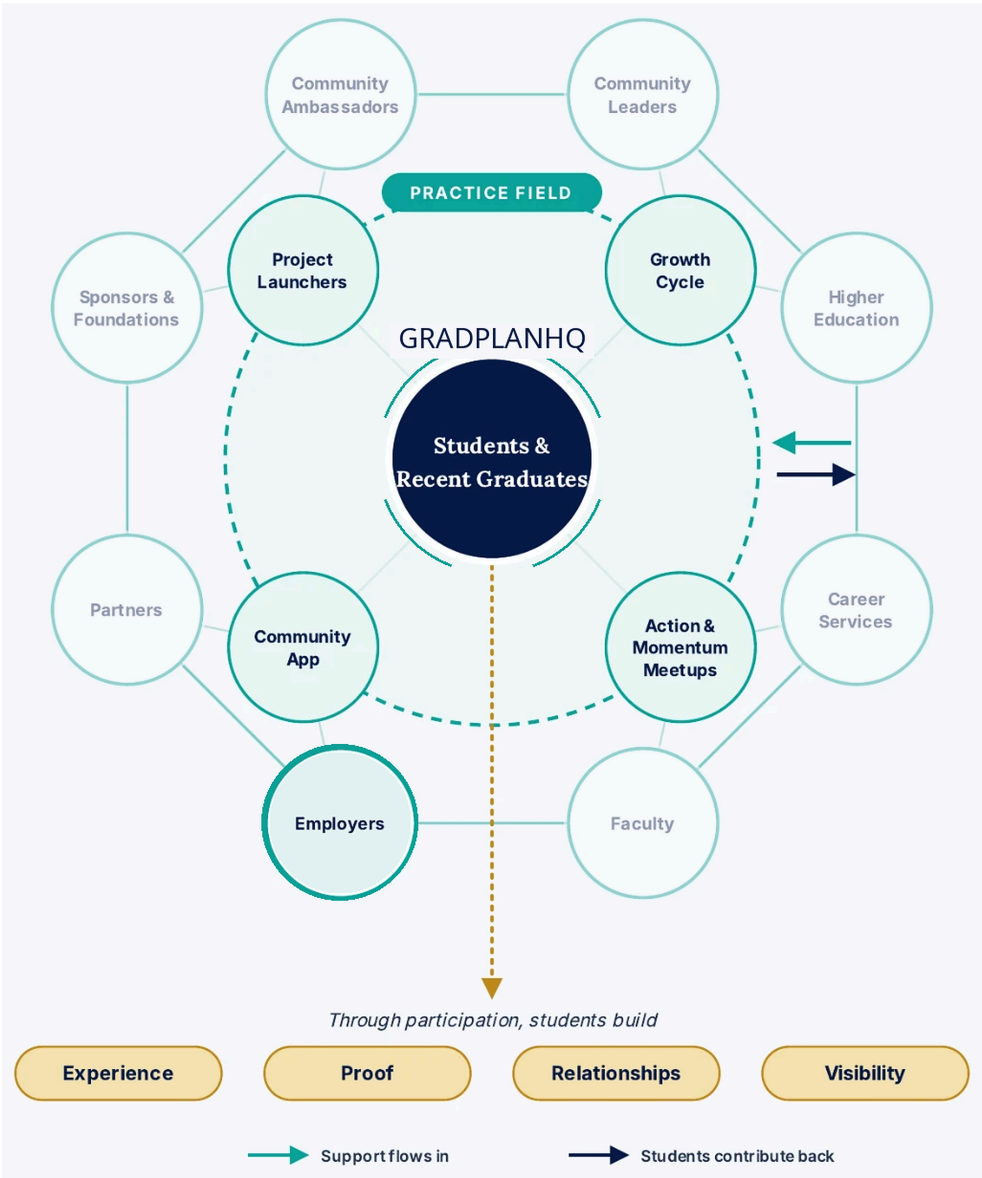


Seeing Capability Before You Hire

How employers can help students turn meaningful work into Proof, without building an internship program.



