ANTHROPOLOGY CAREER READINESS NETWORK

Making Connections with Local Organizations

Demonstrating the value and relevance of anthropology to your students and to those out in the world is essential to the teaching role. Identifying work opportunities can help expose students to workplace options as they begin planning their future. Students benefit from applying their anthropological toolkit across a range of projects, internships, and job opportunities. Similarly, organizations such as government agencies, companies, and nonprofits gain from the concepts and methods anthropology students can bring to current workforce and supply chain issues. Instructors can be the catalysts in connecting the classroom to the workplace. This tool offers suggestions on how to engage in organizational outreach and sustain connections once they are established.

Benefits to You and Your Students

Figuring out the nearby organizational landscape is the first step in building connections between you and employers. With such relationships, you will be positioned to propose:

- a client-based class project
- job shadowing
- a service-learning experience
- an internship for one or more of your students

If you maintain your relationships over time, your students will benefit from employer career advice as well as:

- access to professional networks
- mentoring
- possible job referrals
- references

Benefits to Local Organizations

Partnering with a nearby university is desirable because of value adds:

- extension of professional networks, strengthening the connections between “town and gown”
- conduit for research possibilities
- inexpensive source of student input with advisor
- an anthropological perspective on organizational issues
- possibility of a job pipeline
- enhancement of organizational reputation
- opportunity to “give back” to the community

How Do You Begin?

Numerous options for exploring your ecosystem are open to you. Although much of the work involves exploration, at some point you will be engaged in outreach and discussions with nearby organizational leaders. Consequently, you will need to practice your “pitch” to these leaders. Incorporating the benefits to them into the pitch will enable you to be most effective in this spearheading role.

1. Tap the Experts: Staff, Alumni, and Colleagues

- Contact your campus Career Planning Office to inquire about local employers with whom that office works
  - Find out the kinds of organizations where students intern each semester or summer
  - Indicate anthropology student interest in benefiting from local work experience
  - Ask about arranging introductory conversations with one or more employers
- Alumni from your Department
  - Create a LinkedIn Group of your current students, staff, and instructors with any known alumni; consider using this tool, Fostering Alumni & Student Connections on LinkedIn
  - Reach out to any known alumni to participate in various departmental events (e.g., career panels, guest lectures, departmental workshops)
    - To connect with alumni, see our tool Building Department-Alumni Connections
  - Build relationships with those alumni who seem to have the capacity and interest in supporting student career readiness; arrange virtual and in-person meet-and-greets with selected students and faculty
- Colleagues from your Department or College
  - Learn which instructors have local organizational contacts and whether students are engaged with them and in what way
  - Brainstorm possible student projects with one or more of these contacts
  - Set up meetings with these contacts to probe their interest in working with you/your colleagues and your students
- Reach out to any research parks or business incubators associated with the university
  - To learn about the work occurring there, set up opportunities for students to use their observation and interviewing skills through facility tours and guest speakers, respectively
  - Interview university liaisons in these enterprises about project-related issues with which students might assist (e.g., class projects)

2. Brainstorm and Validate by Category

- Conceptualize organizations in three broad categories: business, nonprofits, and government
- Brainstorm local organizations that fit into those categories
  - Be aware that a medical organization like a hospital could be categorized as a private, nonprofit, or government entity
  - Recognize that some organizations may have multiple divisions, departments, or specialties, with multiple contacts that may offer opportunities
- Gather additional insights using the internet
  - **For Businesses:** Explore local business directories, largest employers, Fortune 500 companies, and companies headquartered in your city
  - **For Nonprofits:** Search for nonprofits and charities, nonprofit associations, foundations, museums, biggest nonprofits, most successful nonprofits and nonprofits and community groups in your city
  - **For Government:** Examine your city (and/or county) government and programs, public services and government, federal executive boards, mayor's office, city council, city commissions, and city departments in your city

3. Treat Your Investigation as On-site Fieldwork

- Conduct a quick survey by driving around and recording the names of area organizations from visible signage
- Consult with knowledgeable professionals including reference librarians, the Chamber of Commerce, service organizations (e.g., Lions Club, Rotary International), United Way and others
- Network with community and university members to identify potential organizational options for student work experiences

4. Ask Students to Identify their Workplace Preferences

- Have students name local organizations corresponding to a list of work sectors where anthropologists work; consider using the organizations listed in the tool, What can you do with a degree in anthropology?
- Encourage students to think about an issue or domain of work that appeals to them such as domestic violence shelters, user experience, local tourism, courts, patient safety, research organizations, housing affordability, historic preservation, or organizational change; use the internet to develop lists of organizations for each issue or domain
- Have students identify whether these work sectors have at least one local match
- Assign students to do a "deep dive" into the websites of those local organizations of greatest interest to the students

Who Gets Involved?

- **For a Client-based Class Project:** An individual instructor would reach out to contacts at one or more area organizations to gauge their interest in sponsoring a class project
  - Focus on a problem or issue the client is facing; see our tool, How do you set up a client based project? for examples
  - Ensure the scope is relatively narrow since the project concludes by the end of the term
  - Design the class project to be an integral part of the course
- **For Internships and Job Shadowing:**
  - An individual instructor or staff coordinator, often working collaboratively with the campus Career Planning Office, would investigate potential options for students; see our tool, How do you set up an internship program?
  - A student may also take the lead in exploring internship and job shadowing options
- **For Service Learning:** These experiences are usually the purview of the instructor that decides to integrate coursework with community service

It is always helpful to begin with some contacts. Your campus Career Planning Office should be able to advise you on working with local organizations and may be able to assist you with recommendations for specific organizations. You will learn about their processes for working with organizations and students.

If you are working on your own without the benefit of any knowledge of local organizations, start small. Reach out to one or two organizations and establish a connection with them. After your first collaboration, you will be able to learn from the experience and then consider whether you will try to resume, expand, or discontinue the relationship.

Tips for Maintaining the Organizational Relationship

Some time and energy will be necessary to sustain the relationship.

- Set up a meeting with the organization to provide and receive feedback; this Post-Internship Evaluation Guide may be useful
- If you/your students gained from the experience, ask your organizational contact about 1) considering a new project, service learning opportunity, or intern/internship, 2) introducing you to a new contact elsewhere in the organization
- Invite your organizational contact(s) to participate in a department-sponsored event (e.g., panel discussion, social occasion, recognition ceremony)
- Explore your organizational contact's interest in offering career advice to your students, opportunities to expand their professional networks, or mentoring them

To allow the relationship to flourish indefinitely into the long-term, regardless of career moves, retirements, and the like:

- Find other departmental or university colleagues to partner with you
- Make as many contacts in the organization as possible
- Involve your students in more than one part of the organization

Advice Offered in Other ACRN Tools

- How do you set up an internship program?
- Building Department-Alumni Connections
- How do you set up a client-based class project?
- Launching and Sustaining a Community Advisory Board