

USE YOUR CAMPUS LEADERSHIP ROLE TO JUMPSTART YOUR JOB SEARCH



UNIVERSITY of
DENVER

STUDENT LIFE
Career Services

If you have a campus leadership position or role on campus or are responsible for any other DU activities, you are developing experience and abilities that can translate into job search success. Positions and roles include: Pioneer Leadership Program (PLP); Living and Learning Community (LLC); Resident Assistant; Pioneer Ambassador; Discoveries Orientation Leader; Peer Mentor; Campus Tour Guide; Volunteers in Partnership (VIP); Excelling Leaders Institute; Public Achievement (PA) Coach/Team Lead or Work-Study. You often draw upon many different qualities valued by employers, so now you need to capitalize on those qualities in your resume, cover letter and interviews with employers. Show them how, while you were getting an education, you were putting into practice the very skills they are looking for in a job candidate.

It's not up to the employer, however, to figure this out. You have to be able to draw the parallels for them. For instance, you could give them examples from your position as Resident Assistant overseeing 30 residents. Demonstrate how you showed leadership, resourcefulness and team building in enforcing policy compliance and promoting cooperation, conflict resolution and self-learning among residents.

Here's how you can help employers quickly grasp how the skills you gained in your DU role directly transfer to the workplace. First list any DU work position, role or involvement in which you were given some degree of responsibility. Then take a look at this list of transferable skills and put a check before every one you can claim. (Don't be modest, but at the same time be realistic and be ready to back up those skills with specific examples.)

Transferable Skills

- Commitment to a theme/idea/value
- Self-awareness/self-understanding/awareness of the complexity of life
- Leadership/character
- Ability to translate institution's values into reality
- Intellectual curiosity
- Experiential learning/hands-on learning to complement theoretical learning
- Community involvement/engagement
- Professionalism
- Exploration of my motivations and values
- Time management
- Eagerness to take on new or extra roles
- Event planning
- Responding to crisis/crisis management
- Interpersonal communication
- Working with diversity
- Promotion of the organization's mission
- Document writing and budget oversight
- Ability to confront others and resolve issues
- Extensive cross training in different areas/wearing many hats simultaneously, often while under pressure
- Extensive dedication and the time commitment
- Handling confidential material

Now take a look at some of the ways you can translate the skills you developed at DU into language that sells your value to the employer:

- Pioneer Leadership Program (prestigious two year program leading to a minor in Leadership Studies): Member of a select group of 66 student leaders in a graduating class of over 1200 students.
- Engaged member of highly selective leadership program. Outstanding ability to successfully work with diverse individuals and effectively interact with multiple stakeholders.
- Selected to participate in leadership program focused on leadership development and civic engagement.
- Created and implemented a year-long service initiative that included consistent and professional outreach to multiple community stakeholders.
- In-depth awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses (perhaps through use of Insights Discovery and StrengthsFinder inventories).
- Developed outstanding skills in conflict resolution, meeting facilitation and motivating team members.
- Participated in numerous team projects and gained thorough understanding of how teams work best.
- Understanding of best practices in leadership including leading by example, setting a vision, motivating followers.

Imagine for a moment that you were an on-campus tour guide. Sounds like a no-brainer if you know your university, but it isn't. When you dig deeper you discover that by showing prospective students, their families, and alumni around university grounds, you no doubt improved your speaking and presentation skills. You also demonstrated that you have maturity. DU would only put someone in that role if they trust the student to represent DU in a positive and mature way.

Turning DU Roles into Real Life Job Goals

Here are a few examples on how to describe the skills you performed on campus in terms that show an employer what you could achieve on the job.

Summer Conference Staff: Took the initiative in following through on all administrative activities associated with sports and music camps, orientation, teacher conferences; ensure all room accessories are present and functional in housing units; check in guests, collect appropriate visitor paperwork; check out visitors, execute follow-up room check; forwarded student mail; assisted secretary in determining next year's student room assignments; assembled student welcome packets and provided taxi service for guests.

Program Director: Supervised 11 resident assistants (RAs), ensuring that they complied with University program requirements; served on a committee that allocated money to qualified programs and as advisor to the Residence Hall Council; made program recommendations, attended weekly meetings and submitted reports on RA programs.

Resident Assistant: Guided 28 residents and ensured they complied with resident hall policy; acted as resource person, conflict intermediary and counselor; established an atmosphere promoting self-learning and cooperation with others; conducted regular programs according to the Wellness Model.