To better serve students in all matters related to preparing them for rewarding careers after graduation, three UA offices have been combined into a new unit, **UA Student Engagement and Career Development** [1]. As students and their families become increasingly interested in return on investment in their UA education, this new unit puts the resources of the three offices ? Career Services, Office of Student Engagement and Leadership Programs ? toward a single mission: to ensure the UA prepares all graduates to create lives of opportunity aligned with their purpose and values.

"We want to ensure that all students find the support they need within the UA community to engage in experiences that have a positive and lasting impact on their careers," says Abra McAndrew, assistant vice provost for student engagement and career development. She explains the guiding principle and motivation behind the move: to offer students a chance to help with real-world challenges faced by businesses as well as opportunities to lead and serve on community projects. The experiences help students develop employable skills and to design a career plan.

To that end, the office is moving from what McAndrew calls a "transactional career development approach" to one that focuses on integrated learning experiences.

"We're used to students coming to us with very specific goals in mind," she says. "Some wanted their resume reviewed, others were looking for help using our database to search for an internship, or they were looking for some guidance on how to prepare for a job interview."

Looking forward, McAndrew says, "We are now working on strategies that integrate with the student experience from freshman year to graduation, and we are focusing on what we call the career development life cycle. We want to identify the points throughout the student experience on campus where there's a natural fit for resources for career exploration, building specific skills, or preparing for job and internship search. Then we want to make sure those impactful and relevant conversations are happening with staff and faculty around campus, in addition to with our team."

The team looks to collaborate more closely with staff and faculty, providing resources and support to incorporate career development within the new student experiences, student employment, retention services, academic advising, student organizations and at appropriate points within the academic curriculum.

To build career development into the entire student experience rather than treating it as something that happens in one-off interactions centered around an event or appointment at the career center, the unit is also leveraging technology in new ways to make it easier for students to engage with interactive career resources on-demand.
In addition to support for students looking to transition into their first job after college, the unit also includes staff members focused on developing both paths to graduate school and greater capacity for innovation among students who may be interested in a career path with a startup company.

**New Tools**

To help potential employers on and off campus attract student talent, Student Engagement and Career Development has adopted Handshake, a new tool that replaced Wildcat JobLink in July.

"Handshake is based on an interactive platform similar to social media sites," McAndrew says. "It's designed to bring all parties together in one place, and in addition to referring students there, we also can provide appropriate roles to UA staff and faculty, so they can support students and post on-campus jobs or internship opportunities."

In Handshake, students can:

- Find and apply for on-campus jobs, internships and full-time jobs personalized to their interests by answering a few short questions and uploading a resume.
- Sign up for career events and appointments and automatically add reminders about them to their calendar.
- "Favorite" companies and jobs they're interested in, so they don't miss an application deadline.
- Control how much of their profile is visible to employers who might be looking for them.
- Connect with other UA students and alumni who have had internships and other experiences they are interested in (coming soon).

All degree-seeking UA students have been provided a Handshake account and no additional fees are required to access Handshake. Resume reviews and appointments with career educators also are free.

In addition, the office collaborated with the University Information Technology Services Campus Web Services team, led by Donna Bieg, to create a search tool to make it easier for students to find 100% Engagement experiences on campus. These opportunities encourage students to apply their learning to solve authentic challenges.

"The UA already has a very good reputation with employers, but we want employers to know that our graduates have the leadership skills and practical experience they will need in their first job," McAndrew says. "We believe that engagement is all about gaining experience not once they enter the workforce, but while they're still students at the University."

The new search tool makes it possible for students to find the experiences on campus that align with their interests using a single search. The 1.0 version of the tool launches this week at search.engagement.arizona.edu and includes 100% Engagement experiences as well as study abroad experiences and some undergraduate research opportunities. Feedback from the initial launch will inform version 2.0, which will include additional data on internship opportunities, student organizations and more.

**New Programs**
The office is launching four new programs this year, in addition to the popular and effective Blue Chip Leadership and Edge Internship Readiness programs. Blue Chip is a four-year program introducing freshmen to community engagement opportunities as well as internships on and off campus. Edge Internship Readiness is a six-week program that prepares students for their first internship.

In response to student interest in more resources for graduate school preparation, Graduate Prep Academy will be offered in collaboration with the Graduate College and other campus colleagues Nov. 4-5. This program is targeted at students planning to apply to graduate school during the 2018-19 academic year, but all students who would benefit from the support are welcome to register through their Handshake account in the coming weeks.

The office's new Build the Skill programs offer students opportunities to build their knowledge in the areas of collaboration, leadership, professional communication and design thinking? along with the ability to tell the personal story of their skills in those areas, McAndrew explains. "Also new are our Fast Track programs, where students of all majors develop in-demand software and analytical skills."

The Design Thinking Challenges offered by the office have student teams compete to solve a problem for a community organization, business or UA department. Students can learn more about these skill-building programs at [http://career.arizona.edu/welcome/skill-building-programs](http://career.arizona.edu/welcome/skill-building-programs) and can register for specific opportunities through their Handshake account.

**Upcoming Events** [4]

- Wildcat Student Employment Fair: Aug. 23, 11 a.m.-3 p.m.
- Prepare for the Fair (Fall Career Days): Sept. 18-22
- Fall Career Days: Sept. 25-27

**To learn more, please contact:**

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**Source URL:** [https://uaatwork.arizona.edu/lqp/connecting-students-opportunity](https://uaatwork.arizona.edu/lqp/connecting-students-opportunity)

**Links:**

[1] [http://career.arizona.edu/](http://career.arizona.edu/)
[2] [http://search.engagement.arizona.edu](http://search.engagement.arizona.edu)
[3] [http://career.arizona.edu/welcome/skill-building-programs](http://career.arizona.edu/welcome/skill-building-programs)
[4] [http://career.arizona.edu/events/upcoming-ua-career-fairs](http://career.arizona.edu/events/upcoming-ua-career-fairs)
[5] [mailto:mcandrew@email.arizona.edu](mailto:mcandrew@email.arizona.edu)
[6] [mailto:akurtin@email.arizona.edu](mailto:akurtin@email.arizona.edu)
[7] [mailto:tneil@email.arizona.edu](mailto:tneil@email.arizona.edu)
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