RUTGERS
Career Exploration and Success

RESUME AND COVER LETTER PREPARATION TIPS

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PURSUE YOUR GOALS

HOW DO I GET THERE?

AGENDA

- Identify and learn to implement key attributes of a competitive resume
- Learn how to translate research experience into industry-relevant accomplishments
- Under the key differences between academic CVs and industry resumes
- Recognize the essential components of a targeted, tailored cover letter
- Develop a clear, compelling narrative about their skills and value.

Resumes

POP QUIZ!

What is the average amount of time an employer/recruiter takes to review an applicant's resume?

POP QUIZ!

6-8 Seconds!!!

PURPOSE OF A RESUME

- A focused document- to support a career goal
- Introduce Yourself to Employers
- Promote Your Knowledge, Skills, and Accomplishments
- Marketing Tool- your personal add

A TOOL TO WIN AN INTERVIEW!

RESUME WRITING TIPS

Concise- 1 to 2 pages

Neat and Organized- Format

Accurate: have up to date information

TYPICAL STRUCTURE FOR A BIOMEDICAL RESUME

- Header (name, contact, LinkedIn, optional personal website)

- Summary (2-3 lines: specialization, years of research, technical strengths)

- Technical Skills (wet lab, computational tools, instruments, platforms)

- Experience (focus on relevant lab/industry work, leadership, communication)

- Education

- Presentations

- Selected Publications (if relevant)

Anatomy of a Standard Resume

FORMATTING: IS YOUR RESUME VISUALLY APPEALING?

- Easy to read, logical in layout, and highlight relevant information
- Consistent
- Place the most relevant information at the top
- White Space
- Identify your accomplishments in a bulleted list
- Reverse Chronological Order

FORMATTING & APPEARANCE

Name: BOLD, 16-20 pt. font

Margins: 1” standard

Font: Serif Style (Times New Roman, Georgia, Garamond, Cambria)

Font Size: 10-12 pt. font

Headers: Consistent in use of bold/underline

Length: 1-2 pages

CONTACT INFORMATION

- **Name**
- **Address** – optional
- **Phone number** (professional voicemail greeting)
- **Professional E-mail address** (basic, easy, not too long)
- **LinkedIn Address**

EXPERIENCE: WHAT IS CONSIDERED EXPERIENCE?

Many Different Types

- Research Experience
- Full and Part-Time Jobs
- Volunteer Experience
- Internship/Co-op Experience
- Practicum/Field Experience
- Academic Projects
- Military Service

EXPERIENCE: DIFFERENT WAYS TO GROUP YOUR EXPERIENCES

Related Experience

- Academic Experience
- Community Involvement
- Leadership Experience

EXPERIENCE: FORMAT

INFORMATION TO INCLUDE

- Employer Name and Location (City, State)
- Position Title and Dates of Employment (Month, Year)
- Description of Responsibilities and Accomplishments
- Use Bullet Points
  - Start with a strong action verb
    - Vary usage of verbs
    - Use present tense if currently employed
    - Use past tense if no longer employed
    - Remove any use of personal pronouns or articles (“I” or “me”)

HOW DO I DESCRIBE MY EXPERIENCES?

ACTION VERB + EXAMPLE + RESULT

Crafting Accomplishment-Focused Statements

- Begin with action verbs (correct verb tense)
- Develop/Developed Organize/Organized
- Highlight transferable and soft skills
  - Think of specific achievements
- Resources and/or tools used

- Answers the following questions:
  - What did you do in the position?
  - How did you do it?
  - Why or for what purpose?
  - What were the results of your actions?

TRANSLATING RESEARCH EXPERIENCE AND BEATING THE ATS

- **FOCUS ON IMPACT AND QUANTIFY WHERE POSSIBLE:**

Instead of "Investigated receptor pathways in cancer cells”

Say “Led a 2 year project on EGFR inhibitors, optimizing compound synthesis and reducing assay variability by 20%”

- **BULLET WRITING TIPS (The “CAR” Method):**

CONTEXT: What was the problem or setting?

ACTION: What did you do?

RESULT: What was the measurable outcome?

