

SMU PATHWAYS 

Business and Industry

Find Success in Business Without a Business Degree

First Two Years Playbook

Explore your options. Invest in your future. Let PBI help.

College is full of choices—some big, like picking a major, and others more everyday, like how to spend your time or who to ask for advice. Every one of these decisions shapes your college experience and your return on investment—not just financially, but in terms of growth, direction, and opportunity.

At SMU, you don't have to navigate these decisions alone. Our Pathways to Business and Industry (PBI) initiative helps students explore strong career paths—even in majors outside the Cox School of Business. Whether you're studying communication, journalism, economics, data science, sports management, markets and cultures or another field, PBI connects you with alumni, events, workshops, and curated course suggestions that reveal how your degree can lead to a meaningful and successful career.

I encourage you to use the PBI Playbook to guide your next steps, take advantage of the resources available to you, and reach out to engage with the PBI team. You don't need to have every answer right now—but the more you explore, connect, and stay curious, the more prepared you'll be to shape a future that's truly your own.

Dr. Jennifer Ebinger
Executive Director, SMU Office of Engaged Learning
Pathways to Business and Industry

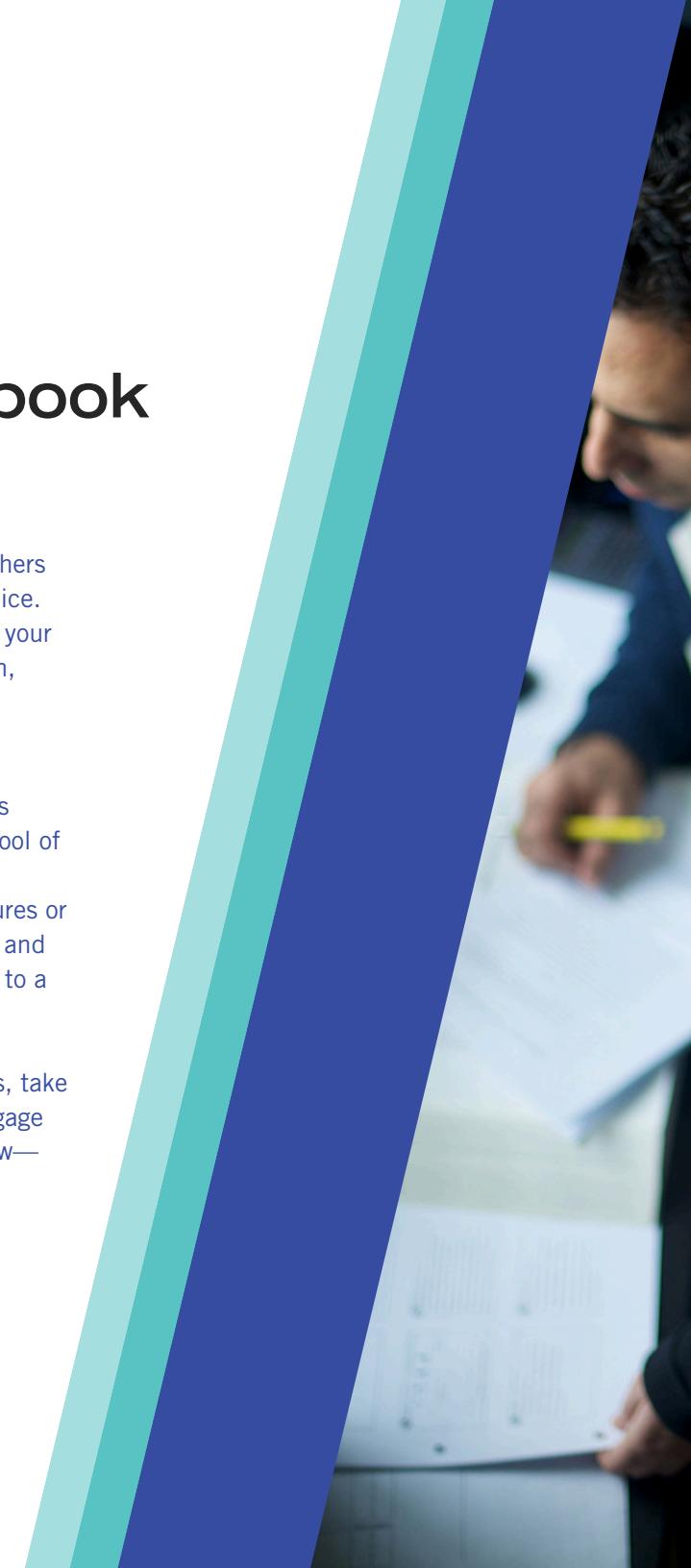




Table of Contents

Introduction	04
Key Steps for Success	05
What is Pathways to Business & Industry (PBI)	06
Our Partners & Ecosystem	08
Get Ahead with PBI: Start with the Playbook	14

