EY Center for Careers in Accounting and Information Systems
Orientation for the Career Planning and Recruiting Process:
for Accounting and IS Freshmen, Sophomores and Transfer Students

**Welcome to the
EY Center for Careers in Accounting and Information Systems**

When you first begin your college career at or transfer from another college or university into CSUN, there is a period of adjustment and a learning curve about academic requirements and planning, semester registration, university offices and services, location of buildings on campus, students clubs and activities, etc., and often students do not feel ready to take on the additional effort of engaging in career planning and preparing for the recruiting process.

As a freshman or sophomore, you have much time to learn about academic majors and careers, so take advantage of the opportunity to start your career exploration process. The sooner you start exploring, the more you will learn, and the better decisions you will make. However, be aware that there are firms that are already recruiting for freshmen and sophomores.

As a transfer student, the effort to focus on your career planning process should start as soon as possible. (In fact, it should have started in community college before you chose the major you'd pursue at CSUN.) There are already job opportunities offered in the Fall semester with a variety of employers, so recruiting may start immediately. And, in the Spring semester, there are other opportunities available to juniors. You can get caught up in the wave of recruiting without knowing what are your career goals, what is important to you, what are the career paths and opportunities available, and how to pursue them. Or you can focus on the long term and engage in a more beneficial career exploration process (before jumping into recruiting).

What is career exploration and career planning? It is the process of figuring out who you are (includes your personality, education, experience, strengths), what you want (includes your career values, interests, and strengths you want to use), and what is available (career paths, employers and opportunities). Then, you can evaluate your choices based on mutual fit

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and feasibility (how hard or easy is it to pursue a given path, and what is your tolerance for risk?). You can make an informed choice and determine the steps to pursue a career path. (It is like using a GPS/map program to get directions based on what is your starting point and what is your destination.)

Your primary resource for career exploration, career planning and recruiting, as an accounting, IS or CIT student, is the EY Center for Careers in Accounting and Information Systems.

What is the EY Center for Careers (EYCC) in Accounting and Information Systems?

- **The EYCC in uniquely dedicated in providing a broad range of career exploration/planning and job-search related services to Accounting, Information Systems (IS) and Computer Information Technology (CIT) students and alumni.**
- **The EYCC is managed by Stuart Fried, Director, who has more than 30 years experience in Career Coaching, Corporate Human Resources, Recruiting, Counseling and Workshop Facilitation.**
- **The EYCC also has a staff of student assistants who are experienced with resume and cover letter preparation as well as the recruiting process.**
- **The EYCC's services are free.**
- **The EYCC is located in Bookstein Hall (BB), Room 2224 (2nd floor). The EYCC office phone is 818.677.2979.**
- **EYCC Office Hours during the Fall & Spring semesters are: Monday/Tuesday, 9 am to 5 pm; Wednesday/Thursday, 9 am to 7 pm; Friday, 9 am to 4 pm. During the breaks and summer, the EYCC closes at 5 pm, unless a student needs to meet after 5 pm.**
- **Students can make appointments (except for resume and cover letter reviews) to meet with the EYCC Director, or come in on a walk-in basis to meet with the Director or student assistants.**

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- **The EYCC website - http://csun.edu/acctis/ey-center - contains an array of career planning and job search tools, information about events and workshops, a list of key dates for the upcoming semester, and links to the student organizations, AIS Department, Meet the Firms, Awards Banquet and main campus Career Center websites.**

What services does the EYCC provide?

