Jess: Hi, everyone. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Jess Tallant and I am the Parent and Family Program Coordinator in New Student Programs and Family Outreach here at Oregon State. Today, I have Britt Hoskins with us. She is the Assistant Director of Career Development within our Career Development Center here. Brit is here with us today to talk to you a little bit about how you can best help your student prepare in regards to career development. Not only beginning within their first year here at OSU but beyond. So, I’m going to get us started. I am going to ask Britt a couple of questions. So, to start us off, can you tell us a little bit about what you do Oregon State specifically with career development.

Britt: Yeah, so, I am a career advisor here at Oregon State and specifically, I work with the colleges of Agricultural Sciences, Forestry, and Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Sciences. And so, there is one of “me” in each of the colleges, as well as the main career development center that I am a part of. And then, as far as what I do; you might see in individual career advising appointments, you can make those, if you are in my colleges. I teach you know, workshops and lectures and things like that, so I might come in to a class. I might be planning a career fair or events. I might be working with employers. It is really kind of a full spectrum of career advising, stuff that I do.

Jess: Awesome. What do students meet with their career advisors about?

Britt: Yeah, so, you might guess that we work through resumes and cover letters, so that is a big part of what we do. But it is really a lot broader than that. So it could be a practice mock interview, it could career exploration, you know, what do I want to do with my life, what can I do with my major, you know that kind of thing. Job searching, strategies, networking, LinkedIn. It is really broad whatever your student needs they can meet with someone to talk about that.

Jess: Beyond college specific advisors, what career services are offered at Oregon State?

Britt: So I like to mention that just the central Career Development Center, they do drop in hours. 9:00-4:00, Monday-Friday, you can just walk in with your resume or your questions. We have a team of career
assistants that can help you. I also like to mention other places where you can just drop in, you do not need an appointment, and you know they can just help you out. So, there is the Oregon State Writing Center, so you can work on your cover letter, or your grammar, that kind of thing. You know you’ve got some English majors behind you there. And then the Undergraduate Research Office also has drop in hours. So if you are really thinking, I want to team up with a professor, I want to really dig in a lab, either as kind of a job or just as a volunteer, they can help you with those kinds of opportunities. So, there are a lot of opportunities out there, if you kind of know who to ask around campus.

Jess: In regards to employment, do employers ever come to campus?

Britt: Yeah, so you don’t always have to go out and find the employers. We bring a lot of them to you. Once per term; Fall, Winter, and Spring, we have a Career Expo and we bring hundreds of employers to campus and they are from all different majors. Engineering, Business, you know, Natural Resources, they are all here on campus. And then, there is also college specific career events that involve employers. So in my colleges; Forestry, Agriculture, Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Sciences, we do federal and state employer panels because a lot of our students want to work in the government. So just, how do they do that federal job application? How do they stick out? We’ll bring out employers and answer questions. So, just keep an eye out for those in your own colleges. And yeah, there is a lot of opportunities there.

Jess: What is one of your biggest pieces of advice for parents?

Britt: Yeah, a lot of times parents are just wondering, “what can I do?” “How can I support students?” in this difficult process of figuring out what they want to do with their lives. The main thing I like to tell people is that it is important to start early. So, you don’t want to be waiting until your senior year to start thinking about your career. It is really easy to get your head down and think, “oh I have to do my classes, I have all these tests going on” and all that is very important but you want to thinking about career development your freshman and sophomore year. And there are a lot of ways you can just start getting experience early. Really, college should do two things for you, for your career development. The first is that exploration piece. So, just trying things out. A lot of times, students think that they have to have this central passion that they know they’re want to do and they are going to follow that. That can be a lot of pressure. So, instead, just start trying things. You know, volunteer in a lab, try out an internship, you know and just see what you like and what you do not like. The second thing that they should be getting is experience. These days about a third of Americans have a four-year degree. So, it is not just having the degree on your resume that really makes you stand out, it’s what kind of experience do you have. Again, it
does not just have to be jobs. So think about career development as a long-term process, during school, after school, and start early.

Jess: Awesome! So, you mentioned starting early. What are some ways first year students can start building that experience?

Britt: A lot of times, your freshman year, you are just figuring things out and figuring out your classes. Think about getting involved in a club. So, there are hundreds of clubs at OSU, so you could join the American Meteorology Society Club or the Anthropology Club. A lot of those clubs actually do those exploration things that you might be looking to for. They might go off-campus and do an industry tour, they might bring a speaker so you can learn about dairy production in Oregon, whatever the thing is that you want to learn. Those clubs are a great place to do that. Also, your sororities and fraternities, if you can take on leadership responsibilities there, that can go on a resume. Also, as you are picking classes and thinking about projects, try to steer towards classes that involve more robust research experience or group work. You know, if you design some sort of website or mapping program. I was thinking about some of my mapping students have worked with city governments to do real world projects. So things like that, keep a running list of those things as you do them because a lot of them can go on your resume.

Jess: Fantastic. What about our sophomores and juniors?