Pathways to Business and Industry Playbook

Maximize Your Academic and Career Success with the Pathways to Business and Industry (PBI) Playbook

Use this playbook to strategize your academic journey, make informed decisions and gain valuable experience at SMU to set you apart in business and industry.

This isn't just a planning tool—it's your **game plan for success**, unlocking exclusive opportunities comparable to those available in the Cox School of Business.

With this playbook, you can:

- ▶ Strategically plan your academic journey and stay on track with critical deadlines.
- ▶ Access internship opportunities and extracurricular activities that align with your goals.
- ▶ Make informed decisions to build a strong foundation for your future career.

Ready to make your move? Take on a champion mindset to get you where you want to be.



Joining PBI was a gateway to additional support in achieving my career goals.

-Abner Taddele '26, Economics with Financial Applications major

SMU and Dallas offer an amazing setting for students to learn, report and write about business.

-Professor Jake Batsell, Meadows School of the Arts



Key Steps to Success

Use this playbook to stay on track, build valuable skills and take advantage of key opportunities that will set you apart in business and industry.

First Year: Build Your Foundation

- Review all levels of the Pathways to Business and Industry (PBI) playbook to understand key milestones.
- Set goals for completing “mile marker” requirements, including: advising check-ins, career development appointments, extracurricular involvement, skill development, mentorship opportunities.
- **Outcome:** By the end of your first year, you will understand the major requirements and identify your primary and/or secondary areas of interest.

Second Year: Expand Your Experience

- Explore different pathways by participating in certifications, workshops, and training programs.
- Set personal and short-term professional goals (internships, mentorship, or job opportunities) with your University Advising Center (UAC) advisor and PBI manager.
- Engage in extracurricular activities and take advantage of networking and opportunities to connect with peers and PBI partners.
- **Outcome:** By the end of the second year, you will have gained practical experience and developed a growing network, further solidifying your career interests.

Transfer Students: Establish Your Pathway

- Familiarize yourself with program requirements, including major curriculum, graduation requirements, and available resources.
- Join student organizations to develop essential skills and expand your professional network.
- Set personal and short-term professional goals (internships, mentorship, or jobs) with guidance from your UAC advisor, Hegi Career counselor, and PBI manager.

What is Pathways to Business and Industry?

What is Pathways to Business & Industry (PBI)?

PBI is a campus-wide initiative designed to help you find success in business without a business degree. PBI offers exclusive opportunities and activities, guiding students to potential majors and connecting them with relevant classes. This program empowers students with resources and support geared towards their professional aspirations.

Who is eligible?

PBI is open to:

- First- and second-year undergraduate students
- New transfer students
- Students who are not enrolled in a major program within the Cox School of Business but are interested in pursuing business and industry-related careers. They may be enrolled in a business minor while participating in PBI.

What value does PBI Offer?

PBI provides tools, resources, and connections to help turn your passions and interests into a successful career that you'll love. As a PBI student/scholar you'll gain:



