

## Career Forward Sprint: Beyond The Academy

### Your Career Support Team

My name is Ryan Sermon and I am here to support you through the Sprint and beyond, with all things related to your professional development. I am currently a Ph.D. student in Higher Education and focusing my coursework around the areas of college access, equity, and sociology. My experience in helping others with their career development stems from serving as a Career Development Specialist with AmeriCorps during my first term of service and as a Career Success and Connected Learning Coordinator with the Pima County Public Library during my second term. Most recently, I have been a Career Trainer and Employment Facilitator working with the Department of Labor's Veteran's Employment and Training Services Transition Assistance Program, where I coached separating and retiring military personnel on job search strategies.

Office Hours: By appointment (schedule via [email](#) or [Handshake](#))

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My name is Joel Muraco and I am here to support you through the Sprint and beyond, with all things related to your professional development. I completed my Ph.D. in Family Studies and Human Development from the University of Arizona in 2014. I was an Assistant Professor of Human Development at the University of Wisconsin Green Bay from 2014 to 2017 when I returned to Tucson and the University of Arizona. I was then a Career Educator in Student Engagement and Career Development from 2017 until transitioning into my current role of Ph.D. Career Counselor in the Graduate College in January of 2020. I am a firm believer in the power of education in and out of the classroom and enjoy working with individuals as they develop their educational and career goals.

Office Hours: By appointment (schedule via [email](#) or [Handshake](#))

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### What is a Sprint?

Borrowed from the concept of Scrum Sprints from Agile Methodologies, a Sprint is a repeatable fixed time project, usually a month or shorter, during which time a product of the highest possible value is created. For our purposes:

Repeatable fixed time project: your active or soon-to-be active internship or career search

Product of the highest possible value to be created: your professional self

*Objective:* Upon completion of the Sprint you will recognize and be able to execute the steps necessary to successfully navigate your internship or non-academic career search, while consistently putting your most professional and informed self forward.

### Sprint Expectations

This Sprint is designed to support you as you prepare to enter or continue your internship or career search. It is not-for-credit, nor required. Every day and week of the Sprint is designed to be helpful (even if just confirmatory for you), with many elements building upon each other. We ask that you complete all tasks to the best of your ability to maximize your experience in the Sprint. That said, if you don't believe something will be helpful to you and your process, feel free to skip it – the goal is for the experience to be helpful to you, not create more work. We are not keeping track of the tasks you complete. It's up to you to maximize your experience by taking control of the experience and doing the work that makes sense for you.

We strive for universal accessibility. Every effort is made to make this experience as accessible as possible. If you find any element problematic, please do not hesitate to make it known so the content can be updated or reworked.

We strive to be emotionally intelligent. We recognize the cultural, historical, and societal influences and pressures that exist around the search process. The experience is often long and taxing for individuals. It often invokes feelings of hope, fear, anxiety, and excitement. Wherever you are in your process, however you are feeling about it, please know you are not alone, and you are supported.

All content will be available via a [D2L](#) course site. Content will become available each day (at 12:01am) to help keep the pace of the experience.

We will send an email every morning (M-F) to alert you to the day's task. Daily tasks will vary in the amount of time needed to complete them. Some days, you'll be fine with as little as 30 minutes. Other days may take you longer. Don't stress the time commitment and do your best to complete tasks as you're able. If you get behind a day or two, that's okay – try and catch up or skip what you missed and jump back in whenever we're at in the Sprint. We are always available to answer questions or provide guidance should you find something unclear. And remember, the Sprint will be offered every month so if you are unable to fully participate this month, you can always sign back up again.

### **Sprint Outline:**

The Sprint is broken down into 4 distinct weeks, with each week building upon the previous:

#### **Week 1: Research & Discovery**

During the first week, we will work together to either identify potential career interests or solidify already identified interests. Then, we will spend time researching our interests; finding opportunities to which we would want to apply. From there, we'll decipher job descriptions to identify the skills, experiences, and requirements for the position. We will use this newly learned or confirmed information to create or update our Individual Development Plan.

##### *Day 1: Understand The Scope*

Review articles about work and identity, what it means to leave the academy, and tips on successfully transitioning out of the academy. A built-in review ensures you pause and reflect on what you've read and how ideas and concepts addressed resonant or are influencing you and your process.

##### *Day 2: Identify Your Biases*

Complete two assessments: 1) Big Five Personality and 2) Career Explore to identify aspects of your personality and potential careers you would enjoy. Evaluate your identified careers via your personality characteristics and for overall fit with your life goals.

##### *Day 3: Conduct Your Research*

Learn how to read a job description, conduct a search for relevant opportunities, and decipher the job descriptions via a guided exercise. You'll use this information throughout the rest of the Sprint so it's important you spend some time identifying potential opportunities to which to apply.

##### *Day 4: Analyze Your Data*

An intentional break in the process to allow everyone time to reflect and to process the information they have gathered the previous three days. Also, an introduction to self-care as an important aspect of this long and stressful process.

##### *Day 5: Build Your Report*

Using SMART Goals, create a plan that includes relevant career related goals and plot them out on a timeline with your remaining time left here at the University of Arizona, or at least over the next 6 months. Some goals are provided to you via participation in the Sprint, others will be specific to you and your career goals.

