ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Student-athletes have multiple demands on their time and focus. Academic rigor, commitment to their sport, and commitment to their team – it can be challenging to leverage vital professional development with an already hectic schedule, which is why student-athletes are traditionally an underserved cohort for career development at most institutions.

This is not the case at Davidson College, where Davidson Athletics partners with our Center for Career Development to ensure all student-athletes have a robust and engaging experience with the Center and high-impact career outcomes. From the first time they visit campus as a prospective student, through specific targeted touch-points and ultimately launch to post-graduate success, this four-year career development playbook includes key initiatives designed to unlock the power of a student-athlete’s collegiate experience, empowering them for professional success. By implementing a cohesive infrastructure and ecosystem with Davidson Athletics and stakeholders – coaches, student-athletes, their families and alumni – the Center ensures student-athletes are empowered with the confidence, clarity, and self-advocacy skills to succeed in their post-graduate lives.

Our Career Advantage program empowers all student-athletes with extensive career education programs, individual career counseling services and comprehensive resources designed to help assess their skills, interests, values and experiences as they explore career options and develop targeted strategies for pursuing these goals.

COMPONENTS

PRIORITIZING ENGAGEMENT DURING THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

First Contact
This is the initial component of the Career Advantage program, promoting early engagement with the Center for Career Development team and demonstrating career development support as an institutional priority for all student-athletes.

In partnership with coaches, as part of an immersive campus tour, the Center welcomes recruits and their families to join members of our team for group and one-on-one informational sessions hosted at our Center. These opportunities enable prospective students to learn more about career pathways, our student-athlete tailored programming, internship programs, and robust resources. For families, these sessions offer an opportunity to engage with the Center’s team and learn of resources available to further their student’s success.

Follow-Up
After meeting with the Center during their time on campus, recruits and their families are encouraged to reach out to us with any follow-up questions regarding their visit. We provide our individual and office contact information during their informational sessions, and we are delighted to continue building a relationship with the student-athletes and their families. It is important for prospects to know that the Center is there for them each step of the way.

TEAM KICK-OFF: INITIAL CAMPUS ENGAGEMENT

“Tackling” Your Career Development Plan
As student-athletes arrive on campus in early August for pre-orientation, Executive Director Jeanne-Marie Ryan and the Center for Career Development team meet with the incoming First Years, team by team. This personalized engagement is a key priority in the Athletics’ partnership with the Center, and the staff works closely with coaches to schedule these interactive sessions.

These kick-off sessions serve as an initial blocking-and-tackling program to familiarize students with the resources, infrastructure, and programs for the year ahead, as well as to introduce them to their Career Advisors. During this session, the Center empowers student-athletes with ways to identify and pursue the opportunities available to them, including extensive career education programs, individual career counseling services, and comprehensive resources designed to help student-athletes assess their skills, interests, values, and experiences as they explore career options and develop targeted strategies for pursuing these goals.

Two critical steps that are imperative for Year 1 include:

1. Activating Handshake – The Customized Career Portal
All incoming First Year students have access to Handshake through single sign-on. In the initial kick-off session, we introduce this critical resource to student-athletes, so throughout the semester and year ahead, they’ll receive customized outreach about events, programs, and internship opportunities.

2. Creating A Resume
Building a strong college-level resume early in First Year enables student-athletes to showcase their college experiences, highlighting their undergraduate athletic experience (and other on-campus roles) to potential employers, in order to compete for research and internship programs, take advantage of on-campus and virtual professional development and employment opportunities. Student-athletes avail of our all-day walk-in hours, customized one-on-one appointments, and our ‘Minute Clinics’ with Career Advisors. We prioritize ease of access and availability: all day, every day.
TAILORED PROGRAMMING

Prioritizing Accessibility
Leveraging insights from Davidson Athletics and student-athletes themselves, the Center for Career Development has taken a strategic approach to ensuring programming and events are accessible to all student-athletes and that we optimize the experience to remove any barriers to access. Evening on-campus employer events and professionalization workshops are conducted in the evenings once practice has completed for students, ensuring they never have to miss an opportunity to meet key employers and graduate school deans, or miss out on professional development programming. The Center provides coach-approved meals and refreshments at targeted events and encourages students to come “as is” from practice, alleviating time constraints and barriers to attending programs. The Center for Career Development routinely joins athletics teams for post-practice breakfast sessions or comes to athletic facilities at Baker and Vance to provide programming at athletic facilities.

Suite of Professionalization Workshops & Programs
This four-year development model includes an array of programming essential for student-athletes. We recognize student-athletes’ limited availability due to practices, games, meets, and various travel commitments, therefore the Center has prioritized a slate of professionalization workshops available to all student-athletes at times that work best with their athletic schedules.

Davidson 101
As an introduction to the Center and Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) assessment, student-athletes will learn how personality type can be applied as a career exploration tool via group interpretation sessions and instrument debriefing. Through the completion of the first career development milestone, participants will identify actionable steps to create a collegiate resume and launch Handshake application for immediate access to professionalization series offerings, on-campus recruiting initiatives, and a curated user experience, based on career clusters of interest.

Minute Clinics & One-to-One Advising
Individualized career coaching attention, customized to fit the student-athletes’ needs based on career goals, resources, and targeted outcomes.

Athletes in Action: Success Strategies for Student-Athletes
Wildcat Athletics alumni share how to leverage an undergraduate athletic experience in multiple professional contexts as student-athletes learn what it takes to activate the skills they’ve honed on and off the field/court in the workplace and beyond Davidson.