Tailored Academic Advising

Personalized guidance to align your coursework with your career goals



Career Readiness Coaching

Professional development and job preparation support



Skill Development

Hands-on learning through workshops, certifications, and real-world projects



Entrepreneurial Mindset

Training to think creatively, solve problems, and seize opportunities



Personal Growth & Confidence

Build the knowledge and skills to navigate your career path with clarity



Community and Networking

Connect with industry professionals, mentors, and like-minded peers



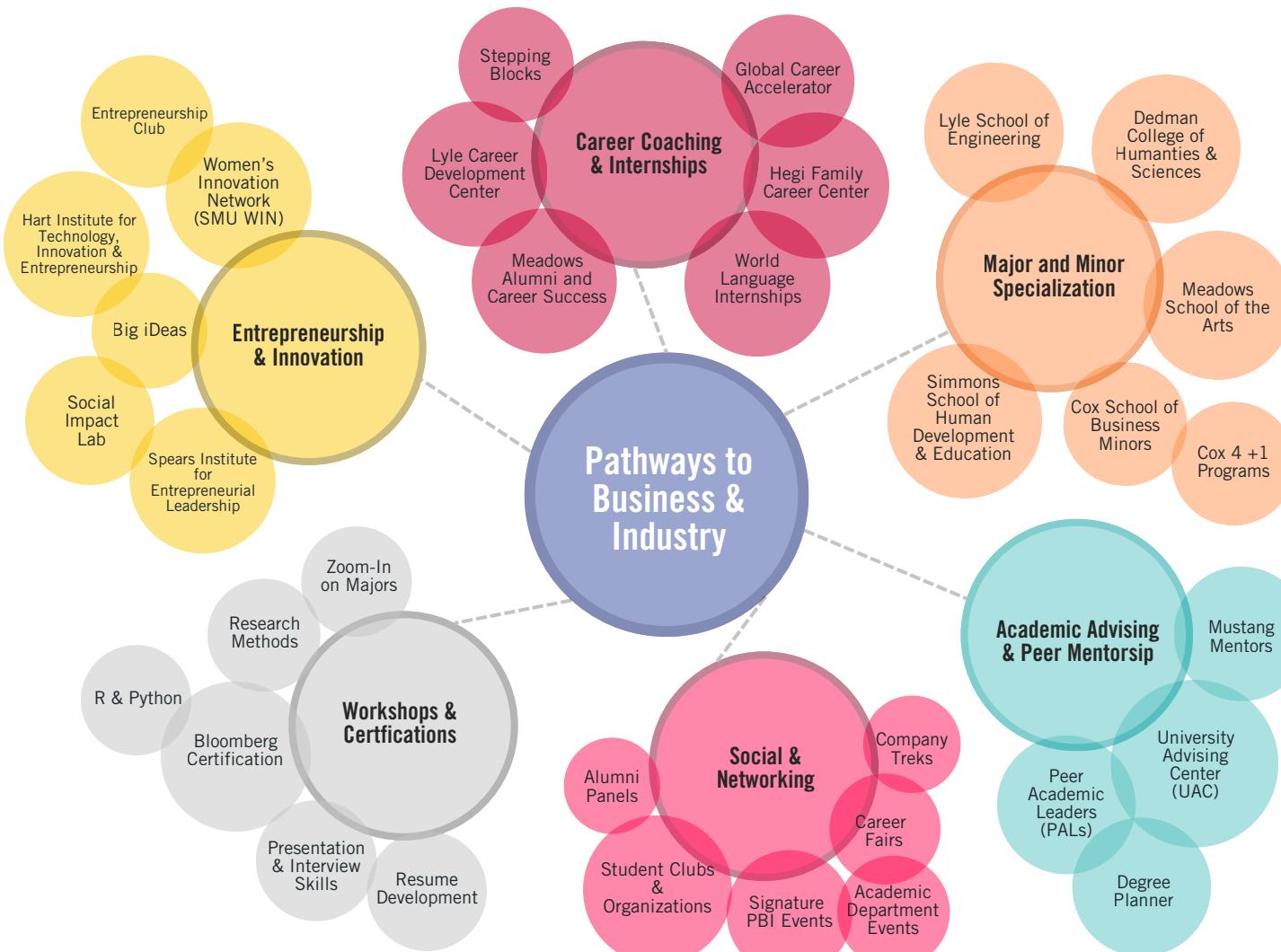
Unlock Exclusive Opportunities

Exclusive services, special events and a strong sense of purpose and community.

With PBI, you don't need a business degree to build a strong future in business and industry —just the right roadmap and support to get there!

Our Partners & Ecosystem

PBI partners with key offices and programs across SMU to create a dynamic ecosystem that supports students in achieving academic and professional success. By tapping into these resources, students graduate well-rounded, skilled, and career-ready—prepared to thrive in business and industry. Through academic exploration, professional development, and peer support, PBI helps maximize each student's potential for lifelong success. Check out the snapshot on this page and explore the offerings highlighted in the following pages.



Academic Departments

SMU offers a range of majors, minors, specializations, and concentrations that will equip students with skills needed in business and industry. Each school contributes unique perspectives and skill sets—whether it's **technical expertise** from the Lyle School of Engineering, **communication and branding skills** from the Meadows School of the Arts, **human performance, leadership, and health management insights** from the Simmons School of Education and Human Development, or **analytical and data-driven decision-making expertise** from Dedman College—ensuring students build a well-rounded foundation for diverse career paths.



How many classes are in a major or minor?

