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An Interview with Glenda Hensley

Glenda Hensley, director of the First Year Experience, discusses how Career Services can assist first-year students.

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Peer Mentoring

Peer Mentoring can be found in many departments on Western Carolina University's campus. Mentorship programs provide students with many great advantages. We provide a deeper look into two of those programs: the Writing and Learning Commons, and the Academic Success program.

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Collaborative Partnerships

As a first-year graduate student in the College Student Personnel program, I am a liaison between Residential Living and Career Services. Collaboration between the two departments takes place through programming and open communication.

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THE FUTURE IS NOW: How Your First Year in College May Shape Your Life

BY MICHAEL DESPEAUX, *ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN THE FYE JOURNAL, AUGUST 2011*

As a first-year student, you'll hear much about what you should be doing to make the most of college. Choosing a major that interests you, building a circle of new friends and meeting people different from yourself, joining student organizations, gaining effective college study habits, and even becoming an independent learner – these should be typical goals for new students. Because you have a full college experience to anticipate, you have the chance to craft a Western Carolina experience that will change your life.

During this recession, what college can do for you may seem especially important. It should. In the news, and in the experience of many North Carolina families, you don't have to look far to find reasons for concern. More than ever before, a simple credential in the form of a college degree, by itself, does not guarantee career success or personal prosperity. A May 18 New York Times article presents evidence that concludes "even for college graduates – the people who were most protected from the slings and arrows of recession – the outlook

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Announcing Atlanta Day

This March 22, Career Services, in collaboration with the offices of Alumni Affairs and Development, will offer the second annual Atlanta Alumni and Networking Day. Students may apply, or faculty may nominate students for this exciting opportunity based not only on their academic excellence but on their preparedness to integrate knowledge beyond the classroom in a workplace setting. Applications and nomination forms will be available in October. For more information, read about what we did last year in the article "Bright Lights, Big Opportunity"

Career Services' Programs for Success

Students and Alumni: Take advantage of the many services we offer!

JobCat & Other Job Searching Services

Internet-based recruiting systems on our website that include jobs as well as opportunities to post a résumé and sign up for interviews.

Career Counseling

If you have a career concern that you would like to discuss, call for an appointment with a career counselor.

Career Testing

If you are having difficulty making a decision about a major or a career, we offer career testing and interpretation.

Cooperative Education

Co-op is a program that allows you to work in your career or major field and receive directly related experience and credit WHILE you are still in school.

Résumé Critiquing Service

E-mail your résumé (cover letter, too!) to mdespeaux@wcu.edu or mashe@wcu.edu and make an appointment to discuss it!

Student Employment

Need some cash? The [student employment office](#) can help you find a part-time job. We offer listings for on-campus as well as off-campus employment. View them at careers.wcu.edu.

Career Services Website

Our website offers links, articles, event calendars, job search tools, directories, videos and DISCOVER, a computer-aided guidance program to help you in your career decision. Available at careers.wcu.edu.

Interviewing Skills Assistance

You can participate in a mock interview and improve your skills through our online [Perfect Interview](#) program.

Career Days and Recruitment Events

Career Services offers multiple [recruitment events](#) every year, including Fall WCU Career Fair & Grad School Day, Health Services Career Fair, Etiquette Dinners, Summer Jobs and Internships Fair, WCU Career Fair, Etiquette Reception, & Education Recruitment Day, and multiple etiquette-development events.

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ATTENTION PRIORITY ALERT:

WANTED

- Looking for a career mentor?
- Interested in becoming a mentor?
- Know someone who should be a mentor?

Brought to you by WCU's Office of Alumni Affairs,
Family Association, and Career Services.

For more information regarding our 2011-2012 Career Mentor Program, please contact [Mike Despeaux](#) or [Mardy Ashe](#) in the office of Career Services.

Mobile Mentor Schedule

Peer Career Mentors staff their mobile mentoring station from 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Each Friday, PCMs can be found from 12:30-1:30 p.m. on the second floor of the Killian Annex (above the OneStop). Locations will rotate every Monday. (The table will not operate during official university holidays. It will operate during Reading Day.)

