

Alumni MasterClass

Planning a Pivot



There are many reasons you may be inspired to pursue a new field, from more money to a better work-life balance to simply wanting to do something different. If you're ready to make a change, here's a step-by-step guide to making it happen.



Planning a Pivot

- 01 Analyze **your situation.**
- 02 Inventory **your skills and interests.**
- 03 Brainstorm **new career directions.**
- 04 Research **specific jobs.**
- 05 Fill **the gaps.**
- 06 Revamp **your brand.**
- 07 Update **your materials.**
- 08 Get **the word out!**



01 Analyze **your situation.**

Make a list of the aspects of your current job that you like and dislike.



- What functions are you best at?
- What do you wish you could do more in your current role?
- What is the source of your dissatisfaction—the work itself? The field? The company culture?

Mapping Your Career Options
These worksheets accompany the Mapping Your Career Options presentation. You can print them or just use Adobe Acrobat to fill digitally.

IDENTIFYING skills and interests

- 1 If a benefactor gave you 1 billion dollars to start your own business or non-profit, what would it be? And what would your role be?
- 2 What do I love enough to do for free?
- 3 If I had to teach something, what would I teach?
- 4 If you and your best friend had to fundraise for a cause, what services or goods would you sell?
- 5 What does the perfect workday look like? Be as specific as possible.

02 Inventory **your skills and interests.**

Take stock of the transferable skills and experience you've amassed over your career to date.

- Think about activities and topics that you enjoy most in your life.
- What skills do you have that you do not use in your most recent role?
- What are your passions?



IDENTIFY YOUR SKILLS

You may have heard about the “skills gap” between the skills employers need and what job candidates offer.

While there are some very specific technical skills that few students have mastered, in most cases, the skills gap is really more of a perception gap. Whether it’s a job, internship or coursework, you can fill the perceived skills gap by viewing your qualifications as a collection of skills rather than just experience.



Know the skill types
First, it’s important to know the different kinds of skills employers look for:

- **HARD SKILLS**
Techniques and abilities that are learned and teachable, such as mastery of a specific technology or software program. Examples include: data visualization, editing, coding, etc.
- **SOFT SKILLS**
Abilities that are more human focused, intuitive and subjective, like communication, teamwork or creativity.
- **TRANSFERABLE SKILLS**
Hard and soft skills that transfer easily from one environment (work, school, extracurricular activities, home) to another, such as leadership, organization, communication, and research.

Stumped on your best skills?
Maybe you have skills you haven’t identified! Consider opening your mind a bit with skills identification activities such as:

- **“Skills Hero” exercise** — Take a character from a movie, book or television show and write out the skills the hero exhibits. Wonder Woman, for example, shows excellent critical thinking, problem solving and communication skills, in addition to her super-human strength and speed. This is your chance to get in touch with your inner super hero!
- **“Let’s Talk About Me” exercise** — Sit down with a friend or group of friends, explain your goal of identifying your transferable skills, and ask them to brainstorm a bit. You may hear a skill or two you hadn’t thought of!

03 Brainstorm **new career directions.**

Research career options online in areas that seem to align with your skills and passions.



- Talk to family, friends, and trusted colleagues in your network.
- For additional inspiration and guidance, consider seeing a career advisor.

SELF-ASSESSMENT AND CAREER EXPLORATION

As a DePaul student, your possibilities are endless! Finding your fit will take careful research, strategic experimentation, ongoing reflection and, more often than not, periodic revisions in your plan.

The Career Center is here to help you design and pursue your path, a process that begins with self-assessment.

Know your VIPS!

Building a thorough understanding of who you are is key to identifying and evaluating potential career paths and opportunities. We encourage you to start with your VIPS:

VALUES INTERESTS PERSONALITY SKILLS

VALUES determine what's most important to you in your work. That may include a certain compensation, work-life balance, travel, serving a particular population, the potential to advance in one's career, and more. There is no one "correct" set of priorities or way to define yours—it's completely up to you!

PERSONALITY refers to how you interact with the world. Having an understanding of your style and preferences can allow you to draw connections between who you are and the work environments and job functions you might find most comfortable, as well as identify your growing edges.

INTERESTS guide where you invest your time and energy when given the freedom to choose. Consider what you most enjoy doing in your spare time or what you want to learn more about when working to identify your interests.