The number of classes in a major or minor varies based on the major/minor selected. While some majors are 50-60 credit hours, a student majoring in Management Science would have to complete 96 credit hours.

Can I double major?

Many students double-major at SMU. Talk to your advisor about options--you might be taking classes that count for both majors!

“[In Management Science] we learned about process mapping, statistical modeling, and operational efficiencies, among many other things—all of which could be applied to see very tangible results of improvements in whichever organization we chose to join after graduation.”

-Sophie Fernando '23

Recommended Majors and Minors:

Dedman College of Humanities & Sciences

- Data Science
- Economics
- History
- Markets and Culture
- Mathematics
- Political Science
- Public Policy
- Sociology
- Statistical Science

Lyle School of Engineering

- Computer Science
- Management Science

Meadows School of the Arts

- Advertising
- Corporate Communication and Public Affairs (CCPA)
- Creative Computation
- Fashion Media
- Journalism
- Public Relations and Strategic Communications

Simmons School of Education and Human Development

- Applied Physiology and Health Management
- Sport Management
- Sport Performance Leadership

Cox School of Business

- Business Minor



Academic Advising

The mission of the University Advising Center (UAC) is to partner with pre-major students as they take ownership of their academic experiences at SMU and develop independent, informed decision-making skills.

Personalized Guidance

The UAC provides **tailored academic planning** for PBI students, ensuring they align their coursework with business and industry-related goals while managing rigorous academic demands in areas such as **social sciences, sciences, fine arts, and humanities**.

Timeline for UAC Advising

Late August	September	Early October	November	Early December
Welcome to SMU!	Check your Early Performance Report to see how you're doing in your classes	Meet with your advisor to discuss Spring and Summer classes	Enroll in classes	Declare your major (when requirements are met)

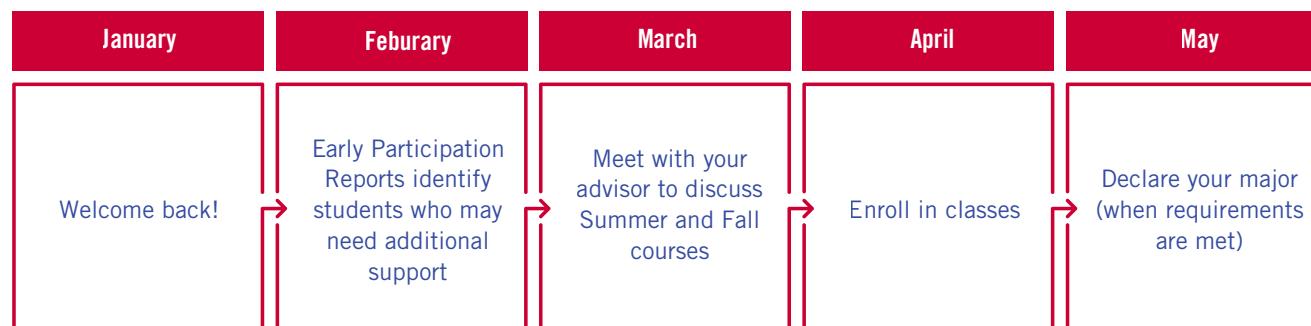


Specialized Pre-Professional Advising

For students pursuing business-related careers in **healthcare, law, tech, media, or entrepreneurship**, UAC advisors help identify relevant majors, minors, and experiential learning opportunities that match their professional aspirations.

Proactive Support

Through regular check-ins, early intervention for academic concerns, and guidance on major declarations, the UAC ensures PBI students stay on track to **declare a major before reaching 75 credit hours** and maximize available resources to build a strong foundation for success in business and industry.



Career Coaching

Benefits of Career Services at SMU

Career Readiness: Hands-on experiences and practical tools that help students stand out in a competitive job market.

Lifelong Career Support: Personalized guidance for students and alumni as they grow, pivot, and advance in their careers.

Purpose-Driven Career Development: Programs designed to help students align their career paths with their passions, strengths, and values

SMU offers comprehensive career support across every school, helping students and alumni turn their education into meaningful career success. Through specialized centers, one-on-one guidance, and hands-on experiences, students gain the tools, confidence, and connections to thrive in life after school.

The Hegi Family Career Development Center

Hegi empowers students and alumni to build meaningful careers through personalized support, skill-building, and workshops. Focused on lifelong development, Hegi helps you grow professionally and navigate your unique career journey with confidence. Schedule an appointment with the Hegi Career Development Team on SMU 12Twenty—they're here to help with career questions for any major.