Founder: Kim Scott

THE CHALLENGE

You don't need more resumes. You need stronger signals.

When you hire early-career talent, you're looking for evidence of initiative, communication, teamwork, leadership, problem-solving and follow-through.

Nearly 90% of employers say they look for evidence of a student's ability to solve problems when reviewing resumes.¹

Internships are still one of the best ways to show it. But there aren't enough of them to reach every capable student, and many employers can't offer one.

Meanwhile, meaningful work is happening everywhere else: in classes, projects, volunteering, leadership roles and communities. It just isn't easy to recognize or evaluate.

As more applications are polished with AI, resumes look more alike. Real, discussable work is becoming one of the clearest signals left.

Communities cannot rely primarily on attracting talent. They must become better at developing talent from within.

1. NACE, *Job Outlook 2025* (Nov. 2024).

YOU'RE NOT STARTING FROM ZERO

Employers already hold what students need most

Industry expertise

A clear picture of entry-level work

Real problems worth solving

Professionals who mentor and serve

Internship, co-op and recruiting programs

Local relationships and reputation

You know the job. You can judge quality quickly, give candid feedback and recognize potential. Many employers already invest in their communities through talks, career fairs, advisory boards and service.

From participation to capability

Participation “I volunteered 30 hours at an animal shelter.”

Demonstrated capability “I organized an adoption event, coordinated volunteers, created outreach materials, and can show the results.”

Both students served. The second can show what the service built. That's the difference you're trying to see in an application, and it's the difference your feedback helps create.

Hours record participation. Proof communicates what a student practiced, produced, learned, and contributed.

A light layer on top of what already works

GradPlanHQ doesn't replace internships, recruiting or campus partnerships. We help more students show up with real, discussable work before you have to make a hiring decision.

Students do the work. You engage in small, optional ways: answer a question, review a deliverable, offer a challenge. The relationships and visibility that come from it feed the hiring you already do.

Outcome	For the student	For you
Experience	Real work on real problems	Your challenges become meaningful practice
Proof	Work others can see and verify	A clearer read on capability than a resume
Relationships	Professionals who know their work	Earlier, warmer connections to emerging talent
Visibility	Work seen beyond the classroom	Recognition as a local talent developer
Career Momentum	The next step comes sooner	A stronger local pipeline over time

Participation doesn't guarantee a hire for you or a job for a student. It gives both sides a better signal.

Four parts. You choose how close to stand.

- 1 Growth Cycle** — Connect, Build, Grow, Repeat. Employers show up mostly in Build and Grow, as a reviewer, a source of feedback and someone who can verify the work. You don't run the cycle.
- 2 Action & Momentum Meetups** — Recurring sessions where students set goals and keep moving. You can drop in with a quick industry question or feedback on work in progress. No required attendance.
- 3 Community App** — Where students, faculty and partners share projects and discussions. It's the easiest place to look around, answer a question or post a challenge.
- 4 Project Launchers** — Optional starting points for meaningful work. A real problem from your organization can become one.

The Meetup is the recurring nudge. The accumulated work is the value.

Campus partners: Career Services is your natural counterpart on campus; the Career Services Brief covers their side.

Start small. Grow your involvement over time.

15 minutes

Review a project summary ·
Answer a few industry
questions · Share what you
expect from entry-level talent

One hour

Join a discussion · Review
project deliverables · Share a
real-world challenge students
can take on

Ongoing

Mentor student projects · Take
part in the community ·
Support project-based learning
· Serve as a subject-matter
expert

No formal internship program needed. Your expertise, feedback, and perspective can be just as valuable as office space.

How to start

Join the community. Look around; there's no commitment and no program to set up. Help where it fits your expertise and time.

Organizations interested in funding student work can see the Sponsors & Foundations Brief.

NEXT STEP

Ready to strengthen the signal?

Small contributions become powerful when they connect. That's how communities develop talent from within.

Resources to share: The Employers page (gradplan.com/employers) · *Developing Talent From Within: Field Guide for Community Leaders* · Career Services Brief (for campus partners)

START A CONVERSATION WITH THE GRADPLANHQ TEAM

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