bit.ly/csecareerguide

Hi There!

Getting started with the job hunt can be a scary thing! We hear a lot about how there are so many incredible software-related job opportunities at an array of fancy, exciting companies. However, when it comes to the actual job hunt, how do we get started?

I am Kim Nguyen, the Lecturer for the Allen School's Career Seminar and I am here to help! I have participated in SWE interviews both as an applicant and as a hiring manager. I've split my career between engineering, recruiting and now- career coaching. To learn more about me, you can check out my LinkedIn profile: http://bit.ly/kimLinkedIn

The materials I've provided in this document are dense but worthwhile. There's information on building your resume, recruiting timelines, how to interact/talk with recruiters and hiring managers, how to actually get started on your job hunt and how to prepare for those super scary technical interviews. Take your time! If you have any questions, feel free to shoot me an email: kim@cs.washington.edu

I BELIEVE IN YOU!

Kim

Building Your Resume

First things first, you need a resume and this is one of my most referenced resources that I've put on the interwebs: http://bit.ly/cseresumeguide

Presentations

Here is my Recruiting Basics presentation, which is a good place to begin if you're trying to understand how internship/job hunting works: http://bit.ly/cserecruitingbasics

Presentation Recording (gonna toot my own horn here but I'm a phenomenal and engaging presenter and this is probably the best way to absorb this information):

https://f5networks.zoom.us/rec/share/DocnX7GEY5cQfwhHNJUy6xt3KjHOCPDYNDWc9yRcOtcOnzb3s_UkJrBOXHPz6Iy2.qrKwQU69oRYlZvZ1 Passcode: P3sZSq.8

This next presentation, goes into depth about how to craft your story when you're talking to recruiters and engineering in-person at things like career fairs or meet and greets: http://bit.ly/csestorycrafting

Presentation Recording (see note about previous recording):

https://f5networks.zoom.us/rec/share/ha6xQRdt9woPn1DZLb1Sp9uHoVtgG7cjWvdrGONjBeAxL8uw8TYqV5MYHtQNZkhE.ryUac5wg8jWajfc8 Passcode: UNA^7tX4

Game Plan

Is this currently your situation? Help me, Kim! I need a game plan for how to start the job hunt.

No worries, first of all, get an idea for the companies you're interested in and make a table like the one below (and fill it out). If you're not sure where you want to go, check out the list of companies that recruit from our department: https://www.cs.washington.edu/industrial_affiliates/current

Also, straight up googling a phrase like "software engineering internship summer 2022" should produce some A+ results.

	Microsoft	Google	Amazon	Facebook
What is the recruiter's email address? (You can find this from a friend, the interwebs, or ask them in person)				
List of friends that have worked there before.				
When will this company be on campus? How are you going to meet them? (ie. Career Fair, Tech Talk, Office Hours)				

My recommended follow up steps are

1.   Send a short email to the recruiter introducing yourself and expressing interest in their software engineering internship opportunities. Include your resume and ask them if you can be considered for any upcoming interviews.

     a.   Example: "Hi There! My name is Kim Nguyen and I'm currently a Computer Engineering and Electrical Engineering double major. I graduate in June 2021 and I'm looking for software engineering internships. I've already applied to the job posting your company has online. I've heard so many great things about Microsoft and I would be grateful to be considered for any upcoming interview opportunities. I've already attached my resume and I plan to attend the tech talk next week. Please let me know if there's anything else you need from me."

2.   Ask your friends/classmates if they'd be willing to refer you to their company's recruiter.

     a.   Typically, you give them a soft copy of your resume and they'll send an email like "Hi There! I'd like to pass along the resume of my classmate, Kim Nguyen. She is one of the hardest working students I know. She'd be a great fit for a software engineering internship at our company! Please consider her for any upcoming opportunities. Thanks!"

     b.   It's okay if you get multiple friends to send separate emails. In fact, I'd recommend it.

