LaunchPad: Seniors in the Field, in the Community

What is LaunchPad?
University Prep's LaunchPad is a two-week real world experience for seniors that offers them an opportunity to step outside of the classroom and work in an environment that speaks to their personal passions and/or to their professional, vocational, or academic curiosities.

As an evolution of UPrep's Senior Project, LaunchPad was created in 2017 as an opportunity for every senior to spend their final two weeks of high school outside of the classroom and working on a self-designed experiential educational project. From shadowing software engineers to maintaining hiking trails to helping manage a Pilates studio to producing original music, LaunchPad is designed to give students a chance to engage with the world beyond UPrep and practice those real-world skills they'll need after they graduate.

Objectives and Expectations
LaunchPad has several key learning objectives:

1. To connect students to a wide array of people, professions, and organizations across the greater Seattle area
2. To strengthen students' networking and communication skills through real-world application
3. To strengthen students' capacity for designing and managing their own learning experiences
4. To let students experience their interests "in the field," learning what it means to work in authentic environments and alongside professional mentors

Dates and Schedule
LaunchPad projects will begin on Thursday, May 24, and end on Thursday, June 7. As a starting point, students are expected to be engaged with their LaunchPad project on regular business days from approximately 8:30 a.m. until 2:30 p.m., although students can shape these hours around availability of their mentors and resources. Students will submit a LaunchPad Work Plan in late April which details where they will be throughout the LaunchPad project and what they should be working on.

Mentors and Program Sites
To meet the objectives of LaunchPad and to ensure their safety, students are required to identify and secure approved LaunchPad mentors and program sites for the duration of their LaunchPad project. A LaunchPad site is any non-UPrep, non-residential office, place of business, research center, studio, and/or work space where supervised LaunchPad activities will take place. Students may work at a single site or at multiple sites over the course of their LaunchPad. All sites must be submitted and approved in advance when a student submits their LaunchPad Work Plan.

For a LaunchPad proposal to be approved, students are expected to work with a LaunchPad Mentor. This is the person who will oversee the LaunchPad experience and serve as the primary point of contact for UPrep. The mentor is not required to work directly with the student during the entire LaunchPad project; they work with the student to plan their daily LaunchPad activities, to touch base with the student daily during their LaunchPad, and to communicate with UPrep any issues or challenges that arise during the student's LaunchPad. Mentor involvement could range from a full-time job shadow to a daily check-in on a student's project work and helping students

connect to resources or other experts. Students and mentors will clarify their expectations of each other and agree on the scope of the mentor's involvement as part of the LaunchPad application.

Contacts or Questions?
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