Lyle School of Engineering Career Development Center

Lyle offers targeted career resources for engineering and applied sciences students, including resume reviews, specialized workshops, and signature events like Engineering Resumania and the Engineering Connections Career Fair—connecting you directly with industry leaders and insights.

Meadows School of the Arts Office of Alumni and Career Success

Meadows connects students with industry-specific career resources, programs, and mentors in the arts, media, design, and communications. Through Meadows Career Success Appointments at the Hegi Center, Meadows majors can explore career paths, learn networking strategies, and get matched with alumni mentors for personalized feedback on resumes, portfolios, or reels. Students can also activate their network by joining a global community of 26,000+ alumni on LinkedIn.

Internship Opportunities

Meadows Intern Fellowship Program

Each summer, this fellowship funds up to ten paid internships –reserved exclusively for Meadows undergraduate students – at leading Dallas arts, communication, and media organizations. Intern fellows work fifteen or more hours per week for ten weeks (June through early August) and receive a \$3,000 stipend to support living expenses while gaining valuable career experience.

World Languages Internships

Put your language skills to work through internships and projects with companies, consulates, non-profits, and campus partners. Open to native speakers or those with four semesters of language study, this paid or unpaid opportunity offers real-world experience. Transfer students are especially encouraged to apply.

Global Career Accelerator

Global Career Accelerator is a fully digital, credit-bearing internship program that offers SMU students the opportunity to gain work experience, develop intercultural competencies, and build real-world industry skills—all within a flexible online format.

- **Collaborate with peers from over 50 countries** in an internship-style experience.
- **Work on projects for top global companies** like Intel, The Grammys, and Amazon.
- **Earn 3 internship credits** while developing critical industry skills.
- **Open to all majors.** No pre-requisites required.





Entrepreneurial Growth & Innovation

Big iDeas: Where Entrepreneurship Begins at SMU

Big iDeas supports undergraduate students in the early stages of building a business through pitch competitions, personalized coaching, and hands-on training. Open to all majors, the program offers seed funding to help bring student ideas to life and move them through the ideation phase.

- Pitch Competitions:** Students present their business ideas and compete for funding to bring them to life
- E-Launch Series:** Guides entrepreneurs through market research, prototyping, and business plan development
- Women in Innovation Network (SMU WIN):** Empowers women entrepreneurs through community, collaboration, and shared insights to support their ventures

After exploring their ideas through the Big iDeas ideation phase, students can take the next step by competing in the **Big iDeas Business Plan Competition** and engaging with other opportunities across SMU's entrepreneurship ecosystem. This ecosystem includes the **Caruth Institute**, **HITIE (Hart Institute for Technology, Innovation & Entrepreneurship)**, the **Social Impact Lab**, **Spears Institute for Entrepreneurial Leadership**, the **Entrepreneurship Club** and more—each offering valuable support through mentorship, networking, and skill-building programs.

What's it like to pitch in an idea contest?

For the Big iDeas contest, you have 90 seconds and no visual aids. It goes by quickly but about 1/3 of contestants are awarded \$1000 to seed their ventures!



Peer-to-Peer Support

SMU Pathways to Business and Industry offers specialized programs and resources to help students build essential skills, gain real-world experience, and engage with top-tier employers. By fostering strong relationships between academia and industry, it prepares students for a seamless transition into their professional careers.

“What excites me most about being a Pathways to Business and Industry (PBI) Peer Academic Leader is the opportunity to help students navigate their academic journeys and connect their passions to real-world opportunities.

-Tiffany Nguyen '27

Peer Academic Leaders (PALs)

Peer Academic Leaders (PALs) are undergraduate students who help students navigate the Common Curriculum, academic resources, and academic challenges. PALs host events and provide peer-to-peer coaching to support student success.

Mustang Mentors Peer Mentoring

Mustang Mentors pairs students with a peer mentor based on shared interests and academic goals.

- **Mentees** learn how to navigate school, approach challenges, and gain career insights.
- **Mentors** develop leadership skills, expand their networks, and enhance their professional experience.

Student Organizations

There are many student organizations to join, including ones focused on careers in business and industry such as **SMU Entrepreneurship Club**, **Women's Innovation Network**, and **Consult your Community**. Find and join student organizations on SMU360.

Having a peer mentor is motivating — especially knowing you are not alone and that you can ask for help. It gives you a foundation to keep you grounded in yourself and make more friends.