SKILLS represent the ways in which you will address the needs of an employer—essentially, what you will actually do in the workplace. Skills are informed by knowledge and talent, and refined through practice. Think about what you most enjoy doing, as well as what you are good at.

04 Research **specific jobs.**

Do an online search to explore and compare potential jobs in your field (or fields) of interest. Look at job postings—what is the compensation range? What are the skills required? Don't worry about the experience requirements



- Also, consider an entirely new role in your current field. Changing roles within your field allows you to leverage your industry knowledge and contacts, which may mean an easier transition.
- Schedule informational interviews to get further insights.

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

Informational interviews are a low-pressure, highly productive way to learn about a field, get career advice, build your network and hone your interviewing skills. Reach out! It's easy and fun.

Informational interviews are an opportunity for you to talk with professionals about their career path, profession, organization and industry. These conversations can take place via phone or email, but it's much more fruitful when conducted in person.

Follow these simple steps to get started:

Step 1
LOCATE THE PEOPLE YOU WANT TO MEET

Search for emerging, mid-career and established professionals in roles or organizations that interest you. Recent graduates that are emerging in their careers have first hand knowledge about existing pathways. Mid-level and advanced professionals have large networks and can share their views about how industries are changing.

- Definitely consider targeting DePaul alumni. They are often the most open to speaking with students and recent graduates of their alma mater.
- If you're still in school, DePaul faculty are an excellent place to start—ask your professors if they know of any contacts in your field of interest.
- DePaul's ASK (Alumni Sharing Knowledge) network and LinkedIn are excellent places to find professionals whose pathways align with your passions.
- Don't be afraid to be bold—is there a well-known person in your field of interest whose perspective would be helpful, interesting or inspiring? Reach out to them! You have nothing to lose and much to gain—the worst that could happen is you get a "no."

An icon of two yellow coffee cups, one slightly behind the other, with steam rising from them.

05 Fill the gaps.

As you begin to zero in on a new direction, identify the skills and experience gaps. Building knowledge in a new field may involve a combination of online research, classes, and industry seminars.



- To expand your network into the new field, consider locating the appropriate professional association and getting involved.

ENGAGING WITH PROFESSIONAL GROUPS

Professional associations and industry groups are often excellent venues for learning about career pathways, expanding your network, enhancing your credentials and staying on top of industry trends.



What are professional organizations?

Professional associations, organizations and other groups generally are formed along industry lines to facilitate networking, share information and advance industry interests.

How to find the right one:

There are professional groups for almost every industry, ranging from the Association for Pet Obesity Prevention to the American Association of Candy Technologists. Even a basic online search that includes industry keywords and "professional association" will help you begin to map the landscape of relevant groups.

In general, you'll want to curate a list of active professional organizations that you either join (many have discounted rates for student memberships) or visit regularly online. Once this list is part of your toolkit, you can use these associations to network, evaluate graduate programs or certifications, and prepare for job interviews.

Why engage with them?

Whether you're an exploring student, recent graduate or are well along your career path, getting involved can offer significant benefits:

- **Networking** - Meetings and events, from local speaker presentations to national conferences, can represent an excellent opportunity to meet and connect with leaders, senior practitioners and peers.
- **Career Resources and Job Boards** - Many professional associations offer career resources for students, emerging professionals, and executive members. These often include industry-specific job boards.
- **Education** - Professional organizations often are a rich source of information on industry issues, trends, research and more.
- **Professional Visibility** - Becoming actively involved in an industry group or association is a great way to enhance your professional visibility, build credentials and form new professional relationships.

06 Revamp **your brand.**

Revamp your brand statement and elevator pitch to fit your new direction. Work in your transferable skills and passions, and how your unique background perspective will translate into value for an employer in your target industry.



- This is an opportunity to think through how your specific background will bring unique skills and perspective to your career target area.
- It also represents the chance for you to highlight your passion or the intentionality of your pivot.

SOCIAL MEDIA & YOUR PROFESSIONAL BRAND

Social media is more than social. In fact, social platforms can be a very effective way to build your brand and advance your career.

Social media is a viable means for expanding your professional network and finding job openings. Studies are showing that an increasing number of people—one study says 48%—used social media platforms as a way to search for their current job.