- **BE MINDFUL OF KEYWORDS IN JOB POSTINGS FOR ATS:**

Extract relevant terms from the posting and make sure to hit as many as possible (organically): “flow cytometry,” “CRISPR,” “clinical assay development”

EDUCATION

Name of Institution

- Include City and State

Name of your degree and major

- PhD, Biomedical Sciences

Minor, Concentration

Grade Point Average – optional

- 3.0 or above

Date or expected date of graduation

- Expected December 2025

Additional Optional Information:

- Relevant Coursework
- Academic Awards/ Scholarships
- Certifications

OTHER HEADINGS

SKILLS

Computer skills: Python, R, SAS, Matlab, Microsoft or Mac OS Software, Google Docs, Social Media, etc.

- **Language skills:** Specify the language and whether you can speak, read, and/or write it (proficiency level)
- **Certifications:** Project Management Professional (PMP), SciPhD Leadership and Business Skills

HONORS/AWARDS

- **Academic** – Dean's List, Scholarships
- **Community** – special recognition
- **Job** – Employee of the Month

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What is the purpose of a strong summary of qualifications?

- Briefly highlight your key strengths and career focus
- Tailor it to the specific role and employer
- Show your value up front to busy hiring managers

Dos and Don’ts of Crafting this Summary:
DO:
- Highlight years of experience, technical experience and soft skills
- Use keywords from job description

DON’T:
- Be vague or generic
- Use first person language
- List everything - this is a teaser, not a bio

PRO TIP:
Customize this section for each application by reflecting on the top 3 qualifications in the job posting

EXAMPLES OF TAILORED SUMMARIES

Example 1 - for R&D Scientist Role:

Molecular biologist with 6+ years of experience in oncology research, assay development, and CRISPR gene editing. Proven track record of leading cross-functional research teams and publishing in high-impact journals. Skilled in cell-based assays, flow cytometry, and bioinformatics tools (R, GraphPad, Python).

Example 2 - for Regulator Affairs Associate:

PhD in Pharmacology with strong foundation in FDA regulations, preclinical documentation, and protocol development. Effective science communicator with experience writing IND-enabling reports and grant applications. Adept at translating complex scientific data for diverse stakeholders.

SAMPLE RESUME

FIRST NAME LAST NAME

Phone: PHONE | Email: EMAIL

LinkedIn: LINKEDIN PROFILE| Location: New Brunswick, NJ

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

PhD candidate in Molecular Biology with 6+ years of experience in cancer biology, assay development, and CRISPR gene editing. Expertise in molecular cloning, flow cytometry, high-throughput screening, and next-gen sequencing. Proven leadership in cross-functional academic-industry collaborations, with strong project management and mentoring experience. Skilled in scientific writing, data visualization, and communicating findings to technical and non-technical audiences.

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Wet Lab: Cell culture (2D/3D), CRISPR/Cas9, Western blot, ELISA, immunofluorescence, qPCR, flow cytometry
Computational Tools: GraphPad Prism, R, Python (basic), ImageJ, SnapGene, Seurat
Platforms: RNA-seq, ChIP-seq, Illumina, Bio-Rad, ThermoFisher, Benchling
Other: Scientific writing, grant proposal development, collaborative project management

EDUCATION

Rutgers University – New Brunswick, NJ
PhD in Molecular Biology, Expected August 2025
Dissertation: TITLE
Advisor: DR. ADVISOR'S NAME | GPA: 3.95/4.0 (OPTIONAL)

University of California, Davis – Davis, CA
Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, 2016

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Rutgers University – Department of Molecular Biology
PhD Researcher | New Brunswick, NJ | Sept 2019 – Present
- Designed and executed a CRISPR-based functional genomics screen to identify druggable targets in TNBC cells.
- Developed and validated a new cell-based assay that reduced error margin by 30%.
- Analyzed RNA-seq data using R and Seurat; visualized expression profiles and pathway enrichment.
- Collaborated with cross-functional teams including computational biologists and bioinformatics analysts.
- Mentored 2 undergraduates and 1 master's student in experimental design and data interpretation.
- Co-authored 3 publications (1 first-author, 1 under review at Nature Cancer).

Genentech – Oncology R&D Internship
Research Intern | Remote (Hybrid) | Summer 2023
- Validated kinase inhibition assays for preclinical drug development.
- Contributed to standard operating procedures (SOPs) and technical reports.
- Participated in cross-departmental regulatory and clinical development meetings.

