

# INTERNATIONAL STUDENT WORKSHOP

Bruin Actuarial Society

# AGENDA

- Introduction
- Soft Skills (Verbal, Written)
- Work Authorization
- Overseas Opportunities
- Help & Resources

# INTRODUCTION

The logo for the Bruin Actuarial Society, featuring the text "BAS.00" in a yellow, digital-style font on a blue background.

BRUIN ACTUARIAL SOCIETY

# OBSTACLES FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

- Companies are reluctant to hire international students
  - They will need to sponsor them for H1-B Visas for full time employment
  - Significant cost and time
  - No guarantee that your H1-B will be approved (lottery system)
- They are more willing to hire local students if international students don't exceptionally stand out!!

# WHAT YOU SHOULD DO NOW?

1. **Don't give up!!** Be patient! It's just a matter of time
2. Improve yourself and show companies you are worth the money and effort
  - I. Resume (GPA, experiences, technical skills, leadership roles)
  - II. Info Session/Career Fair (Communication skills, personality)
  - III. Interview (Communication skills, professionalism)
3. Research on visa regulations and plan ahead while recruiting
4. Make Plan B! Find other (overseas) opportunities
5. Seek for more help and resources

# SOFT SKILLS

# SOFT SKILLS DIAGNOSIS

- Verbal
  - Confidence & Body Language
  - Content of your dialogue
- Written
  - Grammar, word choices, syntax
  - Professional communication (e.g. email)



# INTERNATIONAL VS U.S. INTERVIEWS

International	U.S.
It is ok to be late if I know the interviewer(s) through connection	Be punctual. Arrive 5 to 10 minutes prior to the appointment
Eye contact, especially with persons of high status, may be disrespectful	Eye contact is expected and shows confidence
Citing accomplishments and skills might be considered boastful, self serving, or too individualistic	Open discussion of accomplishments and skills show confidence
Researching the firm in advance may show too much initiative and independence	Researching the firm and demonstrating that knowledge is expected. It shows initiative and interest



# VERBAL SOFT SKILLS

- **Research and prepare well.** Familiarize yourself with words and phrases that might come up to avoid some confusion
- **Speak slowly and clearly.** Don't worry too much that English is not your first language. As long as they can communicate with you, the language barriers shouldn't be a problem
- **Talk about your past achievements.** Your interviewers will not know how great you are for the position unless you tell them first
- **Be yourself and share your experience.** Being an international student can be an advantage, as it shows your ability to adapt to a new environment

# VERBAL SOFT SKILLS

- Enthusiastic greetings!
  - Smile!
  - Show excitement and positiveness when you greet the firm rep/your interviewers
- Pay attention to the facial expression of your listener
  - Adapt the speed of your voice
  - Adapt the length of your answer
- **Pay attention to what they say or ask**
- Engage others by asking questions. Don't interrupt the conversation
  - **If you did interrupt the conversation, you can say "Sorry, go ahead"**
- Strike a balance between formal & casual while networking

# THE **WORST QUESTION** YOU CAN ASK

## **Do you sponsor international students**

### Why?

- You are asking what the company can do to you, instead of what contribution you can make to the company
- If they say no, the conversation is very awkward for both parties
- If they say yes, you risk alienating these firms by showing you are only interested in them because they sponsor

# ALTERNATIVE SOLUTION

- 2 types of Companies
  - They specifically say they won't sponsor (Company policy)
    - Move on and don't waste time on the application
  - They did not say they won't sponsor
    - A little bit more flexible. Don't ask if they sponsor and assume they will. Try your best to impress them
- Many companies are not black-and-white. They will sponsor international students that are more qualified than local candidates

# ALTERNATIVE SOLUTION

- If you must ask, save it at the end
- Some ways to rephrase the question
  - Do you encourage international student to apply?
  - Is the company open to sponsoring exceptionally qualified candidates for the [entry-level] jobs
  - What advice do you have international students seeking a position at your company

# HOW TO FIND OUT IF FIRMS SPONSOR

- Doing research is very important as we all want to save time for companies that sponsor
  - Note: BAS is **not responsible** for providing a list of firms that sponsor
- Available resources
  - Handshake
  - Ask international friends who applied before
  - Google

# WRITTEN SOFT SKILLS

- Keep your message clear & concise. Avoid lengthy sentences
- Check your spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Although emails are not essays, you should minimize the grammar mistakes.
  - Spell-checker
  - Auto spelling & grammar function in Microsoft Word
- Keep it professional
  - Don't use multiple colors or dazzling font types
  - Follow the formatting requirements for writing essays

