Meet the GPS Career Services team

Knowledgeable career professionals set GPS students up for success, directing students toward the best internships for their career interests and helping them launch their careers post-graduation.

Graduate school is about fine-tuning existing skills to help elevate students’ careers to the next level. The UC San Diego School of Global Policy and Strategy (GPS) excels at providing students with the best high-tech career resources that are personalized for their needs, all thanks to the GPS Career Services team.

The Career Services team works with students one-on-one to help them identify satisfying internship and career options, build professional networks and develop hard skills through workshops, panels and career talks. GPS News sat down with each team member to learn more about their areas of expertise.

Stephanie Boomhower
Stephanie Boomhower and her husband. | Contributed photo

Stephanie Boomhower, director of Career Services, has worked at GPS since 2014. Previously, she worked at the UC San Diego Rady School of Management from 2006-2014.

The goal of GPS Career Services, Boomhower said, is to provide students with the tools and guidance to conduct an internship and job search, such as their six-week Career Orientation Program (COP) before school starts to get them ready to search for opportunities.

This includes panels on possible career sectors, such as private, public and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and training on how to craft a resume, set up a LinkedIn profile, write a cover letter and more.

“The students tell us that while all the information is helpful, the one topic they enjoy the most is our pitch workshops because they get to meet and learn about their classmates,” Boomhower said.
Throughout the school year, the team hosts career talks to inform the students about their options, meeting with the students one-on-one to discuss specific strategies based on their interests. The team also engages with employers and alumni to identify opportunities for GPS students and graduates.

“My favorite part of my job is working with our amazing students and alumni and doing what I call the ‘happy dance’ when they stop by to tell us they got the internship or job that they have been working hard to get,” Boomhower said.

She often brings her dog Otto to the office, who is known within GPS as being the “furry career coach.”

“He comes into the office for a couple of hours each week, and at one time had the most-liked GPS Instagram posts,” Boomhower said.

Danica Castro
Danica Castro at the San Diego Zoo. | Contributed photo

Danica Castro, program coordinator, has worked at GPS since September 2020. In her role, she helps to host events related to students’ professional development.

“I coordinate and work with alumni and employers to create events and programs for students to explore different career paths, learn professional skills and prepare them for their careers post-GPS,” Castro said.

These events provide Castro the perfect opportunity to foster networking opportunities between students and alumni – a task she says is her favorite part of the job.

“My position allows me to create events that bring people together,” Castro said. “It’s even sweeter that I get to know and help our students as they navigate their professional careers.”

In her spare time, Castro says you would most likely find her in a thrift shop.

“I love thrifting and enjoy upcycling home décor and clothing,” she said. “I also enjoy cooking, reading and being outdoors in my spare time.”
Amanda Lowery

Career consultant Amanda Lowery is the newest member of the Career Services team, joining GPS in March 2022. Her consulting focus is on multilateral organizations, nonprofits and think tanks.

In her position, she provides support and guidance for GPS students and alumni regarding their careers and is available for one-on-one coaching sessions where we discuss job search strategies, resume writing and interviewing techniques.

“Students and alumni often do not realize how many variables can impact their career path. We help you identify those variables and create an action plan,” Lowery said. “I enjoy providing students with opportunities to leverage their skills and interests in their future careers.”

Lowery said she particularly enjoys teaching students and alumni “job search secrets” about time management during a job search, networking techniques and staying on top of growing trends in a particular industry.

“I love it when a student walks out of my office or a meeting feeling more confident than when they walked in,” Lowery said. “I also love seeing the ‘light bulb’ moment when something finally clicks with someone I’m coaching.”

Outside of GPS, Lowery is a registered yoga instructor and teaches a few classes per week at a yoga studio in Point Loma.
“As a Michigan native, I really enjoy the amazing weather in San Diego,” Lowery said. “I also am a beginner surfer and am open to any advice or surfing tips!”

Kemi Talabi

Kemi Talabi feeds a kangaroo. | Contributed photo

Kemi Talabi, career consultant, has worked at GPS for six months and has four years of experience working in higher education, including managing UC San Diego’s business incubator, The Basement and working in recruitment and public health for the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences.

Prior to joining GPS, Talabi executed corporate social responsibility initiatives, market research and experiential marketing events, which made her a perfect fit to specialize in private sector jobs and internships for GPS students.

“I help students navigate the murky waters of corporate and consulting roles,” Talabi said. “I filter through all the confusion by reframing students’ career exploration based on their transferable skills, revising their resumes and encouraging them to build their personal brand. I engage with GPS alumni and employers to be a referral source and warm the connection for potential candidates.”

Talabi said her favorite part of the job is the personal connections and open communication she is able to create with the students she coaches.
“I love painting a picture for a student who is unaware of what they possessed all along. It’s the ‘aha’ moment when students finally see themselves clearly – we share it together and everything seems possible,” Talabi said. “I am grateful to have this opportunity to support and lift students up. It’s a bond and a privilege not to be taken lightly. I want the dream fulfilled for every GPSer who wants it.”

Outside of work, Talabi is an avid traveler who has visited a number of countries - including Canada, the Bahamas, Jamaica, Nigeria, England, Spain, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Mexico, Trinidad, Japan, the Netherlands, Australia and Iceland – and domestically she has traveled to 42 states, living for extended periods in Michigan, Arkansas and California.

“Melbourne has some of the best vegan comfort food I’ve ever tasted,” Talabi said of her travels. “Spending time with rescued elephants in Chiang Mai, hedgehogs in pet cafes in Tokyo and hanging out with wild kangaroos in Sydney are some of my most memorable moments.”

“I love traveling with limited to no plans and packing only a carry-on for a multi-week trip,” she added. “I love culture shock: it forces my mind to focus on commonalities and to creatively communicate when there is a language barrier.”

Talabi connects her love of travel to her personal background and said her own life experiences contribute greatly to the strong bond she works to form with GPS students.

“As a bicultural person, growing up in both American and Nigerian households, I see life through these two distinct lenses of a dual citizen and second-generation immigrant,” Talabi said. “I learned so much about history and traditions from both sides of the map. I relate to all students and want to be an advocate for their journey.”