LEADERSHIP & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Graduate Student Association, Rutgers University
President, Biomedical Sciences Division | 2022 – 2023
- Coordinated career development panels and workshops with biotech leaders.
- Established mentorship program supporting 50+ early-stage PhD students.

iJOBS Program – Rutgers University
Trainee | 2021 – Present
- Completed modules in drug development, medical affairs, and scientific communication.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

- NAME 1, & NAME 2 (2024). CRISPR screening reveals key synthetic lethality in TNBC metabolism. Under review at *Nature Cancer*.
- NAME 1. et al. (2023). Development of high-throughput 3D assay for breast cancer invasion. *Molecular Oncology*, 18(2), 221-234.

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

- "CRISPR-Based Synthetic Lethality Screens in TNBC," American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) Annual Meeting, April 2024.
- "High-Throughput 3D Invasion Assay Design," poster presentation, Keystone Symposium on Tumor Microenvironment, January 2023.
- "Identifying Vulnerabilities in Cancer Metabolism," invited talk, Rutgers Biomedical Research Symposium, November 2022.

A COMPETITIVE RESUME IS NOT…

A competitive resume is not **repetitive**. Further, a competitive resume should **avoid** including:

- Irrelevant information like your picture, marital or citizenship status, fun facts, logos/graphics/images, or skills that have nothing to do with the job or internship that you are applying to
- Outdated information like activities you participated in during high school
- Overly casual language like slang or colloquialisms
- Military experience that is difficult for civilians to understand
- Spelling mistakes
- Long, narrative explanations in bullet points

A COMPETITIVE RESUME IS...

A resume is **more competitive** when it includes **recent**, **relevant** skills and accomplishments that align with the requirements in a **specific job or internship description**. This is known as creating a **tailored** resume. A **competitive resume** also:

- Is short (about 1-2 pages long)
- Uses strong action verbs
- Includes key terms from a specific job or internship description
- Focuses on results
- Has precise figures and specific information in bullet points
- Has consistent formatting throughout

Curriculum Vitae

POP QUIZ!

When do we use curriculum vitae as opposed to resumes?

ACADEMIC CV OR VITA

- Full CVs are used only to apply for academic positions or grad school
- All the elements of formatting a resume apply:
  - it should be well organized and easy to read
  - an effective, consistent style
  - strategically place the most important information near the top
  - use a header/footer for page numbers along with your last name (e.g.: Gangopadhyay 1)

SECTIONS TO INCLUDE

- Personal Information
- Education
- Honors/Awards
- Relevant Work Experience
- Teaching Experience
- Publications
- Presentations/Conferences/Seminars
- References

OPTIONAL SECTIONS TO INCLUDE

- Skills
- Grants
- Institutional service
- Professional Association

Common Questions & Challenges

HOW DO I SHIFT THE EMPHASIS FOR INDUSTRY JOBS IN A RESUME?

Employers in biotech/pharma care less about the number of publications and more about skills and outcomes.

So, in your materials, highlight:
- Collaborative projects with cross-functional teams
- Data analysis, troubleshooting, and regulatory awareness
- Specific techniques (e.g. CRISPR, HPLC, RNA-seq)
- Results (e.g. “Reduced assay error by 25%)

Include 1-3 publications in a separate section (if relevant), and focus on **impact** and **translational relevance** in your experience bullets. Call the section “Selected Publications” implying there is more.

I’VE BEEN IN GRAD SCHOOL A LONG TIME. WILL THAT COUNT AGAINST ME?

Not necessarily.

Emphasize:
- Progressive responsibility and leadership (e.g., mentoring junior scientists, managing lab operations)
- Multi-disciplinary experience
- Publications or presentations that reflect innovation or problem-solving

Focus on the last 5-7 years.

MY EXPERIENCE IS VERY ACADEMIC—NO INTERNSHIPS OR INDUSTRY COLLABORATIONS (AS YET). HOW DO I SHOW I AM "INDUSTRY-READY"?

Focus on transferable skills:

- Project management: timelines, milestones, data reporting
- Communication: presenting to non-specialist audiences, grant writing
- Collaboration: cross-lab or cross- departmental work
- Problem-solving: designing experiments, adapting protocols, analyzing datasets

Include leadership or service to round up your profile.

WHAT IF I DON'T MEET ALL THE QUALIFICATIONS IN A JOB DESCRIPTION? SHOULD I STILL APPLY?

