



PATHFINDER

A CAREER CENTER NEWSLETTER SERIES
FOR SUFFOLK'S GLOBAL STUDENT COMMUNITY



ABOUT THIS ISSUE

BY AKI VIVEKANANDAN

There is a version of success that is easy to see. The offer letter. The title. The salary. It is concrete. You can point to it, share it, and measure your progress against it. Recruiting timelines, salary benchmarks, employer rankings: all of it trains you to treat these markers as the primary evidence that your investment here was worth it.

And then there is a version that is quieter. Harder to name, but often more lasting. The way you now read a room before you speak. The way you weigh risk with a steadiness that did not exist in you two years ago. The way you built something real, in a place that was not designed for your specific needs.

Most people only track the first version. This issue is an invitation to pay attention to both. Not instead of chasing outcomes, but alongside them. Because what you are accumulating here goes well beyond what any single recruiting cycle can measure, or reward.

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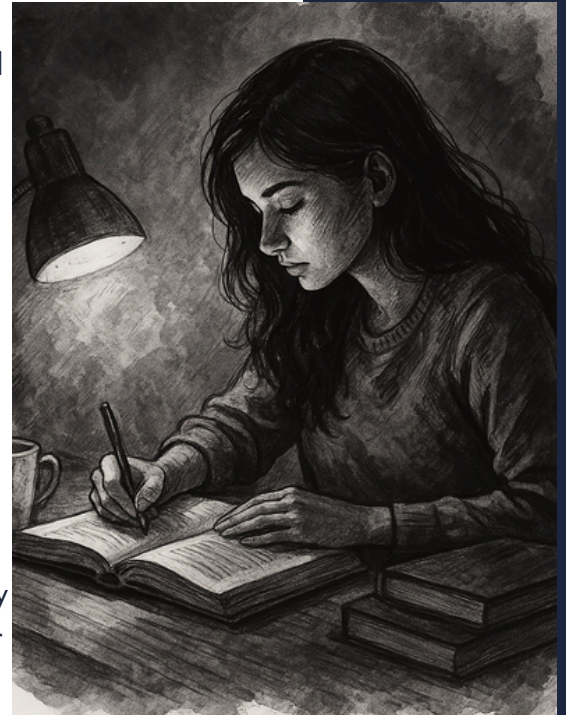
COMPOUNDING YOUR TOMORROWS

You did not arrive here by accident.

Choosing to study in the United States required courage and calculation. You evaluated programs, visa timelines, finances, and long-term opportunity. That kind of thinking is already strategic.

But once classes begin and recruiting season starts, that long-term thinking often narrows. Your focus becomes immediate and tactical. Did I get the interview? Will this employer sponsor? Did I secure the offer? Those questions are real and they matter. Outcomes matter. Stability matters.

The pursuit of those outcomes is not the issue. It is when they become the only measure of progress. Since there is another form of growth building in the background, and it does not arrive as an email confirmation.



You are thinking differently than you were before you arrived. Not just more maturely, but more structurally. Before this experience, career decisions may have felt relatively linear. Study. Graduate. Apply. Work. The path, while not easy, was at least culturally familiar.

Here, you are operating inside layered systems. Immigration policy intersects with labor market cycles. Economic conditions influence hiring trends. Organizational culture varies dramatically across industries. You are making decisions inside constraints that shift in real time.

You have had to decode institutional systems that were not designed with you in mind. You navigate regulatory structures, cultural expectations, and professional norms simultaneously, often in a second language and often without a roadmap. You are managing timelines that extend beyond academic semesters.

You are thinking about optionality, mobility, and long-term positioning, whether you consciously use those words or not. That shift in how you operate compounds. It compounds in your pattern recognition, in your tolerance for ambiguity, in your ability to assess risk without panicking, and in your understanding that access is rarely accidental and that positioning matters.

None of that appears on a resume yet. None of it shows up as a salary number. But it expands your range. The internship you secure this year will matter. The first role you accept after graduation will matter. But those are early chapters. What will actually compound over the next five years is the level at which you learn to

It may be worth sitting with a different set of questions. Not just, Did I get the offer? but: What kind of thinker am I becoming because of this experience? What kinds of rooms will I realistically be able to walk into in five years if I keep building in this direction? What kinds of problems will I be trusted to solve? Those questions extend your timeline. They move you from chasing the next milestone to shaping a trajectory.

You came here to create opportunity. Part of that opportunity will show up in job titles and salary bands. Another part is less visible but more durable. It lives in the way you think, the environments you can navigate, and the standards you hold yourself to.

This experience is shaping more than your resume. It is shaping your ceiling.

