

# MY JOURNEY:

## CLS Exploratory Resources & Toolkit





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

- Welcome
- CLS Mission & Vision
- Learning Objectives
- Career Communities
- Initial Appointments & Exploratory Resources
- Units of CLS
- Your CLS Journey
- CLS Resources
- CLS Digital Resources
- Exploratory Toolkit
- Contact Information

# WELCOME FROM THE CLS DEAN

---



Dear Grinnellians,

Contemplating and planning for one's future is an exciting and, at times, overwhelming process. For many, the abundance of interests, strengths, and curiosities you bring to your Grinnell experience can make discerning a path forward even more daunting. You are not alone on this journey, and the College has developed a robust department—the Center for Careers, Life, and Service (CLS)—where you will access individual coaching and an array of programs and services to assist you with every step of the exploration and planning process.

This brief booklet is designed to introduce you to the CLS and help you envision how we can support you on your journey. Much of our work in the CLS stems from a concept called life design, an iterative, human-centered problem-solving process that can be applied to career and life transitions. This methodology is uniquely suited for the liberal arts as it centers on self-reflection, conducting multi-method research, experiential learning, reflection, reframing, and goal setting.

Whether you are uncertain how to get started or have a clear sense of your post-Grinnell plans, please know we are eager to get to know and work with you. We look forward to helping you design a life that brings you a sense of meaning and purpose.

Onward!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark R. Peltz".

Mark R. Peltz, Ph.D.

Daniel '77 and Patricia Jipp '80 Finkelman Dean

# WHAT IS THE CLS

---

*Life is bigger than a series of jobs.*

As a Grinnellian, you'll contribute to the greater good in ways that are deeply meaningful to you. That's why at Grinnell your personal, professional, and civic aspirations are all part of the same conversation. At the Center for Careers, Life, and Service, affectionately known as the "CLS," we encourage students to not only ask themselves what they want to do, but what problem they want to solve.

Visit the CLS to start talking through what you want your life to become and to connect with ways of getting there. You'll make discoveries, develop new insights, gain experience, broaden your network, and, ultimately, like the many Grinnellians before you, confidently go forth to lead a life of meaning and purpose.

## **Mission**

To empower students and alumni to live, learn, and work with meaning and purpose.

## **Vision**

All Grinnellians leading lives of meaning and purpose.



# OUR LEARNING OBJECTIVES

---

CLS advising, programming, and events will help students develop their abilities in one or more of the following learning objectives:

- Engage in self-reflection to identify their values, strengths, and interests and to foster an understanding of how they evolve.
- Develop the ability to distill and apply their observations and discoveries to refine and guide their goals.
- Acquire the experiences, knowledge, and skills to clarify and pursue meaningful postgraduate pathways.
- Learn to present themselves effectively and persuasively—including their values, strengths, and qualifications—to an array of audiences.
- Learn how to identify—as well as cultivate and manage relationships with—stakeholders who can inform and support their professional, personal, and civic development.
- Develop the ability to assess the ethical, societal, and/or professional implications of their choices and actions.



# CAREER COMMUNITIES

---

**At Grinnell, preparing for the future is part of the student experience.** Every incoming first-year and transfer student is assigned an adviser from the Exploratory Career Community. This is the adviser you will work with to explore your interests, values, and strengths; identify relevant experiential learning opportunities; and learn about and ultimately make a transition to one (or more) of the CLS's pre-professional Career Communities.

**CLS Career Communities include:**

Exploratory  
Arts, Media & Communications  
Business & Finance  
Education Professions +  
Government, Law & Policy  
Health Professions  
Science, Engineering & Sustainability  
Technology & Data

The Career Community Team provides industry-focused advising and specialized programming as you explore and pursue specific postgraduate goals and ambitions. This includes support and guidance for applying, interviewing, and securing internships and jobs; opportunities to meet with professionals and alumni in your career interest area; and guidance on developing field-specific skills and knowledge.



