

Sponsor the Community That Prepares Students for Work

A Sponsor Brief for Developing Talent From Within

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

Executive Summary

Students invest years in education, yet they face higher expectations when they enter professional work. A degree still matters, but it may no longer be enough by itself to help a student stand out.

Employers increasingly look for more than a degree: Experience students can describe, Proof of professional skills, Relationships that can verify or extend their work, and professional Visibility. Internships remain valuable, but traditional internship pathways don't reach every student.

Students need additional ways to build credible professional signals before graduation. Sponsors can help make those pathways more accessible.

GradPlanHQ is one practical response: a professional-development community where students build Experience, complete meaningful projects, and turn their work into Proof employers can find.

Sponsors are not buying access to students. They are investing in a stronger talent-development ecosystem. Students are never required to engage with a sponsor.

Why This Matters Now

Hiring expectations have changed. Nearly 90% of employers say they look for evidence of a student's ability to solve problems when reviewing resumes.¹ Students increasingly need four things to compete:

Experience

Experience on a resume: real work a student has completed and can explain in language an employer understands.

Proof

Proof of professional skills: work a student can show.

Relationships

Proof plus People: those who can verify, recommend, endorse, or refer the student.

Visibility

A professional presence people can find: a credible profile and visible body of work that holds up when someone looks the student up.

Together, these help build Career Momentum.

AI can help polish a resume. AI cannot create the experience behind it.

Internships Matter. Not Every Student Gets One.

Internships remain one of the strongest Experience pathways. Yet while about 70% of first-year students plan to complete one, fewer than half find and complete an internship.² Service, leadership, community projects, and other applied work can help, when students can document and explain it.

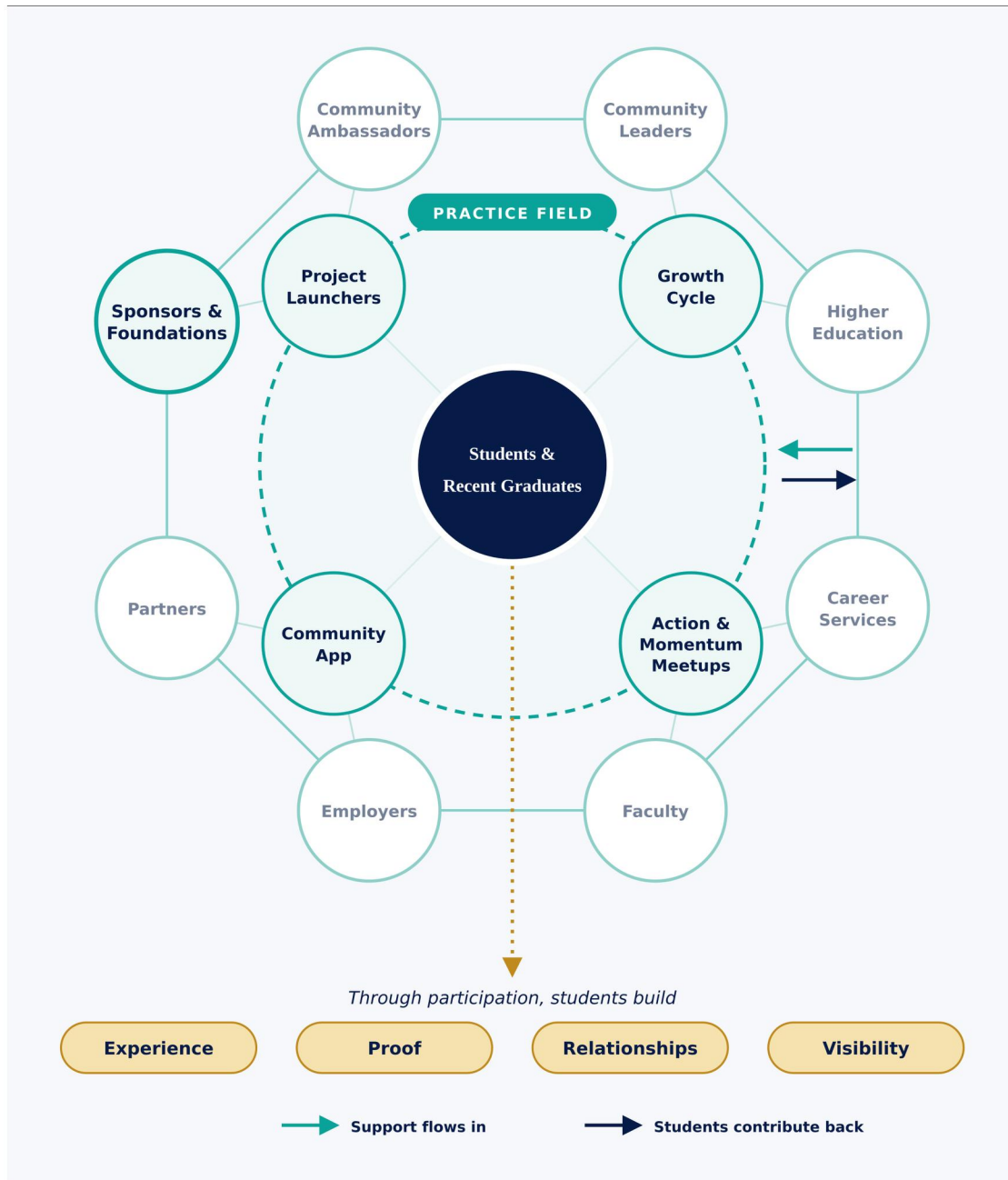
Students need additional ways to build credible Experience before, alongside, or without a traditional internship.