Oct. 17 – 20 | McKee
Oct. 24 – 27 | UC
Oct. 31 – Nov. 3 | Killian Annex
Nov. 7 – 10 | Moore
Nov. 14 – 17 | Killian
Nov. 21 – 22 | Killian Annex
Nov. 28 – Dec. 1 | UC
Dec. 5 – Dec. 8 | Courtyard Dining Hall

PEER MENTORING: A Resource for Academic and Career Development

BY SARAH ALSPA W

By now, you have heard or read about our Peer Career Mentors. This is a new program at Western Carolina, only in its second year. However, if you have attended classes here for even one semester, chances are that you have benefitted from a peer-mentoring program. In Residential Living, among student tour guides, and including Orientation leaders, you can find motivated students who are here to help their peers transition and succeed. More and more peer-mentoring programs are springing up around campus, with several departments sharing with students the responsibility of helping out their fellow students in many different ways. The [Writing and Learning Commons \(WaLC\)](#) and the [Academic Success Program \(ASP\)](#) are two programs on campus that give students the opportunity to become mentors to their peers. While the Peer Career Mentors are helping you with career development, you may also have the chance to benefit academically through programs such as these.

Chesney Reich, the director of WaLC, explains her observations of the effect of student mentoring. Her many student employees serve as mentors in different capacities, including tutors, academic skills consultants, writing tutors, and writing fellows. She feels that student mentors have more credibility because they have succeeded in classes in which other students are struggling, making it easier to identify with them. The mentors can say, "I have been in that class" or "I've also struggled with time management."

Students also seem to feel more comfortable talking to someone closer to their age. The mentor serves as a liaison between the student and the staff in WaLC, referring students to a professional if their situation is becoming too challenging. The tutor also can act as a springboard for students having difficulty, encouraging them to meet with their instructor if they are having real problems in the class. Michael McLamb, a senior majoring in finance and management with a minor in leadership and a tutor in WaLC, states, "Students gain confidence by working with a peer." Tutors also can supplement classroom and office hours by offering help outside of the normal 9 to 5. McLamb says, "Professors are only available for a limited amount of time to help students. Coming to me in the WaLC gives them the ability to schedule appointments that better fit their needs."

I also spoke to Janina DeHart, the program coordinator for the Academic Success Program. This program is designed to help conditionally admitted students succeed. They begin with a six-week summer program, where if the student is successful, they can enroll in the fall. They also are given support through their first year at the university. Peer mentors guide between seven and 10 students apiece, for whom they help facilitate orientation, as well as maintain contact with them over the summer and throughout the school year. If a student successfully passes his or her first year of college, he or she then becomes a mentor for the next class of students. Krysta Sexton, a junior majoring in entrepreneurship and a mentor in the ASP program, states, "Mentors assist students by providing information and guidance throughout their first year. The mentors and students are engaged through meetings and the Lead 141 class the students take."

DeHart believes that students relate more easily with a peer. The mentor is a role model who has gone through the program and been successful, which sets a great positive example for the students. These students find it a lot easier to discuss personal topics with their mentors as well, if they are struggling socially or emotionally. Krysta Sexton also has noticed this, stating, "The ASP students are being rewarded more with working with an experienced student because the mentors can share their own experience and knowledge to help the students adjust to college."

Peer mentoring can provide academic, personal, leadership, and other kinds of assistance and support. To be successful in college and in your career, you should take advantage of this resource. Peer Career Mentors stand by to help you achieve your career goals. When students help students, more students succeed!

For information about writing a résumé or trying to decide between writing a CV or a résumé, please see our April 2011 Career Journal



Want to get on the career path?

USE **JobCat**

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!

An Interview with Glenda Hensley

We asked Glenda Hensley, the director of the First Year Experience, to share her feelings regarding the first-year students on campus and how the Career Services office can best serve these students' needs.



CAREER SERVICES: What is one thing that you are passionate about?

GLEND HENSLEY: I am passionate about helping students find their creative selves – that voice in them that has the power to change the world. I am a firm believer that approaching life from a creative, philosophical stance is what the world needs, what humanity needs. It is the current generation of young people who quite literally hold the world and future in their grasp, and it is my job as an educator to hold the light for them and to inspire them to find their passion and to shine their light.

CS: Describe first-year students at Western Carolina, especially their level of certainty regarding majors and careers.

GH: Our students are the best, and I say that with absolute bias! I think many of them have a good idea about what they want to do in life or what their interests are. I am not sure if they are yet aware of the many choices and avenues available that will allow them to reach their goals and potentials. But then, that is not necessary yet. They are here for an education, and part of the educational process is to open oneself to discovery, to embrace the possibilities one does not yet know. We have so many wonderful opportunities at WCU to share and so many support networks in place to help students find their way.

CS: What kind of career-related questions do you hear from first-years and their parents?

GH: Some want to know if their chosen interest is a viable career option; some do not know about career options that are connected or can intersect with various disciplines. This is where they can benefit greatly from Career Services: They need to have guidance to understand that there are a wealth of choices and that there are many options beyond the obvious.

CS: How will WCU's First Year Experience help first-years reach their goals?