# EXPLORATORY RESOURCES

---

## Your Initial Greenlight Appointment

Have you wanted to be a doctor since you were five? Or does your future look distant and feature glimmers that currently escape your grasp like fireflies on a summer evening? When you come to the CLS to meet with your exploratory adviser for the first time, we'll talk about your professional hopes and dreams in a way that meets you where you are. You have nothing to prepare in advance—just bring your curiosity.

Your initial greenlight appointment will also orient you to the student-centered CLS, a building full of resources that will support your journey through Grinnell and beyond. Book your CLS appointment through Handshake and take the next step toward your professional growth.



## The Externship Experience

The Externship Experience creates short-term job shadow opportunities for Grinnell College students over college breaks. Each extern is paired with an industry professional who has a connection to Grinnell College in a wide range of career fields, organization types, and work environments.

An externship experience is designed to help students:

- explore possibilities for post-graduate life;
- clarify interests, strengths, and values;
- create connections and develop professional networks;
- gain insight into professional work environments and work/life balance; and
- reflect critically on the experience and develop action steps to achieve goals.

Externships can take place virtually or in-person and generally involve shadowing a professional through several normal days' activities. Externships may also include introductions to other professionals, tours of work sites, sitting in on meetings, sample projects, and homestay experiences. The Externship Experience is exploratory in nature and open to first- through third-year students. For in-person experiences, funding is available to students with demonstrated financial need to defray travel and other expenses.

# THERE IS MORE TO CLS

---



## **Global Fellowships and Awards**

The Global Fellowships and Awards team coaches and advises you through the reflection, application, and nomination processes for highly selective awards starting in the first year. To name a few: Boren or Gilman for off-campus study; Beinecke, Carnegie, Goldwater, and Udall for specific field areas; Truman for public service; and Fulbright, Watson, or UK Awards for international travel, research, teaching, or graduate school. The reflection that you do through these applications are invaluable in drawing connections between various aspects of your career aspirations.



## **Civic Education and Innovation**

At Grinnell, Civic Education and Innovation staff provide civic learning opportunities that prepare students to become equity-minded civic agents. Through mentored experiential learning and reflection, students develop the skills and mindsets necessary for intentional civic engagement across diverse contexts. Our programmatic ecosystem supports students as they explore various civic roles, from volunteering to activism, from dialogue to systemic change-making all while considering their identities, community context, and evolving interests.



## **Employer Engagement**

The Employer Engagement team cultivates, develops, and sustains mutually beneficial recruiting relationships with a broad array of organizations seeking to recruit students for internships, full-time employment, and related postgraduate opportunities.

# YOUR CLS JOURNEY

---

## Initial Appointment

Get to know your Exploratory Adviser! They will guide you through exploring career interests, pursuing opportunities, and more!

## Externship or Job Shadow

Participate in the CLS Externship Experience or an independent job shadow opportunity to explore a potential career interest.

## Apply for an Internship or Job

Your CLS adviser is happy to help you search for opportunities, tailor your application materials, and brush up your interview skills.

## Update Your Résumé

Develop a first résumé or update your current one. Work with a CLS adviser to draft a cover letter and create high-quality application materials.

## Build on Your Skills

The CLS and Grinnell College offer access to several online learning platforms to gain a new skill or hone one you already have.

**Explore a Specific Career Interest**

Once you've explored and identified specific areas of interest, CLS Career Communities offer industry-specific advising, resources, programs, events and networking opportunities.

**Civic Education & Innovation**

Take a community-based learning course and/or engage in a service opportunity in the local community.

**Develop a Network**

Work with a CLS adviser and use online resources to connect with peers, alums, and professionals in your area of interest.

**Take an Assessment**

Work with a CLS facilitator to gain insight into your interests and strengths and learn how to apply them to your goals.

**Explore a Fellowship or Award**

Global Fellowships and Awards are impactful ways to pursue research topics or passion projects. Connect with our GFA adviser to learn more.

**Pursue Professional Development or Postgraduate Opportunities**

The CLS offers grant opportunities to support attending a conference, applying for graduate school or jobs, and more.

# CLS RESOURCES

---



## Career Clothing Closet

The Closet offers all students free professional attire for interviews, career fairs, formal events, working in an office, or any career-related function, both on- and off-campus. Closet items are gently used or new donations, available for students to keep. Check out open hours and appointments on our website.



