Since the K calendar affords students a longer winter break (Thanksgiving through New Year’s), many are looking for ideas about how to advance their career preparation while away from campus on break.

The CCPD has developed a “Top Ten” list of things current students might do during time off between quarters:

1. **Reflect on who you want to be after graduation.**
   Stepping away from the busy pace of campus life offers you a valuable opportunity to think deeply about your personal and professional goals. Go for a walk and allow yourself to imagine your life in five or ten years. Sit with a trusted friend or family member and talk together about your hopes and dreams for your lives.

2. **Work on your LinkedIn profile.**
   Make sure you’ve included recent internship and employment experience, as well as relevant educational achievements and accomplishments. You might ask for help from a photography buff who could provide you with a professional-looking headshot. Consider adding new entries in the Skills section of your profile and joining a professional association in your field of interest. For LinkedIn help, visit: [http://help.linkedin.com/](http://help.linkedin.com/).

3. **Post a question on the Kalamazoo College Professional Networking Group on LinkedIn.**
   Think about a career-related topic that might generate discussion if you asked in person. You can reach hundreds of alumni by posting this question on the KPNG. If you are polite and professional as you ask an honest and thoughtful question about a career path of interest to you, chances are an alumni group member will enjoy the opportunity to share their own relevant experience.

4. **Check out potential summer opportunities.**
   The CCPD’s K-Connect database is constantly updated with new internships by employers seeking K student applicants. Most large companies have their own internship programs, some with fall/winter deadlines. Look online for interesting opportunities, and if your heart is set on an organization that doesn’t list internships, don’t be afraid to contact a human resources representative there to ask if you might set something up.
5. Network through informational interviews in your hometown.

Want to find out more about careers in a particular industry? Most professionals are happy to be asked to talk about their work and their career path. Ask to schedule a short informational interview with an alumni professional in your area, or use your network of family and friends to help identify potential interviewees. And remember to send a thank-you note afterwards!

6. Polish your résumé.

The CCPD résumé resource, “Getting Started on Your Résumé,” available on our website, offers tips and tools for updating and refining your all-important job-search documents. You might take your résumé along to an information interview and ask for feedback from the professional you are interviewing.

7. Practice your elevator pitch.

Sometimes you only have 30 seconds to tell a potential employer what makes you stand out. Think about your desired career path and what you’d bring to it, and rehearse your self-introduction until it’s polished and convincing.

8. Go suit-shopping.

Sooner or later you’ll need to dress to impress a potential employer or graduate recruiter. Invite someone whose opinion you trust to help you find a suit that fits well and conveys your serious intentions. The CCPD website has suggestions for how to find a suit that fits your budget.

9. Arrange a job shadow.

Check out the “Job Shadowing” section of the CCPD’s Career Resources webpage for tips on how to get started.

10. Build your skills.

In addition to the critical thinking, communication, intercultural and problem solving skills you’re acquiring as part of your K-Plan, there are other transferable skills you may want to hone during break. Check out the list of online skill-building modules at http://bit.ly/CCPDSkills.

Special Bonus Tip

Take a break!
Spend time relaxing and celebrating with family and friends. After giving your all throughout the quarter, you deserve it.