Britt: Yeah, sophomores and juniors, I think that is a really pivotal time for career development. It is a good time to really start digging in and getting that first internship or getting some work experience. So if it is summer work, you can actually get a lot out of really any job that you do, if you just know how to position it on a resume. So, when I was a student I was a server, a waitress during the summers and I was able to use that for a few years on my resume, just as an example of working well with people and managing stressful situations, and training other people, and it is about bringing those aspects out and mentioning those on your resume. And then there’s internships. A lot of times, they aren’t looking for you to have all this experience already. They are looking, a lot of times, for college students and people that want to try out things and learn things. Sophomore and Junior year is a good time to start getting some work experience, I think.

Jess: Why is working at a job or internships during college important?

Britt: Like I said, some of the exploration and experience, but also getting those references is really good. Getting those people that can vouch for you and speak to what you’ve done when you go to apply for that post college job.
Jess: What tips do you have for seniors and students searching for their first full-time job?

Britt: Come by the career development center first. We will work with you on your resume, or make an appointment with the assistant director in your college, like me. But once you’ve got that stellar resume in place, a lot of finding jobs come down to networking. A lot of times, we hear the word networking and it is like “what is that?” “So nebulous, I am supposed to go to some sort of really hard event, where I put on a suit” but there is a lot of ways to network. You can come to our career fairs, that is a great way to start talking to employers. But it can also be an informational interview, for instance. Maybe you reach out to a company that you are interested in and you learn a little bit more and they kind of interview you and you interview them. That is actually how I got my first job out of college, was an informational interview. An employer from a public relations agency came and spoke with my class. I thought her presentation was really interesting so I talked to her after the class and then I mentioned her name to the HR department that she had come to my class and that I was interested in an informational interview. And I came in and I learned about the company and I was excited and the person I interviewed for, or interviewed with, even though, it wasn’t for a specific job, actually ended up being the one that would hire me like 6 months later because I had made that contact. So informational interviews are a great way to do it, a lot of companies are open to that. Especially bigger companies, they do that kind of thing all the time. And then, they can also work on establishing that personal contact in other ways. Maybe you have a friend at a company and they can put in a good word for you. Or you can do an alumni search in LinkedIn for Oregon State and find someone who works at that company you really want to work at and you can say “Hey, I’m an Oregon State student and I’d love to learn about what you do!” and then maybe they put in a good word for you. There is a lot ways to do it.

Jess: What can parents and family members do to help students with networking?

Britt: Typically, as parents you have a bigger network than your students do, starting out. You can help plug them in there. You know, provided that they are interested in some of the same things that you have done or maybe that your friends have done. Offer to make an introduction for them with a friend or a relative or a co-worker. So you can be someone that can help empower them in that way.

Jess: Where can students find job listings?

Britt: Our main job site is called “Handshake.” And that is the central career development website for Oregon State. It is across the whole university, so not college specific. There are thousands of job listings
there, it is where you can make career appointments, there is career fairs and career events that you can register for. So getting familiar with “Handshake” is a really good first step.

**Jess:** Is “Handshake” and Oregon State specific tool?

**Britt:** Oh yeah, so, “Handshake” is actually nationwide. So 450 universities are using it. It’s got over 200,000 employers on it. So, students can really tap into an enormous network. It has really become the gold standard for career development. So, it is not just something that Oregon State does on its own. I also like to mention, too, that if students know about it. So if your student is using “Handshake” actively, they’ll join the 30% of students or so that are currently using it. “Handshake” is still pretty new at OSU and a lot of students don’t know about it yet. So that means that are a lot of jobs that are just sitting there and no one is applying for them. I get calls from employers being like “No one is applying for my job.” So, if your student is one of the those that knows about the job then they have a leg up on the competition there.

**Jess:** What are the biggest things parents can do to help students get ready for their career?

**Britt:** So, we talked about starting early is a good step. But, also encouraging them to put themselves out there. Sometimes that can be a little bit scary, depending on, you know, the personality of your student. Going and talking to people, showing up at those career fairs and just starting that process, it can feel overwhelming, but just kind of doing it in whatever small ways. And sometimes if you student is more on the introverted side, maybe it is just that they are getting to know, they are coming to office hours with professor and talking to them about what they do. Maybe they can set up just a 1:1 coffee date or something like that. So, there is lots of ways to network and just encouraging them to start that. I also like to caution parents as well, to have a lot of patience with your students as they are going through this exploration process. They might start a major and then decide it is not for them, or they might start a job and they like this aspect but not this aspect. It is a really exciting time, just knowing that the process is not always linear and giving students space to kind of try things out. College is a great time for that.

**Jess:** As we wrap up our time together, are there any other career resources parents should be aware of and know about?

**Britt:** Well there is all kinds, but I guess I will mention just lastly that there is our career development website, which is career.oregonstate.edu. That has all the stuff. It’s got resume resources, videos, and webinars, and that is also where you can access “Handshake.” So there is a button there that students can
click and they already have an account, once they are a student. All they have to do is click and log on. So, that is a good place to keep an eye on and look for further resources. That is also where our contact information is for the career development center. So, if you had any more questions you could always give us a call.