Here are a few ways you can harness the power of social media to advance your career:

- 1 CLEAN UP YOUR SEARCH RESULTS**
Search your name periodically to see what comes up, especially in advance of submitting job applications. You can be sure that some prospective employers will. If you don't particularly like the search results, update your LinkedIn profile and other social media accounts regularly to raise their rank. *Be sure to set privacy settings as appropriate!*
- 2 GET THE WORD OUT**
If you're job hunting, posting on social media is a good way to let people know. Something like this: *"I'm currently looking for a job in public relations, either at an agency or in-house. Let me know if you know of anyone hiring."* Including a link to your resume will make it easier for a potential referral source to understand the specifics of your background and advocate for you.

Posting your job search on social media is risky if you're currently employed—there's always a chance that word will get to your current employer, which at minimum would create an awkward conversation with your boss!

07 Update **your materials.**

Reframe your resume, integrating points you identified in revising your brand statement and elevator speech. Remember, once you begin applying for positions, you'll want to tailor your resume for each by using keywords.



- You'll want to revisit your resume, cover letters, LinkedIn and other social media platforms - even your interview prep!
- Be open about your pivot and "lean in" to your distinctive skills and background.

TAILORING YOUR RESUME AND COVER LETTER

In today's highly competitive job market, customizing both your resume and cover letter to each individual position will differentiate you from other applicants and demonstrate that you are the ideal fit for the opportunity. This is often the difference between getting an interview and being passed over.

250+ MANY OPEN POSITIONS RECEIVE OVER 250 APPLICATIONS

Why tailor?
Hiring managers often rely on software to select the best candidates by scanning for keywords in resumes, cover letters and even LinkedIn profiles. Other employers look for keywords manually. If your materials lack the keywords they're looking for, you may get overlooked.

Here's how to do it: keywords.
Tailoring your resume and cover letter is all about including the right keywords. How do you do that? It's a simple two-step process.

Step 1
Identify how your background and skills align with the role.

Take a look at the job description. The keywords that relate to you will be pretty obvious. They will relate to things like:

- Wording used to describe the business and position
- Skills required
- Types of experience the employer is looking for


08 Get the word out!

Be sure to let your professional network know you're looking and ready for opportunities. Of course, be careful if you need to avoid word getting back to your current employer.



- Get involved in professional associations, seek new networking targets, and get active in your industry's online community - through webinars and social media.

NETWORKING 101



Have you heard the old saying, "It's not what you know, it's who you know?" It's as true as ever.

Developing and continuously expanding your professional network is a crucial aspect of exploring, launching and advancing your career.

TAP INTO DEPAUL'S ASK NETWORK

DePaul created the Alumni Sharing Knowledge (ASK) Network to help students connect with university alumni for career advice and insight. Here, you can search for and connect with alumni mentors, join discussion forums, and participate in group chats. It's easy to join—visit depaulasknetwork.com to learn more.

SCHEDULE INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

Informational interviews can be an incredibly productive, no-pressure way to learn about a field, explore career paths and build your network of contacts.

JOIN PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Virtually every field has one or more professional associations formed to facilitate networking, support knowledge sharing and advance industry interests.

SETUP A LINKEDIN ACCOUNT

LinkedIn is the premier professional networking site, with nearly 600 million members and counting, including over 130,000 DePaul alumni! It's a perfect place to tell your brand story, connect with others and research career pathways and employers. In addition, hiring managers and recruiters are increasingly using this platform to source talent.

REV UP YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is another venue for building your brand and professional network. Join industry conversations, develop industry contacts, connect with employers and get the word out about your job search.

Networking for Introverts

For some people, the idea of reaching out to a stranger for a career conversation sounds painful or impossible. If this describes you, don't worry! Successful networking does not require you to pretend to be someone other than yourself. If you're authentic and move out of your comfort zone in baby steps, you'll build confidence and comfort in networking environments.

MAKE A LAUNCH PLAN

Once you are committed to your career pivot and are building your capabilities, develop a detailed launch plan.



