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BUF 4900  
Professional Development Critique #2

During the Fall 2024 semester, students attending New York College of Technology, City University of New York, taking the class BUF 4900: Internship, were asked to complete two Professional Development critiques. The Professional Development Center hosts these events both virtually and in person on the school's campus. This session was led by Shavon Overstreet, who specializes in helping college students enhance their academic and professional journeys. Her extensive knowledge of career strategy, professional branding, and networking made them well-suited to guide this discussion. The webinar was held on October 25th, 2024 from 1 pm to 2 pm through Zoom, making it accessible to all students at City Tech.

This webinar focused on teaching students how to use Handshake effectively to build their professional brand, connect with potential employers, and align their profiles with evolving career goals. The session included an interactive Q&A, during which participants could ask tailored questions and receive real-time advice from the Career Advisors. I learned the importance of updating my career interests and preferences to reflect any changes in my professional aspirations. This makes it easier for recruiters to understand my current goals and match me with relevant opportunities. Shavon shared actionable tips for creating a standout profile, such as using a polished professional photo and writing clear, concise descriptions of my experiences. These changes can make my profile more appealing to employers. The webinar emphasized leveraging Handshake to connect with recruiters, alumni, and peers. Building

relationships through these connections can lead to valuable insights, mentorship, and career opportunities.

The skills and strategies covered in this webinar directly relate to my major, Business & Technology of Fashion, which integrates business acumen with technology to navigate the modern fashion industry. Courses like Brand Image Marketing, Trend Forecasting and Social Media, and Product Development have taught me the theory behind establishing a professional identity and reaching a target audience. The webinar reinforced these concepts by showing me how to translate them into a personal branding strategy that aligns with industry expectations. For example, just as businesses must tailor their messaging to attract consumers, I learned how to tailor my Handshake profile to attract recruiters in the fashion and technology sectors. Additionally, networking tips from the session mirrored lessons from my coursework about building collaborative relationships, which is essential in the interconnected world of fashion and technology. This experience gave me practical tools to apply what I've learned academically to my career development, making it a valuable complement to my education.

The most significant takeaway from this webinar was understanding that a well-maintained Handshake profile is more than just an online resume—it's a dynamic career tool that can help me stand out in a competitive job market. One of the most impactful realizations was that consistency and active engagement on platforms like Handshake are key to building professional credibility. By keeping my profile updated, engaging with potential employers, and leveraging the platform's networking features, I can create a strong foundation for long-term career success. What stood out most to me was the emphasis on taking control of my own professional narrative. Through strategic updates and thoughtful interactions, I can showcase my unique strengths and interests to employers in ways that feel authentic and

impactful. If I were to share this with my peers, I would emphasize how practical the webinar was. The real-time updates allowed me to immediately apply the tips I was learning, which made the session informational. I would strongly encourage my fellow students to attend similar sessions because they provide clear, tangible steps for advancing our professional goals in today's digital age.