-Fenix Collins '28

Get Ahead with PBI: Start with the Playbook

The **PBI Playbook** includes key activities and electives designed to help you build essential skills and gain real-world experience through workshops, networking, and internships. You'll create your own strategy—choosing the plays that align with your career goals and tracking your progress along the way. [To get the most out of PBI:](#)

- **Complete all required Key Plays** during both your first and second year at SMU.
- **Choose at least one elective each semester** (more if your schedule allows), focusing on areas that interest you.

The **Key Plays** are essential steps toward your goal, while **electives** allow you to tailor your experiences and expand your network. Students who complete all activities within their first two years unlock **exclusive services and opportunities** not available to others.

PBI Key Plays (Required)

Completed	Action	Timeline	Purpose
<input type="checkbox"/>	Advising sessions (3)	Summer (June-July), Fall (first week of November), Spring (by end of March)	Discuss academic plans and course offerings.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Degree Planner	Fall Semester	Have a general degree plan ready for discussion with your advisor.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Career coaching session (1)	Fall or Spring Semester	Work on your resume, networking, and explore internship options.
<input type="checkbox"/>	PBI coffee chat and PBI PAL check-in (1)	Fall or Spring Semester	Discuss overall academic and extracurricular plans.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Steppingblocks Digital Career Counselor	Fall Semester	20-question personality assessment to help identify career paths.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Attend a PBI Signature Event	Fall and Spring Semester	Check SMU360 for social and networking events.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Declare Your Major	After meeting declaration requirements	Make it official and get connected with your department advisor and faculty.

PBI Electives

Completed	Activity	Approximate Time Commitment	Activity Level
<input type="checkbox"/>	Attend a PBI Major and Career Exploration Panel	1-2 hours each	Explore and Build Your Network
<input type="checkbox"/>	Attend a company trek or career fair		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Attend a networking event (career fair, academic department event...)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Attend a PBI partner workshop (alumni panel, resume skills, zoom-in on majors...)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Attend an event hosted by a department in a major you're interested in		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Be a Mustang Mentors (Mentee)	5-10 hours each	Develop Your Skills
<input type="checkbox"/>	Be a Hegi Career Leader		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Earn a Certificate (Bloomberg (BMC), FactSet Finance)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Earn a MS Office Certification (Associate Level)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Complete a LinkedIn Learning Online Training Course		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Join a student organization (SMU WIN, Entrepreneurship or Consulting Clubs)	10+ hours each	Gain Hands-On Experience
<input type="checkbox"/>	Participate in Hegi Case Competition		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Serve as Mustang Mentor		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Serve in a leadership role (PALs, RA, student organizations)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Participate in entrepreneurship program (Big iDeas, Spears Institute...)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Get an internship (career centers or Global Accelerator)		

Signature PBI Events

Academic Department Alumni Panels

- Provide you with first-hand insights into the diverse career opportunities and personal growth that comes with pursuing specific majors. By sharing their professional journeys and experiences, alumni will inspire students to see how the major aligns with their interests and long-term goals.

PBI Scholars Welcome Social

- Meet fellow PBI Scholars, connect with campus partners, and learn about career and academic resources from the Hegi Family Career Center, University Advising Center, Big iDeas, and more.

PBI Peer Academic Leader (PAL) Office Hours

- Get personalized and career support, ask questions, and connect with peers in a collaborative learning environment.

Zoom In on: Majors

- Explore basics of the major, potential job and internship opportunities, and ways to get involved on campus. These virtual sessions often feature alumni or current seniors who share how the major has shaped their college experience and career. If you are a pre-major student, it's a great opportunity to learn what to expect and gain from the major

Check out the PBI website or SMU360 for even more opportunities beyond what's listed here.





Explore and Build Your Network (1-5 Hours)

