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Peer to Peer

Advice from a Peer Career Mentor. One job seeker's search for the ultimate career attire

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The Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education is a unit of the Office for Undergraduate Studies, "A Pathway to Intentional Learning for Undergraduate Students at Western Carolina University"

Catamount Spotlight Alumni Shadowing Program A Success!

By: Michael Despeaux, Associate Director of Career Services

On March 31, Career Services partnered with Alumni Affairs to bring 20 students to Atlanta where they shadowed professionals in accounting, investment management, law, Fortune 500 and 200 corporations, marketing firms, law enforcement, school administration, music therapy, construction management, engineering, small business, hospitality and tourism, and the wine industry.

Many thanks to all faculty who nominated students for this successful, fifth annual program. Next year, look for an expanded program for which students may apply without having been nominated, and possibly an expansion to Charlotte, where we have a growing and energetic alumni presence.

Here are some first-person reflections about the experience, and complete lists of both student and alumni (and friends) participants can be found here: <http://www.wcu.edu/academics/campus-academic-resources/career-services-and-cooperative-education/alumni-career-services/alumni-job-shadowing.asp>

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Looking For More Advice?



Previous issues of Career Journal can be found at our online archive. More advice and resources are just a click away.

WCU Career Journal

Career Services INFORMATION

828.227.7133 | careers.wcu.edu

Mardy Ashe, Director and Career Counselor
mashe@wcu.edu

Michael Despeaux, Associate Director and Career Counselor
mdespeaux@wcu.edu

Cassie Spencer, Graduate Assistant
crspencer@wcu.edu

Carrie Hachadurian, Non Work-Study Student Employment Specialist
cphachadurian@wcu.edu

Deneen Landis, Administrative Support Specialist
dslandis@wcu.edu

Thomas West, Graduate Intern
tlwest@wcu.edu

The CAREER JOURNAL is a publication of the Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education at Western Carolina University.

*Publisher: Michael Despeaux
Editor: Cassie Spencer*

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Career Services' PROGRAMS FOR SUCCESS

STUDENTS AND ALUMNI: TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE MANY SERVICES WE OFFER!

For More Information and Direct Access to the Following Programs, Visit Our Website at careers.wcu.edu

JobCat

Internet-based recruiting system that includes jobs as well as opportunities to post a résumé and sign up for interviews.

Career Counseling

Set an appointment with a career counselor or seek immediate assistance from Peer Career Mentors on campus.

Career Testing

Take tests on our website assessing your values and skills. Schedule an appointment for interpretation.

Cooperative Education (Co-op) and Catamount Externships

Work or shadow in your field of study, receiving related work experience and class credit or a certification of completion.

Resume Assistance

Email your resume/cover letter to mdespeaux@wcu.edu or mashe@wcu.edu and make an appointment to discuss the document.

Interviewing Skills Assistance

Participate in a mock interview and learn from the interaction through the online [Perfect Interview Program](#).

Career Days and Recruitment Events

Multiple recruitment events are held every year, like the Fall WCU Career Fair & Grad School Day, Health Services Career Fair, Etiquette Dinners and Receptions, Summer Jobs and Internships Fair, and the Education Recruitment Day, to name a few.

Collaborating for Success

CAREER SERVICES PARTNERS WITH CEAP

By Cassie Spencer, Graduate Assistant & Thomas West, Graduate Intern

According to research by Ellinger, Keller, and Ellinger (2008), effective interdepartmental integration is made possible through “interaction, collaboration, and combination views” (p. 41). They argue that the primary method for successful collaboration is increasing the frequency of meetings and the amount of information exchanged. Secondly, each department needs to share the workload and share the same goals. As departments combine both the primary and secondary suggestions, better collaboration is possible and the result is a more successful and effective event.