Yes. If you meet ~70% of the qualifications and are genuinely interested, you should definitely apply.

Hiring managers know ideal candidates rarely check every box.

Focus on:

- The skills and experiences you do bring.
- Willingness and ability to learn quickly.
- How your research mindset equips you to adapt.

Tailor your cover letter to make a strong case for fit.

Cover Letter

BASICS OF A COVER LETTER

- The purpose of a cover letter:

1. Personalizes the application
2. Connects your expertise to the employer’s mission
3. Demonstrates communication and motivation

- For an effective cover letter, follow the rule of the 3Cs of professional correspondence:
- Clear
- Concise
- Compelling

ANATOMY OF A COVER LETTER

Opening Paragraph: State who you are, what you're applying for, and 1-2 key strengths

Middle Paragraph(s): Highlight 1-2 experiences that match the job (e.g. project management, data analysis, regulatory exposure)

Closing Paragraph: Reiterate fit, interest, and availability to interview

Sample (Email) Subject Lines:

- Response to a job/internship posting: (Company Name) Ad for a Job Posting on Handshake
- Networking with employers or following up on referrals: Met You at the Rutgers Career & Internship Fair Referred by _____.
- Canvassing employers to explore potential opportunities: Strong Applicant for Your _____ Department

Sample Lead in Sentence for 1st Paragraph:

- I am a _____ student in my _____ year at Rutgers University and am writing in response to your job posting on _____c for a _____.
- I am very interested in the _____ position and am particularly attracted to _____ because of my extensive experience in _____.

BREAKING DOWN A COVER LETTER 3

Sample Lead in Sentence for 2nd Paragraph: (Follow with a comparison of your qualifications/selling points and their requirements)

- Please allow me to draw your attention to a few of the ways my background meets your requirements …
- My previous experience as _____ is a particular asset for this role because …
- During my time as a doctoral student at Rutgers, I worked on _____ …

Sample Final Paragraph Closing:

- I welcome the opportunity to meet with you and discuss in more detail my qualifications for the position. Thank you for your time and consideration.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

When composing emails, follow the following guidelines:

- Use an appropriate subject line for your email.

- Use professional salutations such as “Dear Ms/Mr/Dr” and be sure to spell their name correctly.

- Take the time to proofread, spell check, and grammar check your message before sending.

- Do not use slang terms, text message abbreviations, emoticons, overly stylized fonts, graphics, or multi-colored backgrounds.

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

Dear Hiring Manager,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic interest in the Scientist I position at Nimbus Therapeutics, as advertised on your website. Currently completing my PhD in Molecular Biology at Rutgers University, I bring over six years of experience in oncology-focused translational research, with a strong foundation in assay development, high-throughput screening, and collaborative team science. Your mission to pioneer treatments for metabolic disease and immuno-oncology deeply resonates with my own research values and career goals.

In my dissertation work, I designed and validated a novel CRISPR-based functional screen to identify key modulators of drug resistance in triple-negative breast cancer. This project, in collaboration with our university's core facility, led to the discovery of a synthetic lethal interaction that is now being tested in vivo, and I co-authored a first-author manuscript currently under review at *Nature Cancer*. Beyond the bench, I led a multi-disciplinary subgroup of five researchers, coordinated project milestones across departments, and presented findings at both the AACR and Keystone Symposia. This experience not only honed my experimental rigor but also taught me how to communicate complex findings effectively to cross-functional stakeholders.

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

I am particularly excited about Nimbus's integrated approach to target validation and structure-based drug design. With hands-on expertise in molecular cloning, flow cytometry, and RNA-seq analysis, along with proficiency in data tools like GraphPad, Prism, and R, I am confident I can contribute immediately to your oncology pipeline. Moreover, my experience mentoring undergraduate researchers and managing cross-lab collaborations has instilled in me the interpersonal and organizational skills needed to thrive in a dynamic biotech environment.

Thank you for considering my application. I would welcome the opportunity to contribute to Nimbus's impactful research and would be thrilled to discuss how my background and passion align with your team's needs. I am available for an interview at your convenience and can be reached by email or phone.

Sincerely,

THOUGHTS ON USING CHATGPT

- ChatGPT's advanced AI capabilities allow it to generate eloquent, human-like sentences in seconds — and it's free.
- It's important, however, to combine the chatbot's edits with your own editing and voice.
- Triple-check that the resume you create accurately reflects your experience.