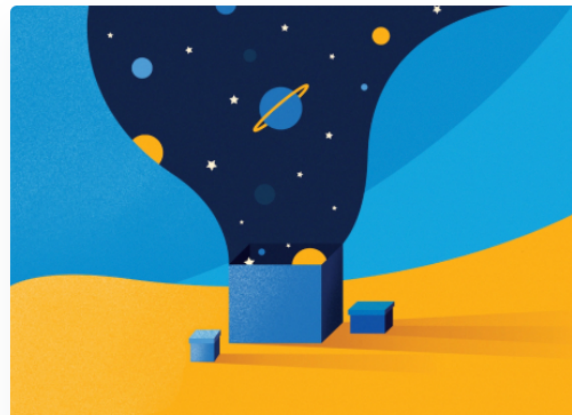
- Outline financial considerations like your personal living expenses, minimum salary/benefits requirements, and savings plan to prepare for the change.
- Create a time frame or milestones for skill-building or savings goals, and include a target date for searching and applying to new positions.

BONUS RESOURCES

EMSI Skills Match

Your Goals

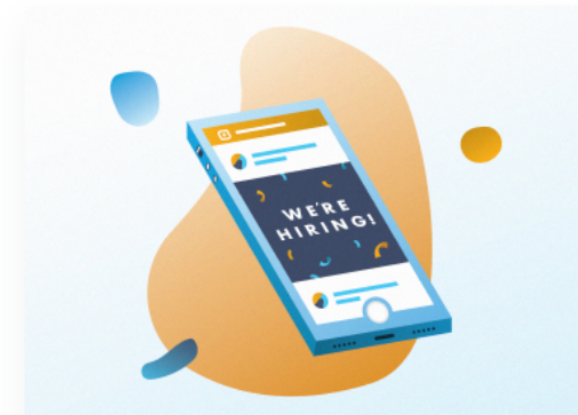
What is your objective?



Explore new career paths



Level up in my career
(stay on my current path)



Find a job



Learn & Explore

BONUS RESOURCES

Digital Defynd

- At Digital Defynd, we help you find the best courses, certifications and tutorials online. Hundreds of experts come together to handpick these recommendations based on decades of collective experience. So far we have served 1.2 Million+ satisfied learners and counting.



BONUS RESOURCES

YouTube Library of Career Center Presentations

+ Temporary [Google Doc](#) with Links

The screenshot shows the YouTube channel page for the DePaul University Career Center. At the top left is the channel logo, which includes the DePaul University name and a crest. To the right of the logo is the channel name "DePaul University Career Center" with a verified checkmark. Below the logo and name is a navigation menu with tabs for "HOME", "VIDEOS", "PLAYLISTS", "CHANNELS", "DISCUSSION", and "ABOUT", along with a search icon. The main content area features a featured video titled "Networking 101" with a yellow and blue icon showing a person in a network. Below this is a "Career Library" section with a "PLAY ALL" button and a welcome message. At the bottom, there is a row of four video thumbnails with their respective titles and view counts.

DePaul University Career Center ✓

HOME VIDEOS PLAYLISTS CHANNELS DISCUSSION ABOUT 🔍

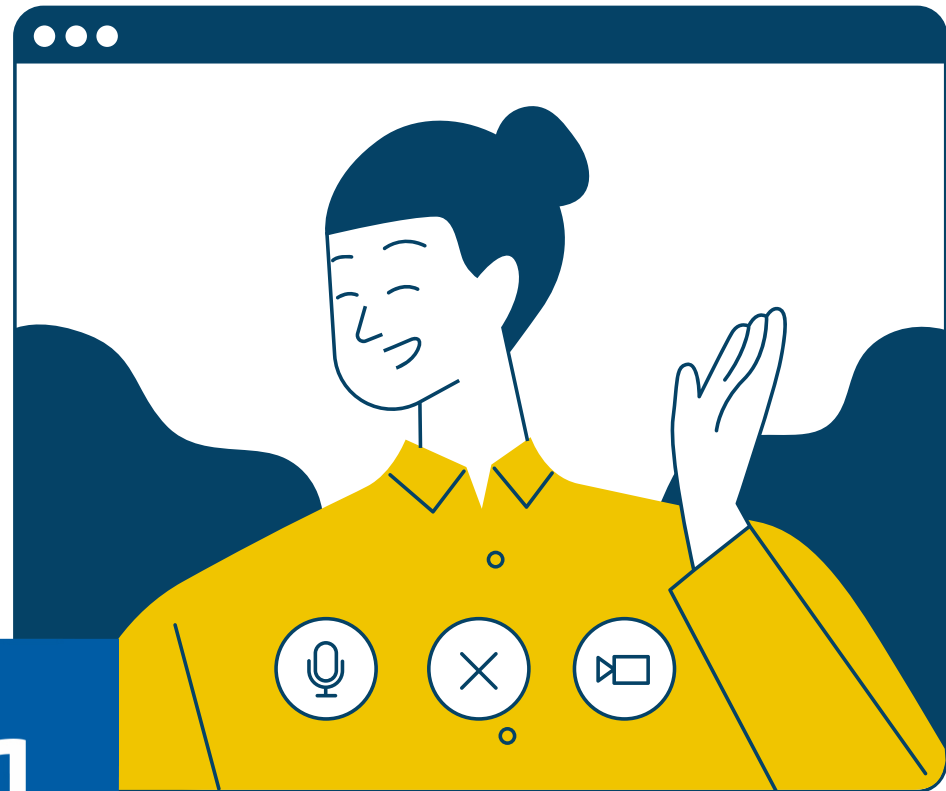
Networking 101
DePaul University Career Center ✓ 595 views • 9 months ago
Your professional network is a crucial part of your career toolkit. It's an important source of industry knowledge and job-hunting insights, people who can be a sounding board for ideas,...

