

# Writing a Resume

## Objectives

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1. State the purpose of a resume.
2. Describe the design, length, and format of typical and alternative resumes.
3. Distinguish between a chronological and a functional resume format.
4. Describe the six basic categories of information on a resume.
5. Review four sample resumes.
6. Write a quality draft of your resume for critique by others.

## Purpose of a Resume

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The resume documents one's qualifications for a position. It is a marketing tool and should be unique in both content and format to highlight facts about an individual as they relate to a job or position. A resume is a summary of one's personal, educational, and work experiential qualifications. Resumes can be used by candidates applying for work, graduate schools, or scholarships/fellowships. This guide will focus on the resume primarily for a job search situation.

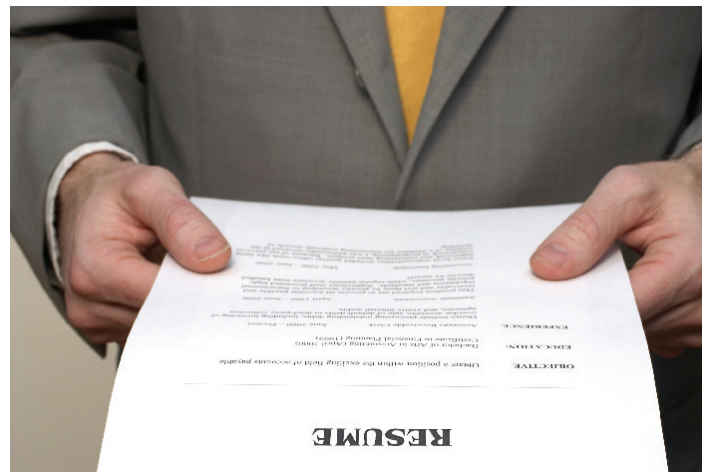
## Style of a Resume

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### Design

Resumes follow several formats. There is not one correct design, but certain elements of the resume have become standard. The following descriptions are intended to help you create a resume that will serve and represent your individual needs and qualifications.

A resume must present a positive image. Keep in mind that while a resume is an essential tool in your job search, it is not meant as a substitute for the interview (it usually precedes the interview). The resume is a summary, so you can use incomplete sentences to describe your job duties and accomplishments. Some people feel that the resume should be action-oriented and reflect a more assertive, confident job seeker. Others are more comfortable with a neutral tone demonstrating qualifications and experience without much focus on assertiveness or salesmanship. Ultimately, the tone and content of your resume is based on information regarding your career field and prospective employer.



## What's Inside

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## Length

How long your resume can be depends on the purpose for which you are using it. In the private, non-profit, and government sectors, the traditional resume length is one page. Multi-page resumes may be appropriate when applying to graduate school programs, scholarships, or more academically oriented positions.

If you are an active and involved student, keep in mind of the maxim "quality over quantity" and select only those experiences which strongly support your candidacy for a particular position. It may be helpful to keep a multi-page master resume, which documents all of your experiences, and then save different, one-page versions of your resume targeted at particular positions.

## Format

The format should attract attention and create interest. Choose appropriate categories for your information and order them from most to least relevant to your objective. Use capital letters, underlining, bold face, indentations, and white space to emphasize important information. Be careful not to overload your resume with these. Once you've selected a format, be consistent within the categories. The resume should be easy to follow and pleasing to the eye. Two situations that may require your resume in an alternate format include Internet resume posting and resume scanning systems.

## Alternative Resume Styles

### Resumes for posting on the Internet

A common job-hunting practice involves posting resumes on the Internet. This may or may not increase your chances of securing an interview. There are a few recommendations to consider before posting your resume.

- No line of text should be longer than 65 characters, including spaces.
- Pay close attention to your choice of words throughout your resume. Employers searching for online resumes typically use keyword search programs to find resumes of interest. If your resume does not include these words, it may not be retrieved during the search process. To select keywords, consider specific skills and qualifications necessary for success in the field of interest.
- Keep in mind that the information you place in your resume will be available to anyone who wants to see it, so avoid confidential information, such as your address and telephone number.