In March, Career Services witnessed a prime example of interdepartmental cooperation, which led to a successful event. Education Recruitment Day is an annual event hosted by Career Services for students and alumni who are interested in job opportunities within schools and school systems. This year, Career Services worked collaboratively with the College of Education and Allied Professions to plan a full day of Education Recruitment events, in hopes to reach out to current and graduating students majoring in education.

The success of the Education Recruitment Day correlates with what Ellinger, Keller, and Ellinger’s (2008) research indicate as

a means to successful collaboration. Career Services and the College of Education and Allied Professions (1) shared the same goal to provide students with professional development opportunities and to prepare them for a career after college. With the same goal in mind, each department (2) worked together to plan their respective events. Career Services planned the Education Recruitment Day Career Fair, while the College of Education and Allied Professions planned events before and afterward, so that students were able to dedicate a full day to professional development. Based on the success of this year’s Education Recruitment Day, Career Services and the College of Education and Allied Professions plan to continue this collaboration in the future.

The day opened with a welcome from Dr. Dale Carpenter, dean of the College of Education and Allied Professions, and Dr. Kim Winter, associate dean and director of Teacher Education. Following the welcome, students attended a Principal’s Panel with representation from five schools, based out of three different counties. There was representation from elementary, middle, and high schools. The Education Recruitment Fair was held from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., and gave students the opportunity to talk with potential employers. This was

followed by a keynote address on “Whole Brain Teaching Streamlined.” The day ended with concurrent breakout sessions.

The Education Recruitment Fair saw 33 employers and 122 students. The day proved to be a success as one student stated, “I enjoyed seeing my options and having the opportunity to learn more about the area school systems. I hope to use the information to make my career choice in the future.” Employers also noted the success of the event in their comments about the Education Recruitment Fair as being a “great event that we look forward to coming back in the future.” Other employers noted that the students attending the event were, “very prepared and willing to discuss future endeavors.”

As Career Services continues to plan career fairs and other like events, the office hopes to work in cooperation with colleges and other departments when possible to replicate the success seen at this year’s Education Recruitment Day. The goal for Career Services is to maximize the number of students who are reached so that more students have the opportunity to meet employers, apply for jobs, and network.

Ellinger, A. E., Keller, S. B., & Ellinger, A. D. (2008). *Developing interdepartmental integration: An evaluation of three strategic approaches and performance improvement*. *Performance Improvement Quarterly*, 13(3), 41-59.

JobCat

Get an Account!

WHY YOU NEED ONE:

To keep updated with regular postings for on-campus and local jobs, To strengthen your network and seek advice from volunteer mentors, To set your resume in the sights of future employees

HOW TO GET ONE:

1. Log in to JobCat at careers.wcu.edu.
2. Complete a personal profile.
3. Upload a résumé.
4. Submit your online application by the deadline.

JobCat is updated with new jobs almost every day, so check for updates regularly!



Creating and Maintaining a Professional Digital Presence

By Thomas West, Graduate Intern

The most important aspect of a professional digital presence is having a presence in the first place. Social media is the language of the generation and, while not all jobs require social media skills, many employers see that digital presence as a way to understand your character more than what a resume and cover letter can provide. A professional digital presence is something that takes time and is never complete. While it is a great idea to start thinking about maintaining a professional digital presence when preparing to graduate, it is beneficial to begin as early as possible. Having a professional digital presence does not mean just removing photos that employers should not see and deciding not to bad mouth certain companies on social media, but, rather, crafting your social media in a way that showcases your accomplishments and tells employers that you are right for their position.

One of the best ways to showcase skills and accomplishments is through LinkedIn. If you do not already have one, you should create a LinkedIn account. Having a LinkedIn profile is an increasing expectation from employers, and it is becoming commonplace for employers to search candidates on LinkedIn to help make a hiring decision. Whether you're just creating one or you have had one for a while, maintaining your LinkedIn is crucial. Make sure that everything is up-to-date: include presentations you have done, conferences you have attended, awards you have received, and skills that you have acquired—especially as they pertain to the specific career for which you are applying. Businesses have groups that you can join or company pages that you can follow to receive updates about what is happening.