- **Career Planning - The first step in the career planning and job search process is to do a self-evaluation: Who are you? What is important to you? What are you looking for? What are your long-term goals?**
  - o **"Who are you?" consists of identifying and understanding your personality type, the values that provide the primary motivations for you within a work setting (see the Career Value Assessment on the EYCC website), the work activities you enjoy doing (see the Interest Profiler on the CSUN Career Center Pathways website), and the skills you possess and can develop. It also includes your education, GPA, experience, student and volunteer involvement, and other relevant experience / skills.**
  - o **Start to identify factors (related to your values above) that are most important to you in a job and career path (i.e., challenge, teamwork, helping others, recognition, growth, autonomy, creativity, income, variety, work/life balance, etc.).**
  - o **Then prioritize the factors, and determine if any factors are requirements (vs. preferences). Begin to research the market (career paths, industries, companies, location, and the long-term outlook) and compare career options with your list of factors.**
  - o **Finally, weigh the feasibility of each choice with your level of desire (passion) to pursue a specific path. Your choice(s) will depend on the feasibility and your level of risk tolerance. In other words, the more you can handle risk, the more likely you will seek your ideal path; whereas, the less you can handle risk, the more likely you will seek a realistic (more feasible) path.**
  - o **Career planning is like creating a map or set of directions to get from Point A to Point B and beyond. You have a starting**

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point and you want to reach a destination. Career planning is an on-going and ever-changing process as you learn more about yourself, learn more about the market, and the market itself continues to change.

- <u>Resume and Cover Letter Reviews</u> - **The EYCC staff reviews resumes and cover letters and provides feedback to students to improve the layout and content for both the resume and cover letter(s).**
    - o The EYCC provides two Resume Templates (and Resume Guidelines) - one for Accounting and one for IS and IT. We recommend that you use the EYCC Resume Template as it is designed for a CSUN student, and employers support the use of this template. It presents the information that they are looking for, and in a format that is easy and quick to review.
    - o The EYCC provides two Cover Letter templates as well. One is for the larger public accounting firms, but can be tailored for other employers who hire from CSUN. It explains why you are interested in the employer and position, and shares your unique story and/or provides one or more examples of your experience that demonstrate the skills that employers are seeking. The second template is for online applications, and it easily demonstrates to an employer that you customized the cover letter for that specific company and position, as well as matched the requirements as closely as possible.
    - o Students are encouraged to come to the EYCC and work with the EYCC Director and student assistants for one-on-one assistance. Resume and cover letter reviews are done on a walk-in basis only (no appointments).
    - o The EYCC Director also reviews resumes that are uploaded to Handshake (the online job system), and provides feedback, when possible. <u>All accounting and IS resumes uploaded to Handshake require approval by the EYCC</u>.
    - o ** Do not use the VMOC (resume review) application.
- <u>Networking</u> - **Networking is the process of building and maintaining relationships with professionals and employers. Networking is a key**

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component to exploring and selecting a career path as well as landing in a career position with an employer of your choice.

Networking is the process of learning about career options, employers, industries, positions, and the career paths and decisions that professionals have made. Networking provides you with the opportunity to conduct direct research. Employers want to know that you have some ideas about what you would like to do with your career, and what is important to you. It is in both your and the employer's best interest that you match your career goals with who is the employer and what do they offer. You are more likely to enjoy your work and co-workers, perform better, stay longer, and grow into more responsible roles, a win-win for you and the employer.

In addition to learning how to network with professionals, it is very important to know how and to use <u>LinkedIn</u>, the largest professional online networking site. Recruiters and professionals will look for you on LinkedIn, so it is essential that you have a profile and that your profile is filled in thoroughly and appropriately. In addition, there is great benefit to building your LinkedIn network with students, professionals and others you know, and to learn how to use LinkedIn to find professionals and leverage your contacts for introductions.