1. NACE, Job Outlook 2025 (Nov. 2024), employer survey on resume attributes.

2. Strada Education Foundation, Building Better Internships (May 2024).

Where Sponsors Fit

Communities already contain valuable assets. The opportunity is to help those assets connect around student growth.



Students practice inside the Practice Field: the Growth Cycle, Action & Momentum Meetups, the Community App, and Project Launchers. See *Developing Talent From Within: Field Guide for Community Leaders* for the full system.

What sponsorship helps students build: Experience • Proof • Relationships • Visibility

What Sponsorship Supports

Sponsorship helps lower participation barriers and strengthens the tools, infrastructure, and access pathways that support students.

Accessible participation

Keep future participation affordable and expand need-based or sponsored-access opportunities.

Community infrastructure

Maintain the Community App, event calendar, Action & Momentum Meetups, and member tools—and support Community Ambassadors who help students stay connected.

Free tools

Support resources used by students, families, faculty, and community partners.

Projects and Proof

Help more students complete meaningful work, including Project Launchers, and capture Proof of what they can do.

Showcases and Visibility

Support appropriate opportunities for students to share work and receive recognition.

Chapters

Campus membership experiences within the Community App.

How the Funding Model Works

During beta, Founding 100 students participate at no cost while GradPlanHQ refines the community and documents what students use. After beta, student membership revenue is expected to support the people who facilitate the community and Action & Momentum Meetups. Sponsor support helps strengthen the technology, tools, infrastructure, and access pathways that make broader participation possible.

Impact comes first. Sponsors help make student opportunity more accessible. Technology is the enabler, not the value.

Sponsor Levels

Choose the level that fits your organization. Every sponsorship strengthens student access and the infrastructure behind the GradPlanHQ community.

Supporting Sponsor

\$1,000 per year

For local businesses, alumni, small nonprofits, and community supporters.

- Logo on the Our Sponsors wall
- Quarterly impact email
- First notice of selected public student showcases

Lead Sponsor

\$3,000 per year

For employers, foundations, community partners, and organizations with talent-development interests.

- Everything in Supporting Sponsor
- One co-branded public project prompt, subject to review
- One named monthly Action & Momentum Meetup theme, subject to safeguards and scheduling

Talent Development Partner

\$10,000 per year

For organizations seeking to support the annual technology and community-infrastructure cost.

- Support for annual Community App and infrastructure costs
- Annual aggregated impact report
- Early notice of public student projects that invite appropriate collaboration
- Recognition as a leading talent-development supporter

What Sponsors Receive

Appropriate recognition

Placement on the sponsor wall and acknowledgment in sponsor-supported initiatives.

Impact updates

Quarterly or annual aggregated updates, depending on sponsorship level.

Showcase Visibility

Invitations or early notice for selected public student showcases.

Collaboration opportunities

Information about public student projects that invite appropriate collaboration.

Safeguards

- No student data is shared as a sponsorship benefit.
- Sponsorship does not purchase recruiting access or influence hiring decisions.
- Students are never required to engage with sponsors.
- Sponsor recognition does not imply student or institutional endorsement.
- Community Partner access, when applicable, is governed separately by the Community Partner Guidelines.
- Sponsorship does not purchase unrestricted messaging or candidate endorsements.

Ready to Back Student Talent?

The Founding 100 Beta Cohort

The first 100 students participate as Founding Beta Members at no cost while GradPlanHQ refines the experience before public launch.

Sponsors help keep beta accessible, strengthen infrastructure, prepare for launch, and build an inclusive long-term pathway.

Other Ways to Help

Advisory Board

Contribute expertise, relationships, strategic guidance, community knowledge, and professional perspective.

Students need opportunities to build Experience, Proof, Relationships, and Visibility before graduation. Sponsorship helps make those opportunities more accessible while strengthening a talent-development ecosystem that benefits students, employers, and communities.

Start a Sponsor Conversation

www.gradplan.com | hello@gradplan.com

Founder: Kim Scott

Create experience. Build your brand. Launch your future.

Companion read: Developing Talent From Within: Field Guide for Community Leaders.

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