OBERLIN SENIOR LAUNCH 2021
Ad Reinhardt (American, 1913–1967)

**Abstract Painting**, 1948
Oil (and water-based paint?) on canvas
Fund for Contemporary Art, 1967.26

Dear Seniors,

Over the past four years, your class has asked the question at the core of musical ingenuity and a liberal arts education: why? This question has guided your engagement inside and outside the classroom. Now, as you’re shifting gears to think about life after Oberlin, it’s time to ask an equally important question: how?

We at the Career Development Center want to help you use your Oberlin education to figure out how to identify job opportunities, how to gain a steady footing in a gig economy, how to stand out in an interview, how to navigate challenging workplace dynamics, and how to determine your next steps.

This is why we’ve created the Senior Launch Program: to meet the needs of your graduating class. Together, we will answer questions such as: how do I find a job when COVID-19 has disrupted the way employers look for new people? Or, how can we talk about renewed calls for racial equity in the workplace?

These are extraordinary circumstances, times when you will need all of the comradery and compassion you’ve shown each other during your time at Oberlin. You will also need the outer Oberlin network, which we know is as thickly woven as the community you’ve developed here.

But to make the most of this community, you will need to develop a trust in your internal compass. In Arabic, there’s a word for this: fitra, which roughly translates to “creation.” In the Islamic faith, fitra refers to the knowledge and sense of stewardship that you are born with as part of your innate nature. It is a concept found in other old religions and secular humanistic beliefs as well. In extraordinary circumstances, like the ones we face, it is easy to lose touch with your fitra.

During the Senior Launch Program, I hope that you will hone professional skills while also finding your fitra, and allowing your community to help guide you. Your community will show you how. Your fitra will remind you why.

Dana Hamdan  
Associate Dean & Executive Director  
Career Development Center
The new Senior Launch Program has been developed specifically for the Oberlin College & Conservatory Class of 2021, as you prepare to graduate and move on to future opportunities. Over the past year, the COVID-19 pandemic and renewed calls for racial justice have dramatically shifted the professional landscape that you will shortly enter. The Senior Launch Program is designed to help you meet the demands of the current moment, both through assessing and strengthening the knowledge and skills you already have, as well as developing new competencies.

In early February, we asked for your class’ input on what you would like to see as part of a career readiness program; this page provides an overview of what we built based on the 120+ responses that we received. Beginning March 8, the program comprises three primary components, outlined below.

- **Career Readiness Bootcamp:** From March 8 to April 14, students will be invited to participate in a range of workshops focusing on key career development areas, from résumés and cover letters to crafting your digital image and code-meshing in professional and technical writing genres. These workshops are organized into two primary categories:

  1. Career Readiness & Skill-Building
  2. Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI)

All students will attend a core set of skill-building workshops, which will serve as key building blocks throughout the Bootcamp. However, we know that each student is at a different place in your professional journey, and have different skills you need to hone. With this in mind, the programming outside of the core workshops is structured to give you the opportunity to choose which workshops will be most helpful to you (you can certainly attend them all!). More details about this structure are included in the schedule.

Our approach to DEI is slightly different than our approach to other workshops. At the Career Development Center, our expectation is that all of us — students and staff alike — take seriously our responsibility to identify and address inequity and injustice in professional spaces. We also know that, as Oberlin students, you have already grappled with many of these issues. For this reason, the DEI workshops will not be introductory — rather, they are designed to elevate our conversations and develop skills that can be applied directly to navigating and thriving in diverse professional environments. In order to have a complete Bootcamp experience, and to make good on our shared commitments to equity and justice, students will be expected to attend all DEI workshops.

- **Connection Fair:** Immediately following the Bootcamp, all students will be invited to attend a virtual Connection Fair. Taking place April 14, this fair will give students an opportunity to connect with alumni and parents in your area of professional interest. You will be able to directly apply the skills you’ve honed during the Bootcamp, including delivering an “elevator pitch” of your career interests and aspirations. Each participating alum and parent took different paths to their present professional lives, but all are committed to supporting you as you prepare to graduate.

- **Launch Support:** At the completion of the program, all participating students will be eligible to receive a professional headshot and a $400 award to help with your next steps after graduation — for example: new business attire, interview travel expenses, or relocation costs. We have also established a fund to provide additional support to graduates with financial need, made possible by the Oberlin network.
Program Schedule

Schedule *
A full list of workshops and other program opportunities is included in this section. All sessions are listed in eastern time, and the most up-to-date schedule and session descriptions can be accessed via the Senior Launch Google Calendar. Throughout the entire experience, students will be expected to monitor both their email and the program calendar for updates and announcements.

Understanding the Schedule
The program schedule contains information about each Bootcamp workshop, including the expected, tangible outcomes for participating students. More in-depth descriptions of each session can be found at the end of the booklet.

