


Closing the Network Gap



Equipping Students with
Career-Building Connections

Sept 12, 2025

Equitable Counseling Conference

Today's Agenda

**Warm
Up**

**Career
Launch**

**MANA
Summer
Bridge**

**Cool
Down**

Introductions - CSM in the House!



Jane Hsu Southwick
Career Counselor +
Instructor



Melissa Manuofetoa
"Ehm"
Counselor + Instructor
Learning Communities



Dr. Finausina Tovo
"Fi"
Project Change
Coordinator + Instructor

Who's

In

the Room?

What's your
campus role?

Anyone focus on
student career
development?

Anyone work with
employers or
alumni?

What brought you
to this
workshop?

Closing the Network Gap: Equipping Students with Career-Building Connections

Pair Share

Chat with the person next to you:

1. How did you get your first job in education?
2. Did you talk to any professionals in this field before you got the job?

**Career
Launch**

**Partnerin g
with a
social
enterprise**

**Building student
social capital**

Three Part Story

**What
is
CRER
126?**

**What
is
Career
Launch?**

**National
&
CSM
Outcomes**

Resume

World of Work

LinkedIn

Interviews

Cover Letter

**CRER 126
Job Search
Strategies**

**Salary
Negotiation**

Job Boards

**Informational
Interviews**

Engagement? Data? Equity?

CAREER LAUNCH

Build your Career-Aligned Social Capital

impact@careerlaunch.academy

www.CareerLaunch.academy



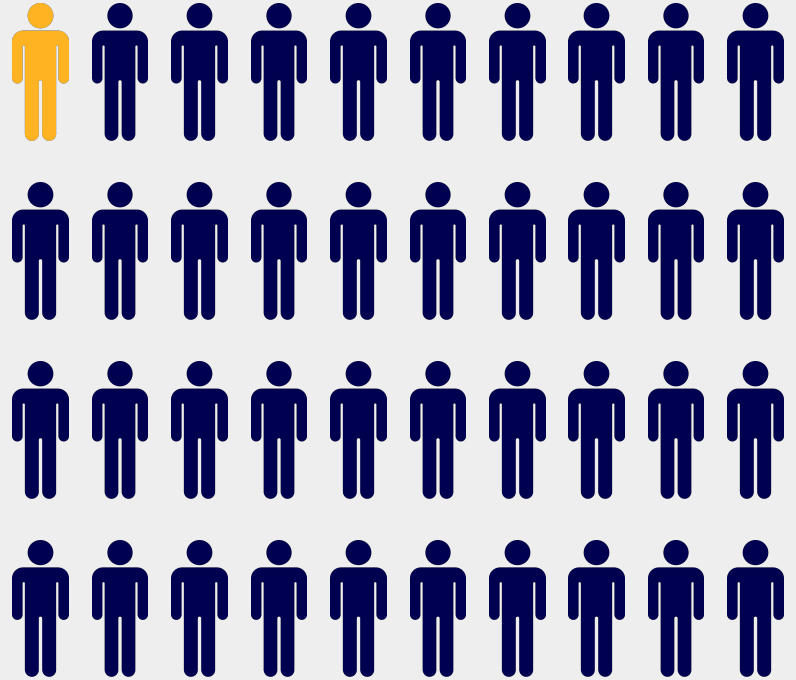
Student Behavior

90% of students spend
most of their job / internship
search **applying online**



Applying Online

2% Success Rate of
getting an Initial Interview



Applying Online

12x more likely to Earn the
Position with an Internal Advocate



QUESTION

What percentage of jobs are found through personal connections?



Most students don't realize...



20%

of Jobs & Internships are advertised

Source: Designing Your Life, 2018

87%

of employers said they hired at least one intern through an informal channel

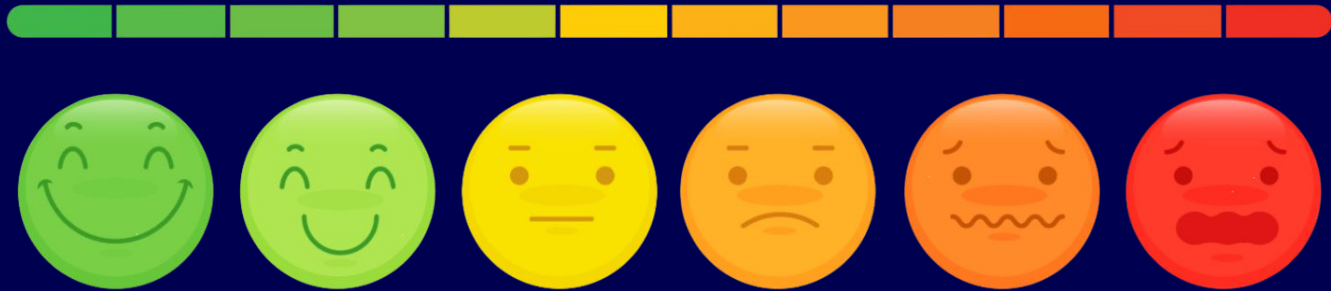
Source: Inside Higher Ed, 2024

80%

of jobs are filled in the hidden job market

Source: Forbes, 2023

How comfortable are students at reaching out to professionals to have a career conversation?