## Reservable Interview Rooms

The CLS, located in the John Chrystal Center, has four private interview rooms to reserve for your upcoming virtual or phone interview. Each interview room is equipped with all the necessary technology and privacy so that you can simply focus your energy on communicating your talents, skills, and abilities in your next interview without distractions.



## Photo Booth

Located on the 2nd floor of the John Chrystal Center (JCC), the self-service Photo Booth offers high-quality lighting, state-of-the-art equipment, and instant digital delivery of your new head shot. Stop by the CLS info desk for more information!

## CLS Grants & Summer Internship Funding

The CLS offers several opportunities for students to apply for funding to support their professional goals, including the [Summer Internship Funding Program](#). [CLS Grants](#) are available for Graduate School, Professional Attire, Professional Development, Senior Interviews, and Service or Civic Activities. Ask your adviser and consult our website for more information!

## Assessments

The CLS offers facilitated assessment tools to help students explore their interests and strengths, including the [Strong Interest Inventory](#) (available for second- through fourth-year students), which measures interests and compares your likes and dislikes to those of successful professionals in various fields. [CliftonStrengths](#) (available for first- through fourth-year students) creates a customized report listing students' top five talent themes, along with action items for development and suggestions about how to use the talents to achieve academic, career, and personal success.

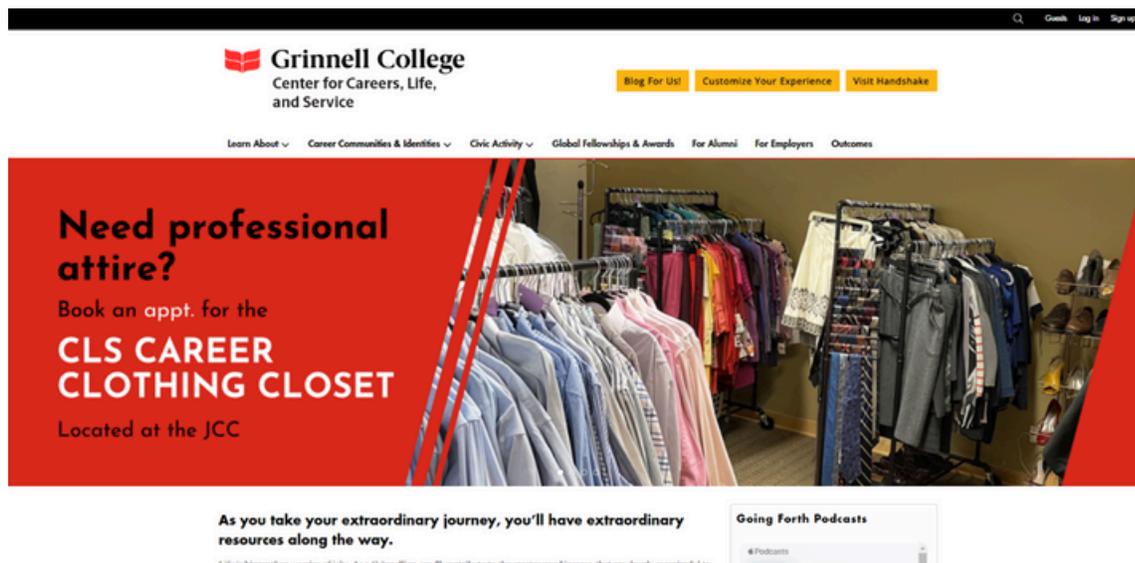
# CLS DIGITAL RESOURCES

## The CLS Website

The CLS website is a treasure trove of information, resources, and other content that will be of tremendous value to you as a student. Whether you are just beginning to think about what you want to do, or if you are assembling the finishing touches to an already polished career trajectory, our website has something for you.



Visit [career.grinnell.edu](https://career.grinnell.edu) to get started, or scan the QR code above.



Welcome to our site! Our landing page features articles, news, information, and updates that we think are important.

Hover over the **Learn About** tab to access resources such as résumé and cover letter examples, interviewing guides, e-Learning platforms, and career exploration resources.