3.   Go and meet these companies in person every chance you get. It's a lot of leg work but recruiting is about relationships. And yes, recruiters see a ton of faces but too few bother to follow up.

     a.   Always keep paper copies of your resume handy. A lot of these short meet ups with recruiters between office hours, after tech talks or at the career fair are really a mini screen to determine if you're ready for an interview. This is essentially the time when you want your communication skills to shine. It might sound cheesy, but practice an intro. "Hi there! My name is Kim Nguyen and I'm looking for a software engineering internship this summer. Would you mind taking a look at my resume and giving me some suggestions on how I can better prepare myself?" Be prepared to answer follow up questions about whatever projects of experiences you have on your resume and give a compelling reason as to why you're interested in their company. For a deep dive into intro conversations with a recruiter, check out this presentation: http://bit.ly/csestorycrafting

     b.   Don't forget to get contact info!!! "What's the best way to get in touch with you later?"

     c.   Follow up with a short thank you email and attach your resume expressing interest like in Step 1. If you've already reached our previously, just send a note thanking them for their help/information.

4. FAQ

    a. What if my recruiter doesn't email me back? What should I do?!

        i. It's all good, recruiters are pretty busy and their inboxes definitely get packed. But don't worry about coming off as annoying if you want to follow up and be persistent! Just make sure you never come across as entitled. My recommend is something like this, "Hi There! I know you're busy so no worries if you haven't gotten around to my email, yet. I just wanted to let you know that I'm starting the final round interview process with Google, but would still love to be considered for a role at Microsoft. Please let me know if there's anything you need from me."

<u>Technical Interviewing</u>

Alright! YOU GOT THE INTERVIEW! What do you do? First, do a happy dance!!! Okay- now you can panic a little if you want. But don't worry! YOU GOT THIS. In case you didn't know- software engineering interviews usually have a substantial technical evaluation as part of the interview. This typically comes in the form of a coding question. The expectation is that you'll write real, working code on a whiteboard or using pen and paper. If it's over the phone, sometimes you and the interviewer will share a google doc and you can type out your solution or in some cases, you'll have to explain your code verbally to the interviewer. The point is- you won't have a compiler or IDE to help you. Sounds scary, right? IT'S ALL GOOD- the groovy thing is you can prepare for your interview just like you would prepare for a test- STUDY AND PRACTICE. You should have a framework or strategy that you use to approach coding questions and practice it a million times.

Before I launch into all of my tips and tricks, note that you'll need to have solid knowledge of data structures and algorithms to be successful at interviews. This knowledge can be acquired through class (CSE 332 or CSE 373 at the UW) or on your own. Also, my recommendation is that you are practicing and preparing for coding interviews 1 – 2 hours EVERY DAY or 5 hours per week. Don't leave yourself in a situation where you are cramming the night before an interview- at that point in the game it's much more important for you to be relaxed and well rested.

To start, here is my favorite article ever written about technical interviews:

https://medium.com/@techie4good/the-secrets-no-one-told-you-about-technical-interviews-5294fed0da9a

This blog post also gives an excellent game plan for approaching technical coding questions:

https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/nervous-during-your-technical-coding-interview-tebow-sarpangal

In addition, this blog post is an excellent technical review for the different topics you should be studying: https://medium.freecodecamp.org/coding-interviews-for-dummies-5e048933b82b

Preparing for your interview will come in two parts:

1.   Reviewing and practicing as many coding problems as you can find

2.   In-person mock interview practice with another human being

I find that many students do #1 but not many make time or arrangements for #2. Crushing the code is only half of the interview- it's also important for you to articulate your thought process and communicate and collaborate with your interviewer. Please note that interviewing can be a pretty awkward interaction the first couple times around. It's much better for you to figure out your verbal flow with a friend or mentor ahead of time.

For practice on your own, www.leetcode.com and www.hackerrank.com have a fantastic variety of coding problems that range from easy to difficult.

You can also pick up this classic book, "Cracking the Coding Interview" which does a great job reviewing important concepts and has loads of practice problems: https://www.amazon.com/Cracking-Coding-Interview-Programming-Questions/dp/0984782850/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1542321179&sr=8-1&keywords=cracking+the+coding+interview

PREPARATION IS KEY!

If you want more info, check out this presentation: http://bit.ly/cseinterviews

GOOD LUCK! YOU GOT THIS!