Networking Decoded
Designed to introduce the value of networking & career mentorship development, student-athletes will learn the art of conversation, intentional strategy for learning about a variety of industry and job functional areas, and end with a profile launch on the Davidson Career Advisor Network (DCAN), Davidson’s premier networking database.

Professional Protocols
Student-athletes will develop tools to thrive professionally, understand the impact of their digital/online brand, professional presence, and communication efficacy in a professional setting.
- Digital Dirt: Building Your Brand Online
- Communicating for Impact: The Power of Persuasion
- Outlook for Business

Insider Insights Series
Industry insiders share with student-athletes key insights to careers and share their experiences through moderated discussions and networking.

Professional Immersion Search Strategies
Student-athletes will explore best practices in creating a strategic summer experience search by sector and geographic location, while mapping the landscape of opportunity. This includes application to funding for unpaid or low-paying internships, eliminating barriers to those seeking impactful and immersive experiential opportunities.
- Funding Your Unpaid Internship
- Internship Search Strategies (multiple offerings based on career clusters)
- Research Experience Search Strategies

Interviewing Skills
Student-athletes will learn to parlay the value of the liberal arts in any interview situation and master the art of interviewing – whether traditional, behavioral, or case-study by design – and speaking with confidence about accomplishments and value-add in any professional setting.
- Ace the Case
- Get Here, Go Anywhere: Interview Prep
- Graduate & Professional School Interview Prep (including MMI)
- Mock Interview Marathon Day

Our partnership between Davidson Athletics and the Center for Career Development is in response to the needs and timing of our student-athletes as they look to the future. The Career Advantage Program will tailor a career plan for our athletes and then help them reach their goals as the Program supplies our students the tools they need to guarantee professional success.

JIM MURPHY
Director of Athletics, Davidson College
CONNECTING STUDENT-ATHLETES WITH EMPLOYERS

In order to catalyze career opportunities, student-athletes are connected directly with employers through interactive networking events, workshops and information sessions, and meeting with key recruiters on and off campus as we facilitate career treks to a variety of sector partners. Employers across every sector, industry and scale - ranging from Fortune 500 firms to local non-profits, recruit directly from Davidson College annually. Because of the success of this program, student-athletes are highly sought after candidates for internships, research, fellowships, and graduate roles across a wide range of industries and geographies. Davidson’s student-athletes are deservedly recognized for their high caliber, which coupled with a clear focus on professional development and career-readiness by campus partners in Athletics and Career Development, has built deep trust and a strong reputation with employer and graduate school partners who choose Davidson as their college partner of choice for recruiting talent.

LEADERSHIP MATTERS

During their four years at Davidson, all students have the opportunity to avail of robust assessment tools and career counseling to aid them in identifying key areas of interest, uncovering strengths and preferences, and helping to clarify areas of potential career interest. Resources such as our MBTI, Strong Interest Inventory, and other assessment methodologies, along with individualized counseling, support each student.

In addition to this suite of resources, all student-athletes have heightened resources and programming to aid the identification and nurture the development of their key talents and traits. Leveraging leading-edge resources, our certified career development counselors lead individualized workshops for student-athletes in CliftonStrengths, team by team.

CliftonStrengths

CliftonStrengths is an assessment designed to uncover natural talents and discover what makes individuals stand out. Based on positive psychology, the assessment will help student-athletes identify their top areas of talent from a group of 34 strengths themes. The CliftonStrengths Discovery workshop is intentionally designed as an interactive workshop, through which student-athletes will discover their talents, set specific goals, and develop a plan to apply their strengths as an individual contributor and member of a team, applicable to both college and professional environments. In this program, student-athletes will gain CliftonStrengths tools and language that can also be leveraged as strategic talking points at interview and in professional settings.

Leadership Matters Program

Designed to activate strengths-based leadership and tools for success, student-athletes will learn how to effectively lead and manage teams, develop mentoring relationships, and navigate conflict and challenges in professional contexts.

- StrengthsQuest Assessment: Strengths-Based Leadership Development
- Conflict & Crisis: Learning How to Deal
- Developing Mentoring Relationships
- Managing Up & Across: The Art of Effective Feedback

HIGH-IMPACT EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AND PROFESSIONAL IMMERSION

“Tackling” Your Career Development Plan

Davidson Athletics and the Center for Career Development have developed a partnership approach to ensuring key professional development, immersive experiences, and applied learning opportunities are readily available and leverageable for all student-athletes. Whether their athletics commitments are predominately Fall, Spring, or year-round, we have professional development experiences available to them. From virtual networking to immersive job shadowing externships with professionals in the field, to career treks from Charlotte to New York, we prioritize impactful opportunities for students to explore and clarify their career interests.

Our network of high-quality firms, organizations, and institutions ensures that all student-athletes benefit from opportunities for critical professional immersive experiences - internships and research roles on campus - in Charlotte and both nationally and globally ensure student-athletes have leading-edge opportunities to achieve their career goals.

From specific internship grants specifically for student-athletes, to key employer partnerships with firms willing to accommodate early-return to campus for student athlete summer interns, our infrastructure and support network is intentionally designed to support the unique demands of a student-athlete’s schedule.

Throughout each student athlete’s Davidson experience, Davidson Athletics and Davidson Center for Career Development are here to support, guide, empower, and equip student athletes with the skills, confidence and clarity to succeed off the field and to ultimately launch post-graduate lives of leadership and service with intention and success.

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