The **Career Communities & Identities** tab connects you with industry-specific advisers and resources, as well as resources to support specific identity groups.

Spend some time exploring these resources—you may even find inspiration to pursue something you never considered before!

# CLS DIGITAL RESOURCES

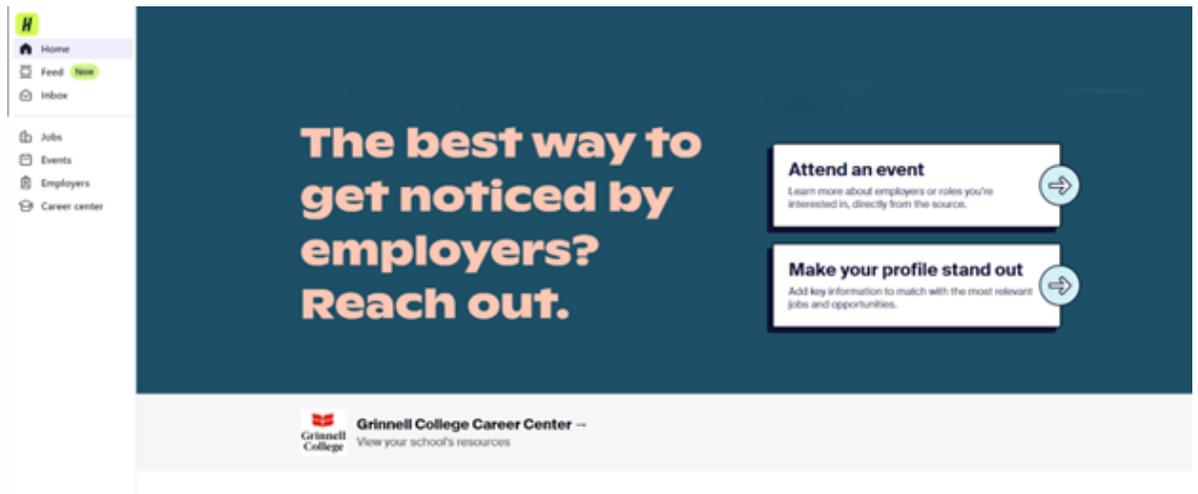
---

## Handshake

Handshake is the platform you will use to schedule appointments with your CLS adviser, register for events, and apply to our curated list of internships and other opportunities. We receive hundreds of new postings each week, so check back often!



Visit [grinnell.joinhandshake.com/edu](https://grinnell.joinhandshake.com/edu) to register, update your profile, or interact with the CLS or scan the QR code provided.