GH: Our first objective is to help students successfully transition to college life – to identify their needs and the resources available to help them meet their goals and needs. We have many academic and co-curricular programs in place to specifically address this objective, such as our transition courses, learning communities, and first-year seminars. We foster a holistic approach to educational experience via partnerships across campus that encourage students to connect the dots – to engage their world – to move forward beyond the first-year into their sophomore year and to matriculation.

How Your First Year in College May Shape Your Life *continued from cover*

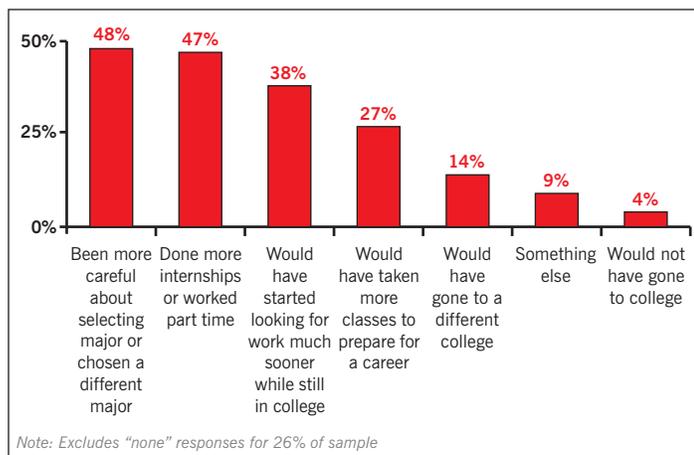
is rather bleak.”¹ Your parents’ generation, with good reason, saw college as a way to improve their lives and to achieve upward mobility. Due to changes in our economic landscape, while for you this outcome may be possible, it certainly is no longer automatic. A recent Rutgers study reports, “Just 17 percent of recent college graduates expect to do better than the previous generation.”²

Does any of this mean that you shouldn’t go to college? Does it imply that Western Carolina won’t positively impact your life and increase your chances of enjoying a meaningful and productive career? The answer to both questions is simple – no. Western Carolina offers you the chance to climb high. But putting one foot in front of the other is up to you.

You have reached a remarkable moment in your life. You are uniquely positioned to establish patterns, set goals, and build stepping-stones that will help you achieve success in the days and years after you graduate. Instead of traveling a path of lesser resistance and addressing each career step only when it becomes urgent, I urge you to begin now, during your first year of college.

What can you do? It’s helpful to take a look at the things that many of today’s graduates wish they’d done. It turns out, despite facing challenges upon graduation, most of them are glad they went to the college they chose. In “Unfulfilled Expectations: Recent College Graduates Struggle in a Troubled Economy,” the authors discover that most regrets centered around what students did (or didn’t do) while they were there:

WHAT STUDENTS WOULD HAVE DONE DIFFERENTLY TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN TODAY’S LABOR MARKET/WORKPLACE



Jessica Godofsky MPP, Cliff Zukin PhD, Carl Van Horn PhD, May 2011. “Unfulfilled Expectations: Recent College Graduates Struggle in a Troubled Economy.” In *Worktrends: Americans’ attitude about work, employers, and government*. Rutgers University, NJ. Page 18

According to the study, graduates wish they had made more careful choices, gained more integrated experiences, and practiced job-search skills earlier. When I speak to first-year classes, I usually discuss these very things that students should be doing to develop their career paths. I always talk about the importance of choosing

a major that not only excites you but also matches your interests, abilities, and values. Career Services offers counseling, career tests, and lots of information that can help you make informed decisions.

Career Services also helps students identify and pursue meaningful real-world experiences, starting with on-campus employment but ranging from related service or campus involvement to internships and job shadowing opportunities. More than ever, it is critical that you gain experience during college, find ways to apply your knowledge, and develop skills that will make you more competitive when you graduate. In recent years and in the new economy, students who fail to integrate their academic, co-curricular, and work experiences, demonstrating that they have workplace skills, are at an instant disadvantage. An article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* about internships states that they “used to be optional, an added bonus. But for many of today’s overprogrammed college students, it has become a critical career move – and a rite of passage.”³

Career Services also provides assistance to students through every stage of any job search. Whether you’re competing for an internship or readying for full-time employment, we’re here to help. During your very first year, I recommend that you go ahead and seek our assistance preparing your résumé. Consider practicing your career-related communication skills by using your webcam to interact with the Perfect Interview online program – the questions will actually help you identify skills and experiences you’ll want to develop during the next three years. Attend a job fair and meet real employers – ask them what you need to do to become an exceptionally qualified candidate for a job at their organizations. Go to an etiquette event and learn how to create strong first impressions in a social or networking setting. In short, take advantage of our services, and do it now. Don’t wait until the last minute.