Career Library ▶ PLAY ALL

Welcome to the Career Video Library! We're creating these short videos to compliment the handouts and activity sheets in our Career Resource Library (bit.ly/CareerLibrary). Stay tuned, we'll

Video Title	Duration	Views	Time Ago	License
Ready for What's Next	1:55	140	7 months ago	CC
3 Quick Resume Tips	1:20	704	9 months ago	CC
Writing Your Cover Letter	1:21	176	9 months ago	CC
Networking 101	1:26	595	9 months ago	CC

WHAT CAN THE CAREER CENTER DO FOR YOU?



- [Drop-In Career Coaching](#) (no appointment necessary!)
- [Virtual Appointments](#) with Career Community Advisors
- [Email Resume Review](#)
- Access a [Career Library](#) of 50+ Handouts and Videos
- Search for opportunities on [Handshake](#), our careers platform
- Network with Alumni on (ASK) or [Alumni Sharing Knowledge](#)

careercenter.depaul.edu

SKILLS LABS!



Join us for our weekly 30 minute skills-based sessions. Anyone who RSVPs on Handshake will get a recording of the session with supplemental materials!

SKILLS LAB



Introduction to
SURVEY DESIGN



SKILLS LAB



Introduction to...
CONTENT MARKETING



SKILLS LAB

HEALTH CARE AND SCIENCE



Public Speaking
FOR SCIENTISTS



SKILLS LAB



Designing
HIGH IMPACT PRESENTATIONS



SKILLS LAB



Introduction to...
PRODUCT MANAGEMENT



SKILLS LAB

BUSINESS, ENTREPRENEURSHIP,
AND CONSULTING



Know Your Worth!
SALARY NEGOTIATION




SKILLS LAB




Mastering the art of...
GRANT WRITING



SKILLS LAB



intro to...
DESIGN THINKING




SKILLS LAB

TECHNOLOGY AND DESIGN



Agile
PROJECT MANAGEMENT



CAREER WORKSHOPS

These 45-minute workshops offer tactical advice for every stage of your career journey! Anyone who RSVPs on Handshake will get a recording of the session with supplemental materials!



RSVP on [Handshake!](#)

CAREER LIBRARY

The DePaul Career Center recently created a library of 50+ handouts and 14 two-minute videos focused on every career readiness topic, ranging from resume basics to exploration to building your brand!

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

Informational interviews are a low-pressure, highly productive way to learn about a field, get career advice, build your network and hone your interviewing skills. Reach out! It's easy and fun.

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GRADUATE SCHOOL 101

In many fields, earning a graduate degree or certificate is a benefit and competitive advantage. In some, it's necessary for advancement.

Getting accepted into your preferred program requires research, differentiation and extreme project management skills. Here are some tips:



Selecting the right institution and program

Chances are, you'll want to apply to multiple programs to maximize your options. Which are the right ones? There are a number of factors to consider.