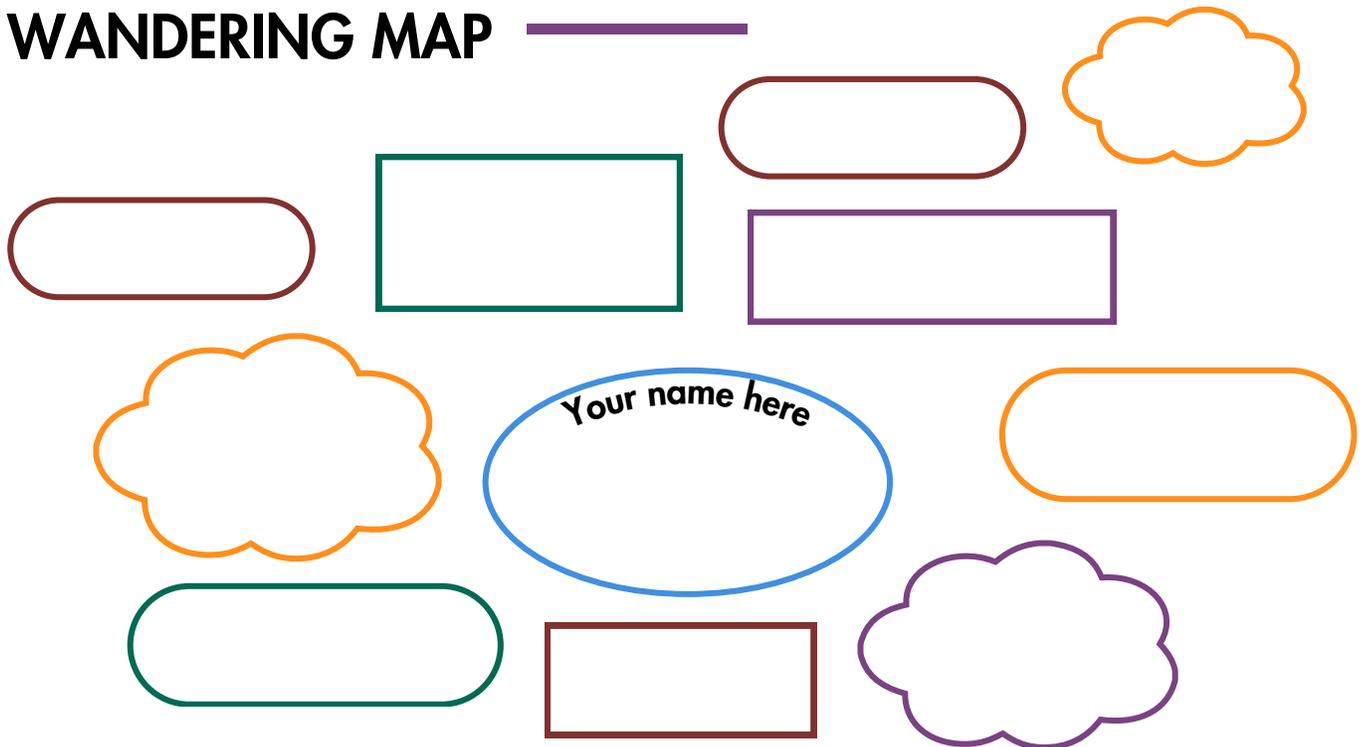


## Steps to schedule a CLS advising appointment:

1. Visit <https://grinnell.joinhandshake.com/edu>
2. Click on the "Career Center"
3. Then click on "Appointments"
4. Then "Schedule a New Appointment"
5. Select the appointment type that fits your goals
6. Toggle through the dates available and find a time that works for you!

# CLS EXPLORATORY TOOLKIT

## WANDERING MAP ---



The wandering map is a visual thinking exercise to spark your career exploration and help distill your interests and goals. Follow the steps below to create your own map.

1. Start with writing your name in the center oval.
2. Brainstorm things that you have found interesting, engaging, impactful, and significant. Think about your childhood, school years, and present experiences. Consider the prompts below to get the gears turning!
3. Fill in the shapes with these ideas - keep it short; a word or two; and keep adding more shapes as you go. Don't worry about organizing the ideas—just fill the page with as many ideas as you can think of!
4. Consider what you have written, and draw lines to link the ideas with obvious connections. Highlight the experiences that stand out the most to you.
5. Take some time to reflect on your work. What links do you see from past experiences to your present? What themes stand out? Are there patterns of interest you could pursue further?

---

Summer Experiences • Interesting Classes • Volunteer Experiences • Hobbies • Jobs  
Favorite Trips • Tough Challenges • Extracurriculars • Favorite Books • Inspirations • Sports  
Internships • Job Shadowing • Skills • Achievements • Places

# CLS EXPLORATORY TOOLKIT

## 4-YEAR EXPERIENTIAL PLAN

Four years go by quickly! Use the following planner to sketch out what you hope to accomplish during the upcoming semesters and breaks. You can use a pencil (or our digital version) and make updates as your plans evolve! We've brainstormed some ideas for you at the bottom of the page.