### Scannable Resumes

Some employers use scanning technology to handle the large number of resumes they receive. This is done by a system that scans the resume into computer memory. Employers can then search the resume for skills that match those necessary for a particular job.

When constructing a scannable resume, remember the following tips:

- Specify skills you have obtained using verbs. For example, "trained new employees."
- Use lots of white space to aid the computer in

recognizing the information.

- Avoid using underlining, bold facing, varied fonts, or other fancy formatting options. These can result in misread information.
- Do not fold or staple a resume that will be scanned. If you are concerned about whether a particular employer scans resumes, you may want to call in advance to check.

For more information on electronic and scannable resumes, see resources in the Career Library.

## The Two Basic Formats

The two basic approaches to organizing information on a resume are chronological (or general) and functional.

### Chronological or General

A chronological resume lists, describes, and dates the details of each job and educational experience separately. Listings under each category are placed in reverse chronological order, starting with the most recent schooling or job. This approach is most appropriate if you have extensive, uninterrupted work experience in the area in which you seek employment. It is also the most common approach.

### Functional

This resume format consists of selections from your total experience of only those parts which relate to the job you seek. Under each category, list qualifications, skills, experiences, etc., that logically support your job objective in functional areas such as management, research, writing, teaching, sales, human relations, etc. This approach is more difficult to construct but may be more effective in documenting the skills or functions you want to perform, especially if your background is varied. Functional resumes are generally not appropriate for traditional college students.

## The Six Categories of Information

Certain elements of a resume have become standard. The following categories are commonly found on resumes.

### 1. Identification

Your name, full address, and phone number(s) with the area code should be the first item on your resume. If you are at a temporary address, you can include this in addition to (or in place of) your permanent address. It has become common practice to include your email address, but make sure it is

professional in nature and doesn't contain cutesy words, slang, or profanity. It is also important to choose an email address that you check regularly.

## 2. Professional Objective (optional)

This should be your career objective stated as concisely as possible. It should be broad enough to cover any suitable employment and to interest a wide array of employers, yet be specific enough to give an element of sound career direction to your resume.

If you are planning to seek employment in several different areas where the same objective would not be appropriate, consider writing a resume for each area. Remember to state clearly whether you are looking for an internship, full-, or part-time job.

An alternative is to omit this category from your resume and relay the information in a cover letter.

A potential problem with this approach occurs when cover letters and resumes get separated, creating a void when it comes to comments about your job interests and objectives.

Statements concerning your objectives should be continually reinforced and supported through the other elements of your resume. You can focus on any of the following:

- position title
- career area
- organization type
- specific population
- skills you wish to use

For more information, visit the Career Center Library's *Guide to Writing an Objective Statement*.

## 3. Education

The highest level achieved (or the degree you are currently seeking) should come first and continue backward with other schools attended, degrees earned, or training received. It is not necessary to include high school after sophomore year. However, if some items in your high school background show high honors or generally reinforce the career objective, then that data should be included. List the names of schools, dates attended or graduation date, degrees earned, and major/minor subjects.

You may also include honors, awards, Dean's list, grade point average, and other items which may enhance this section of your resume. The possibilities for expansion in this category are unlimited.

Consider listing courses you have taken, as well as research projects and other efforts that demonstrate your abilities.

If you have a long list of such activities, it might be wise to select only the most important. You can omit the others or include them in separate categories such as "Honors/Awards" or "Activities." Including all of these items under the Education heading might begin to dilute the image of the degree and make your resume look cluttered and confusing.

## 4. Experience

This category typically reflects your contact with specific employers. It is permissible to include full and part-time jobs, internships, volunteer work, summer jobs, special projects, or military experience under this category. If you have several experiences very much related to your objective or target audience, you may wish to list those under "Related Experience" and your other experiences under "Other or Additional Experience."