- 1 Faculty** Your relationship with faculty will be a huge factor in the educational experience. Learn the names, departmental positions and academic credentials of the professor or professors you'd be working with.
- 2 Resources** Research can require significant out-of-pocket costs. Find out if there are resources available at the institution that can reduce these costs.
- 3 Community/Location** Take a look at the on-campus and off-campus communities. Is the on-campus culture—faculty access, social life, etc.—what you're looking for? Does the local area have the amenities you want and need? Is it in a city or a small college town? Does the program offer online courses? How would these factors contribute to your quality of life?
- 4 Cost/Funding** The tuition and fees will be an obvious consideration, but you should also take into account living expenses, which can vary widely by region. What sort of stipends and funding programs are available? What are the work requirements?
- 5 Career Outcomes** What are the career outcomes for program alumni and how does the program support students and alumni in professional development?

PERSONAL IDENTITY AND YOUR BRAND

Your identity, whether based on your gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, culture, faith, or another element of your background, is fundamental to who you are. Deciding when and/or how to integrate your identity into your brand and job search can be a meaningful part of navigating your professional life.



In the Career Center, we often work with students and alumni who ask about the risks and benefits of sharing personal details about their identities. Whether it's a recent alum who is non-binary, or a single mother who returned to school to complete her degree after spending years caring for her children, every individual has the power to shape a specific and compelling authentic professional identity that includes (or does not include) personal information.

While we understand that identities are intersecting and not binary, below are some general tips that we hope are helpful in navigating discussions around career development.

Connect who you are to what you do.

If your identity or background links to why you have selected a career path or professional interest, you can differentiate yourself from other applicants with a "why statement," which illustrates your personal commitment to that role or career. For example, in a cover letter, you might include a statement like this:

"As a first generation college student navigating the opaque space of higher education without the insights of parents or a network of college-educated adults, I am passionate about providing support to under-resourced students, helping them succeed academically and thrive socially."

"I am particularly interested in this role because I recently returned to college to complete my degree in Health Sciences after providing care for my disabled sister for five years. This experience taught me the value of a holistic approach to caregiving, and I am eager to use these skills to enhance the patient experience at Good Samaritan."

DRESS FOR SUCCESS

You never get a second chance to make a first impression. That's why it's important to put careful thought into how you dress for job interviews and meetings with business contacts.



General Guidelines

Dress codes in the workplace have relaxed considerably in recent years, which can make it tougher, not easier, to decide what to wear. While it's definitely better to over-dress than under-dress, looking too formal for an interview can suggest that you're not a good fit for the culture. That said, here are some general guidelines:

- Clothes should be in good condition, fit correctly, and be clean and lint free
- Wear dress shoes that are comfortable and clean
- Hair should be well groomed
- Fragrance—a light touch is better
- Bring essentials only—a professional bag, briefcase or portfolio
- Cellphone off

HOW TO RESEARCH EMPLOYER DRESS CODES

If you have an interview or it's your first day at work or at business functions, look for everyday-type images (not dressy corporate events) to get a sense of the culture. Be sure to look for staff in functions similar to yours, as some teams' dress codes vary.

✓ **Check out their social media accounts** Many employers post images of employees at work or at business functions. Look for everyday-type images (not dressy corporate events) to get a sense of the culture. Be sure to look for staff in functions similar to yours, as some teams' dress codes vary.

✓ **Call the hiring manager or HR department** You can ask explicit questions about an employer's dress code. Questions like: "How formal is the dress code?" or "Do most interviewees wear a suit?"

WORKING REMOTELY: THE BASICS

Working from home is common now, and with the pandemic, it's even more so. The number of remote roles has increased by 173 percent since 2005, and most experts expect this trend to accelerate. This is the future of work.



Set up your workspace for success.

Whether it's a home office, a commercial co-working space, or a table in a coffee house, your workspace has a lot to do with your effectiveness. Make sure your space:

- Is comfortable and ergonomically sound
- Is quiet and able to accommodate phone conversations or video conferencing without distractions
- Gives you room to move around—cramped quarters can increase fatigue!

Get the right equipment.

Make sure you have the right tools and technology to do your job well:

- A computer with a camera.
- A reliable internet connection—nothing is more disruptive to a video meeting than a connection that drops.
- Remote-work software
- LinkedIn Learning is an excellent source for technology tutorials and tips, including entire courses, to support remote-work success.

SOFTWARE SUGGESTIONS

Video conferencing/screen sharing: Zoom, Skype, GoToMeeting, JoinMe or others

Communication: Slack or others

Project Management: Asana, Trello, Mondays

Cloud Computing/team sharing: Basecamp, Google Drive, Microsoft Teams, Box

Check it out here: go.depaul.edu/careerlibrary



Thank You!