	First Year	Second Year	Third Year	Fourth Year
Fall Semester				
Fall Break				
Winter Break				
Spring Semester				
Spring Break				
Summer Break				

- Externship • Internship • Fellowship • Job Shadow • Research • MCAT/LSAT/GRE
- On-campus Job • Independent Project • Travel • Volunteer • Off-campus Study
- Professional Development • Business Pitch or Start-up • Networking

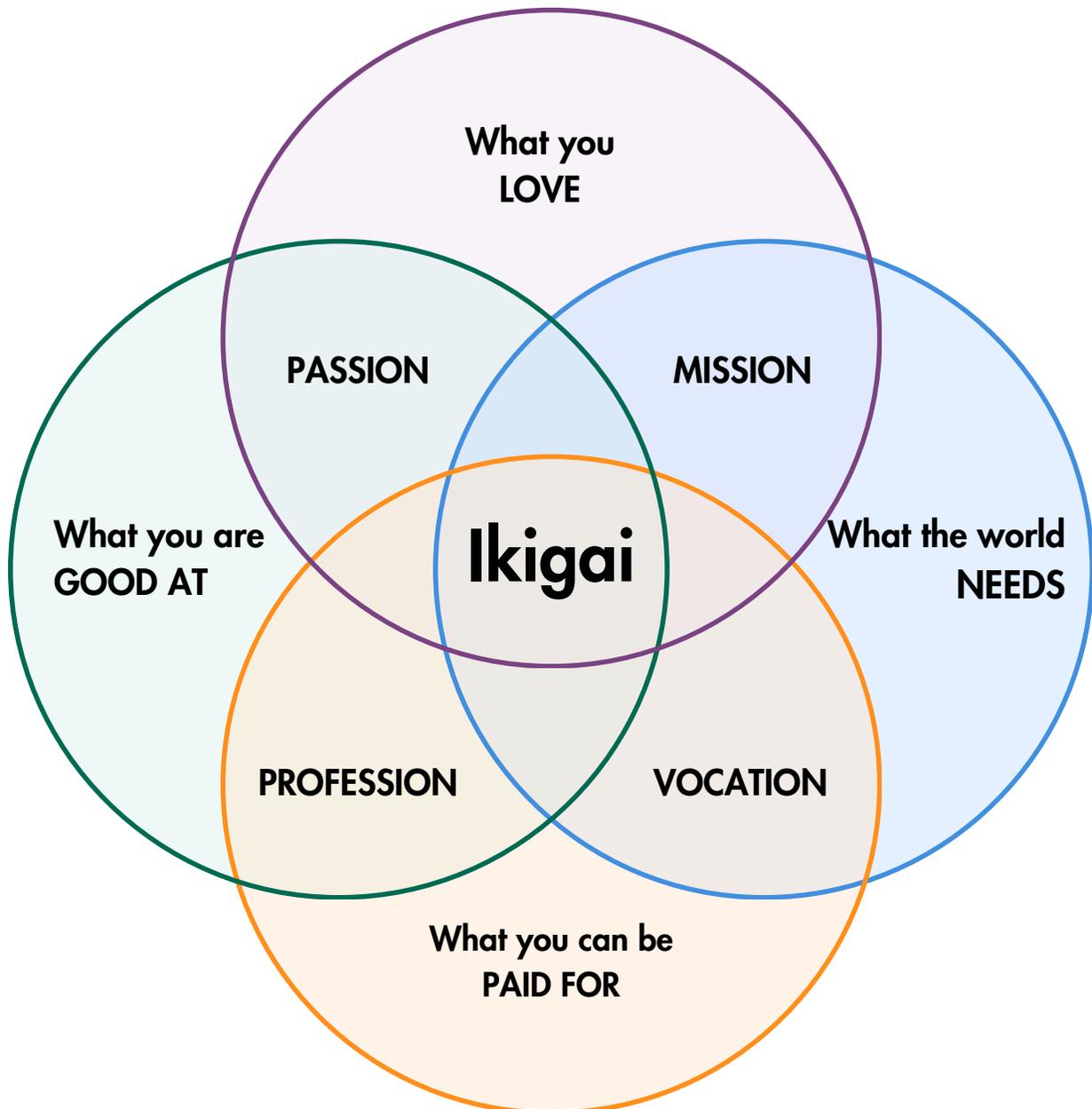
# CLS EXPLORATORY TOOLKIT

## IKIGAI CONCEPT

---

The image below represents the Japanese concept of Ikigai, meaning “a reason for being.”