- o **<u>Networking Guide</u> - There is a Networking guide on the EYCC website to provide guidance about networking.**
- o **<u>LinkedIn Guide</u> - There is a LinkedIn guide on the EYCC website that has detailed steps to complete your LinkedIn profile, grow your network, and search for and connect with professionals, especially CSUN alumni. The EYCC Director also delivers LinkedIn workshops each semester during which he demonstrates the actual use of LinkedIn as he navigates through the profile, discusses how to build a quality network, and shows how to find professionals using the search function.**
- o **<u>Coffee Chat Guide</u> - There is a detailed step-by-step Coffee Chat guide on the EYCC website. A "coffee chat" is a phone conversation or face-to-face meeting/discussion with a**

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professional. You or the professional may initiate the "coffee chat". *Obviously, you do not need to drink coffee!* The guide takes you through each step of planning and preparing for the discussion. It can occur on the phone (do not ignore phone "coffee chats" as they can lead to follow-up in-person meetings and/or introductions to other professionals with whom to network as well). Also included are sample questions to ask of all professionals, staff/seniors, and managers and above. Students often ask, "*what questions should I ask?*" - ask what is important to you, what you want to know about the professional, their background and experience, their career decisions, the firm, the work, aspects of culture, etc.

- **Job Search** - Whether looking for a part-time, internship or full-time position, the EYCC can help you use the on-campus job site - Handshake - as well as online sites such as Indeed.com. While searching on sites like Indeed.com appears to be easy and straightforward, you will save a lot of time and effort learning how to use the Advanced Job Search function using targeted search strings and Filters to narrow down the search results list. In addition to working with an EYCC staff, there is a Job Search guide on the EYCC website with step-by-step instructions to help you navigate these sites, as well as how to work with recruiting firms (agencies).

- **Interview Prep** - After networking, and preparing and submitting your resume and cover letters, resulting in one or more interviews, it is important to be as prepared for your interview(s) as possible. While you have successfully navigated step one, the next step is just as competitive. You should be prepared:
  - To be confident, but not cocky - learn how to share your experiences and accomplishments in a factual and humble manner without "selling"
  - To answer challenging questions including the dreaded behavioral questions - there are specific questions and certain types of questions that you can anticipate ("Tell me about yourself" "Why are you interested in our firm?" "Why are you

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interested in -----?" "What are your strengths and weaknesses?" "Why should we hire you?" "What are your short and long-term career goals?" "Tell me about a situation when …" "How would you handle …?") We provide guidance as to how to best prepare for these and similar questions, without your practicing and <u>memorizing 100+ possible questions</u>! (What if they don't ask a question you've memorized?) Preparing and <u>remembering</u> (not memorizing) examples (stories) is the key to answering behavioral questions effectively. ** <u>Do not prepare rehearsed answers - you will sound robotic, and not genuine.</u>

- o **To ask good questions - don't ask questions you think they want to hear. Ask questions that actually are of interest to you. If you have done your self-exploration process and researched the field and company, you will know what you still need and want to learn, and that leads to asking excellent questions. You usually do not have a lot of time to ask questions, so knowing what is most important to you will help you prioritize.**
- o **What will you do if an interviewer sits back and says, "So, what would you like to know?" instead of grilling you for 30 - 45 minutes? Will you freeze? Will you panic? Or, will you be ready to take advantage of the opportunity to ask good questions and learn more about the employer, the position, the professional, the career path, and the expectations?**
- o **The EYCC facilitates Interview Prep workshops during the week following Meet the Firms and prior to the start of on-campus interviews (OCIs).**
- o **There are also an Interview Prep guide and a Behavioral Interview guide on the EY Center website.**
- • <u>**Discussion of Offers**</u> **- whether you recruit during the on-campus interview process or through another process (job posting announcement from the EYCC, networking at Meet the Firms or other events, application through Handshake, application through online sites such as Indeed.com, referral, or other), you may want**

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to discuss your offer(s) with someone who is objective and will not try to influence you one way or the other. The EYCC Director will listen, ask you questions, discuss your options, brainstorm negotiation strategy (timing, offer, start date, etc.) and help guide you through the decision- making process without leading you toward a specific decision. When discussing your offer(s) with others (students, professors, family, friends, professionals), be aware that, while they can definitely be helpful, they may have a preference, based on their own pre-conceptions or goals for you, and therefore, may not be as objective.