Attendance Expectations
The Senior Launch Program’s attendance policy follows Oberlin’s Honor Code, including when determining student eligibility to receive the post-program launch funds. Information about which workshops students are expected to attend is included both on the previous page and below, alongside the icons associated with each type of session.

Sessions are organized using the following icons:

- **Core Workshop; all students are expected to attend**
- **Career Readiness Workshop**
- **Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) Workshop; all students are expected to attend**
- **Optional Session**

*Please note that this schedule is subject to change. Any changes to the schedule will be made with advance notice and updated on the program Google Calendar.*
WEEK 1
PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CAREER ALIGNMENT
ALL SESSIONS BEGIN AT 7:00 PM ET

MARCH 8
SELF-AWARENESS AND CAREER ALIGNMENT
Note: This session will end at 8:15 pm
Outcome: Understand your FourSight Inventory results
Presenter: Tim Hurson ’67, Disruptor in Residence, Courage Co-Lab

MARCH 10
RÉSUMÉS: GOOD TO GREAT
Outcome: A polished résumé
Presenter: Career Development Center

MARCH 11
PICK YOUR HEADSHOT OUTFIT
Outcome: Decide what to wear to your professional headshot appointment
Presenter: Tanya Rosen-Jones ’97, Rosen-Jones Photography

MARCH 13–18
ONE-ON-ONE RÉSUMÉ REVIEWS
Presenters: Peer Career Advisors

WEEK 2
JOB SEARCHING AND PROFESSIONALISM
ALL SESSIONS BEGIN AT 7:00 PM ET

MARCH 15
NAVIGATING THE JOB SEARCH PROCESS
Outcome: Identify where and how to find job postings related to your career interests
Presenter: Career Development Center

MARCH 16
OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT) WORKSHOP FOR F-1 VISA HOLDERS
Outcome: Begin the OPT application process
Presenter: Career Development Center

MARCH 17
DECONSTRUCTING PROFESSIONALISM
Outcome: Understand how your identities intersect with social norms of professionalism
Presenter: Temptalous Mckoy, Assistant Professor, Department of Language, Literature & Cultural Studies, Bowie State University

MARCH 18
CRAFTING A COMPELLING COVER LETTER
Outcome: A persuasive cover letter that aligns with your résumé and position description
Presenter: Career Development Center
WEEK 3
INTERVIEWING WITH CONFIDENCE
ALL SESSIONS BEGIN AT 7:00PM ET

MARCH 22–23
NO CLASSES

MARCH 24
INTERVIEWING WITH CONFIDENCE: TRUST
Outcome: Develop interviewing strategies
Presenter: Lili Foggle P ’21, Interview Specialist, Impressive Interviewing

MARCH 25
INTERVIEWING WITH CONFIDENCE: VALUE
Outcome: Develop interviewing strategies
Presenter: Lili Foggle P ’21, Interview Specialist, Impressive Interviewing

MARCH 26
INTERVIEWING WITH CONFIDENCE: ALIGNMENT
Outcome: Develop interviewing strategies
Presenter: Lili Foggle P ’21, Interview Specialist, Impressive Interviewing

WEEK 4
DEI IN THE WORKPLACE
ALL SESSIONS BEGIN AT 7:00PM ET

MARCH 29
INCLUSIVE PROFESSIONALISM: DEEP DIVE FOR THE BIPOC COMMUNITY
Outcome: Identify strategies to be successful in predominantly white professional spaces
Presenters: Temptalous Mckoy, Assistant Professor, Department of Language, Literature & Cultural Studies, Bowie State University; Cecilia Shelton, Assistant Professor of English, University of Maryland

MARCH 30
AFFINITY GROUP DISCUSSIONS
• Black Alumni and Students
• Navigating the Workplace as a Person of Color
• International Alumni and Students
• Allies and Advocates in the Workplace
Outcome: Gain perspective from alumni about bringing your whole, authentic self to the workplace
Presenters: Oberlin Alumni

MARCH 31
CAREER LAUNCH MASTER CLASS W/ PRESIDENT AMBAR
Outcome: Apply newly developed interview skills in an authentic interview scenario
Presenter: President Carmen Twillie Ambar

APRIL 1
INCLUSIVE PROFESSIONALISM: DEEP DIVE FOR THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY
Outcome: Identify strategies to be successful in predominantly heteronormative and cisnormative professional spaces
Presenters: Temptalous Mckoy, Assistant Professor, Department of Language, Literature & Cultural Studies, Bowie State University; Johnathan Smilges, Assistant Professor of English, Speech, and Foreign Languages, Texas Woman's University
WEEKS 5–6
PREPARING TO LAUNCH & BUILDING CONNECTIONS
ALL SESSIONS BEGIN AT 7:00 PM ET UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED
APRIL 5
FINANCIAL & BUDGETING SKILLS
Outcome: Create a mock budget based on relocation area
Presenters: Yoon Lee, Senior Vice President - Relationship Manager; Matt Flamer, Financial Education Program Manager, The Huntington National Bank

