Make the Most of Your Winter Break

Winter break is almost here! We know that you worked hard this fall, so now it’s time for you to enjoy the city or travel for some holiday fun with friends and family. It’s also a great time to make some moves on your internship or job search. Remember, CCE is open during winter break and career counselors are available for in-person, phone or Skype appointments. Schedule a 30-minute session by calling 212-854-5609.

Here are some tips for using your time off to reach your career goals:

1. **Explore**
   Sit down with some of our quick paper-and-pencil assessments like the $50 million question or the Transferable Skills Checklist to start identifying your preferences and career goals. Or, pick up a book like *You Majored in What?* or *I Could Do Anything if Only I Knew What it Was* (yes, those are real book titles). Answer a few quick questions to explore career options using sites like Inside Jobs or My Next Move.

2. **Prepare**
   Update your resume and LinkedIn profile to reflect your most recent internship, volunteer, research, or leadership experiences. See resume samples in the Career Planning Guide and get advice from the Resume and Cover Letter Writing webshop. Watch our LinkedIn 101 webshop on how to write a great profile and get started on the site.

3. **Network**
   Set a goal of connecting with 3–5 contacts over the break. These can be new people (such as Columbia alumni) that you find through LinkedIn, or people in your existing network. Ask your family members, friends, former coworkers or teachers, etc. to introduce you to someone in a field you find interesting. Review the networking section of our Career Planning Guide for tips on informational interviewing.

4. **Gain Experience**
   Consider building experience over the break through winter externships or volunteering in your community. An externship is a short (from a couple of days to a couple of weeks) experiential learning opportunity which involves shadowing employees at an organization, participating in meetings, and potentially contributing to project work. Try searching the keyword “externship” for your hometown on Indeed.com, or use your network to arrange an opportunity if a formal one does not exist at your company of interest.

5. **Apply**
   If you’re ready to apply to internships or jobs, search LionSHARE for positions of interest or view our On Campus Recruiting employer list to see who comes to campus. Use CCE’s Industry Exploration pages to identify job search resources for your field, or use aggregate search engines like Indeed.com or SimplyHired.com.