



Bates Center for
PURPOSEFUL | WORK

Hello!

As we wrap up the academic semester and the calendar year, this is a great time to think about how you want to approach 2026. Whether you see January 1 as just another day, a major turning point, or something in between, it's an opportunity to start fresh if you want to, get motivated with new and current projects, and activate your drive towards purposeful work. Whatever you choose to do, we're here for you.

In that vein, here are a few suggestions in case you're looking for ways to set yourself up for success in the new year:

Update everything that needs updating. Pause to reflect: What have you accomplished since the summer? With things still fresh on your mind, take time now to update [your resume](#) with your relevant courses as well as your campus achievements and community contributions, [your LinkedIn profile](#) with your fall highlights, and [your career interests on Handshake](#) with any new industries and roles you're exploring. *NOTE: Updating your career interests is especially important so that we can send you targeted communications about employer events, internships, and jobs from alumni and recruiters.*

Dive into industry and company research. For industry research, explore the extensive list of [Vault guides](#) by setting up a Vault account with your Bates email. You can explore industries of interest, from advertising to agriculture, sports to statistics, and (almost) everything else in between.

For company research, use the power of the internet to identify companies in industries of interest – this is where AI can be helpful. You can search for companies based on recognition (e.g., top 50), size (e.g., mid-sized), location (e.g., Chicago), focus (e.g., film vs. theater, commercial vs. residential, corporate vs. nonprofit, quantitative vs. qualitative) or any other criteria that are important to you. Once AI provides you with your list(s), check out those companies, their websites, and specifically their career pages. The most updated information on opportunities and deadlines will be on those pages.

In case it's helpful, check out [general industry timelines](#) – more application windows will open in 2026, especially as more companies across industries (even consulting and finance) are doing just-in-time hiring and recruiting as staffing needs arise. As economic conditions change rapidly domestically and globally, it's important that you remain flexible and nimble, and stay on top of what's happening with industries of interest. Follow companies, news outlets, and industry influencers on LinkedIn and other forms of social media for the most relevant information.

Explore roles of interest. The best way to figure out *exactly what* experiences and qualities companies are seeking in new hires is to read through internship and job descriptions. Start by using a few basic search criteria on Handshake, LinkedIn, or any industry-specific job board. Are you interested in "data analytics" or "creative storytelling" or "education policy" or "problem-solving"? Are you looking to apply and expand your "Excel" or "Adobe InDesign" or "Tableau" skills? Try using any of these as search terms to get started.

Read critically and make a note of phrases in internship and job descriptions that draw your attention. Use those phrases as additional search terms. Stay broad in what and where you're willing to explore, and use specific prompts to help AI identify similar opportunities in your companies or regions of interest.

Consider your personal story. "Tell me about yourself" is a surprisingly hard question to answer in both interviews and formal/informal conversations. Yet, this question gives you the agency and space to tell the story you want to tell based on your audience – but you need to know yourself well enough to tell that story. Who are you really? What do you care about deeply? How

are you different from other college students?

It can also be hard to pare down your life to a two-minute pitch (what some people call an “elevator pitch”), so consider your audience and bring up the highlights that are most relevant to the opportunities you’re seeking. Consider what will make your story unique and memorable. Be reflective and specific.

To help get you started, check out these great pieces:

- [The Muse: How to Answer “Tell Me About Yourself” in an Interview \(With Examples\)](#)
- [Indeed: Interview Question: “Tell Me About Yourself” \(With Answers\)](#)
- [The Balance: How to Answer “Tell Me About Yourself” in an Interview](#)

Connect with people. You may be astonished to learn that the job opportunities that are advertised online through Handshake, LinkedIn, and other search platforms represent only about 20 percent of all jobs that are available. Statistics consistently show that most people who succeed in securing employment do so by making professional connections, which is also known as networking. Spend some time over winter break **building a list of people (e.g. Bates alumni, NESAC alumni, family friends, friends’ families)** who could offer valuable information and insight pertaining to your search, and **reaching out to them for in-person or virtual coffee chats (no coffee actually needed)**. Networking is simply about developing professional connections with individuals of interest and getting information about their professional journeys, companies, and industries. [Check out this resource to get started.](#)

If you need additional suggestions for the next few weeks, check out this Vault article on: [Strategies to Keep Your Job Search Active During Winter Break](#). You’ll see several of our suggestions along with a few others. Consider what might be most helpful and realistic.

All that said, if what you really need is a long stretch of rest and relaxation, take the time to physically and mentally refresh,

rejuvenate, reconnect with people around you, and do what you need to do for you. We'll be here when you're ready to [engage with us](#) in the new year.

Happy winter break!

Cheers,

The Purposeful Work Team