You can also connect with Western Carolina University and follow updates from your alma mater. Above all, LinkedIn is a networking site. LinkedIn provides a perfect opportunity for you to join conversations and showcase your knowledge. Starting discussions or commenting on existing discussions are great ways to network with other professionals, which increases your professional digital presence. When prospective employers are looking at your page, they should be convinced that you're an excellent candidate.

Professional digital presence expands beyond LinkedIn into other social media, as well. Try to search yourself on Google and see what you might find, as employers may do the same. Make your username similar from site to site, so they can find you on all social media. For example, using your middle initial might help to separate your page from others with similar names, which could help when employers attempt to find your pages. Using the same name helps for continuity when searching, so your Twitter can show up alongside your LinkedIn in a Google search. It is important to not hide your social media because you should not have anything to hide; guarantee that employers will find you in a search. When employers do see your social media, make sure they like what they see. Privacy setting should be adjusted so that certain things cannot be seen, while other things can. If you've posted positively about companies, make those public so that they can be seen in a general search.

Look at the content on your Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other sites. Unprofessional content—pictures, statuses, or shared links—should be removed.

Sites like Simplewash can help identify posts which may be considered offensive or unprofessional. It brings the post up directly, highlighting the offensive word(s), and allows users to remove it. Fire Me! tells users how likely they are to get fired based on their tweets. If there is a negative tweet, it will flag the tweet and will notify the offending user; it will also include a link to the tweet and give the user an option to delete it.

Clean and professional social media profiles are important. This is true for more than just the job search process because, in certain jobs, employees are expected to use personal profiles for business-related tasks, even if it is just communicating with colleagues. As lines begin to blur between professional and personal use of social media, it is important to make sure that even personal profiles maintain a professional presence.

Creating a professional digital presence may appear to be a laborious process, but its payouts are greater than you might expect. Maintaining that professional digital presence is much easier. Certain things should not be discussed on social media; if it is considered offensive or if it is something you would not show your boss, it should not be posted. It is not uncommon to hear about people who have gotten fired over posts on social media. It should be noted that people do not get hired for the same kinds of posts. Maintain the same professionalism online as you would in an interview.

Simplewash: <http://www.simplewa.sh/>

Fire Me!: <http://fireme.l3s.uni-hannover.de/fireme.php>

Catamount Spotlight Alumni Shadowing Program A Success!

Continued from Cover



Logan Gentry “I had the privilege to shadow Yancy Bachmann with World Fiber Technologies. This company has a strong background in traffic control and networking that expands

across the country. I was able to experience some of the day-to-day tasks within the office and in the field. It was an awesome experience and gave me the opportunity to network with some of the top managers/CEOs in business.”



Kevin Bryson “I was able to shadow Jim Beddingfield on our trip to Atlanta. Mr. Beddingfield’s professionalism and vast knowledge of the legal environment assisted in

mentoring me and helping me understand the trial that we were able to observe that day. The trial itself was able to show me just how much an attorney must research in other fields such as engineering to be able to present a case that is worthy of debating.”



Michelle McDuffie “I had the honor and privilege to shadow Dr. Monica Henson of Provost Academy Georgia who introduced me to many aspects of the job field that I had not yet

experienced. The experience was amazing and I really learned a lot about what to expect while advancing in my career choice.”



Katelyn Johnson “I shadowed a music therapist named Anna Hardy at Seasons Hospice care. Through this experience I got to see firsthand what hospice care is and how music

therapy in this setting is different from other settings.”



Austin Brown “Thanks to the shadowing initiative, I was able to spend the day with Michael Ferguson, a wine wholesaler working for United Distributions. He taught me

an incredible amount of information about the wine sales industry, but the most important was in regards to developing an understanding of wines from around the world: ‘You can read all the books you want about different wines, but at the end of the day, you can’t drink a book.’”



