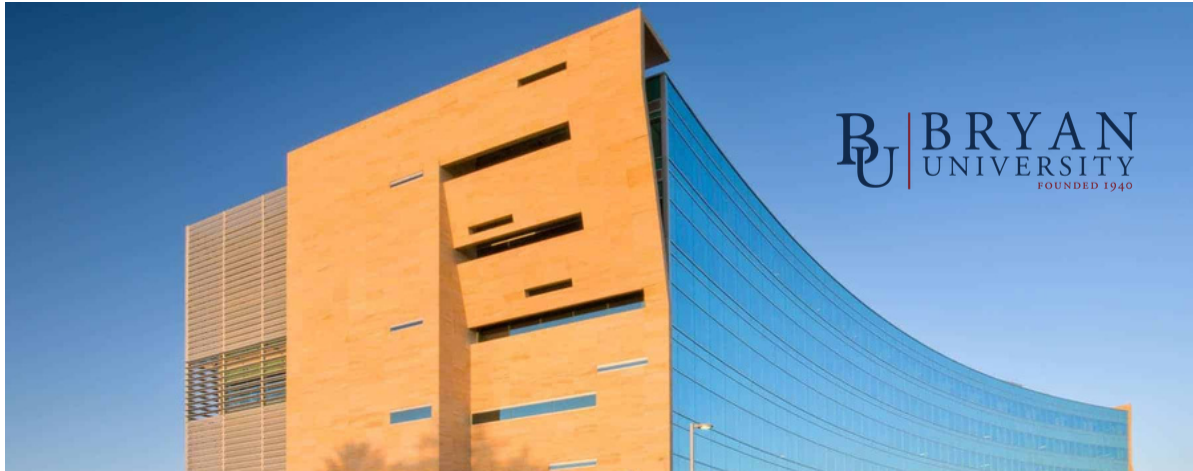


The Searchlight

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May 2026

Career Woman Chronicles

Dr. Makisha Cheeks

You Don't Have To Have It All Figured Out

Entering the workforce can feel like stepping onto a stage where it seems like everyone else already knows their lines. For many women, there's an unspoken pressure to have everything mapped out: career path, long-term goals, even personal life milestones. But the truth is, you don't have to have it all figured out to get started.

Careers are rarely linear. They evolve through experience, mistakes, opportunities, and growth. It's okay if your first job isn't your dream job or if your goals change over time. What matters most is taking that first step and being open to learning along the way. Confidence doesn't come from having all the answers; it comes from showing up, trying, and building resilience through real-world experience.

Give yourself permission and grace to be a beginner. Ask questions, seek guidance, and don't be afraid to admit when you don't know something. Growth happens in those moments. Surround yourself with people who support your development, and remember that every professional you admire once started exactly where you are now.

Most importantly, define success on your own terms. Your journey doesn't have to mirror anyone else's. Whether you're exploring different roles, building skills, or simply figuring out what you enjoy, each step forward counts. You don't need a perfect plan to build a meaningful career. You just need the courage to start.

Upcoming Events

CS Live: Local
Networking 101

Wednesday,
May 20 at 3:00 p.m.
MST

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Alumni Corner

Michael Scalice

The Top Skills Alumni Should Learn in 2026

As our places of work continue to evolve at a rapid pace, alumni who stay competitive are those who commit to continuous learning. In 2026, employers are placing a premium not just on technical expertise, but on a blend of adaptable, forward-thinking skills that allow professionals to navigate change with confidence.

One of the most in-demand skill areas is digital fluency. This goes beyond basic computer knowledge and includes comfort with emerging technologies like artificial intelligence tools, data analytics, and automation platforms. Alumni who can interpret data, leverage AI to improve efficiency, and quickly learn new systems will stand out in nearly every industry.

Equally important are human-centered skills, often referred to as your “power skills.” Communication, adaptability, collaboration, and emotional intelligence are essential in today’s hybrid and fast-paced work environments. These skills not only enhance workplace performance but also position alumni for leadership roles.

Finally, career resilience and lifelong learning are critical skills for 2026 and beyond. The most successful professionals take ownership of their development and remain open to change. By cultivating both technical and interpersonal skills, alumni can remain agile, relevant, and ready to thrive in an ever-changing job market.

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