List position titles, names of organizations, locations (city and state), dates, and duties. Present this in a format where the most relevant information comes first. Two different examples for presenting the same information follow:

Holiday Inn: Tallahassee, FL  
Desk Clerk, 1/11 - Present

Desk Clerk - Holiday Inn, Tallahassee, FL  
January 2011 - present

Employers are mainly interested in the degree of responsibility you held and the skills you demonstrated. Outline your duties in a way that accentuates your job experience and at the same time relates it to your professional objective. For example:

Crew Member, McDonald's  
Tallahassee, FL, 1/11 to present

- Managed operations and supervised 19 co-workers
- Compiled inventory data and maintained stock
- Assisted in hiring and training new employees

Use the *Positive Action Word List* and *Job Duties Exercise* included in this guide to help you identify and document skills and accomplishments from your past experiences. Remember, any experience in the world of work may be capable of demonstrating your dependability, resourcefulness, and responsibility, including internships, volunteer experience, leadership positions, class projects, part-time work, etc. Choose



items that show your qualifications and experience to your best advantage.

## 5. Personal (optional)

Personal information about age, gender, marital status, and ethnicity is typically not included on a resume.

In fact, many employers become uncomfortable when receiving this information out of fear they may violate federal equal opportunity laws. It is important to note that this information may be necessary when using a resume to apply for a position abroad. Other information, such as hobbies and interests, should only be included if it is relevant to the position to which you are applying.

For example, a person applying for a sales position with Nike might list relevant sporting activities.

## 6. References

Choose one of the following:

- Leave off the statement referring to references, as it is assumed you will provide them.
- “References available upon request.”
- Provide on a separate page.

To document your references, list the names, titles, addresses, telephone numbers, and email addresses of three to five people on a separate page. Include your contact information on this page as well in the event that your resume and reference list are separated. Be sure these individuals can speak about your experience or knowledge of a specific subject matter. Remember to ask their permission before listing them as a reference and make sure to provide your references with a copy of your resume. Provide this list to the employer only when requested. Your Career Portfolio is a good place to store your references.

FSU students and alumni seeking admission into graduate or professional school, or those applying to teaching, nursing, social work, library science, or higher education positions have the option of utilizing a “Credentials Files Service.” This service is a fee-based file, available via the FSU Career Center for their references. For more information, please contact the Career Center at 850.644.6431 or visit [www.career.fsu.edu/credentials/](http://www.career.fsu.edu/credentials/).

**Other Categories:** The above categories are a foundation of a resume, but there are many other options. Some possibilities include:

- Activities
- Background

- Certifications
- Computer Skills
- Honors/Awards
- Interests
- Languages
- Licenses
- Memberships
- Professional Activities
- Publications/Presentations
- Recitals/Art Shows
- Special Skills
- Workshops/Seminars

If you have information which you feel is important but doesn’t fit any of the above categories, create sections to encompass this information and/or the requirements of specific job targets. You also may have categories unique to your field of study, e.g., clinical nursing experience. The key is having categories that best fit the position(s) you are seeking.

## Four Sample Resumes

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At the end of this guide are four sample resumes. *These are only intended as examples. Feel free to create a format that fits your own style and career goals.* Please note that the font size of the samples has been reduced for inclusion in this guide. They are intended to help you pull together the information in the preceding sections and to give you some idea of what finished resumes can look like. Be aware of the variety in layout style, writing techniques, format, etc. Additional sample resumes are available in two locations where a career advisor may also be available to help you.

- The Career Center Library, DSC 1200
- The College of Engineering, B226

Pick and choose what is useful and consistent with your individual needs and objectives and create your own original resume. Remember, the focus is on your needs, objectives, and qualifications.

## Resume Builder

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If you need help getting started, SeminoleLink has a new feature called “Resume Builder.” To start the process, click on the “Create a Resume” button located under the “Shortcuts” tab in SeminoleLink.

Resume Builder allows students and alumni to create a resume using a variety of formats and styles. Resume Builder should be used as a starting point, and

individuals are encouraged to bring in their resume drafts to the Career Center for further revisions.

## Hints and Suggestions

Before you begin the task of actually writing your rough draft, thoroughly familiarize yourself with the *Do's and Don'ts of Resume Writing* included in this guide. By following these guidelines, you will increase the probability of producing a readable and straightforward account of your unique qualifications. While most sources agree that a resume composed along these lines is more competitive and successful, remember, the focus is on your needs and objectives. Consider which hints will help you write the resume most appropriate for your job objective.

## The Resume Critique

Have several people critique your best draft. Next, bring your revised draft to the Career Center, and a career advisor will be glad to review it with you.