You can use this concept to help brainstorm ideas for work that is meaningful to you and why. Grab a blank sheet of paper and take some time to write down where your interests, goals, jobs, hobbies, and other activities fit in. Can you think of anything that you love, that you are good at, that you can be paid for, and that the world needs?



# CLS EXPLORATORY TOOLKIT

## PASSION PLANNING

This exercise will help begin your process of understanding what drives you and what does not. Learning what is important in your life helps you identify what to dedicate your time and energy toward.

On this page, write down activities that fill you up with energy and activities that you find the least engaging. These activities could come from any part of your life: school, home, extracurricular activities, work, volunteering, hobbies, and more.

### Most engaging activities:

Activity: Why is this activity so engaging?:

Activity: Why is this activity so engaging?:

Activity: Why is this activity so engaging?:

### Least engaging activities:

Activity: Why is this activity so draining?:

Activity: Why is this activity so draining?:

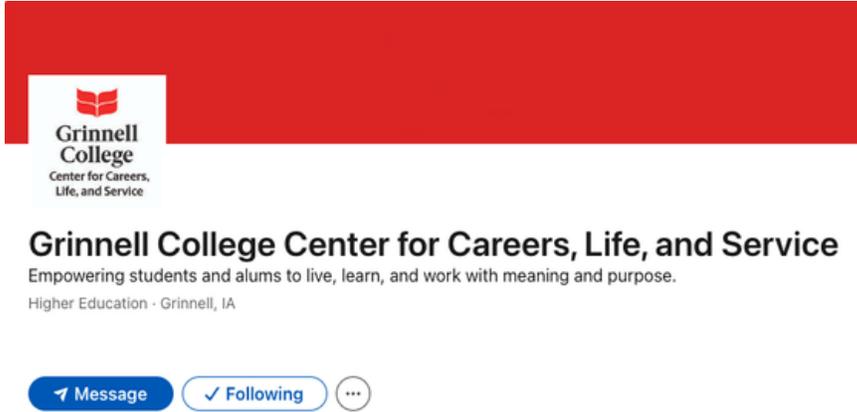
Activity: Why is this activity so draining?:

### Now bring it all together!

What patterns do you notice? Reflect below:

# CLS EXPLORATORY TOOLKIT

## PROFESSIONAL PROFILES —



**Building your professional brand is a quintessential part of laying the groundwork for your professional life.** Some online platforms are career-specific, but everyone can start with an up-to-date Handshake profile and a robust LinkedIn presence.

**LinkedIn** is so much more than a platform to highlight your experience—here you will network with alums and follow leaders, companies, and organizations in your career fields of interest. You can take LinkedIn Learning courses and research future opportunities. With over one-billion users worldwide, LinkedIn is host to nearly one million active employment recruiters. Ninety percent say they use LinkedIn to find prospective employees or learn more about applicants during the hiring process.

### Other opportunities:

- A professional website is a great way to establish your online presence and share your research, art portfolio, writing, or designs.
- Computer scientists and code developers can share their work through GitHub.
- Creator-economy platforms abound and may be a way to host your endeavors and curate followers.
- Social media, when approached with care and tailored appropriately to your professional presence and audience, can be a generative tool.

Find guides, tips, and other information on developing professional profiles on the CLS website at: <https://career.grinnell.edu/channels/expand-your-network-mentor/>

# EXAMPLE RÉSUMÉ

## Mengyu (Ben) Cheng

Ben.cheng@gmail.com | linkedin.com/in/mengyucheng | 987.654.3210

### Education

#### Grinnell College

Grinnell, IA

*Bachelor of Arts in Psychology*

Expected May 2026

- GPA: 3.45/4.00
- *Selected Coursework* Introduction to Education; Introduction to Statistics; U.S. Public Policy

### Teaching Experience

#### Intern

Woodland Hills, CA

*Education Center*

May–August 2021 & 2022

- Tutored two high-needs children daily for two summers
- Negotiated sensory-processing issues, language disorders, and learning disabilities
- Reported on progress to parents and supervising psychologist at the end of each day

