

FIRSTHAND



How Morgan State University Empowers Its Students to Discover Their Best Next Step

Firsthand Helps HBCU Students Connect with Employers

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Morgan State University in Baltimore, MD, is a longtime subscriber of Firsthand and an HBCU. Seana T. Coulter, M.Ed., NCC, BC-TMH, Director of MSU’s Center for Career Development, shares her experience, advice, and ideas on effective career advising for today’s students and career landscape. She also discusses the ins and outs of virtual interviewing and how Firsthand helps her students prepare for life after graduation.

1. We were very interested to hear about your intrusive career advising. Could you please share some details and examples? Did Firsthand play a role in that, and if so, how?

At many universities, Career Centers are often referred to as the “Best Kept Secret.” At Morgan State University, we work extremely hard to be “seen” by students. It is our goal to be present and available from the moment they become Morganites. Prior to COVID, we actively participated in orientation with our incoming freshmen. We blanketed the campus with materials advertising our services and upcoming career-related events. We set up tables in high-trafficked areas and spoke to students [about career development] as they exited their classrooms. We worked collaboratively with faculty and presented career workshops to classes. We maintained an open-door policy allowing students to drop in for appointments. Then, COVID hit. We were forced to reimagine our interactions with our students. How will incoming students know we exist? How will we maintain relationships with our current student population? How will we educate our students so they can successfully navigate the remote world? How can we connect students to employers?

Our colleagues in the Office of Student Success & Retention were the first to tackle our student interaction. They proceeded with a full summer virtual orientation for our incoming freshmen. It was a phenomenal experience. I won’t give all their secrets away, but I will share that the Center for Career Development had a dedicated week where students learned about the services (which included Firsthand),



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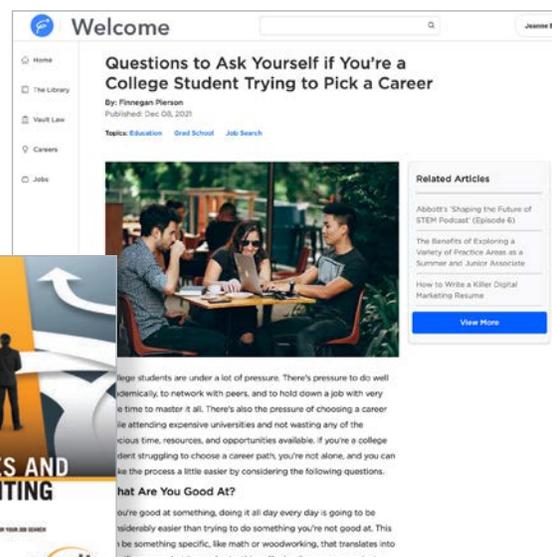
met the staff, took career assessments, explored career options, developed future plans and met virtually with their assigned Career Specialist. The students [and their parents] were overjoyed that they were connecting with a member from the university and already discussing career plans. The experience from those virtual appointments set the stage for our future interactions.

Based on the success of the virtual summer orientation, we decided to adopt the “intrusive career advising” approach. With this approach, we do not rely on marketing efforts to drive students to our office; instead, we send direct messages with a personal touch inviting students to meet with us. We created a year-long campaign targeted to each student group (by classification), crafted around career milestones (self-assessment, career exploration, developing skills, branding). From this approach, we have significantly increased our one-on-one appointments with students.



2. You mentioned your focus on virtual interviews, especially in light of the pandemic. Can you tell us more about how you coached your students on virtual interviews and how you used Firsthand to help with that?

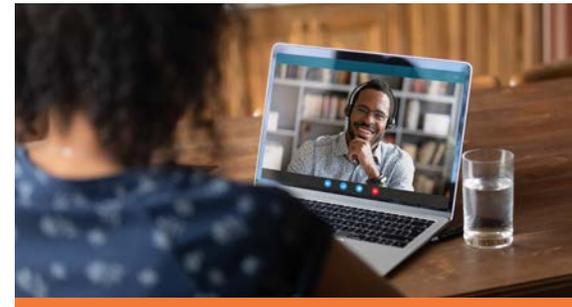
During our meetings with students, we often find ourselves dispelling myths about the current job market (yes, organizations are actively hiring!). As you can imagine, the concept of virtual interviewing is new to many of our students and can be a bit intimidating. It is extremely beneficial to provide students with information that will lead to their success. The resources and articles on Firsthand are extremely informative and reliable; as a result, we are very confident in directing students to Firsthand. In addition to great industry guides, Firsthand provides a wealth of articles to assist students with virtual interviewing (e.g., appropriate attire and tips), tips for finding companies that focus on diversity and inclusion, and workforce changes due to coronavirus.



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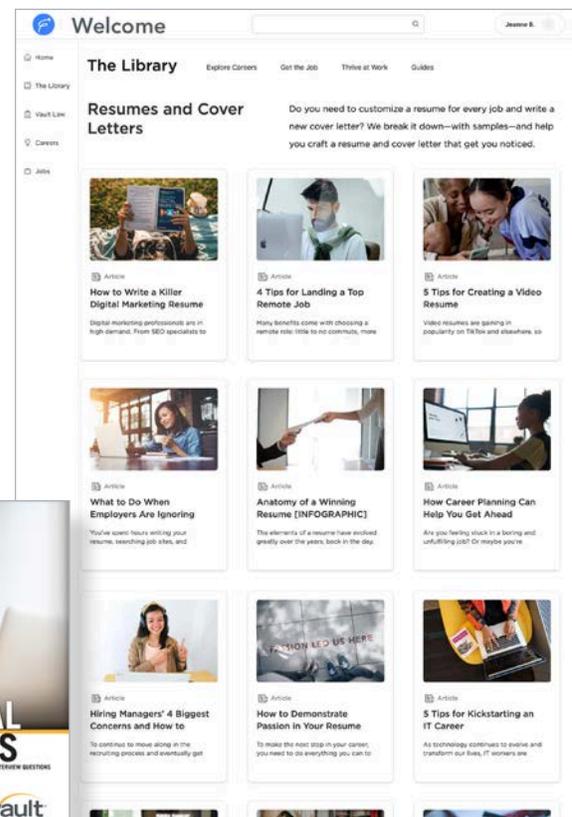
In addition to sharing resources with students, Career Specialists conduct mock interviews with students. During this time, they offer valuable feedback on their responses, their lighting, their clothing choice, their eye contact (direction of camera), and background noise. The mock interviews are extremely helpful and reduce anxiety related to virtual interviewing. In addition to mock interviews, we also offer a platform that allows students to practice and record interview sessions based on their chosen industry.



3. Are there other ways you successfully used Firsthand to help your students with career-seeking success during the pandemic? How do you plan to use Firsthand to help Morgan State University students as they plan for life after graduation?

Firsthand is such a comprehensive resource. There is something for everyone. Depending on the needs of the students, we will direct them to various components of Firsthand. For those who are seeking experience, there are company reviews/rankings and Explore Internships. For our alumni, there are industry guides and jobs.

We also share excerpts (via email and on social media) from Firsthand articles that are timely with our campus community and include the link from Firsthand to read the complete article (and more). This allows the reader to be fully introduced to Firsthand. Firsthand also allows us to keep our alumni engaged. They are able to serve as mentors to our current students and aid in their matriculation.



Contact us today to learn how Firsthand can empower your students.

For more information or to set up a personalized demo, contact us at (800) 322-8755 or CollegeOnline@Infobase.com.

Learn more about the [Firsthand Career Engagement Platform](#).