APRIL 6
NAVIGATING TAXES
Outcome: Develop strategies to stay organized and prepared for filing taxes
Presenter: Elaine Grogan Luttrull, Founder, Minerva Financial Arts

APRIL 7
PRESENTING YOUR BEST SELF ONLINE
Outcome: Create or update an eye-catching digital profile
Presenter: Ma’ayan Plaut ’10, Senior Manager, Audience Development & Engagement, PRX

APRIL 8
NEGOTIATING
Outcome: Prepare skills to successfully negotiate in the workplace
Presenter: Vickie B. Hall, Director, HR Operations, Wayne State University

APRIL 12
AUTHENTIC NETWORKING
Outcome: Develop your oral and written elevator pitch
Presenter: Career Development Center

APRIL 13 | 12:00 PM
PERFECTING YOUR PITCH
Outcome: Practice delivering your pitch before the Connection Fair

APRIL 14
CONNECTION FAIR
Outcome: Connect with alumni and parents working in your professional field of interest

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

SELF-AWARENESS & CAREER ALIGNMENT
Figure out where you naturally light up in the innovation process by taking the FourSight Inventory. This framework — clarify, ideate, develop, and implement — is both universal and instinctive and will provide you with insight into how to leverage your talents and abilities.

RÉSUMÉS: GOOD TO GREAT
We will discuss what makes a good résumé vs. a great résumé. You will have the opportunity to tailor your résumé to a particular field of interest and receive peer feedback.

PICK YOUR HEADSHOT OUTFIT
Join us for an informal conversation to strategize around what you’d like your professional headshot to convey about you.

NAVIGATING THE JOB SEARCH PROCESS
This session will share key steps in navigating the job search process, including how and where to find jobs, essential job search tools and strategies, and how to make the process more manageable.

OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT) WORKSHOP
This session is designed for international students holding an F-1 visa. This session will cover OPT regulations and an overview of the OPT application process. You will learn how to address questions about OPT with potential employers.

DECONSTRUCTING PROFESSIONALISM
This session is open to all students and will unpack the idea of “professionalism” by decentering whiteness and cisnormativity. You will develop more inclusive interpretations of what it means to be a “professional” and build skills to navigate diverse workplaces.

CRAFTING A COMPELLING COVER LETTER
Learn how to develop résumés and cover letters that both complement each other and reflect the skills that a particular job description is looking for.
SESSION DESCRIPTIONS, CONT’D

INTERVIEWING WITH CONFIDENCE (PARTS 1–3)
Interviewing skills are often the difference between getting the job interview versus getting the job offer. These sessions will explore what to expect in a job/internship interview and learn how best to prepare. You will learn concrete strategies to create authentic interview answers that powerfully demonstrate the specific strengths you bring to each opportunity.

INCLUSIVE PROFESSIONALISM: DEEP DIVE FOR THE BIPOC COMMUNITY
This session is reserved for students who identify as Black, Indigenous, and/or a Person of Color. You will continue learning how to de-center professionalism and identify strategies to navigate predominantly white workplaces in the future.

AFFINITY GROUP DISCUSSIONS
Connect with Oberlin alumni in four different affinity group spaces to discuss personal experiences and perspectives on racial equity and inclusion in the workplace.

MASTER CLASS W/ PRESIDENT AMBAR
This session will provide you with an opportunity to take what you learned from the “Interviewing with Confidence” sessions. President Ambar will provide real-time feedback to student volunteers during this master class session.

INCLUSIVE PROFESSIONALISM: DEEP DIVE FOR THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY
This session is reserved for students who identify as LGBTQIA+. You will continue learning to de-center professionalism and identify strategies to navigate predominantly heteronormative and cisnormative workplaces in the future.

FINANCIAL & BUDGETING SKILLS
Figure out the best strategies for personal financial management and budgeting, especially when moving to a new location or living independently for the first time.

NAVIGATING TAXES
Explore how to file taxes if you have one or multiple sources of income, ranging from music gigs, tutoring, providing childcare, and grant-funded opportunities.

PRESENTING YOUR BEST SELF ONLINE
In today’s professional environment, making intentional decisions about your digital image and online presence is both necessary and complicated. In this workshop, you will tie together content from previous sessions to develop language that you can use to articulate yourself professionally in a digital context, including on platforms like LinkedIn. Students should bring a digital profile, professional website, cover letter, or similar artifact that you’d like to workshop.

NEGOTIATING
Learn about job evaluation and salary negotiation skills, including ethical considerations and navigating multiple job offers.

AUTHENTIC NETWORKING
In advance of the Connection Fair, this session will offer practical tips and strategies for how to introduce yourself to various audiences and settings and how to build authentic connections with alumni and potential employers in your career field of interest.

PERFECTING YOUR PITCH
These optional drop-in hours will give you a chance to connect with a Career Development Center staff member to make final preparations for the Connection Fair.

CONNECTION FAIR
Students will network with alumni and parents representing their career field(s) of interest.