Among the students I see, the ones who prevail, in any economy, are those who meet two criteria. First, they are purposeful. They thoroughly examine their interests and research majors and related career fields. They make choices based on self-knowledge and identify four-year paths toward their goals. Second, they achieve excellence. Excellence begins in the classroom, but it extends to job or internship settings, leadership and service roles, and character. Even in a tight market, there is always room for excellence.

Career Services stands by to help you succeed at Western Carolina. The rest is up to you, and, as first-year students, you have time and opportunity on your side.

CITED:

1. Catherine Rampell, “Many with New College Degree Find the Job Market Humbling,” May 18, 2011, *New York Times*.

2. Jessica Godofsky MPP, Cliff Zukin PhD, Carl Van Horn PhD, May 2011. “Unfulfilled Expectations: Recent College Graduates Struggle in a Troubled Economy.” In *Worktrends: Americans’ attitude about work, employers, and government*. Rutgers University, N.J.

3. Sara Lipka, “Subsidizing the Internship,” July 18, 2008, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

A New Batch of Peer Career Mentors

BY SARAH ALSPA W

This photo essay introduces the 2011-12 Peer Career Mentors, (PCMs). Already successful in their own majors and on their own way toward a career, PCMs engage with the students at Western Carolina as role models and as mentors. The Career Services office gave the PCMs specialized training in résumé building and editing, interview preparation, finding on-campus and local jobs through the student employment office, writing cover letters, navigating the career development resources found on the Career Services Web page, and inviting students to Career Services events such as career fairs and etiquette dinners. Because these students serve as campus role models for the students they are helping, we asked each of them what he or she hopes to gain from this position.

DESIREE REAGAN

Desiree Reagan seeks a bachelor of science in business administration with a concentration in finance and a minor in Spanish. She plans to achieve the eventual goal of becoming a business consultant. She was the founder and serves as the president of the International People Club, she is the secretary of the Finance Club, and she actively participates in volunteer work at a local medical clinic.



"I wanted to be a PCM because I felt that it would enhance my knowledge about the work force and better prepare me to make the transition from college into a career. I think that being a PCM will give me training and experience as I prepare myself to apply to business school and also to prepare me for later employment in my desired field."

"As a Peer Career Mentor, I am in a position to learn more about careers in general, and I also am gaining valuable experience and developing my leadership, teamwork, and communication skills. On a personal level, being a PCM will help me in my goals to better myself by learning new and interesting things and by giving me an excellent opportunity to help other students."

COREY HARRINGTON

Corey Harrington is a pre-med student from Raleigh, N.C., who is pursuing a bachelor of science degree with a double major in biology and chemistry. He has already earned an associate's degree in emergency medical science. He is a first aid, CPR, and AED instructor and holds various other certifications through the American Heart Association and the N.C. Office of EMS. On campus, he is a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc. He hopes to enroll in the MBA program in health care administration at WCU and to become a sales and marketing representative for the research or health care industry.



ALISHA LAMBERT

Alisha Lambert is pursuing her bachelor of science degree in communication with a concentration in public relations and journalism. She is in the Honor's College and has been on the Dean's List multiple times. She serves as the vice president for public relations for Alpha Xi Delta, and the public relations chair for Whee Rock, and she is involved in RUF, intramurals, PRSSA, and Catamount Communications. She has been a part of our Career Services family for quite a while, serving as a student office assistant for two years.

"I think that being a PCM will benefit me and my future goals because the job will expose me to many different types of people, which will be important to my future career. Learning how to edit résumés will also encourage my writing skills, helping me to improve, as this is very important to my major! I think what the Career Services office has to offer is awesome and not enough students know about it!"

KYRIE CARLSON

Kyrie is in her second year working as a Peer Career Mentor. She is a 2012 candidate to receive her bachelor of science degree in nutrition and dietetics. After she graduates, she is intends to pursue her degree in nursing here at Western Carolina. She hopes to one day use those degrees for medical mission work.



"I wanted to be a PCM in order to learn the important skills that come with being one. This way I could pass on valuable information to my peers. I believe that being a PCM will be greatly advantageous in my future goals because I will have the skills necessary to advance into the work force and look for opportunities mission work."



KASEY RIVER JONES

Kasey Jones is a Teaching Fellow from Franklinville, N.C., who believes that "students are always going to be the future of America, and what better way to make sure America can rebuild itself than to teach!" He is pursuing a bachelor of science degree with a double major in mathematics and secondary education with a concentration on mathematics. He works as an academic tutor with WaLC (Writing and

Learning Center), is an Honors student, has been on the Dean's List, and last year he received the Math Freshman award.