So pursue the internships. Go after the interviews. Take the offers seriously. But do not mistake your first professional outcome for the full measure of what this experience is already building in you.

You are not only securing your next step.

You are compounding your tomorrows.

CAREER INSIGHTS CORNER

THINK BEYOND THE FIRST OFFER

- **Audit the Skills You Are Compounding**
 - Not just what you are learning, but what kind of problems you are repeatedly solving.
 - Are you becoming analytical? Strategic? Operational? Client-facing? Technical?
- **Choose Roles for Exposure, Not Just Title**
 - Early roles shape your access.
 - Ask: Will this position expand the types of decisions I'm allowed to observe or influence?
- **Build Signal, Not Noise**
 - Instead of applying broadly, build visible evidence of capability.
 - Projects. Research. Case competitions. Leadership roles. What proof are you leaving behind that you can operate at a higher level?
- **Track Your Five-Year Trajectory:**
 - Once a semester, ask yourself: If I continue on this path, where does it realistically lead?

VOICES FROM THE JOURNEY: ALFREDO SERRANO

STOP TRYING TO “WIN” YOUR CAREER TOO EARLY



CLASS OF 2022; BBA
SENIOR DATA SCIENTIST II AT
MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS

One of the biggest mistakes I see international students make is treating every semester, internship, and job application as if it will define the rest of their professional lives.

I understand why this happens. When your visa status, finances, and sense of stability are tied to your academic and professional progress, it is easy to feel like every decision carries permanent consequences. A missed opportunity feels catastrophic. A rejection feels like falling behind. Uncertainty feels dangerous.

But something that I (unfortunately) learned the hard way is that trying to “win” your career too early often does more harm than good.

As international students, we tend to operate under invisible pressure. We compare ourselves constantly. We look at peers who secured internships earlier, landed brand-name roles, or seem to have a clear plan, and we quietly assume we are behind.

This pressure pushes many students into survival mode:

- Applying to roles they do not really want, just because they sponsor
- Overloading themselves with activities without understanding why
- Chasing credentials instead of clarity
- Making decisions out of fear rather than intention

At the time, it feels responsible... when it often leads to burnout, confusion, and a career path that feels reactive instead of deliberate. I wish someone had told me earlier that careers are not built in semesters. They are built in phases.

Early in your career, your job is not to optimize outcomes. Your job is to learn how the system works and how you fit inside it.

That means:

- Learning what type of work energizes you versus drains you
- Understanding how organizations actually make decisions
- Developing professional judgment, not just technical skills
- Building confidence in uncertainty

When you rush to “lock in” a path too early, you often sacrifice learning for perceived security. And that security rarely lasts. Short-term thinking feels productive, but it narrows your options.

When every move is framed as “this has to work,” you stop experimenting. You stop asking questions. You stop taking intellectual risks. Instead of growing, you freeze.

Long-term thinkers do the opposite. They optimize for optionality.

They ask:

- What skills will compound over time
- What environments will stretch me
- What mistakes are worth making now rather than later

Ironically, this mindset leads to better outcomes. Not because it guarantees success, but because it builds resilience and clarity; having a strategy does not mean having all the answers but rather asking better questions.

Instead of asking:

- “Will this job solve everything?”

Ask:

- “What will I learn from this role that helps me next year?”

Instead of:

- “What if I fall behind?”

Ask:

- “What kind of professional am I becoming through this experience?”

If I could speak to my younger self and to any international student feeling overwhelmed right now, I would say this:

You are not late.

You are not behind.

And you do not need to have everything figured out yet.

Your early career is not about winning. It is about positioning yourself to win later. Focus on building skills that compound. Choose environments that teach you how to think, not just what to do. Allow yourself to grow into clarity instead of demanding it upfront.

Careers reward patience far more than panic.

And sometimes, the smartest move you can make is slowing down just enough to see the bigger picture.

UPCOMING EVENTS

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT CAREER LAB II: FROM INTERVIEW TO OFFER

Thursday, March 19th | 12:30 PM-1:30 PM |

73 TREMONT STREET, STAHL BUILDING

9th FLOOR PROGRAMMING SPACE AND ZOOM

This high-impact workshop delivers the specific strategies and insider knowledge you need to turn opportunities into offers.

POST GRADUATION IMMIGRATION SESSION HOSTED BY CIESA

Thursday, March 26th | 4:00 PM

VIRTUAL EVENT ON ZOOM

This event will feature immigration lawyers who can discuss immigration pathways post OPT and how to navigate your immigration options as a professional.



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[EMAIL ME](#): To be featured in the next issue and for feedback.