The 8-step scaffolded framework provides students of all backgrounds and fields of study the agency to take ownership of their academic experience and their career development.

Career Launch focuses on an equitable social capital curriculum that is personalized, strategic, proactive, and rooted in self-efficacy. We've learned that providing students with content isn't enough. Motivation and accountability, delivered via socio-emotional learning best practices, are integral for students to take action.

14+ YEARS

The Career Launch Method has been developed and refined over the course of 14+ years of evidence-based student data and research.

The Career Launch Method

1

Discernment

Identify the companies or organizations you want to work for

2

Strategic Research

Identify professionals who can be strategically beneficial

3

Professional Brand

Enhance your online reputation

4

Outreach

How to play the student card to set up career conversations

5

Preparation

Strategies and details for career conversations

6

Advanced Preparation

Turning career conversations into formal interviews

7

Effective Follow Up

Hosting career conversations with effective follow-up

8

Ace the Interview

Acing the job interview and landing the job



Pre/Post Data Analytics



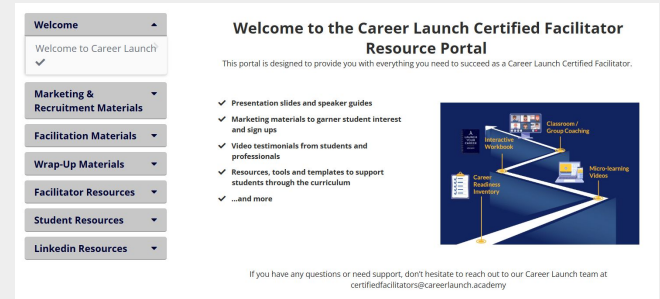
Micro-Learning Videos



Hard Copy Workbook



Facilitator Training and Resource Portal



Key Takeaways

1) Language Matters

- a) ~~Informational Interviews~~ → Career Conversations
- b) ~~Networking~~ → Relationship Building

2) Actionable, Clear, Micro-Steps and Scripts



Step 2 - Strategic Research

How to Target Professionals Who Can be Most Helpful to You

Try to identify some or all of the attributes below for the professionals you add to your Strategic Contacts Lists (p. 31-35).

1. Job Function

A job function describes a general category of job roles at an organization, such as finance, nurse, human resources, teacher, marketing, office assistant, design, etc. **Targeting professionals in the job function you are most interested in is a great way to discover insights about your job types of interest.**

2. Job Title

Hiring managers are supervisors or managers of other employees. These professionals are more likely to make hiring decisions than non-manager professionals. Unless you are trying to get a job in HR, **DO NOT target recruiters or HR personnel.** You want to target **mid-level management** professionals who are "Directors" or "Supervisors" in the departments or divisions of your organizations of interest. See the graphic on page 23.

3. Location

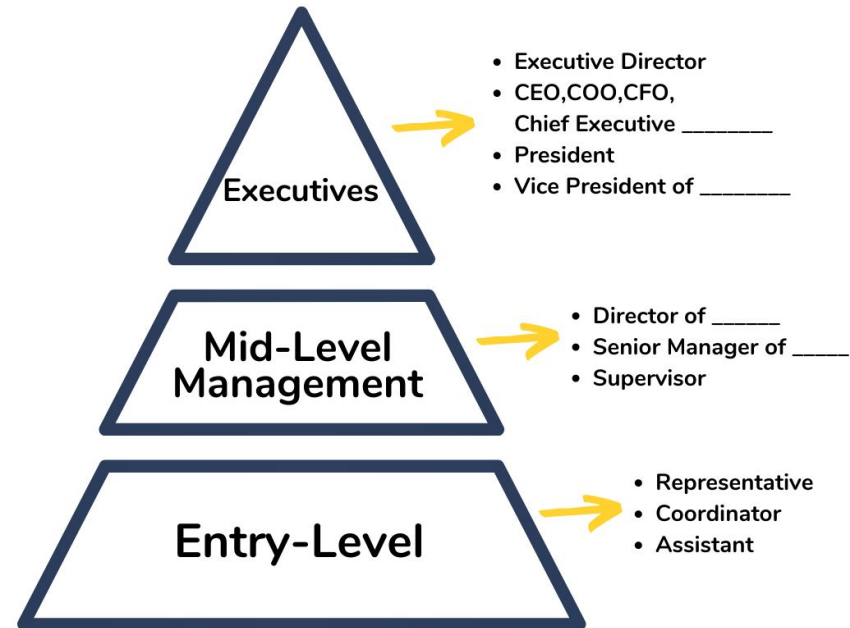
Identify people who are located at the office or worksite where you want to work. This is not important if you are looking for a remote position.