Emma Costanho “I met with Bob Thomas the CEO of EIS, a Fortune 500 company, and spent the day with some of the engineers at a job site they have in Atlanta. I learned about engineering

within the company and some important factors to consider when looking for a career in engineering.”



Summer Travel Leads to International Social Enterprise

Rebecca Bleich and Devan Lalas, alumni of Western Carolina University ('14), founded Rafiki Kenyan Imports, LLC (RKI) in January of 2014. Rebecca traveled to Kenya in May of 2013 with the Department of Anthropology and Sociology at WCU where she spent three weeks in the remote village of Wongonyi learning about sustainable development. Wongonyi is a small mountainous village in the Taita Hills, five hours by car outside of Nairobi, with a subsistence agricultural economy that is full of talented artisans with a very limited market to sell their products to supplement the income they get from farming. Their idea was to start a company that would provide a needed market to improve lives. In May of 2014, they traveled back to Kenya to set up ground operations for RKI. They then launched an online store (ShopRKI.com). They are in the process of fostering relationships with stores across North Carolina and launching a speaking tour to spread the word about the amazing artisans of the Wongonyi village while promoting sustainable development. Rafiki Kenyan Imports, LLC would not be in existence if it weren't for Western Carolina University's dedication to providing an engaged and meaningful education to students. Rebecca and Devan both say WCU provided them with the foundation they needed to become effective leaders and world changers.

Claire Lippy: Student Worker of Year

By: Carrie Hachadurian, Student Employment Specialist



Claire Lippy, a junior nursing major from Stone Mountain, Ga., has been named Western Carolina University's fourth annual Student Worker of the Year award winner. Lippy,

an outdoor program guide with Base Camp Cullowhee, has made her passion for the great outdoors a major part of her college experience at WCU.

"I love being able to get outside and learn more about outdoor activities and meeting other people who also share similar interests," she said of her time working with Base Camp. "I love building a sense of community among the people on our trips." In a typical semester, she helps

lead between five and ten outdoor trips with Base Camp, ranging from whitewater rafting, kayaking, rock climbing, caving, skiing, backpacking and hiking.

Being a student worker at Western Carolina has helped her become more involved with the school and community. "I think being a student worker brings a closer tie to the university. I'm able to meet a variety of people and I have a better sense of involvement. There's definitely a lot to be learned in any job on campus," she said.

As far as what type of worker she is, supervisor and director of Base Camp Cullowhee Josh Whitmore said of Claire: "Across the board, Claire operates with a level of quality that is noticeable and remarkable. Her level of work serves as an example and inspiration to the other staff, raising the bar for excellence around her. Whenever she completes a task, she goes the extra mile to make sure it is done with excellence. She takes the extra time to help other student staff improve, providing valuable feedback and mentoring to aid

them along their progression and achieve quality on their own. Overall, the level of quality that Claire demonstrates would be far above average for an experienced professional staff and is absolutely remarkable for a student leader."

This year, 14 students were nominated for the Student Worker of the Year Award, representing the top 1 percent of WCU's student workforce. Among those nominated are: Amy Solesbee with the School of Health Sciences; Andrew Pridgen with IT; Jeffrey Lucas with the WCU Print Shop; Kenyatta Fortune with the Office of the Provost; Lauren Marksberry with the Office of Undergraduate Admissions; Marcus Shoffner with Campus Recreation Center; Michelle McDuffie with Hunter Library; Royce Dunnivan with Athletics; Samantha Mungro with the Honors College; Sarah Blackwell with the Registrar's Office; Sarah Cole with Educational Outreach; Shelby Lequire with the Advising Center; and Tyler Easterbrook with the Office of Internal Audit.

The Career Services office is currently offering the following presentations for any student organization on campus, free of charge, to help develop the students professionally.

APPROPRIATE ATTIRE

Learn to identify the context in which business casual or business professional is required. Guidelines for men and women are both featured.