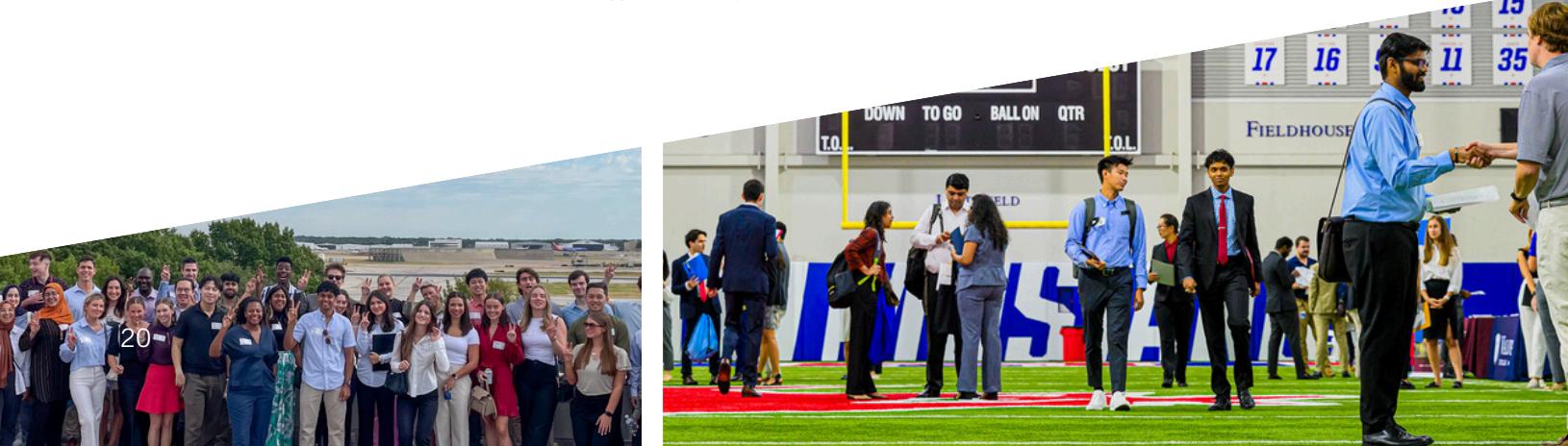
Networking Events with the Hegi Career Center

- **SMU All Majors Career and Internship Fair:** Held in early September and early February and is open to all undergraduate students, graduate students, and alumni from all SMU schools. Connect and network with 90+ employers seeking candidates for full-time and internship positions.
- “**Networking Towards the New Year**” (fall) and “**Mocktails with Mustangs**” (spring): Annual networking receptions for students to meet employer partners. By attending these events, you'll have the chance to enhance your networking abilities, connect with potential employers, and make a positive impression.
- **Company Treks and Site Visits:** Tour DFW companies, meet industry professionals, and explore potential career paths.

Workshops

- **Big iDeas** offer workshops for entrepreneurship. Beginning with “ideation sessions” to work out general ideas, workshops are also available for prototyping, creating business plans, and honing your business pitch.
- The **Hegi Career Center** offers workshops on resumes, mock interviews, personal branding, and more.
- The **Peer Academic Leaders (PALs)** offer workshops about filling out your Degree Planner, understanding Common Curriculum requirements, using my.SMU, and advice on getting involved on campus.

Check out the PBI website or SMU360 for even more opportunities beyond what's listed here.



Lectures and General-Interest Events

- **SMU Tate Lecture Series:** The Willis M. Tate Distinguished Lecture Series brings thought-provoking and entertaining icons to the SMU campus and Dallas community.
- **Clements Center Evening Lecture Series:** On topics related to Texas, the American Southwest and the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. Presentations are wide-ranging and interdisciplinary, often focusing on current research, recent publications, or new exhibitions.
- The **Gartner Honors Lecture Series** brings noted academics, business leaders, civic figures, authors, and cultural experts to SMU. This series include public lectures, classroom visits, shared meals, and small, informal gatherings in which lecturers and the community may talk freely of wide-ranging issues.
- **Undergraduate Research:** The Office of Engaged Learning coordinates multiple opportunities for students to share their research and creative work. The **Fall Research Symposium** features 10-minute oral presentations and is held around the beginning of November. **Research & Innovation Week** features multiple research poster sessions and lectures; it is held the first week of April.

Check out the PBI website or SMU360 for even more opportunities beyond what's listed here.