4. Shared interest or background (optional)

Your school's alumni are more likely to speak with you, even if they have never met you. Other things you may have in common that can establish a connection include **shared first-generation status; community college background; veteran/military background; ethnic heritage; hobby** (if discussed on the professional's LinkedIn, personal website, or biography page); involvement with a sport, community group, non-profit, etc.

Of your Top 10 organizations on page 19, choose five to focus on. Write them below and on the top of pages 31-35, your Strategic Contacts Lists.

1. _____



Step 2 - Strategic Research

LAUNCH YOUR CAREER WORKBOOK

★ How to Find Work Email Addresses

Over ten years of data shows that **email is the most effective way** to reach out to professionals.

But how can you find the work email of a professional you don't know? Begin by checking the company website. Then use the following tools until you find a working email address. Never email someone's non-work email unless it is listed publicly on their personal or organization website.

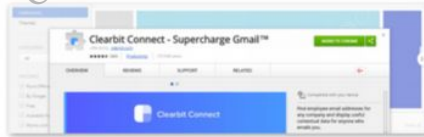
Although you may need to enter your email to create an account for some of these services, you don't need to pay. If one of these services isn't working for you, try another.

For a full list of email-finding tools, visit www.careerlaunch.academy/resources or scan the QR code to the right.

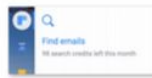


Clearbit Connect Browser Extension

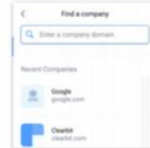
1. Download the Clearbit Connect Chrome browser extension



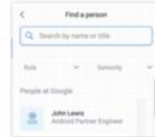
2. Click the Clearbit button on the right sidebar in Gmail



3. Search for an organization



4. Search for a name, role or title



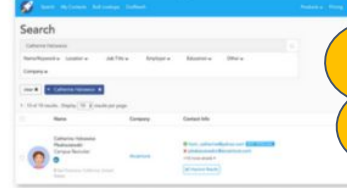
LAUNCH YOUR CAREER WORKBOOK

RocketReach Browser Extension

1. Download the RocketReach Chrome browser extension



2. Search for names or organizations



Email-Format.com

1. Search for the organization's domain



2. Use the recommended format for the employee you want to reach



Students watch an online demo of these browser extensions

Step 3 - Professional Brand

LAUNCH YOUR CAREER WORKBOOK

Crafting an Email Signature

As you can imagine, many professionals will not say “Yes” the very first time they receive an email from you. To increase your chances of getting a response, make your email as professional and simple as possible.

An email signature bolsters your credibility because it gives the recipient relevant information about you. At the very least, include your **name, photo, major or program of study, your school, and a link to your LinkedIn profile**. If you have a personal website or online portfolio, you should include links to those as well. You may not be comfortable having your phone number on your email signature at all times. For the purpose of reaching out to professionals, it **increases transparency and the likeliness of you receiving a “Yes.”**

To learn how to create an email signature or use one of our templates, visit www.careerlaunchacademy/resources.

Here are several samples of excellent email signatures:



Sonia Gonzalez
Business Administration
San Diego City College
(123) 456-7890
www.linkedin.com/in/sonia-gonzalez12



Henry Gabriel
Penn State, Sociology
VP of Interact Club | (123) 456-7890
www.linkedin.com/in/henrygabriel1234
www.henrygabrielportfolio.com



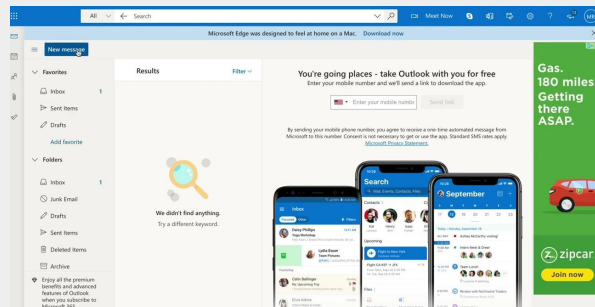
Kirthi Ramjin
Art & Design, Games Playable Media
University of Iowa
LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/kirthiramjin
(123) 456-7890