JOB SEARCHING

Explore job search resources available at Career Services while briefly reviewing how to write resumes and cover letters.

RÉSUMÉ & COVER LETTER WORKSHOP

Methods of how to craft a resume based upon the needs of the audience:

- Creating your first resume, and how to use it later as a repository for future activities
- Modifying a pre-existing resume to focus on strategy and answering more job-specific questions

NETWORKING AT EVENTS AND THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

Learn how to professionally and methodically grow a beneficial network by finding networking arenas, pursuing contacts and maintaining correspondence.

INTERVIEW SKILLS & PREPARATION

Provide students with a space to prepare and practice for an interview. The Perfect Interview program will be demonstrated as a resource.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES AT WCU

This presentation describes the ideal chronological progression of career development for students while providing an overview of services within our office. Actual resources will be described or demonstrated, including career counseling, FOCUS 2, resume assistance, job search tools like JobCat, and Perfect Interview.

If you are interested in booking a presentation for your student organization, please contact Career Services at careers.wcu.edu at least two weeks prior to the potential date of the event.



THE FIRST 90 DAYS

Your Post-Graduation Success Story

By: Cassie Spencer, Graduate Assistant

As a soon-to-be graduate, you are about to complete the necessary coursework, hopefully have held an internship or part-time job in your area of interest, and should have a polished resume ready for employers. Even with all of this preparation, are you really prepared for your first job following graduation?

Starting a new job can be nerve-racking; starting your first job after college will be an experience like no other. In the last month, over 23,000 articles have been posted on LinkedIn by top-level executives, mid-level managers, recent graduates, and numerous other employees all situated on various rungs of the corporate ladder. These articles all focus on the importance of the first 90 days of a new job.

What makes the first 90 days of a new job so critical? The first three months in a new position is a time of transition; you will be learning your role with the company, meeting co-workers, experiencing the company culture and determining how you fit into the structure of the organization. Additionally, it is within the first 90 days that your boss and co-workers form opinions about your work ethic, reliability, and value to the company. With so much pressure put on your first 90 days on the job, what can you do to ensure that you're on a path to success? Just by searching "first 90 days", you will find numerous articles offering advice for new employees. The majority of this advice all boils down to six major points:

Be a Sponge

"Soak up" everything you can about your new company. Listen and take in everything that goes on around you when you are first starting at a new company. Adapt to the company culture and familiarize yourself with how your boss operates.

Set Expectations with Your Boss

Be sure that you and your boss are on the same page in terms of expectations, how you will be evaluated, and company

procedures. Clarifying this early can ensure that you know what you will be held accountable for.

Meet Your Co-Workers

Getting to know your co-workers early on will pay off in the long run. Invite a co-worker to lunch or for coffee. While you may feel pressure to get the work done, be sure to also invest in the people with whom you will be working.

Don't Be Afraid to Be Curious

Success in your new role will be driven by your willingness to learn. After all, starting a new job is a huge learning curve. Take advantage of this time to ask even the simplest of questions.

Jump In

When starting a new job there is often little time to "test the waters." Jump in feet first to the tasks and responsibilities that have been assigned to you. Ask questions when you need clarification and say yes whenever possible.

Keep an Open Mind

Adapting to both your new position and your new company/organization is essential in the first 90 days. Be open to how the organization functions, don't make assumptions about policies or procedures. Don't let yourself become stuck in a mindset of how things were done at a previous job or internship.

With all of this advice in mind, you should be able to enter your new job ready for the first 90 days. Remember that the first three months is when you learn the environment, but also when your colleagues learn about you. Make sure that your first impression is excellent. Transitioning from a college student to a full-time employee in your area of interest will be challenging; utilize your first 90 days on the job to adapt, learn as much as possible, and to set yourself on a path to success.