Develop Your Skills (5-10 Hours)

Individual Training and Certifications

- **Microsoft Office Associate Certification:** Exams are performance-based timed exams conducted in a "live," or simulated, environment. Candidates receive 5-7 small projects with tasks that build on each other. The Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) Certification gives students and institutions of higher learning the tools they need to chart their own course, fulfill their ambition, and realize their potential. Certification exams are free for SMU students.
- **Business Research Workshops**
 - **Introduction to Business Research:** Discover business research fundamentals, learn to navigate popular business databases, and increase skills that are important to career research. Participants will use Mergent Intellect, IBISWorld, and Factiva to investigate companies and the industries they operate in.
 - **Bloomberg Basics:** The Bloomberg terminal provides access to vast amounts of data dealing with all financial markets. This workshop will cover basic searching strategies used in the Bloomberg database and exporting data to Excel. Finance or students with an interest in the finance applications industry are encouraged to become familiar with using the Bloomberg terminal. Each session of this workshop will be limited to 20 participants.
 - **FactSet Fundamentals:** FactSet provides access to vast amounts of data pertaining to global equity and fixed income markets. This will cover basic search strategies used in the FactSet database and auditing data in Excel. Finance students are encouraged to become familiar with using FactSet.
 - **LinkedIn Learning Online Training Courses:** All active SMU students have full access to LinkedIn Learning and over 16,000+ expert-led courses covering business, design, technology, and much more available 24/7.

Check out the PBI website or SMU360 for even more opportunities beyond what's listed here.

Leadership and Experiential Learning

- **Hegi Career Leaders Program** is an exclusive opportunity for selected students seeking advanced professional development. Through this program, participants gain access to specialized career counseling sessions aimed at defining and achieving their career goals. Additionally, they have the privilege of attending targeted networking events, including Lunch with Leadership, Networking Towards the New Year, company visits, and presentations.
- **Mustang Mentors (Mentee):** If you are an incoming undergraduate student and are looking to build connections with your peers. Through your peer-mentor, you will learn what to expect in school, how to navigate challenges, gain understanding of the campus culture, and build your network to become a better leader on campus! Having a peer-mentor can greatly benefit your overall growth and development. Priority for first-year students.
- **Podium Education** partners with universities to offer the **Global Career Accelerator**, allowing students to gain real-world experience for credit and access an exclusive career network.

Check out the PBI website or SMU360 for even more opportunities beyond what's listed here.



Gain Hands-On Experience (10+ Hours)

Dedicated Experiential Learning

- **Undergraduate Research:** Working on research projects outside of class assignments develops several career-readiness skills, from critical thinking to technology to teamwork. Ways to get involved include Undergraduate Research Assistantships, the Engaged Learning Fellowship, among other opportunities across campus.
- **The Hegi Family Career Development Center's Case Competition** is an experience designed to expose non-business majors into an area to share their experience in a pitch style competition. Experience the thrill as students from diverse backgrounds come together to pitch innovative solutions to a panel of esteemed judges, including SMU alumni representing various industries.
- **Mustang Mentor (Mentor):** Serving as a peer-mentor for first year and transfer students will build your leadership skills, create opportunities for connection and networking, and allow YOU to make a difference in the lives of your fellow classmates.
- **Becoming a Peer Academic Leader (PAL):** Applications for Peer Academic Leaders open in the Fall term, with some of the general requirements to become a PAL are:
 - 3.0 GPA on a 4.0 Scale
 - On good academic and disciplinary standing with the university
 - A sophomore, junior, or senior with the intent to live on campus
 - Responsible, reliable, flexible, with the ability to work independently
 - Tech savvy with social media knowledge (e.g., my.smu.edu, Canvas, YouTube, Instagram)
 - Excellent planning, communication, and organizational skills
- The **Big iDeas** program hosts pitch competitions and provides training and coaching for entrepreneurial projects. Undergraduate students of any major are welcome to participate.

Check out the PBI website or SMU360 for even more opportunities beyond what's listed here.



Use the strategies and tools in this playbook to elevate your career game plan—whether you're just getting started or already on track for graduation.

Wherever you are in your journey, these resources will help you make smart choices, build momentum, and move confidently toward what's next.

Stay Informed

Visit the **Pathways to Business and Industry** website, where you'll find an overview of important resources, academic departments, and programs available through PBI.

Check **SMU 360** for event updates, workshops and training, and advising and mentorship opportunities. Stay informed and engaged with PBI events, programs, and resources.

Get Advising & Coaching

As part of the PBI program, we encourage you to be proactive in your academic and career development, so be sure to: Schedule regular meetings with your UAC advisor, Hegi Career Center coach, PBI Peer Academic Leader, and PBI Assistant Director to stay on track with your academic and career goals.

Be Involved

By actively participating in PBI events, workshops, and mentorship programs, you'll gain the skills, experience, and connections to thrive in business and industry—without needing a business degree.



OFFICE OF
ENGAGED LEARNING

SMU Clements Hall, Scholars Den
3100 Dyer Street, Dallas TX 75205

smu.edu/pbi

Version 2, October 2025