

To Get Ahead . . . Get Involved

by **Connan Campbell**

Decades of research supports the idea that students involved in campus activities (fraternities, residence halls, student government, community service) are more likely to graduate and are more likely to develop leadership skills that prepare them for “life after graduation”.

Research also asserts that student involved in co-curricular activities do better academically. Whether this is because they have readily-accessible mentors in their advisors and supervisors, are forced to improve their time management skills or their involvement is directly related to coursework, the results are positive.

Certainly, if you’re involved, you are probably having more fun than those who are not active!

1. Get connected in your career field.

Join a student group focused on your career field or field of study. Most organizations are affiliated with a national association that produces a newsletter or publications, a listserv, and hosts a regional or national conference; all opportunities that offer insight into issues and a connection to practicing professionals.

2. Join a student organization.

Become involved in a non-academic focused student organization that forces you to improve your interpersonal relationship and communication skills.

3. Participate in community service activities.

Companies of all sizes build connections to customers by connecting to their communities. Participating in service activities or raising funds for charities can demonstrate your ability to build relationships and your interest in the community.

4. Take on leadership roles in all that you do.

Being an active and responsible member is not enough. Companies have a lot of employees who fulfill their basic responsibilities. They need individuals – like student organization officers – who are willing to take responsibility for the success of the organization and the development of others. With this in mind, do not attempt to take on so many leadership responsibilities that you are unable to show successes in your efforts.

A research study involving human resource professionals, CEOs, and senior recruiters for the Top 1000 companies in the US asserted that 60% of candidates’ success could be attributed to exposure and visibility, above the 30% for image/manners and 10% for talent.

Getting involved can help you gain the necessary skills to be successful after graduation, but getting involved to get connected can be even more beneficial.

To get ahead . . . get involved!

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