether you are calling a Rockefeller Career Advisor or a personal contact, prepare in advance what you want to say. This is your first chance to make a positive impression. You want to sound organized, knowledgeable, and professional. Indicate who you are, how you obtained their name, and why you are calling. Express your interest in talking or meeting with the person at their workplace, indicating that you only need twenty minutes of their time. Practice what you want to say beforehand. You may not get through to the person on the initial try, but remember that persistence and congeniality will go a long way.

**PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW**
Depending upon your initial reasons for meeting with a Career Advisor or personal referral, carefully consider what it is you wish to ask and accomplish in the discussion. Because you have initiated the contact, you must be clear about your agenda. Your questions should be focused around three major categories: career preparation, the content and responsibilities of the person’s job, and trends in the industry and profession. If possible, do some initial research on the organization with whom the person is affiliated. Set goals and objectives for your discussion and prepare an outline for the meeting.
CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW

If the interview is being conducted by telephone, call at the agreed upon time. If you are having a face to face meeting, arrive approximately ten minutes early. Be sure to clearly state your purpose for the interview. Indicate right away that you are only looking for information and advice. **It is not appropriate to ask a networking contact to provide you with a job.**

Prepare your questions carefully so you come across sincerely and genuinely interested in the person and the information they are sharing. You will be judged upon the scope of your questions and the way you deliver them. As an introduction, discuss a little about your background, skills, and interests. The goal is to be conversational and relaxed yet professional. Your questions should be broad and very open-ended. Remember that you are there to listen and learn, not impress the person with your qualifications for a job. (See the attached list of questions.)

Bring a resume and ask the person to review it if it seems appropriate. Many people ask for a resume to get a better understanding of you and your background. If the person has critiqued the resume, you can later send a final copy along with a thank you note.

Be enthusiastic and well prepared; it is the key to a successful interview. Contacts want to feel their time was well spent. In addition, the meeting may benefit them as well. If a position opens up in the future, and you have made a positive impression, you may be in line for a job interview.

End the meeting by asking for other contacts in the field who may be of assistance, and if you could use this person’s name as a referral. Be sure to express your gratitude for their time and the information you received.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Evaluate the success of the discussion. Did it meet your goals and objectives? Did you come away with answers to most of your questions? Did it confirm or change your impressions of the occupation or industry? Did it help prepare you for future plans?

Prepare a brief thank you letter (see attached sample) outlining some specific points covered during your interview. Enclose a resume, if appropriate. Indicate that you will keep the person informed of your progress and any meeting you set up as a result of their referrals.

Networking is an ongoing process that will continue to demand your time and attention. It means keeping in touch with established contacts, constantly reaching out to new ones, and is essential to your career success.
QUESTIONS FOR NETWORKING AND INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

Remember, the objective in conducting an informational interview is to gain knowledge about a potential industry and to develop your network. Your questions should be tailored to your personal and career objectives and should not focus directly on obtaining a position with the employer. Here are some possible questions to facilitate your interview.

Career Preparation
What is the best preparation for this profession? (i.e. education, part-time work, training programs, etc.)
What skills or talents are most important for this field and how can they be acquired?
How did you become interested in this profession/organization? What are the good and bad points about this profession?
What was your undergraduate/graduate major? How did it help you prepare for your career? What additional training/education have you had?
How can students find summer jobs or internships in this field? Are there other ways to get experience?
Is a graduate/advanced degree important? If so, which areas of study would you recommend?
What journals, magazines, books, or websites would be helpful for me to learn more about this profession?
What personal attributes do you think have contributed to your success in this field?
What professional organizations do you belong to? Would you recommend I join?
Which of my transferable skills should I emphasize when looking for employment in the field?
What skills are most valued in this profession/industry?
What are some good resources for job opportunities and further research?
Do you have any suggestions regarding my resume?

Job Content and Responsibilities
What services are provided by your organization?
What is a typical day like? Do you work alone or as part of a group?
Can you describe the work environment? (i.e. casual/formal, structured/flexible, etc.)
Which part of the job is most challenging for you?
What do you like most about your position? The least?
What are the greatest pressures, strains, or anxieties in your work? What are the toughest problems or decisions with which you must cope?
What are the time demands related to this field?
How did you find your job?
Can you describe your job history?

Industry/Job Trends and Environment
Tell me about the current state of the industry.
What changes do you foresee in this profession/industry over the next five years?
What is the outlook for jobs and career growth?
In what other settings do people in this profession work? (e.g. educational institutions, corporations, non-profits, etc.)
What are the titles/responsibilities of the people you work for/with?
To whom do you report?
What are the typical entry level positions in this field?
What is the typical career path?
What are the beginning, mid-range, and top salaries in this profession?
Where are the best employment prospects? What are employment prospects in your company?

Do you know anyone else who could share career advice with me?
SAMPLE EMAIL REQUEST FOR INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

Dear Ms. Smith,
I was referred to you through Professor Bob McEvoy from Rockefeller College of Public Affairs & Policy at the University at Albany. I am writing to introduce myself and request a possible meeting or phone call with you regarding my interest in the field of local government.

Presently I am in my first year of the MPA program at Rockefeller College, with a concentration in local government management. In the past, I participated in various internships and volunteer experiences surrounding politics, doing campaign work for Senator Schumer. Having completed one semester in the MPA program, I am now considering what my options are in pursuing full-time positions after graduation. If possible, I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you for an informational interview so that I can learn more about your career path, find out about opportunities in the field, and get some advice from you as to how I can best achieve my goals.

I know you are very busy and truly appreciate whatever time you can give me. I look forward to hearing from you and hope that we can set up a meeting. Thank you in advance for considering this request.

Sincerely,
John Doe

SAMPLE THANK YOU EMAIL FOR INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

Dear Mr. Rogers:
Thank you for spending time with me last Tuesday to discuss your career and the field of public finance. I was extremely appreciative of the tour of your facility as well as the introduction to your colleagues.

The information you provided about your position as a Financial Analyst at the NYS Banking Department was extremely helpful. Your description of your duties helped to clarify the distinction between public and private finance. I also appreciated your tips on entering into public finance, and will plan to follow up immediately with the contact names you shared with me.

Again, thank you for your assistance. I thoroughly enjoyed our visit, and will keep you posted on my progress.

Sincerely,
Max Evans

SAMPLE THANK YOU LETTER TO NETWORKING REFERRAL SOURCE

Dear Ms. Mertz:
It was a pleasure meeting you at the "Policy Conversation" sponsored by Rockefeller College of Public Affairs & Policy last month. I appreciated your interest in my job search and would like to particularly thank you for putting me in contact with Jane Bryant at the American Red Cross in Boston.

Ms. Bryant was most generous with her time and provided me with a great deal of useful information on job hunting in the Boston area. She made valuable suggestions for strengthening my resume and gave me the names of a few colleagues who might be interested in my background and skills.

Enclosed is a copy of my updated resume. Feel free to make comments or suggestions.
Again, thank you for being so helpful. I will keep in touch as my search progresses.

Sincerely,
Lucille Ricardo