#### Volunteer

Livingston, NJ

*Friendship Circle*

2018–2021

- Facilitated development of psychosocial skills for one young child with special needs
- Created daily itinerary, based on Exceptional Lives curriculum, to stimulate lifespan development
- Pivoted to virtual and then hybrid during 2020–2021

### Selected Leadership Experience

#### Member

Grinnell, IA

*Student Government Association Services Committee, Grinnell College*

January 2022–Present

- Promote awareness on campus of local community service opportunities
- Review, amend, and approve applications for service-related expenses, managing \$18,000 budget

#### Elected Grade Representative

Summit, NJ

*Community Service Committee, Kent Place School*

2018–2022

### Additional Experience

#### Advocate

Grinnell, IA

*Grinnell Advocates (GA), Grinnell College*

October 2022–Present

- Serve as a Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault advocate in Iowa (after completing 24 hours of training)
- Create and execute social media campaign to promote use of 24/7 crisis line staffed by GA

#### Student Worker

Grinnell, IA

*Dining Services, Grinnell College*

August 2022–Present

- Prepare and serve high quality pasta dishes utilizing elements of the SafeServe training program
- Promoted to Student Lead Spring 2023; train new student employees on procedures and protocols

#### Student Researcher

Grinnell, IA

*Music Department, Grinnell College*

Fall 2022

- Explored materials and methods of classical music research in student-run performance
- Collaborated with two peers to develop the event, design programs, and create advertising

### Specialized Skills

*Language:* Mandarin (native); Spanish (conversational); Arabic (beginner)

# EXAMPLE COVER LETTER

---

## Mengyu (Ben) Cheng

Ben.cheng@gmail.com | linkedin.com/in/mengyucheng | 987.654.3210

---

April 12, 2024

Dr. Natalie G. Hansen  
Executive Director  
All Stars Project  
33 Washington Avenue  
Newark, NJ 07102

Dear Dr. Hansen:

Please consider my application for the All Stars Project internship. With experience rooted in teaching and a passion for youth engagement and performance art, I am excited to contribute to the All Stars Project's novel approach to community development through the arts and professional mentorship.

Throughout high school I volunteered for the Friendship Circle, developing a passion for working with children. I further pursued child-education experiences by volunteering at the Noble Education Center. In these positions I interacted one-on-one and in small groups with children with disabilities, focusing on social skills and language development. In both positions, seeking creative ways to meet organizational guidelines and the needs of the children, I incorporated music through games and vocal exercises as a dynamic teaching tool. This approach would benefit me in working with the diverse population of the All Stars Project.

Serving as a liaison between the Grinnell community and Grinnell College to actively promote community service initiatives to Grinnell students is honing my organization, planning, and budget management skills. In my role as a member of the Student Government Association's Services Committee (SGASC), I manage a budget of \$18,000 to fund students' service opportunities with area nonprofit organizations. Through careful application review and appropriate grant disbursement, I have aided the SGASC in becoming one of the largest sources of student organization funding at Grinnell College. I would bring my keen interest in community development along with critical thinking and project management skills to assist the All Stars Project with performance and development workshops.

Along with my committed desire to work with young people and their communities and all of my related experience, I converse with ease in English, Mandarin, and Spanish. I would bring my skillset to support All Stars Project youth from a variety of backgrounds, and I would contribute to and gain valuable perspectives from this internship opportunity. Thank you for your consideration—I look forward to talking with you.

Sincerely,



Ben Cheng

# STAY CONNECTED

---



(641) 269 - 4940



[www.career.grinnell.edu](http://www.career.grinnell.edu)



[career@grinnell.edu](mailto:career@grinnell.edu)



John Chrystal Center (JCC)  
1103 Park Street, Grinnell, IA 50112



CLS Instagram: @grinnell.cls



**Follow the CLS on Instagram**  
and stay up to date on  
events, deadlines,  
student spotlights,  
opportunities and more



# NOTES

---



Center for Careers, Life,  
and Service

641-269-4940

EMAIL  
[career@grinnell.edu](mailto:career@grinnell.edu)

ADDRESS  
John Chrystal Center  
1103 Park Street  
Grinnell, IA 50112