## Resume Printing

Given the accessibility of computer technology, most individuals produce their resume using some form of word processing software. However, be sure not to use the templates or wizards in these software packages. Using these tools often results in a generic resume which looks too much like the resumes of other people. Plus, it can be difficult to edit and revise resumes created by these tools. Thus, you might need to recreate your resume from scratch on a Word document. Once you have completed your resume, you may want to print your resume on resume paper.

If you want a certain type of paper to print your original on, specialty papers are sold at most office supply stores and copy centers. Avoid textured or marbled paper as it does not scan or copy well.

Remember, when you save your file on a USB drive or hard drive you can easily update it, but be sure to keep a backup of this file in a safe place so you don't lose your resume. Both the online Career Portfolio and SeminoleLink at [www.career.fsu.edu](http://www.career.fsu.edu) are great places to upload your resume for safe keeping.

Students can access a variety of computer labs on campus to create and print their resume.

For information on campus computer labs visit [www.its.fsu.edu/Computing/Computer-Labs/](http://www.its.fsu.edu/Computing/Computer-Labs/).

Students and alumni can also use the Career Center's computer lab located in 1200 DSC.

## Do's and Don'ts of Resume Writing

### Do

- **Quantify information and give specific skills gained.**
- **Be brief, clear, and concise.** A resume that is not confusing, easily readable, and well-organized is more competitive.
- **Be consistent.** Experiment with the arrangement of headlines, captions, indentations, blocks of text, and the use of capitalization and underscoring. Then choose a layout which is readable and appealing to the eye and stick with it.
- **Be positive.** Start statements or phrases with verbs denoting positive actions (see the *Positive-Action Word List* for ideas). Avoid the use of the personal pronoun "I." Omit negative statements.
- **Be honest.** Included information should accurately represent you to employers.
- **Be careful.** Double-check for typos and mistakes in grammar, spelling, or punctuation. Use a dictionary. When in doubt, check it out. Errors in detail suggest careless workmanship.
- **Be neat.** Use lots of white space when creating your resume to avoid the cluttered look. Make sure you get a clear, unmarred copy. Print copies of your resume using a quality laser printer.
- **Get your resume critiqued!**

### Don't

- State salary requirements. If asked, research the value of the position and your skills and give a range of mid to high.
- Give reasons for quitting previous jobs.
- Limit geographical considerations unless absolutely necessary.
- Expound on philosophy or values.
- Offer any negative information.
- Use standard resume templates found in popular computer software or books.

## Positive Action Word List

|             |             |             |            |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| accomplish  | delegate    | interpret   | publish    |
| account     | demonstrate | interview   | purchase   |
| achieve     | decrease    | invent      | qualify    |
| act         | decide      | investigate | raise      |
| administer  | design      | judge       | read       |
| advertise   | determine   | landscape   | recommend  |
| advise      | develop     | lead        | recruit    |
| analyze     | devise      | learn       | repair     |
| appraise    | diagnose    | listen      | report     |
| appeal      | direct      | make        | research   |
| arrange     | discover    | manage      | review     |
| assemble    | document    | manufacture | schedule   |
| assign      | draft       | market      | select     |
| assist      | draw        | measure     | sell       |
| attend      | edit        | meet        | serve      |
| audit       | engineer    | mobilize    | solve      |
| authorize   | entertain   | model       | speak      |
| budget      | establish   | motivate    | staff      |
| build       | estimate    | negotiate   | start      |
| calculate   | evaluate    | operate     | structure  |
| catalogue   | exercise    | order       | submit     |
| chart       | exhibit     | originate   | supervise  |
| clarify     | experiment  | organize    | supply     |
| collect     | explain     | paint       | synthesize |
| communicate | facilitate  | perform     | talk       |
| compete     | formulate   | persuade    | teach      |
| complete    | furnish     | photograph  | test       |
| compile     | guide       | plan        | train      |
| compose     | handle      | play        | translate  |
| conduct     | hire        | predict     | travel     |
| contribute  | implement   | prepare     | tutor      |
| control     | improve     | present     | type       |
| coordinate  | increase    | preside     | understand |
| correct     | influence   | produce     | verify     |
| counsel     | initiate    | program     | write      |
| create      | inspect     | promote     |            |
| dance       | install     | propose     |            |
|             | instruct    | provide     |            |

## Job Duties Exercise

Sometimes people have a difficult time describing what they did in a particular job. In the Career Center we often hear, "Oh, I just waited tables." Every position requires skills which are transferable to work after college. Use the following steps to identify these skills and make them relevant to employers.

