

# TALENT SCOUT

## Alumna's internship leads to position diversifying Google's workforce

BY JANET WALDMAN  
PHOTO WEINBERG-CLARK

BRITTANY HAYLES '17 CONSIDERED herself fortunate to be chosen for an internship at Google during her junior year—fewer than 5% of applicants get offers. The management major parlayed that experience into a job at the renowned tech giant, and now she's the one recruiting college students for internships as a diversity staffing specialist at Google in Mountain View, California.

Hayles, who lives in San Francisco, was hired right after graduation, first as an associate account strategist. In that role, she helped Google advertisers optimize their marketing plans and improve their returns on investment, an area she was exposed to as a marketing solutions intern in 2016.

She enjoyed that role and was successful at it.

"But I knew it was not where I wanted my career to be, long term. I've always been really passionate about diversity," she said. "Growing up as a black woman, I saw people of color underrepresented in every facet of my life. I always wanted to see more people who look like me."

During her own internship, Hayles made a point of networking with many Google employees. This served her well when, a few years later, she ran into a colleague she'd befriended during that internship who was now working on a Google team recruiting underrepresented talent through internships. Hayles knew that's what she wanted to do next.

"The conversation was great timing. I met with the manager of that team, they were hiring, and I got my current job a few weeks later," she said.

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful. To that end, it strives to employ a workforce that represents the users it serves.

As Hayles explains, "Google prides itself as being innovative and accessible. We can only do that if everyone is represented in the room. If everyone looks the same and thinks the

same, the company will remain stagnant, and we will be behind the curve."

She noted that Google's workforce is about 1% black while black people represent roughly 13% of the U.S. population, according to the 2018 Census.

Her team prioritizes recruiting college students from underrepresented backgrounds who identify as black, Latinx, LGBTQA, persons with disabilities and veterans. They seek students majoring in computer science, mechanical engineering and industrial engineering, and find them at campus events and through LinkedIn. Having done her internship at Google, Hayles can describe the company's work culture and the challenging nature of the internship to prospective interns.

"Recruiting underrepresented students and interns is important because we like them to experience Google during an internship to attain the skills necessary to perform exceptionally during a full-time opportunity," she said, adding that Google has a high conversion rate from intern to full-time employee. "We understand that to achieve a more diverse workforce, it's important to start with students."

"My internship was phenomenal and the most challenging experience I had in college. It was not a 'go-grab-coffee' internship," she said. Before Google, Hayles did an internship with Rolls Royce.

Google is known for encouraging its employees to work autonomously. "Yes, we work on teams and rely on them for resources, but a lot of what I do is individualistic, and we are expected to navigate ambiguity. You have to learn to work diligently and efficiently or else you will burn out."

Hayles appreciates what she terms Google's dedication to employee job satisfaction—professionally, physically and emotionally. "The company provides a free shuttle from San Francisco, a variety of foods, a gym that offers fitness classes, meditation, and even cooking classes," she said.

She feels her extracurricular life at Quinnipiac contributed to her success. She was among the founders of the Women Empowered organization, which seeks to prepare female students for life, both professionally and personally. "We discussed what a resume should look like, and how to deal with being the only woman on a team, among other things," Hayles said. As a resident assistant for two years, she learned valuable people management skills and how to provide constructive feedback, both of which she uses in her current role.

Academics also played a role. "My professors emphasized the mentality that we had to work hard, no matter how stressed we were or how time-crunched we were," she said.

"We had our projects and our deadlines. That work ethic and determination I learned at QU has trickled into my career. I would not be prepared for the rigors of this job otherwise."

Brittany Hayles '17 recruits college students for internships at Google in Mountain View, California.