#### **Week 2: Networking and Professional Profiles**

During the second week, we build or iterate on our professional selves, as informed by the research we conducted during the first week. This means we use the information we learned about ourselves and the types of opportunities we plan, or have been seeking, to identify how we market ourselves to employers. We'll spend time crafting or updating our self-introductions and online professional profiles, ensuring we highlight what's most important. Then, we'll transition to networking – the why and the how – before actively networking with professionals in our chosen fields.

##### *Day 1: Craft Your Pitch*

Develop the pieces of your self-introduction, or elevator pitch, to confidently introduce yourself to professionals in your chosen field. The exercise requires you to tailor your introduction using the information you learned from deciphering job descriptions to ensure you highlight your most relevant skills and experiences.

#### *Day 2: Create Your Profile*

Create or update your LinkedIn profile to stand out in the right way. Again, you'll use the information you learned during the first week to tailor your profile so that others will have a clear sense of the exact relevant skills and experiences you possess, as needed for the roles to which you plan to apply.

#### *Day 3: Build Your Network*

Now is the time to begin using LinkedIn for what's it really intended for – networking! A step-by-step guide helps you get started connecting with relevant University of Arizona professionals and pages. From there, connect with others in your field to being to build, or to strengthen, your network. The more relevant others the better!

#### *Day 4: How To Collect Qualitative Data*

Learn about the power of Informational Interviews, the dos and don'ts, and hear success stories. Understanding the importance of connecting with, and speaking to, professionals is an important strategy to employ before you need a job, but it's never too late to start because you never know where opportunity will come from.

#### *Day 5: Collect Qualitative Data*

Now is the time to contact those new professionals in your network and invite them to chat with you (i.e. invite them to an informational interview). A how-to guide is provided to help you navigate the process, with resources for ensuring you make the most of your informational interview.

### **Week 3: Application Materials**

During the third week, we focus on your application materials. Using the information you learned about yourself, the types of positions you wish to pursue, and how you've decided to market yourself, it's time to create or update your materials. We'll make informed decisions concerning which materials make the most sense – a CV or a resume, a cover letter, various types of statements (teaching, research, etc.), a portfolio – and we'll draft them before seeking feedback from others.

#### *Day 1: Draft Your Resume*

Focusing on resumes, spend dedicated time drafting, updating, or converting your CV into a tailored resume you can use for one of the jobs you previously identified. A checklist of sorts is provided to help you create a document you can be both confident in and comfortable with. Resources are provided, as is a template if needed.

#### *Day 2: Draft Your Cover Letter*

Shifting our focus to creating effective cover letters, you'll now spend time drafting or updating your cover letter for one job you previously identified (same job you tailored your resume for). A guide is provided, as are resources to provide examples and additional information if needed.

#### *Day 3: Review Your Drafted Materials*

A third day dedicated to drafting your resume and/or cover letter. As both documents take time to create and tailor, this third day illustrates the nature of the work – you'll continue to edit, refine, and update your documents. Spend time today looking over your materials, making revisions and edits as necessary.

#### *Day 4: Evaluate Your Tailored Resume*

Dedicated time to using an online Applicant Tracking System (Jobscan) to evaluate how well you've tailored your resume to the job of your choosing. Results inform whether additional tailoring is needed, or what skills you may want to gain. A self-care check is also built in, to make sure you're taking care of yourself during this process.

#### *Day 5: Seek A Professional Review*

Reach out to a professional in your network, perhaps the professional you were able to speak with for an Informational Interview and ask if they'd be willing to provide a review of your resume. Receiving insider information, from a professional in your field, can be helpful in identifying industry or role specifics.

## **Week 4: Interviewing**

During the fourth week, we get a little ahead of ourselves (potentially). Having done the research, polished our professional selves, and created or revised our materials, it's time to practice talking about ourselves and our relevant experiences in the context of an interview.

### *Day 1: Research Potential Questions*

Using Glassdoor, identify potential interview questions you may experience during an interview for the specific role to which you plan to apply. Looking for overall trends can be informative and help you appropriately prepare. Will you be asked very technical questions or are general interview questions the norm for your field?

### *Day 2: Draft Answers To Questions*

Now that you've identified potential questions, the goal is to formulate potential responses that include the most relevant skills and experiences. The STAR method is introduced as a format for answering behavioral interview questions. Other types of questions (technical, situational, general) are also discussed.

### *Day 3: Big Interview Mock Interview*

Using Big Interview, select and complete a relevant mock interview. You can choose a mock interview based on a particular industry, a particular skillset, or a general interview. Whatever you do, the practice will be good for you, and as Big Interview provides video recordings of you answering questions, you can assess yourself.

### *Day 4: Refine Potential Answers*

Reviewing your previous mock interview, a day later, can be informative as you may see things you didn't previously, or you may now recognize how an answer can be even stronger. Use the time today to reflect and revise answers to potential interview questions.

### *Day 5: Prepare For Your In-Person Mock Interview*

Draft an email to your Career Counselor requesting a mock interview. In your email be sure to include a PDF of the job description to which you tailored your materials, your tailored resume, and your tailored cover letter. Then, prepare as best you can for your mock interview, during which time you'll receive feedback on your materials.

## **To Conclude**

Our goal is to create an experience that will be helpful to as many graduate students and postdocs as possible. We recognize not all of what we create may be helpful to you and that's okay. We hope you find many of the tasks helpful and learn some useful tips and strategies along the way to creating your most professional and informed self. We are always available to meet to discuss the content, or your process.