

## **CSU Career Center Initiative to Support DREAMers**

- The Career Center has launched an initiative to provide DREAMers with the foundation they will need to earn a living post-graduation, as well as seeking to provide experiential learning opportunities for professional development and internship completion during the college years
- Since fully undocumented students and DACA students (depending on politics) may need to start their own businesses, it is important to connect DREAMers with the knowledge, skills, resources, and connections that they will need to be successful entrepreneurs
- Since more than 50% of small businesses fail in the first four years, and the primary cause of business failure is incompetency by the people running the business, The CSU Career Center is creating the opportunity for DREAMers to be competent in entrepreneurship
- The Career Center has created a Seven-Part Initiative to address these needs, which include:
  - 1) Workshops
    - a. Hosted by the Career Center once per month during DREAMers United Meetings
    - b. Focus on topics such as how the Career Center can help DREAMers, forming LLCs, graduate school, and other important issues
    - c. Feature guests from the CSU community who can help these students in specific ways
    - d. Opportunity for students to share their experiences with each other as it pertains to the topics being discussed, such as their experience forming an LLC, how they navigated the graduate school application process, etc.
  - 2) Legal business documents
    - a. Students need to know which legal documents are required to start a business, and who on campus can help them with that
    - b. The Career Center is collaborating with Student Legal Services to refer students who need to create legal businesses in order to earn a living
  - 3) Community Resources – Entrepreneurship options in Fort Collins, Denver, and Online
    - a. Students who graduate need to know which community resources, outside of CSU, are available to them as entrepreneurs
    - b. Fort Collins: Larimer Small Business Development Center, Innosphere, FoCo Start-up Week
    - c. Denver: Mi Casa, Tech Stars, The Commons on Champa, Denver Start-up Week
    - d. Online: Crunch Base, Angel List, Kauffman Foundation, Udemy, and many more excellent resources
  - 4) Educating Employers
    - a. Since students with DACA have legal work authorization and can be hired by employers, the Career Center is discussing how best to educate employers about the benefits of hiring students with DACA
    - b. Examples of the strengths of this population (from the perspective of employers) include: Higher GPA than average population on campus, often bilingual, multicultural competency, grit and highly admirable work ethic

- 5) Internships and Other Professional Development Opportunities
  - a. Many majors require an internship to graduate
  - b. Since students who are undocumented and without DACA cannot be paid for these internships, it often causes dire financial hardship since they are forced to stop earning money during college (often in the creative ways that they have figured out) because they no longer have any extra time to work
  - c. The Career Center is working with the Office of Financial Aid and other campus partners to figure out a plan for helping students to graduate when an internship is required and it imposes a serious financial concern
  
- 6) Individual Career Advising
  - a. All Career Educators have been trained on assisting DREAMers
  - b. The Co-President of DREAMers United is completing training to provide drop-in hours for DREAMers in her own, private office within the Career Center
  - c. Career Educators are available to help DREAMers figure out the right kind of business for each individual to create, graduate school options and strategies, answering questions about license requirements in each state, strategize the job search for students with DACA (who have legal work authorization) and make sure that they understand the laws and legal strategies for protecting themselves in the workforce
  - d. We recommend at least a minor in Entrepreneurship for all DREAMers
  
- 7) Connecting CSU alums and other professional community members with DREAMers to serve as mentors in their fields of interest
  - a. Having a mentor in the specific field can be highly valuable for networking, learning the realities of work, advocacy, boosting hope, and resiliency
  - b. The Career Center is researching software to help match students with possible mentors in their chosen industries
  - c. The Career Center is also making personal introductions between professional community members who have expressed interest in mentoring underrepresented students and DREAMers who would like to be mentored