40

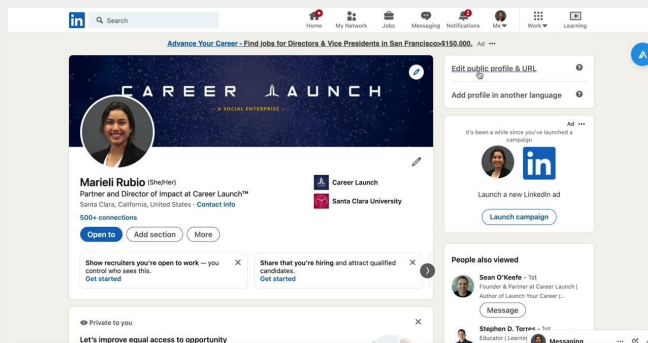
Career Launch Method 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

CAREER
LAUNCH™

Creating Email Signature on Outlook



Creating Email Signature on Gmail



Step 4 - Outreach

LAUNCH YOUR CAREER WORKBOOK

★ 10-Day Outreach Strategy

You must follow ALL these micro-steps to maximize your success rate. If you take shortcuts or don't follow this schedule, your chances of getting a "Yes" decrease.

From your Strategic Contact Lists on pages 31-35, you can choose one person from five different organizations or five people from the same organization.

(Note: do not count weekends or holidays)

- ✉ Day 1 - Initial Email to contacts 1-5.
- ✉ Day 3 - Follow-up Email to contacts 1-5.
- ☎ Day 5 - Call contacts 1-5.
- 🌐 Day 7 - LinkedIn message to contacts 1-5.
- ✉ Day 9 - "Give-up" Email or Print & Mail a letter.
Include your resume and send in a 9"x12" envelope.
- 🛑 Day 10 - Stop contacting the first 5 people and repeat the process with 5 more contacts from your list on pages 31-35.

If you receive a response, great! If you don't receive a response, continue through Day 9 before you stop your outreach.

This is how you separate yourself from other students looking for jobs and internships. You demonstrate that you go above and beyond by being proactive. You are communicating that you are eager for career success and enthusiastic about learning from them.

Professionals will appreciate and respect your professional etiquette and persistence.

58

Career Launch Method 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

LAUNCH YOUR CAREER WORKBOOK

Initial Email Template (Day 1) ✉

Sending a clear and concise email is essential to landing a career conversation. The template below has been refined over 10 years based on student data and will optimize your chance of getting a "Yes."

Important: make sure to customize the email so the professional knows you really care about meeting with them. You can do this by mentioning the name of the college that the person attended or the first company they worked for, in addition to the name of the company they currently work for. **All emails should be sent from your school email address, not your personal email.**

Subject Line: [University of Texas]

Hi [Name*],

I'm a student at the [University of Texas]. I have an assignment this [quarter/semester/spring] to conduct two 20-minute career conversations via video chat or in-person with [companies/organizations] and people that interest me.

You've had a successful career [since you graduated college from ____]. I'd like to learn about your journey from [name of first company after college] to [name of current company] because I'm interested in [____] as well.

I understand you probably keep a busy schedule, so I'm willing to meet before or after business hours, if necessary. Are you available on [day & time slot] or [day & time slot]?

I hope it's okay that I'm sending this email, and I look forward to hearing back from you.

Regards,



Sonya Jain
History & Sociology
University of Texas
phone number ____
www.linkedin.com/in/____

*Rule of thumb: for greetings, use first names for professionals in their twenties, and use Mr./Ms. for professionals age 30-40 or older.

Career Launch Method 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

59

2-YEAR COLLEGE OUTCOMES

92%

of Career Launch participants reported that learning how to strategically create social capital with employers of interest **increased their likeliness to complete their program/degree.**

83%

of Career Launch participants reported that the Career Launch immersive experience **improved their mental health** related to career readiness and life after college.

"Career Launch enabled us to scale our career services, reach more students, and collect valuable data about career readiness despite us having a small team.

Our campus is rural and has a large population of first-generation students, and this program has been very beneficial for them to measure their career readiness and create new professional relationships."



Gail Bower
Lead Career Advisor
Western Nebraska Community College

"The Career Launch program has significantly enriched the content of my workforce preparation courses. In my capacity as a professor, it was effortless to incorporate most of the program's handbook into my lesson plans. The program helped develop my students' confidence and skills to attempt a potential career conversation with professionals.