1. Think about a specific job you held. Picture in your mind what you did on a typical day.
2. Use the *Positive Action Word* list to brainstorm all of the skills you employed during this day. Mark each word that fits the job.
3. Choose three to five of these words that shows you working at your best.
4. For each verb think of the questions "Who?, What?, When? Why? How?" to write a detailed description of the job duty.

These steps can help you create a vivid and accurate picture of a past job. For example:

**Rabbit's Restaurant**, *Head Server*, Tallahassee, FL

January 2010 - July 2011

- Promoted nightly specials while greeting guests
- Trained 25 new hires in restaurant policy and procedures
- Supervised front-of-house staff when manager was off duty

Now, use this space and the four steps to describe one of your jobs.

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## Chronological Resume: Example 1

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### Steve Andrews

123 Ocala Rd #1  
Tallahassee, FL 32304  
(850) 323-4000  
abc251@fsu.edu

#### Education

- Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL* 5/13  
**Master of Accounting in Taxation**  
Overall GPA: 3.92
- Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL* 5/12  
**Bachelor of Science in Accounting**  
Overall GPA: 4.00, Summa Cum Laude

#### Experience

- FSU College of Business, Tallahassee, FL, Teaching Assistant (ACG 2021)* 8/11– Present
- Review course assignments with approximately 50 students
  - Assist students in course material by staying after class frequently
  - Administer and grade course exams as well as assignments
- Leon Co. Commission, District 5, Tallahassee, FL, Campaign Treasurer* 6/11 –11/11
- Supported fundraising efforts, achieving \$87,000 in campaign contributions
  - Managed the campaign account utilizing campaign software
  - Produced financial reports in accordance with Florida election law
- State of Florida DEP, Tallahassee, FL, Accountant I* 6/10 – 8/10
- Reconciled work order accounts and processed checks
  - Assembled vouchers to pay invoices for various projects
- ABC Bank, Tallahassee, FL, Accounting Clerk* 5/09-8/11 (seasonal)
- Determined institution's fixed assets
  - Updated the Accounting Department procedures manual
  - Handled accounts payable and receivable assignments

#### Honors

- Member of National Society of Collegiate Scholars – 2009-present  
FICPA, Tallahassee Chapter Scholarship – 2012  
FSU College of Business Achievement Scholarship – 2012  
FSU Accounting Department – Outstanding Senior 2011-2012  
FSU Accounting Department – Outstanding Junior 2010-2011  
Dean's List; 8 consecutive semesters

#### Activities

- Accounting Society, Treasurer, Political clubs—local & school, intramural football



## Chronological Resume: Example 2

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### **Natalie Jones**

123 Park Avenue North

Tallahassee, FL 32301

Home: 850-575-2000, Cell: 333-290-8000

abcd5518@yahoo.com

#### **Education**

*Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL, Bachelor of Science, April 2013*

Major: Criminology, Minors: Psychology & Sociology

Major GPA: 3.5

#### **Experience**

**Assistant to Director of Undergraduate Internships**, January 2012 - Present

*Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL*

- Collect and analyze reporting data using SPSS
- Deliver basic advising services to undergraduate students
- Answer phones, file documents, and post internships

**Receptionist**, September 2010 - August 2011

*State Attorney's Office-Worthless Check Division, Tallahassee, FL*

- Collected and processed fees and receipts
- Processed mail, organized files, and responded to general inquiries

**Administrative Assistant**, September 2009 - August 2010

*Thomas Smith Law Offices, Tallahassee, FL*

- Created spreadsheets and performed data entry
- Arranged daily appointments and greeted clients

**Account Representative**, May 2009 - August 2009

*National Distribution Centers, Orlando, FL*

- Acted as the sole account representative for the Florida sales territory
- Kept accurate and current inventory records and account receivable ledger
- Prepared orders and selected individual carriers for distribution

