

## Eastern Michigan U - DivComm | Career Corner Podcast - Episode 5

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This is Eastern Michigan University's *Career Corner*. Here are your hosts, Brad Minton and Logann Dolan.

Welcome back to the *Career Corner Podcast*. I'm Brad Minton, and back again is Logann Dolan. And we're both career coaches in the University Advising and Career Development Center. And today we're building off the great discussion that we had last week with Cara, in which we investigated the current state of the job market and hiring practices from a recruiter standpoint. What I loved about what she talked about was those best practices that students need to do in order to stand out and get connected to opportunities.

Yeah, and it was really great to hear that companies are still hiring and students can still adjust their course during this time. So an important key takeaway was that many employers are providing resources for candidates to stay connected during social distancing. And so that leads us to dive a little deeper and take a closer look on job search best practices in our fourth part of our series "From Class to Career Ready Through COVID-19."

And to help our students understand what they can do right now in order to be more effective in their job search, we're very excited to be joined by April Calkovsky, who is our amazing colleague. And April is a career coach here at EMU and she's been here on the staff for the last six years.

Prior to her work at Eastern, she actually served as a career advisor and an internship specialist with the Ohio State University. She teaches graduate level courses here in career advising and she is currently a doctoral student pursuing Educational Leadership. If that wasn't impressive enough, she's also the current president of the Michigan Career Development Association. So welcome, April.

Well, thank you so much, Brad and Logann for having me on the podcast today.

And we're really, really excited to talk with you today about a really important subject during this time. So we've all heard the news, right, companies are making cuts, internships are being canceled, and many are now in hiring freezes. So, April, with all that going on, how can students who are now looking for internships and employment move forward with any confidence?

Great question, Logann. I think it's important for students to think about a few things. One, what do they need to do right now in terms of experience and employment? Two, what do they need to do for

longer term opportunities? Like do they need to develop new skills? And three, how can then they find the opportunities and how can they use this time to develop their new skills?

So for instance, if students are in need of immediate job opportunities to keep food on the table, our COVID-19 job page at [emich.edu/uacdc](http://emich.edu/uacdc) has some great resources for full time and part time options. Long term it's important to remember that while it may take time, the economy will reach a new equilibrium, and that between now and then students can gain valuable experience and transferable skills through the jobs that are currently available.

Finally, if students need to upskill in order to meet job requirements, now is a fantastic time to take advantage of low cost, high impact online learning programs. Many of these programs are short term and self paced. So students don't need to feel overwhelmed by yet another mode of learning.

I'm so glad that you brought that up and to piggyback off of that, I think we've just completed the winter semester, we're going into the summer, and now is an excellent time to really be working on skill building and thinking about what are those top skills that you can help work into your personal brand, which we're going to talk about next week, and really allow you to network more effectively? And those are new tools that you can add into your tool bag over the course of the summer.

So, April, well, some of the common things that we're hearing from students right now it's really about the frustration. And this is not a new concern but this has probably just been magnified a little bit more during COVID-19. And students are finding themselves in this position of seeing opportunities online and applying and not really getting any response back. It seems like they're in this never ending cycle of find an opportunity, put together a resume, apply, and they're not getting rewarded for that. So what steps can students take to get out of that?

That's a great question, Brad. This is definitely a frustrating reality. And I think we feel it more now than ever. There are several things students can do to get out of this cycle. In my opinion, the most important and effective one is networking. And in this new environment networking through LinkedIn by connecting with companies and recruiters and alumni is one of the best uses of their time.

So by putting in extra effort to update their LinkedIn profile and connect with alumni through the university page, the EMU university page, students could discover what we call the hidden job market and this is where employers are oftentimes asking their employees first. When they are looking to hire new people they'll ask their employees, hey, do you know anyone who could fit this role? And those employees would then refer people that they know, like, and trust.

And in connecting with alumni and companies through LinkedIn, students may ask those individuals for an informational interview. And an informational interview is an opportunity for students to learn more about a position, a company, or an individual's path to get to that position. It's also a way to put yourself in front of potential opportunities and the people in the positions that could refer you to new positions.

And another important thing to do is to really focus your job search on those opportunities for which you're not just qualified but that you really want. So think of it as quality over quantity. Applying to hundreds of jobs just because you could do the job if you had to doesn't mean you should apply to that job.

It's often more effective to apply to jobs for which you are uniquely qualified than to apply to hundreds of jobs you'd rather not do but could do if you were hard pressed for employment. So focus your time, your energy, and your effort on those opportunities that mean the most to you.

Yeah, and it's definitely a really frustrating and just an unknown time for students, the graduating class, and companies. And those are really helpful and proactive tips students can take right now. So given that so many companies have moved all their hiring and candidate interaction to online, what are some tips or suggestions you would give students to help them stand out in a really crowded field of job seekers? And are there any more effective strategies for them to separate during this time?

Now more than ever it's essential to pay close attention to the words and phrases used in a job description and to ensure that your cover letter and resume specifically addresses the employer's needs for that role. A strong cover letter in which you connect your experience directly to the employer's needs, and where you express precisely why you would be excited to be part of their team could be the difference between you and another applicant getting the interview.

I also recommend following up with employers after an application deadline to introduce yourself and reiterate your interest in the position. That follow through could show them your level of commitment and excitement about the position. And one more thing I'd like to say about job searching during this time is practice patience, patience with yourself, patience with the process, patience with employers.

During your job search don't spend more than one to two hours at a time focused on cover letter writing and applying for jobs. Get up, walk outside, play a game, use a different part of your brain. Job searching is tough enough even during the best of times. Now we have an added layer of stress and complications that are completely outside of our control. So do what you can to practice patience and good self care during this time.

Wow, April, that was absolutely incredible advice, and I love the point that you made about cover letters. I'm a huge advocate for them myself. And what I always kind of say about that is the resume is kind of the black and white but the cover letter can really add in that gray layer and really speak a little bit more to the passion, the personality, and why you're the best fit. It can answer that question of why.

So we want to thank you so much for the incredible insights that you gave us today. And as a reminder for all of you, the career coaches and corporate relations managers here in the UACDC at EMU are available anytime for virtual appointments. If you go to [app.joinhandshake.com](https://app.joinhandshake.com), you can schedule an appointment with one of us where we can help you modify your approach and be as effective as humanly possible in your job search during this time of uncertainty.

Don't forget to tune in next week where Brad and I will be diving in a little bit deeper with networking and personal branding in the midst of COVID-19, and talk about some easy and simple things and steps you can be doing right now to improve your networking skills and develop your personal brand.

Until then, stay safe, stay healthy, and remember--

We support your goals.

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