

## **Not all graduates are being stymied by the economy**

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Not every college grad has gone home to live with their parents this summer.

The secret to finding jobs in these tough times: cultivating and maintaining strong connections and using college resources and internships.

“I wish they would have told us before college how important it is to maintain connections,” said **Northeastern University** graduate Emmania Rodriguez, who majored in international affairs and recently landed a job at the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce. Rodriguez initiated contact with the chamber during a junior year co-op in Vietnam. She advises students to leverage opportunities colleges offer and to start by initiating and maintaining contact with professors and employers.

“You never know who can help you in the end,” she said.

Connections can help lead to internship or volunteer opportunities, key components to help students stand out.

Although many students in previous years did not realize the growing importance of internships and work experience in the job application process, Rachel Schwartz, a recent **Suffolk University** graduate, did.

The graphic design major is now employed with the Americorp Gulf Coast disaster relief program.

Schwartz had numerous volunteer jobs and internships in college, including disaster relief in Mississippi, **Habitat for Humanity** in Texas and teaching art and study skills to inner city kids participating in a Suffolk-affiliated program called Connections to College.

“You should pursue anything in the field you’re interested in and work hard,” she said.

Students who have built a foundation of job-related experiences are finding work, said Paul Tanklefsky, Suffolk’s director of career services and co-op education.

Suffolk recently completed its annual follow-up survey with graduates, he said. “(We) were pleasantly surprised to see that a good number of students across the board did find work in their field,” primarily due the fact that students “networked, co-oped and leveraged to find work in their field.”

Some recent graduates backed their way into jobs.

**Tufts University** graduate Emma Murphy turned to Hollister, a Boston-based recruiting agency, when her first post-graduate job hours at a small events management firm were reduced. After interviewing Murphy for job placement, a staffer recognized that her qualities befitted Hollister itself.

Murphy was recruited to work as a marketing intern.

The ability to manage these jobs is due in part to Murphy’s college internships. She had done one in Tufts’ public relations office and one with **O’Neill and Associates**, a public relations and government relations agency.

Murphy, who majored in psychology, said her interest in how media influences consumer behavior helped lead her to her current job as the PR coordinator at Hollister. Murphy’s advice: “Find internships. Internships allow you to showcase skills and talents and demonstrate that you can add value to a company while building connections that are just invaluable.”