#### **Research Experience**

- Florida State University - Center for Excellence Study on School Violence
- Federal Public Defender's Office - United States v. Drayton

#### **Honors**

- All American Scholar Award 2011
- Seminole Award Nominee 2011
- Who's Who Among Students in American Universities & Colleges Nominee 2011
- Dean's List - 5 semesters

#### **Activities**

- Alpha Phi Sigma - National Criminology Honor Society
- Volunteer - Animal Shelter, Kate Sullivan Elementary School

### Ariana Franklin

7578 Tree Lane • Atlanta, GA 30318  
arifranklin@fsu.edu • (850) 385-1370

#### OBJECTIVE

To obtain a position in the financial industry to utilize financial and managerial skills to increase the customer base of the organization.

#### EDUCATION

**Georgia State University**, Atlanta, GA

5/13

*Bachelor of Business Administration, Finance GPA 3.6/4.0*

Financed 100% of Education

#### RELEVANT COURSEWORK

Corporate Finance

International Finance

Financial Institutions

#### RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

##### Banking

- Serviced business and consumer accounts according to customer financial needs
- Processed consumer loans and created lines of credit
- Approved transactions and resolved discrepancies on accounts

##### Analytical

- Served as liaison between regional executives and sales staff by tracking, forecasting, and reporting revenue activities
- Analyzed sample of projects to evaluate the quality of current forecasting tools
- Established reports that enabled the sales department to increase efficiency of operations

#### EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

**Nations Bank**, Atlanta, GA

2/13 - Present

*Consumer Banker I*

**Wallace Computer Services**, Atlanta, GA

1/11 - 12/12

*Sales Analyst*

#### HONORS

- Tracy Oaks Scholarship for Outstanding Leadership
- Dean's List

#### SKILLS

- Proficiency in Lotus 1-2-3, Excel, and dBaseIV

# Combined Functional & Chronological Resume

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## DANIEL TAYLOR

1234 Park Ave. Apt. 15, Tallahassee, FL 32303

Home: (850) 555-7000 · Cell: (407) 555-6000

abc1202@fsu.edu

### EDUCATION

**Florida State University**, Tallahassee, FL 8/13  
*Biology, Bachelor of Science*  
G.P.A. 3.55, with Honors, Dean's List

### HEALTHCARE EXPERIENCE

**Healthcare Services**, Tallahassee, FL 6/13 - Present  
*Self-Employed*

- Founded a business working with adults with disabilities
- Provide rehabilitation services to clients to improve physical and mental health
- Develop and incorporate daily routines that utilize physical exercises

**Starlight Child Center**, Tallahassee, FL 1/12 - 8/12  
*Counselor*

- Mentored and advised children ages 3-11
- Prepared programs with activities for youth success

**Bobby E. Leach Center**, Tallahassee, FL 12/11 - 12/12  
*Personal Trainer*

- Refined fitness goals and introduced proper technique to over 150 clients
- Motivated and enhanced clients' work-life balance by incorporating physical fitness into their daily routine

### MARKETING AND SALES EXPERIENCE

**Vector Marketing**, Orlando, FL 4/11 - 8/11  
*Sales Associate*

- Achieved and exceeded quarterly sales goals
- Worked sales and marketing functions for CUTCO product

**Mail Boxes Etc. — U.P.S.**, Orlando, FL 8/10 - 8/11  
*Sales Associate*

- Generated store marketing plans and refined customer service procedures

### VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

- **Gretchen Everhart School:** Aide to children with a wide range of mental disabilities
- **International Medical Outreach:** Medical mission trip serving a third-world population
- **Clairbridge Nursing Home:** Program facilitator for the elderly
- **Hospital:** Shadowed physicians and assisted with daily routines

### ACTIVITIES & HONORS

American Medical Student Association (V.P.) Golden Key International Honor Society  
FSU Career Center Advisory Board Seminole Torchbearers



FLORIDA STATE  
UNIVERSITY

The  
**Career Center**  
*linking futures*

850.644.6431 • [career.fsu.edu](http://career.fsu.edu)

Alternative Format Available.  
Revised 2/14.

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