



University of Pittsburgh

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The Basics of Excelling Post-Graduation

Life after college may seem daunting to many undergraduate students because they are still unsure what they want to do after college whether it is continuing to further their education or accept a job offer. Regardless of the plans any undergraduate student may have, here are some tips and pieces of advice I wish I knew before graduating.

First, get involved in campus but not over involved in so many organizations. In other words, join one or two clubs and really commit to them. In my time at Pitt, I was a resident assistant (RA), undergraduate teaching assistant (UTA) for organic laboratory classes, and an undergraduate research assistant. Being an RA allowed me to enhance my “soft skills” like leadership, communication, and conflict resolution whereas my involvement with teaching and research allowed me to further my career and gain essential skills to set myself apart from peers when applying to jobs. Pitt has incredible undergraduate research programs that allow undergraduates to be involved in cutting edge research, and I strongly encourage each undergraduate to get involved in research as early as possible in their undergraduate career. Because of my research experience as an undergraduate, I was able to join a more senior group at my current company that works on developing, writing, and executing new methods to test clients’ raw materials.

Second, take advantage of each opportunity you are given. Attend each professor’s office hours, do the extra credit for the class (is possible), and form study groups. For me, study groups were a key part of my success in college, especially in my higher level chemistry classes. In high school, I was always an independent worker, and the idea of forming a study group outside of class with peers never crossed my mind until college. I challenge you to go outside of your comfort zone and seek out all the opportunities to develop yourself as a person and career while at Pitt.

Third, challenge yourself but don’t over-exert yourself. Take that higher level course even if it wasn’t needed for your major instead of an easy general education class. For example, physical chemistry I and II were very extensive and challenging courses, but these courses allowed me to gain valuable knowledge within the classroom and within the laboratory that many of my peers didn’t have when it came to applying for jobs. This allowed my resume to stand out amongst others, and thus, I was able to start working a week after graduation in my dream field while in the midst of a global pandemic.

Lastly, don’t compare yourself to others and their growth. Each person has their individual strengths and areas of development. Be able to recognize your strengths and weaknesses. Challenge yourself while in college but also remember to have fun and smile each day.

Sincerely,

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