# EMAIL TIPS AND ETIQUETTE

- **Subject Line:** Keep it short and meaningful
- **Greeting:** Use professional salutation
  - “Dear Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_ “
  - Use “Hi” only later, if they reply with “Hi”
- **Content:** Introduce yourself & provide context for what you’re emailing
- **Length:** No more than 5-7 sentences per paragraph
  - Easier to read
- **Closing:** Use professional closing and sign your name
  - E.g Best regards, Sincerely etc



# ASSORTED TIPS & REMINDERS (FOR EVERYONE)

- **DO NOT** put a photograph on your resume
- **DO NOT** ask the firm reps for favorable treatment
  - What questions should I prepare for before the interview?
  - Can you give me an interview?
  - Can you recommend me for a job?
- **DO NOT** ask firm reps if they can speak another foreign language
  - It can make them feel uncomfortable

# WORK AUTHORIZATION

# WAYS TO WORK IN THE U.S

- **Unrestricted on-campus employment**
  - Dining Halls, campus stores, coffee houses etc.
- **CPT (Curricular Practical Training)**
  - Related to your academic studies (e.g. Summer internship)
- **OPT (Optional Practical Training)**
  - Post-completion (e.g. entry-level job)
- **H-1B Visa**

# CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING (CPT)

- Off-campus internship relevant to your major as a **full-time** student
- Qualifications & Restrictions
  - Must be in valid F-1 Status for more than 1 academic year
    - Therefore, Freshman cannot apply for CPT
  - Enroll in one of the **internship courses 195 (Check department website)**
  - CPT will only be granted **ONE QUARTER** at a time
    - E.g Summer internship --- enroll in an internship course in Summer Quarter
  - Must obtain an official offer letter from your employer for further application

# CPT APPLICATION (AFTER YOU GOT AN OFFER)

1. Ask your employer for an official offer letter
2. Go to Dashew Center for the CPT Request Form
3. Enroll in an internship course (Check out our International Student Guide published by BAS on our website for more details and infos)
4. Submit your completed CPT Request Form with an offer letter after your enrollment in an internship course
5. Receive an updated I-20 from Dashew Center
  - Be aware of business day! You can't work without an updated I-20

# OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT)

- Off-campus directly related to your major **AFTER graduation**
- No need for an official offer letter from your employer for application
- Otherwise, same requirement as CPT



# OPT APPLICATION (AFTER YOU GOT AN OFFER)

1. Complete the OPT Online Workshop and OPT App from @DCISS website
2. Submit your completed OPT form at an OPT Hand-in Session
3. Returned to DCISS after your submission date to sign their OPT I-20
4. Generally, your firm enrolls you into H-1B lottery during this time

## Timeline:

1. Initial 12-months OPT, 3 months before graduation
2. USCIS requires 90 days to process your application (No travel allowed!)
3. OPT start date should be within the first 60 days after your graduation

# OPT EXTENSION FOR STEM MAJORS

- STEM students (including FAM) can apply for 24-months OPT STEM extension after the original 12 months
- Warning:
  - Qualification & restriction for initial 12 months OPT are also applied in CPT STEM extension
  - Still, be aware of the timeline (business)



# THE MILLION DOLLAR QUESTIONS

1. Are you legally authorized to work in the United States?

**YES**

2. Do you now, or will you in the future, require employment sponsorship (e.g. H-1B visa status) to work legally in the U.S.

**YES**

3. Do you have unrestricted unlimited authorization to work in the U.S.?

**NO**

**WARNING:** Don't lie about your visa status. They will find out at the end and will rescind the offer.

# OVERSEAS OPPORTUNITIES

## WHAT IF I DON'T GET AN INTERNSHIP OFFER THIS YEAR

- Find an internship/employment in your home country
- Ask your friends/parents back in your home country, or Google
- Recruiting season is **slightly later than** the U.S., beginning at early March
- Companies have different qualifications from American firms
- It is still very competitive to get an internship back in your home country, but the visa status will no longer be a burden

# HELP & OTHER RESOURCES

## OTHER RECOURSES

- Visa policy – Dashew Center
- Internship/Job Opportunities – Career Center
- Resume Critique – Undergraduate Writing Center
- AND BAS!!
  - [International Student Guide](#) published by BAS (Here is the [link!](#))
  - Make appointment with your mentor or other BAS officers (resume critique, mock interviews, visa etc.)

QUESTIONS?

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