Peer-To-Peer: Advice from a Peer Career Mentor

THE STYLE OF SUCCESS One job seeker's search for the ultimate career attire -An Essay by Stefani Cronley, Peer Career Mentor

The alarm clock sounds and I roll out of bed, fling open my closet, and stare. Blankly. What to wear? It's a decision I struggle to make on a daily basis. Toss in an important interview and my best option seems to jump back under the covers, else run the risk of showing up in my bunny slippers.

No one ever talks about the pressure of deciding what to wear to a job interview, career fair, or etiquette reception. "Be professional!" they say. But what does that actually mean? How do you achieve that and still stand out in a sea of applicants?

As a Peer Career Mentor, I often tell people that the most important thing on their resume is their name; after all, they are essentially advertising themselves: their great personality and valuable skills. And nothing should detract from those things. This seems like a sensible rule for career attire. After all, you want the employer to remember you as a good match for the position, not because you wore some flashy colored dress. Just like the information included on a resume, it's all about tweaking your style to fit the context. You don't want to be overly formal or too casual.

I think of the old adage, "location, location, location," and dig through my closet for something that won't look like I belong at a wedding reception, but without making me feel ready for a weekend with my friends. I settle on a flattering, knee length dress. Now for shoes.

I rush for a pair of stilettos, but this new concept of highlighting my skills, not my clothes, stops me. I slip on some nude heels instead. I desperately want to reach for some flats. But flats aren't professional, right? Wrong. Dressing professionally doesn't mean you have to forego your taste. Feeling uncomfortable in your outfit is only another subtle distraction. If you are teetering around or constantly adjusting your clothes, you are negatively drawing attention to yourself. Interviews can be hard enough without being physically uncomfortable, so pick clothing that makes you both feel and look your best. On that note, I swap out the heels.

Dressing professionally shouldn't just extend to your outfit, but also includes hair, and for ladies who wear it, makeup. Keep in mind that when you spend time on yourself, it shows and can highlight you as being both serious and detail-oriented. I give my hair

a good brushing and style it away from my face. I apply my makeup, sticking to a low-key look with neutrals and subtle colors. In an effort to feel "dressed up," I reach for my red lipstick. But a thought stops me; will it be distracting? That seems to be my new mantra, so I select a soft pink instead. I skip applying any perfume. I once heard a story about someone who blew an interview solely because their cologne bothered the allergies of the interviewer. Yikes! Seems best to avoid anything overly fragrant, including shampoo, lotion or cologne.

I give myself one last look in the mirror, and snap a quick photo for my mom. She texts me back a big "thumbs up." Now that I have gotten her okay, I feel a lot better.

Navigating the professional world can be tricky and often scary. It helps to remember your objective: to get them to remember you. Not your clothes. Also remember you don't have to do it alone. Find a business professional whose opinion you trust, whether that's a parent (like my mom for me) or a PCM here at Western. I can guarantee they'd be happy to help! Here's to the style of success and the success of style!

Become a Peer Career Mentor

The Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education is calling all campus and academic student leaders to apply to become a Peer Career Mentor (PCM) for the 2015-2016 academic year. PCMs are trained to present on a variety of career development topics, assist with student outreach, and promote the importance of early and continuous career planning and preparation. PCMs will provide résumé advice, assistance with job search technology, and assistance with career exploration to students on a peer-to-peer level.

How to Apply

- Complete the application found on the Career Services' Website
- On the Career Services' Homepage, look on the purple side bar to the left of the screen. Click on "Career Mentors." The application will be found on that page
- Email a completed application with a current copy of your resume to Cassie Spencer at crspencer@wcu.edu



Follow Career Services on Facebook, Instagram & Twitter

Stay connected with Career Services. Follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter to stay up to date on events, presentations, job searching trends and more!



Find us on Facebook by searching keywords: "WCU Career Services"

Follow us on Instagram: @WCU_CareerServices

Follow our Peer Career Mentors on Twitter: @WCU_PCMS