- **Handshake - All accounting and information systems students should set up a Handshake (http://csun.joinhandshake.com) account and fill in their profile. Handshake is the job site that the EYCC is using as well as other campus career centers, and numerous employers are posting accounting, IS, IT, and other positions on Handshake for CSUN students and alumni. The EYCC staff will help you with your Handshake account. We have two computers for students in our office, so you can setup your account at the EYCC and ask for help directly.**

  ** Use your CSUN email to activate your Handshake account.

  Key fields to complete in your Handshake Account:
    - **Under "Account", fill in the correct School Year (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, Masters, alumni)**
    - **Under "Profile", use the Primary Education box with CSUN David Nazarian College of Business and Economics in the Education section (do not create a separate CSUN listing) - fill in Bachelors or Masters, Major (Accountancy, Pre-Accountancy, Information Systems), and Dates (Started and Expected Graduation)**
    - **These fields need to be filled in to match many job requirements**
    - **You can choose to have your profile "private" (cannot be found and contacted) if you are only using Handshake to apply - or "public" (can be found and contacted) if you want employers to find you**

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With Handshake, you can search for and apply for jobs online. All of the firms who conduct OCIs post open positions on Handshake, and most coordinate the interviews through the system. Even more non-OCI employers post on Handshake as well for students and alumni.

Remember that you need to upload your resume (and other documents) into your Handshake account, and the EYCC needs to review and approve your resume. Once your resume is approved, all other documents will be automatically approved. When you replace an approved resume, or you upload other documents (cover letters, transcripts and DPRs, etc.), they do not need further review and approval. If you make significant changes to your resume or would like your cover letter(s) reviewed, come to the EYCC to meet with one of the staff.

- **Preparation for Summer Leadership Programs (SLPs), Internships and Full-time positions:**
  - Prior to attending a Summer Leadership Program (SLP), network with the firm in advance (and following the SLP) to learn more about the firm and career opportunities, and improve your internship options and decision - read the Preparation Guide on the EYCC website.
  - Prior to starting an internship, network to learn about expectations, know how to perform well, and how to expand networking with the firm so you get the learning experience you're seeking, and increase the possibility of being assigned the work and clients you desire - read the Preparation Guide on the EYCC website.
  - Prior to starting a full-time position, understand expectations, how work is assigned, and how to network throughout your tenure at the employer to improve the opportunities to get assigned the work and clients you desire - read the Preparation Guide on the EYCC website.
- **Job Postings** - the EYCC receives numerous job postings from employers, and the EYCC sends out these postings via email to students and alumni. Many of these positions get filled by CSUN students and alumni.

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Key Events and Activities:

- **EYCC Career Success Programme** (CSP) - **Prior to the start of each semester, the EYCC hosts a 2-day Career Success Programme. Firm professionals from public accounting firms present on a variety of career planning, soft skills and recruiting related topics. The 100 or more students who attend learn about the career exploration and planning process as well as preparing for Meet the Firms and the on-campus recruiting process. They have the opportunity to learn more about firms and network with firm professionals and other students. Attending the CSP is one of the key steps to career planning success. The CSP is free, includes lunch for full-day attendees, and registration opens 2 to 3 weeks prior to the event. Check your CSUN email, Handshake and EYCC website for dates and information.**

- **Meet the Firms** - **Each semester (in September and February), the Accounting and IS (AIS) Department in conjunction with the EYCC and student organizations, hosts the largest career fair for accounting and IS/IT students in Southern California. 70+ firms and organizations and 600+ students attend in September, and 60+ firms and organizations with 400+ students attend in February. Meet the Firms provides a unique opportunity to network with multiple firms to learn about career opportunities and paths, compare employers and build relationships. Attending Meet the Firms is ultimately a key component for career planning and recruiting success.**

  Most large, mid-size and local accounting firms and a number of corporations hire students and graduates from the networking that occurs at Meet the Firms. Employers want to meet you, get to know you, and know what you are looking for. Many of these employers do little recruiting via online posting and resumes only.