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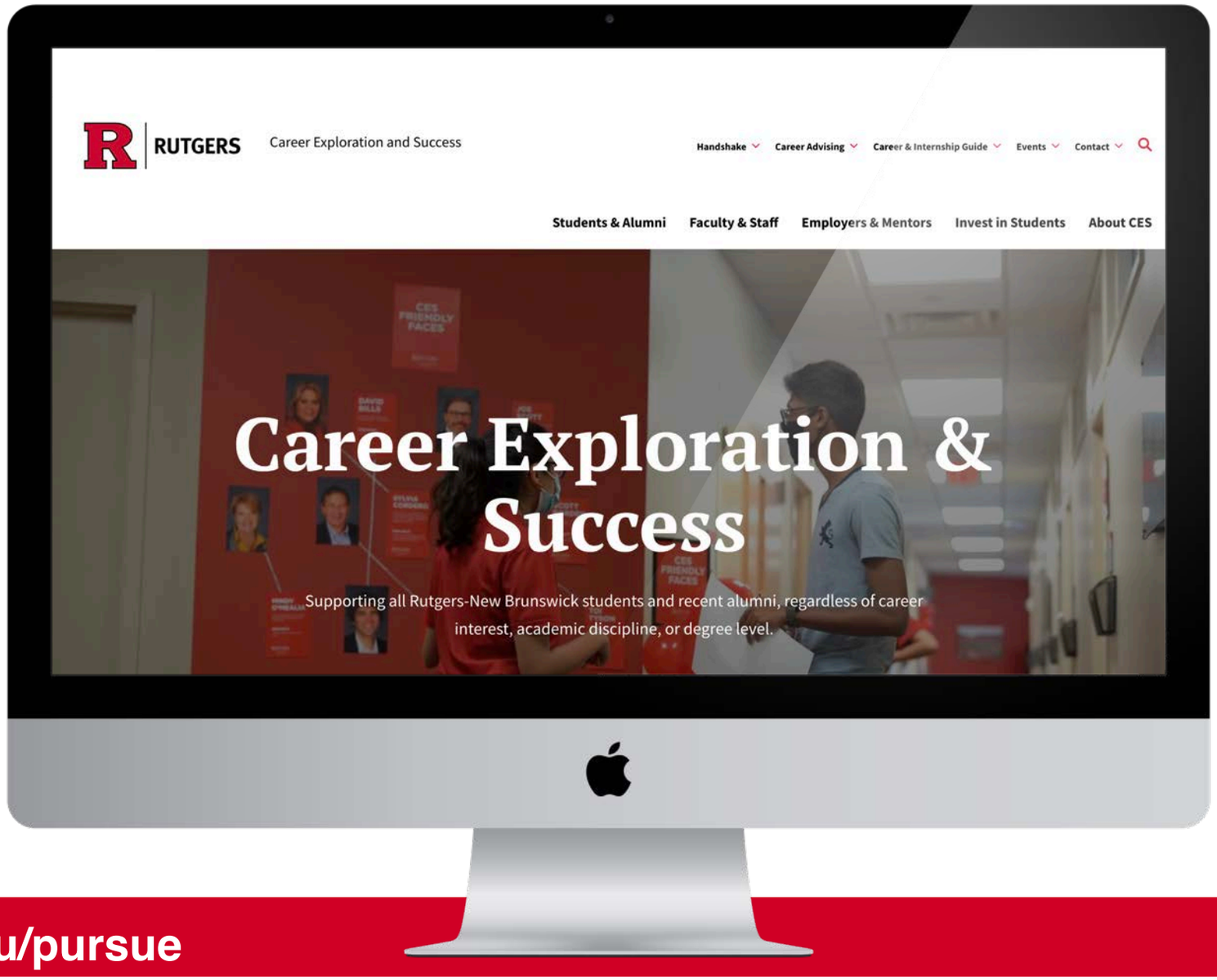
CAREERS.RUTGERS.EDU