"This job will give me the opportunity to work with students and help them learn about opportunities at Western Carolina and how to land the jobs available."

TIFFANY WENERD

Tiffany Wenerd is a 2012 candidate for a bachelor of science in education in middle grades education. A Teaching Fellow, she currently student-teaches with the sixth grade at Scotts Creek School. She has been on the Dean's List for the last six semesters and is the financial vice president for Alpha Xi Delta. In addition to working with the Peer Career Mentors, she works with WaLC as a workshop facilitator and with the Office of Admissions as a member of enTOURage, the tour-guiding group on WCU's campus.



"The reason I wanted to be a PCM was because I find the tools we have extremely helpful. They will help in the long run, and I like helping people understand these tools. In addition, I enjoy interacting with my peers, and letting them know what jobs are available on campus. Being a PCM will help contribute to my other goals because I am still teaching others and working with people."

KATIE GRABEMAN, INTERN

Katie Grabeman serves as a graduate intern for the Career Services office. She is currently pursuing her master of education degree in college student personnel and will be working closely with the Peer Career Mentors this semester. She is originally from Indiana, and in May 2010 she graduated from Northern Michigan University, where she earned her bachelor of science degree in secondary education in social studies with an emphasis in geography and history.

"I will be interning this semester with Career Services, which I'm very excited about, including working with students and learning more about the field. I feel that the experiences that I have with Career Services will help propel me toward my goal of becoming a career or admissions counselor."



COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS: Working Together to Bring Career Development into Residence Halls

BY KATIE GRABEMAN

Collaboration between college and university departments is frequently emphasized as a formula for success. As a first-year graduate student in the College Student Personnel program, I am on a mission to be a supportive liaison between two main departments: Residential Living and Career Services. Currently I hold a graduate assistantship in Residential Living as an academic resource coordinator, and an internship in Career Services.

As an academic resource coordinator, my role is to promote academic programming, recognize academic achievements, refer students to on-campus resources, and help at-risk students succeed at Western Carolina University.

Also student-focused, my internship at Career Services is concentrated on resume development, helping students find employment, marketing, and shadowing career service professionals to learn more about human resources and career counseling and assessment.

Collaboration between the two departments takes place through programming and open communication. Career Services seeks to support students in the residence halls by promoting in-hall programs and opportunities via advertising to expand students' professional network through job fairs and internship opportunities. Vice versa, Residential Living seeks to promote Career Services through programming partnerships and relaying information directly to students who may need help with resume building, deciding upon a career, or finding an internship.

Our 2011 Fall Career Fair on Thursday, Oct. 27, offers an excellent opportunity for Career Services and Residential Living to work together. Development to promote the Career Fair has already begun within both departments. It is very exciting to see what new ideas will come forth by these two departments working together.

The Oct. 27 Career Fair is one of many programs offered by Career Services. Career Services is a great resource for students who are unsure of what major to choose, who may need to brush up on their interviewing skills, need help setting career goals, or writing a resume. Career Services also offers online assistance for students looking for an on-campus or off-campus job, or an internship or co-op. In my internship, I also help provide direct support to students in the residence halls and on-campus by participating in the PCM program. PCMs can be found around campus between 10:30 a.m. and 3 p.m. Visit our website, www.wcu.edu/26695.asp, for weekly locations

Students, staff, or faculty who are interested in learning more about Career Services, please stop by our office located in Killian Annex, or contact me at kgrabeman@wcu.edu. If you currently live in a residence hall, be sure to look for Career Services programs in your hall and seek help from a career mentor or a career counselor.



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Facebook

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WCU Career Services has a Facebook page!
Become a fan, and we can send you updates on Career Services and Co-op Event happenings.
Find us online by searching keywords: "WCU Career Services" on Facebook.

Upcoming Events

Fall WCU Career Fair & Grad School Day

October 27, 2011
UC Grandroom, 1-4 p.m.

Health Services Career Fair

November 10, 2011
UC Grandroom, 4-6 p.m.

Etiquette Dinner

February 22, 2012
UC Grandroom, 6-8 p.m.

Summer Jobs and Internships Fair

March 13, 2012
UC Grandroom, 1-4p.m.

WCU Career Fair

March 14, 2012
UC Grandroom, 1-4 p.m.

Etiquette Reception

March 14, 2012
Blue Ridge Conference Center, 5:30-7 p.m.

Education Recruitment Day

March 20, 2012
UC Grandroom, 9 a.m.-noon