

Transforming Career Support

By Debra Bradley Ruder '80

The new Brown Center for Career Exploration is building on the University's network of alumni and family members to serve as mentors, industry liaisons and potential employers.

As a senior pondering her career path after Brown, Yuna Hur '18 — a cognitive science and education studies double concentrator — was eager for real-world advice. The University found a perfect match in mentor Deb Mills-Scotfield '82, who as a student helped create Brown's cognitive science concentration and has been mentoring Brunonians for over 15 years.

Now Hur gives back herself as an alumni mentor, sharing her post-Brown experiences as a teacher, lacrosse coach and learning technology strategist, and helping undergraduate mentees navigate career and life choices. They might discuss courses, concentrations, internships, extracurricular activities, self-care, identity issues or adjusting to one's first job after college.

"It has been such a meaningful opportunity to continue being part of this community as a mentor," says Hur.

Volunteers like Hur are a mainstay of the new Brown Center for Career Exploration, which launched in summer 2023 after two years of development. With a significant boost in staffing, more funding for internship and research experiences, new partnerships, and advising tailored to a wider range of defined professional pathways, the center will offer programs that equip Brown graduates for the 21st century workforce.

Anchored in Brown's student-centered learning approach, the center builds on the University's network of campus advisers, along with thousands of dedicated alumni, parents

BROWN CENTER FOR CAREER EXPLORATION EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MATTHEW DONATO (LEFT) HELPS STUDENTS REFLECT, CONNECT AND EXPLORE MEANINGFUL CAREER OPPORTUNITIES.

and family members who contribute invaluable expertise and job contacts to help students investigate rewarding career pathways. It's what Executive Director Matthew Donato, an associate dean of the College, calls "a warm network" of individuals with a shared Brown connection.

"The power of the Brown network is incredibly important," he says. "Our students have always been successful at attaining internships, jobs, graduate school admission and competitive fellowships, but we're adding value to how they engage in that exploration and making sure they really achieve the outcomes that they want."



STUDENTS AND ALUMNI CONNECT THROUGH A NETWORKING EVENT HOSTED BY THE WOMEN'S LAUNCH PAD, AN ALUMNI RELATIONS PROGRAM THAT PARTNERS WITH THE BROWN CENTER FOR CAREER EXPLORATION TO OFFER STUDENTS MENTORING AND SUPPORT.

Donato encourages students and alumni to "Reflect, Connect, Explore" — a model of career exploration that views career journeys as a lifelong process of reflecting on one's skills, values, interests and goals; using professional networks to identify exciting opportunities; and trying something new, and then regrouping if needed.

Opening Doors

With *BrownTogether* campaign support, the Center for Career Exploration is helping to guide students along more defined career areas than its predecessor, the CareerLAB. Those areas include technology and tech ventures; finance and consulting; arts and media; science and engineering; and careers in the common good, such as the nonprofit, government and education sectors. Pre-professional advising for careers in health and medicine and law will continue to be offered.

The reimagined center, which serves undergraduates, graduate students and recent

graduates, is also adding resources for alumni of all ages looking to give or receive career assistance. For example, it is developing a more robust online networking tool that builds on the success of the BrownConnect platform and facilitates student and alumni/family connections for mentorship, networking and community building.

Center leaders are working with Alumni Relations to recruit more career volunteers to meet growing demand. Opportunities include mentoring individuals or small groups, speaking during an academic class, leading a workshop or pointing students to jobs or internships. A volunteer might help with one specific task — say, honing a student's research "elevator pitch" — or have longer-term involvement.

"There are simple things people can do that make a big difference," says Johanna Hussey, director of career and life design in Alumni Relations. She says mentoring can be fun and energizing.

"When you talk with a student about what they're reading and researching — maybe new trends, technology, companies or innovative ways of doing business — you can see your industry or career differently," Hussey says. "You grow and learn together. As alums, you're opening doors for students. But don't be surprised if doors open for you, too."

Hur agrees. "Being a mentor has been rewarding and inspiring," she says. "It gives me the chance to pause and reflect on my Brown experience. It's also great to have a little window into what's happening on campus and to feel that pride of being a Brown alum."

Ways to get involved with the Brown Center for Career Exploration:

- Update your online alumni profile at my.brown.edu.
- Register on BrownConnect.
- Volunteer as a career mentor.
- Join Brown's LinkedIn communities.
- Visit career-center.brown.edu for more information.

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