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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- About Resumes + Best Practices
  - https://careers.rutgers.edu/news/anatomy-resume
  - https://careers.rutgers.edu/news/make-it-count
- Resume Power Verbs + Templates
  - https://careers.rutgers.edu/news/power-verbs-strengthen-your-resume
  - https://careers.rutgers.edu/news/resume-blueprints-career-communities
- BIG Interview AI
  - https://rutgers.biginterview.com/
- Cover Letter
  - https://careers.rutgers.edu/news/cover-letter-and-email-etiquette

BIG INTERVIEW RESUME AI

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RUTGERS HANDSHAKE

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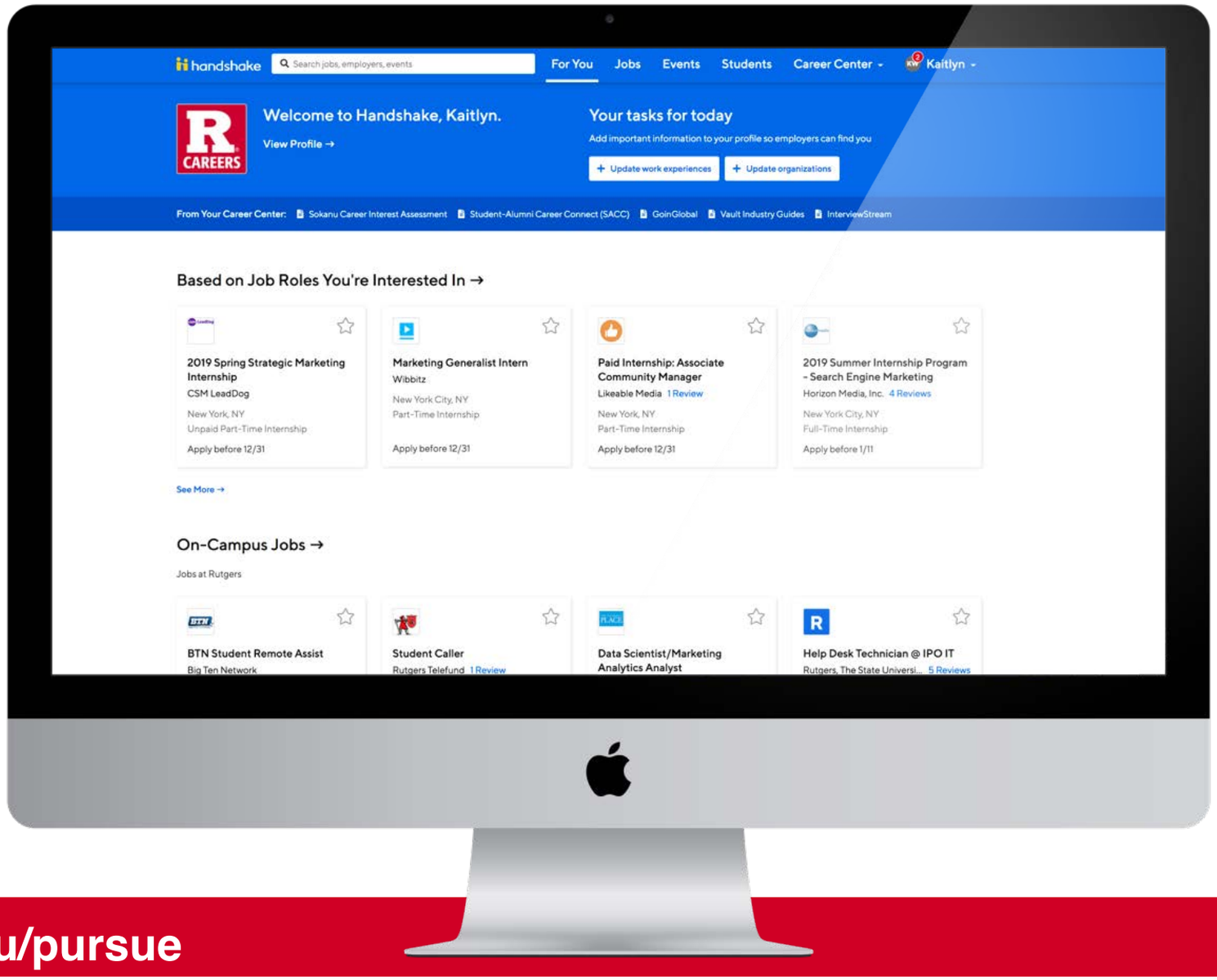

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RUTGERS–NEW BRUNSWICK

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