Gap Year Planning Bootcamp

Considerations, Strategies, Tips, and
Gap Year Alum Panel Discussion

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Pathway For Tonight’s Discussion

- **Factors** to consider
- **Options** for gap year experiences
- **Resources** to identify options
- **Application** tips, timelines & strategies
- **Examples/Stories** from the field
- **Support** available
- **Gap Year Alumni Panel Discussion, Q & A**
Why a Gap Year (or More)?

• Present a more robust application to schools
• Compete in pool with many applicants who took gap year(s)
• Focus on classes, research, service, gaining experience during all 4 years of college + 3 summers
• Confirm a career decision
• Develop or strengthen particular skills
Gap Year Data

Gap Year Data 2008 - 2016

Number of Applicants

Application Year

Senior Applicants
Alumni Applicants
Reflection: Imagine the Possibilities
## Considerations When Crafting Your Gap Year(s) Experience

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<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Skills</th>
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• How will you talk about your gap year experience in your application essays?
• How will you express the value of the experience to who you are and who you are becoming?
What Are My Options? For Example:

- **Study:**
  - Scholarships and fellowships
  - Post-baccalaureate programs
  - Unstructured record enhancement, pre-requisites

- **Teach/Tutor/Mentor:**
  - Blue Engine Teaching Assistant
  - Citizen Schools
  - City Year
  - Teach for America
A word about post-bacc programs:

• Career-changer programs
• Record enhancer programs
• UG coursework or Master’s level
• Flexible or set program
• GET ADVICE on which type of program may best suit *your* situation, or if other options may work as well (with less expense), from pre-health advisors
What Are My Options? For Example:

**Fellowships:**

- Working
- Domestic vs international
- Sector most applicable to your gap year goals, e.g. humanities, policy, science, health, etc.

**Interning:**

- Various industries, organizations
- Short-term or longer
- E.g. CDC’s Office of Minority Health & Health Equity; RTI International
What Are My Options? For Example:

• **Federal Government:**
  - ORISE opportunities for recent grads
  - USAJobs; for Recent Grads = Pathways

• **Research:**
  - NIH Post-baccalaureate IRTA (1-2 yr)
  - Research/clinical trials assistant/associate (1-2 yr)
  - Labs of interest at Duke or other institutions
  - ORISE
What Are My Options? For Example:

- **Industry: what are your interests, goals?**
  - Biomedical device
  - Biotechnology
  - Pharmaceutical
  - Non-profit organizations, e.g. education, development
  - Start-ups, e.g. digital health, mHealth, biotech, etc.
  - Life Sciences
  - Foundations
  - Consulting, e.g. healthcare, education, life sciences
  - Clinical trials
Ethics of a Gap Year Job Search

- Disclosure to employer? When?
- How is employer affected by one-year employee?
- How are you affected?
- Flexibility for length of time before professional/graduate school?
- Professional posture for dialogue?
What are my options? For example:

- **International:**
  - What do you want to do?
  - Where do you want to be?
  - Consider travel issues with interviews in US

- **Design your own experience:**
  - Volunteer, do something completely different
Where Can I Find Resources to Identify Options?

- Online resources
- People
- Duke/HPA/Career Center events

See handout for examples of resources to get you started…
Online Search Strategies

• **Resources:**
  – CareerConnections
  – LinkedIn for jobs
  – Job boards
  – GoinGlobal
  – Idealist.org
  – OUSF and ProFellow scholarship & fellowship databases
  – Networking
Networking Strategies

Office of Health Professions Advising

• **Who:**
  – Faculty
  – Upperclassmen
  – Duke alums, e.g. “gap year alums,” other
  – Former supervisors, e.g. summer experiences, labs, jobs, etc.

• **Additional resources:**
  – LinkedIn, Duke Alumni Network, Duke Med MAP
  – Family members
Networking Strategies, cont.

• **How:**
  - Informational interviews
  - Networking opportunities, e.g. on campus, departmental or professional meetings, etc.

• **Important:**
  - The power of keeping in touch
  - The power of *thank you*
Issues of Funding…

- **Options:** grants, fellowships, awards, crowdfunding

- **Resources:** OUSF and Profellow databases, Career Research LibGuide > Internships & Funding

- **Strategy:** networking, research librarian, professors, and more
Documents For Application

• **Resume**
  – Tailored to specific position
  – Transferable skills
  – Accomplishment statement = action + impact/result
  – May be asked for CV

• **Cover letter**
  – Tailored to specific position
  – Tell story of fit with examples

• **Personal Statement/Application Essays**
  – Develop around provided prompts
  – Research program or position for foundational knowledge
  – Reflect: on yourself, past experiences, accomplishments
Think Transferable Skills…

- Environment
- Skills
- Transport from one environment to another
- “I’m just a paramedic, I’m not qualified for…”
Letter of Interest

- Aka “prospecting letter” or “inquiry letter”
- Sent to employers of interest, e.g. company/organization, laboratory, etc. who may be hiring but have not listed specific job posting
- Target specific individuals, e.g. PIs of labs, projects, etc.
- Include information on why lab/company interests you, why/how your skills and experience would be an asset to organization
- Be specific—make the connection between you and organization
- Helpful to include resume
- Suggest action plan, e.g. 15-minute phone conversation to discuss possible opportunities
Is There a Timeline For Planning?

