

TartanGPS: Global Professional Strategies

An essential program to initiate, confirm and realize your career plans

TartanGPS is a three-part career navigation program for all Carnegie Mellon students, managed by the Career and Professional Development Center at Carnegie Mellon University. Divided into three distinct Coordinates, this program integrates learning from the classroom, and experiential and campus involvements with your natural abilities, interests and aspirations to operationalize your unique career vision. The *TartanGPS* program is designed to meet you where you are in your career development and prepare you to embark on the next coordinate level. The ultimate goal of this program is to prepare you for life after the undergraduate experience which requires an investment of time and effort beyond classroom academics and starts with the first academic year of college. Therefore enrollment in this prestigious program begins in the freshman year and continues beyond graduation.

Involvement in *TartanGPS* is similar to planning any journey that requires a well developed plan in order to arrive at the chosen destination. In addition to an idea about where you will go, it requires up-to-date directions, excellent navigation tools and good decision-making skills. Every student's journey is different and so each plan will be unique. Some will find the road to their destination straight and narrow. Others will detour and find a completely new direction along the way, and yes, some will make a turn that takes them off course. To plan for these challenges *TartanGPS* provides direction. By participating in the *TartanGPS* program you will arrive at graduation more focused, more aware of your options and more skilled at achieving them, than those who do not engage in a specific career navigation program. Additionally the Career and Professional Development Center promotes this program to employers who understand the "value added" that involvement in *TartanGPS* gives to the academic background they are recruiting for. This increases your competitive edge for internships and jobs and more. To get the most of your enrollment in GPS, use the Navigation Checklist below.

- ◆ **To enroll in *TartanGPS*, contact the Career and Professional Development Center at Carnegie Mellon University**
- ◆ We are located in the University Center, Lower Level
- ◆ To schedule an appointment with your Career Consultant call (412) 268-2064

***TartanGPS* Navigation Checklist**

Coordinate One: Discover and Explore

You have so many options for where you will go...so how do you make the best decisions? What if you come across a detour? What are the side trips that you might want to include in your overall plan? It is not unusual for a college student to have many decisions to make, to have many questions to answer, and yes, even experience uncertainty about their direction and choices. Navigating these decisions requires advanced preparation and a foundation of self-knowledge. By starting in the beginning of your academic career, you will have the best foundation to get on track and stay on track.

To get started, initiate a meeting with your Career Consultant some time in your freshman year. He or she will help you start developing your custom journey in Coordinate One. (To learn about programs to get started in the *TartanGPS* program contact the Career and Professional Development Center).

- Meet your Career Consultant who can help you to begin exploring or confirming your focus in college.
- Take a career inventory to help you know how your unique interests, talents and values relate to major choice and career direction.
- Familiarize yourself with all of the resources available at the Career and Professional Development Center and the career website for your college.
- Access and update your *TartanTrak/My 3D account*. This database is an essential resource for internships, student employment positions and full time jobs.
- Meet with your Career Consultant to help you make choices about school-year positions on/off campus and identify summer opportunities.
- Get involved: take advantage of other social/academic organizations and services on-campus! Seek individuals in a profession of interest to conduct informational interview

Coordinate Two: Decide and Experience

This part of GPS focuses on effective decision making and identifying and building intentional skills based upon an understanding of options that will fit you. The focus and programming of Coordinate Two will help you confirm or analyze what to major in, identify skills that you need to hone, and experiences that will help you further clarify your direction. Effective decision making is an essential tool for navigating this coordinate. Ignoring the decision-making process or making an uninformed decision influences successful preparation for Coordinate Three of the GPS program.

- Make or confirm your choice of major. Plan to meet with your Career Consultant to learn about career options related to your major choice
- Attend workshops and programs sponsored by the Career and Professional Development Center.
- Consider part-time, on-campus positions and internships that relate to your major or that will help you to develop additional skills and career savvy. Learn about Experiential Learning through Student Employment at: http://www.studentaffairs.cmu.edu/career/campus_employment/
- Use Career and Professional Development Center services such as career counseling, on-campus interviews, the Career Resource Library, and *TartanTrak/My 3D*.
- Consider your study abroad options. Check with Office of International Education <http://www.studentaffairs.cmu.edu/oie/> .
- Explore opportunities for independent research and creative projects through the Undergraduate Research Office. www.cmu.edu/uro/ .
- Register with the Fellowships and Scholarships Office to receive scholarship/fellowship information. www.cmu.edu/fso/.
- Send for career materials from professional associations and consider joining one as a student member.
- Attend workshops for help with resumes, employment letters, interviewing skills and working job fairs.
- Devote a significant amount of time seeking a summer job/internship related to your field. Attend job fairs, and search for internships on *TartanTrak/My 3D*. Your Career Consultant can assist you with additional resources.
- Assume a leadership role in campus organizations and/or volunteer projects.
- Develop relationships with advisors and faculty members. Identify individuals who will serve as references for graduate school or employment.
- Schedule a mock interview.
- Explore your options to attend graduate or professional school. The Career and Professional Development Center has many resources to help you make and prepare for this decision.

- Planning for medical or law school? Meet with Carnegie Mellon's medical school and pre-law school advisors before spring about admission processes and testing.

Coordinate Three: Connect and Implement

At this point, you will need to make another important decision, preferably in your junior year, about the direction you will take after graduation, such as; will you go to graduate school or to find a job? As in the other three coordinates, the direction you choose to take requires specialized tools to get there.

A very important aspect of Coordinate Three is maintaining the relationship with your career consultant. He or she is interested in knowing the kinds of internships and employment that you are interested in. Also, by having worked closely over the course of your undergraduate education with your Career Consultant he/or she will know the kinds of positions you are seeking and can help direct you to resources that you need.

The end of your undergraduate academic experience may be an ending of one goal—to get your degree but the beginning of a new set of goals in realizing your career vision! By this point and by virtue of your involvement in TartanGPS, you will have both the tools and skills to arrive at your chosen destination, whether it is a job, graduate school or other unique destination. Also by this time your resume will be well developed and polished. You will have a number of interviews, a network of potential employers, or graduate schools, and most importantly confidence.

Plan for Graduate School:

- The Career and Professional Development Center has many resources to help you identify programs. Stop by to schedule an appointment with your Career Consultant.
- Write your application essays and have them proofread. Complete applications and take the necessary entrance exams.
- Request faculty members and employers to serve as references.
- Get information about *Interfolio*, an on-line credential file service for graduate school application materials at the Career and Professional Development Center.
- Continue researching graduate school funding sources by searching the Fellowships and Scholarships Office at www.cmu.edu/fso.

Embark on a Job Search:

- Meet with your Career Consultant for guidance with your final job search plan and to gain specific resources for positions of interest. Frequently check *TartanTrak/My 3D* to learn about employer information sessions and interview schedules.
- Network with parents, friends, alumni and others.
- Contact employers by participating in on-campus recruiting and job fairs. Review job postings in *TartanTrak/My 3D*, the Career and Professional Development Center's Career Success Guides and the Internet.
- Use the Career Search database, for access to over two million companies. Current students can connect to Career Search through WebISO, using this web link: www.cmu.edu/career/careersearch.