  The event is usually held at the Odyssey in Granada Hills. Tickets go on sale at the beginning of each semester. You will receive emails with information as to when and how to purchase tickets.

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- **On-Campus Interviews** (OCIs) - On-campus interviews occur each semester (in October and March at the EYCC (Bookstein Hall 2224) - you will apply via Handshake (and on most firm websites), and generally interview(s) are scheduled in Handshake (with the exception of a couple of firms that schedule directly with students). The EYCC posts (and updates) the OCI schedule at the office and on the EYCC website.
  - **Fall OCIs** - Big 4 and mid-tier accounting firms (and one or more government entities) hold on-campus interviews in the fall for internship and full-time positions. Internship opportunities may be for the upcoming winter or the following summer. To be eligible for most internships with these firms, a student must have only 1 summer remaining prior to graduation. The Big 4 also offer diversity internship programs for students with 2 summers remaining prior to graduation - check the requirements carefully as they differ amongst Big 4 firms. Full-time positions may start in January or the following summer / fall.

    In addition to the OCIs, many local accounting firms hire for internship and full-time via Meet the Firms, Handshake and email job postings.

  - **Spring OCIs** - Big 4 and mid-tier accounting firms mostly hire for Summer Leadership Programs (SLPs) with a few openings for internships and full-time. Most SLPs lead to internship offers for the following winter or summer. One or more government entities may hire for full-time as well. For most SLPs, students will have 2 summers remaining prior to graduation to be eligible.

    There are local accounting firms still looking to hire for internships and full-time via Meet the Firms, Handshake and email postings.

  - **"Non-OCI" Postings** - check Handshake for numerous accounting, IS and IT positions that are posted throughout the semester(s).

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- <u>Student Organizations</u> - **There are four student organizations within the accounting and IS domain - Accounting Association (AA), Association of Latino Professionals For America (ALPFA), Beta Alpha Psi (BAP) and Management Information Systems Association (MISA) - you can find links on the EYCC website. The first three student org's hold lunch-time meetings, usually in BB 4117, during which employers present about the accounting profession and other professional topics. You are encouraged to join one or more organization, but <u>all students are welcome to attend the lunch meetings</u> (food is provided). MISA holds their weekly meetings on Wednesdays at 3 pm, and you do need to join MISA to attend the meeting as food is provided. MISA invites professionals from the IS/IT profession to educate students about technical topics and career paths and opportunities.**

  The student organizations also host other activities including recruiter and alumni panels, workshops, firm tours, technical training, charitable events, and social events (including member only and alumni events).

  <u>B.A.A.M. News</u> - **the EYCC emails the B.A.A.M. News each week that shows the calendar of meetings and events hosted by the student organizations and the EYCC for the coming week.**

  The four student organizations participate in table sitting for their membership drives during the first several weeks of each semester in the Bookstein Hall courtyard (1st floor).

  <u>Why get involved</u>? **Joining a student organization and developing into a leadership role brings you into contact with other students, from whom you will learn about career opportunities, firms, positions, recruiting, etc.; contact with firm professionals for networking and recruiting; skill development (leadership, team work, communication, customer service, networking, and planning and organization - skills that are requisite for career success); and the opportunity to give back and help other students.**

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Some of the student organizations' Directors participate in the committees that plan the Meet the Firms and Awards Banquet events.

Meet the student organizations during table sitting, join, attend meetings and other events and activities, make new friends, and get involved.

- **Awards Banquet** - The AIS Department, in conjunction with the EYCC and student organizations, hosts an annual Awards Banquet during which students are awarded thousands of dollars in scholarships which are donated by firms, foundations, trusts, faculty and alumni. ~400 professionals, students, faculty, staff and community members attend.

  The Awards Banquet is held in April at the Castaway in Burbank. Scholarship applications open in February, and tickets go on sale in March. Students must attend the Awards Banquet to be eligible to receive one of the scholarships awarded at the event. The event includes a sit-down dinner, scholarship awards, and silent auction, as well as networking with professionals and students.