• YES! Be aware of deadlines, resources to track

• On-campus recruiting vs Just-in-Time hiring timelines different [MYTHS TO BUST]

• Monitor fellowship, scholarship deadlines closely

• Openings for many clinical research positions begin appearing during winter/early spring

• Reflect, explore options, make supporting networking contacts early
Take For Example…NIH Post-bac IRTA

- Postbaccalaureate Intramural Research Training Award
  https://www.training.nih.gov/programs/postbac_irta

- “Applying to the NIH Postbac Program” video presentation focuses on eligibility, application tips, and follow-up to be a successful candidate
  https://www.training.nih.gov/oite-yt/applyingpostbacprogram

- PI research and networking; SIP connections

- Submit application ~ 6 months before desired start
Take for Example...Working Fellowships

- OUSF Post-graduate scholarships & fellowships: http://ousf.duke.edu/post-graduate-scholarships/search-all-fellowships
- ProFellow http://www.profellow.com/
- Application specifics per fellowship
- Recommendations
- Monitor application deadlines
Examples of working fellowships applied to by Dukies:

- Horseshoe Farm Fellowship
- MedServe
- Duke College Advising Corps
- Hart Fellowship ("the Duke Fulbright")
- Villers Health Justice Fellowship
- Global Health Corps
- City Year
- Blue Engine
- Health for America
- "Princeton in …" (Asia, Latin American, Africa) programs
Take for Example…
Clinical Research Asst.

- What are your research interests?
- Applying for specific position
- Letter of interest/cover letter + resume
- Networking, e.g. who do you know, who might you meet?
- Listservs: HPA listserv, majors’ unions, CareerConnections industry-specific
- Postings: CareerConnections, HR sites, Indeed.com, etc.
Take for Example… Healthcare Consulting

- Companies of interest, e.g. The Advisory Board Company, Triage Consulting Group, Huron Healthcare, Clearview Healthcare Partners, and more

- Networking, especially Duke alums

- Application process

- Interview preparation: case studies, transferable skills

- Work with Career Center, attend Career Fair
What have other Dukies done during their gap year(s)?
Stories from the Field:

- Mirai T’17 and Alejandro T’17: Duke College Advising Corps
- Simon T’17: biotech start-up in Durham
- Leah T’17: teaching + medical scribe in CA
- Kristen T’17: ophthalmology research Duke Eye Center
- Emily T’17 and Walid T’17: research with Duke Smoking Cessation Ctr
- Christina T’17: family planning start-up in Kenya
- Xavier T’18 and Keara T’16: Horseshoe Farm Fellowship
- Brittany T’18, Okechi T’16, Adil T’16: Fulbright Research Awards
Stories from the Field, cont:

• David T’16: clinical research @ UNC-CH
• Bo T’15 and Rim T’15: NIH Post-bac IRTA
• Sam P’15: research with Burke Rehabilitation Group
• Claire T’15: Innovations in Healthcare in Durham
• David T/15: Princeton in Asia in China
• Robbie T’14: St. Boniface Hospital in Haiti
• Kelly T’14: Vincentian Volunteer Corps in CO
• Li T’14: Medical Missionaries in Haiti; clinical research at UC Irvine SoM
Stories from the Field, cont:

- Julie T’13: HIV/AIDS work with AmeriCorps in DC
- Alexandra T’13: City Year and Yelp in NYC
- Russell T’13: 2 yrs NIH Post-bac IRTA
- Sonia T’13: digital health with Rock Health and Omada Health in SF
- Annie T’13: Partners in Health/Haiti and clinical research at Emory
- Nari T’12: Peace Corps
Get Yourself Organized

- Compile options of interest on single spreadsheet
- Create “buckets” of similar interests
- Prioritize options for consideration
- Keep track of any application deadlines
- Track networking contacts
Support Available

- Office of Health Professions Advising
- Career Center
- Writing Studio
Gap Year Alumni Panel

- Mirai Matsuura, Duke T’17, Duke Med MS1
- Parth Chodavadia, Duke T’16, Duke Med MS1
- Simon Jiang, Duke T’17, Duke Med MS1
- Nali Gillespie, Duke T’15, Duke Med MS2 (nali.gillespie@duke.edu)