One of my students mentioned feeling more comfortable attending our Job Fairs and engaging in conversations with employers. I am fortunate to have been certified through Career Launch and to have access to the videos and presentations that help enhance my lessons."



Veronica Castaneda
Assistant Professor
Santa Ana College, School of Continuing Education

89%

of students report **greater confidence** in understanding how to create relationships with professionals from scratch

77%

of students enjoyed having a tangible, hard-copy workbook to reference and complete activities in

“The Career Launch Program helped me build the confidence I needed with not only employers but also with professors and the college community as a whole.”

Summer
Haslam

100%

of students report feeling more prepared to land internships / jobs / research positions that have **not been posted online**.

Thank you!

**Please connect:
Jane Hsu Southwick
southwickj@smccd.edu**

MANA SUMMER BRIDGE



Empowering Pacific Islander Student Career Access

Presented by Dr. Finausina Tovo & Melissa Manuofetoa
September 12, 2025



**DR. FINAUSINA
TOVO**

**DR. WESLEY
HINGANO**

**MELISSA
MANUOFETOA**

MANA



Mana aims to increase student academic support by adopting a cohort model as it guides students on a clear pathway to graduation, transfer, & career success. MANA provides a Critical Pacific Studies & Oceania Certificate, specialized curriculum, and a wraparound support community.

MANA SUMMER BRIDGE STRUCTURE



“Rooted in Identity, Rising in Innovation: Pacific Islander Pathways into STEM [Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics]

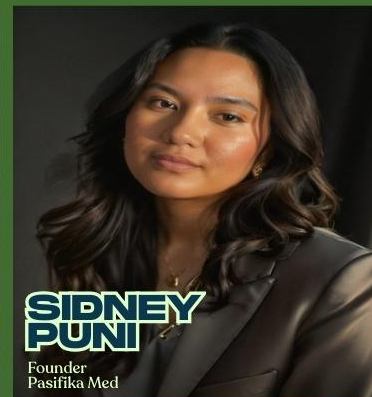
This first-ever Mana Summer Bridge experience centers Pacific Islander cultural values and community-building, while offering practical, academic, and emotional preparation for the college journey.

Student Audience: Primarily for incoming recently graduated high school students, but open to all returning and/or continuing CSM Pasifika students.

3
DAYS

- Talanoa
- Workshops
- Guest speakers
- Academic Counseling
- Financial Aid Onboarding
- Campus Partner Connections (EOPS, Promise, DRC, AAPILD, and more)

PASIFIKA IN STEM



- **Defining STEM**
- **Careers in STEM**
- **BIG PHARMA - Defining the pharmaceutical industry**
- **Biotechnology**
- **STEM in Food Technology & Investment**
- **Indigenous STEM**
- **Native Hawaiian Wisdom from an engineers lens**
- **The Future of STEM**
- **AI/AI in the Bay Area**
- **Ethics of Innovation**
- **Racism in AI technology**
- **Tuvalu's Digital Nation**
- **STEM Career Experiences**

Presented by Dr. Finausina Tovo & Melissa Manuofetoa
September 12, 2025



USING AI & TECH TO PRESERVE CULTURE & SOVEREIGNTY



USING AI & TECH TO PRESERVE CULTURE & SOVEREIGNTY



“IF WE’RE NOT AT THE TABLE, WE RISK BEING CODED OUT OF THE FUTURE.”

**- NAMULAU’ULU NU’UALI’I ETEROA LAFAELE
[ENGINEER, SAMOAN]**

Preserving Sovereignty Beyond Borders:

AI helps Tuvalu digitally map land, culture, and governance systems, allowing the nation to assert sovereignty in virtual space—even if the physical land disappears due to colonially driven climate change.

Archiving Ancestral Knowledge with Respect:

Instead of Western data extraction, AI tools are being used by Tuvaluans to record language, oral history, and traditional ecological knowledge—on their terms, in their voices.

Cultural Immortality Through AI & 3D Modeling:

Using AI and immersive tech (like digital twins), Tuvalu is replicating islands, ceremonies, and structures—not for tourism, but for cultural continuity for future generations.



MANA SUMMER BRIDGE



CONNECT WITH US



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manuofetoam@smccd.edu

Dr. Finausina Tovo
tovof@smccd.edu

Caroline Tuipe
<https://decoloniseall.org/>



Pair Share

with

**someone
new!**

**What's one new
thing you learned?**

**Is there anything you can
implement at your campus?**



Questions?

Thank you!