BRUIN ACTUARIAL SOCIETY
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT WORKSHOP
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 17TH, 2017
Scope of the Workshop

- How to get a job
- How to get a job for INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS
- Work authorization
- Salary reporting & taxes
- In the news
Introduction

- Companies in the US are reluctant to hire int’l students
  - Firms know they will need to “sponsor” int’l students for H-1B visas to work full time in the future
  - Can be significant in cost and time expense
  - No certainty that H-1Bs will be approved (lottery system)

- What’s the best way to get hired as an int’l student?
  - Show companies that you are worth the money and effort
How to make an actuary

- Actuarial Exams
- Networking
- Skills
- GPA
- Experience
- Communication

The Ideal Candidate
How to make an actuary

The Ideal Candidate

Networking

Communication
Soft Skills – Diagnosis

**Verbal**
- Confidence & body language
- Content of dialogue

**Written**
- Grammar, vocabulary and syntax
- Professional communication
Soft Skills – Verbal

- Make eye contact & smile. Project friendliness!
- Give a firm handshake
- Pay attention to your listener’s body language
  - Adapt the volume of your voice
  - Adapt the length of your answers
- Engage the other party by asking questions!
- Strike a balance between formal and casual while networking
Group Activity!

- Get into pairs WITH PEOPLE YOU DON’T KNOW
- Introduce yourself
  - (1) Answer the “tell me more about yourself” question — 30 sec. each
  - (2) Describe the most recent/significant experience on your resume to others — 45 sec. each
- Feedback
  - What did you think about the conversation?
  - How can you/others improve?
Soft Skills – Written

- Email correspondence with professionals:
  - Subject Line: Keep it short and meaningful
  - Greeting: Use “Hello Mr.______” or “Dear Ms.______”
    - Use “Hi” only later, if they reply with “Hi”
  - Content: Introduce yourself and provide context for why you’re emailing
  - Length: Not more than 5 to 7 sentences per paragraph.
    - Limit the length of emails
Soft Skills – Written

- Grammar and syntax
  - Even more important in written communication!
  - Read what you write.
  - Make sure it sounds natural.
Soft Skills – How to improve

- Join student organizations & have hobbies
  - Enrich your experiences
  - Meet new people
  - Have interesting things to talk about
  - Get more practice speaking in English
- We cannot overlook the importance of personality and passion
“Do you sponsor int’l students?”

▶ Consistently one of the most bothersome questions for firm reps at Career Fair. Why?
  ▶ Int’l students often ask this early in a conversation and bluntly.
  ▶ You’re asking “What can the company do for me?” instead of “What can I do for the company?”
▶ If they say “no,” the rest of the conversation will be incredibly awkward for both parties.
▶ If they say “yes,” they’ll assume you’re only interested because they sponsor.
“Do you sponsor int’l students?”

► Why else? Many companies are not black-and-white.
  ► Some companies do specifically state they DO or DO NOT consider int’l students.
  ► But many do not have a clear policy.
  ► They WILL sponsor int’l students who are exceptionally more qualified than domestic candidates.

► You risk alienating these firms by suggesting that you’re only interested in them because/if they sponsor.
“Do you sponsor int’l students?”

What if you MUST ask?

- Save it for later in the conversation.
- Rephrase the question with tact.
  - “Do you encourage int’l students to apply for the positions at this firm?”
  - “Is the company open to sponsoring exceptionally qualified candidates for the [entry-level] job?”
  - “What advice do you have for int’l students looking for a place at your company?”
Assorted Tips & Reminders

► DO NOT put a photograph on a resume.
  ► Many companies discard resumes with photographs to avoid any possibility of discrimination in the hiring process.

► DO NOT ask firm representatives for favorable treatment when you don’t know them.
  ► “What questions should I prepare for before the interview?”
  ► “Can you give me an interview?”
  ► “Can you recommend me for the job?”

► DO NOT ask firm representatives if they can speak in a foreign language.
Remember!

- The things we covered are true not just for int’l actuarial students!
- They apply to int’l & domestic students in ALL fields.
Work Authorization
FOR STUDENTS ON F-1 VISAS
Work in the US: Three Choices

- Unrestricted on-campus employment
  - Dining halls, campus stores and coffee houses, etc.
- CPT – Curricular Practical Training
  - Work related to your academic studies, e.g., an internship
- OPT – Optional Practical Training
  - “Post-completion”, e.g., an entry-level job
Work Authorization - CPT

- Work authorization for FULL-TIME students (i.e., for an internship)
- Application
  - Offer letter from a company
  - Internship course 195
  - An updated I-20 from Dashew Center

Note: It usually takes 5 business days for Dashew Center to update your I-20. You CANNOT work until you get your I-20 back.
Work Authorization - CPT

- Maximum hours of work
  - Fall, Winter and Spring quarters: 20 hours per week.
  - Summer: unlimited
- Maximum of 12 months
  - Months in excess will be deducted from your 12 months of OPT
Work Authorization - OPT

▶ “Post-completion OPT”
 ▶ Authorization to work AFTER graduation
 ▶ “Pre-completion OPT” is not as preferable as CPT

▶ Timeline
 ▶ 3 months before graduation (Dashew Center)
 ▶ 90 days of unemployment (cumulative)
 ▶ 12-months of OPT
 ▶ 24-month OPT STEM extension

▶ Generally, your company enters you into the H1-B lottery during this time
Work Authorization – H-1B Visa

- Employer sponsorship
  - “Employer-specific”
- A maximum of 6 years
- “Lottery” system allocates 85,000 visas
- Dual intent
  - An H-1B holder can apply for and obtain a green card
Salary Reporting & Taxes

- **Salary Reporting**
  - W-2 (Wage and Tax Statement) for employees
  - 1099 (Miscellaneous Income) for self-employed, independent contractors

- **Taxes**
  - W-2 Employees have taxes withheld from each paycheck
    - Federal Income Taxes
    - Social Security
    - Medicare
  - File your taxes in April to receive a refund of some taxes
    - All Social Security should be refunded for F-1 students
The Million-Dollar Questions

- Yes, you are legal to work in U.S.
- Yes, you will need sponsorship in the future.
In the News

- Feb. to Apr. 2017: H1-B Visa reform was reported to be in the works
- Multiple bills in Congress target H1-B “abuse,” or the allocation of visas in a manner that harms American workers
- Proposals include
  - Raising the minimum salary for H1-B workers to 100k+
  - More strictly requiring firms to demonstrate that no Americans were qualified for the job
  - Abolishing the lottery and granting visas to the highest paid workers
Additional Options

- Internships & employment in your home country.
  - Check BruinView for PwC and KMPG actuarial opportunities in Mainland China & Hong Kong
  - Experienced actuaries are more likely to receive H1-B visas
  - Experienced actuaries from Canada and Mexico can work in the US on TN (NAFTA professionals) visas

- Graduate school
  - 20,000 out of 85,000 annual H1-B visas are reserved for Masters+
For More Information

- Dashew Center for International Students & Scholars
  - Tom Bradley International Hall (Next to Dykstra and De Neve)
- UCLA Career Center
  - Strathmore Building
Questions?
Special thanks to Sean Ke, BS ’15
  - Slideshow based on his work