

Career Center offers assistance in job, internship search for students

Another school year is rapidly coming to a close. Do you know where your life is headed?

It seems many students find themselves lost in the quest to get a job after graduation. But they don't know where to go to get the job or where to go for help.

The University Career Center, located in Hendricks Hall, is one place students can seek help in everything from job opportunities to summer internships to career-preparation workshops.

When they hear the word "career" students might misunderstand what the Career Center does — it does not "place" people in jobs.

"It is a resource between students and employers," said Beth L. Swank, a career counselor at the Career Center. If students want employment opportunities, the Career Center has plenty of helpful information. If employers request students' resumes, the center has several on file, she said.

And there are plenty of employment opportunities. The job market is showing a national trend in certain areas becoming very popular, such as sales marketing, financial services, retail, computer science and technology, accounting and hotel/motel management, possibly due to an increased focus on tourism.

"As many of the people being hired in those kind of entry-level jobs have liberal arts backgrounds," Swank said. "So it's not just business majors."

In addition to the business-related areas, other fields are becoming popular but are difficult to obtain jobs in.

"There are certainly students that are interested in the journalism area and the media, the arts, the sciences, social services," Swank said. "And they are certainly finding jobs, but it's just more competitive in those fields."

Employment recruiters from business-related areas come to campus. But other fields do not see recruiting visits from employers. This is not based on the popularity of different majors.

Some organizations, such as those in journalism and media, hire differently — they expect the graduates, or soon-to-be graduates, to approach them. Many that do not recruit on campus, which include social services, science, environmental and nonprofit services, are smaller organizations without the necessary staff, money or resources.

But the Career Center has information in these fields even though employers do not have recruiting visits. The center has employer directories and lists of organizations nationally and in the Pacific Northwest.

"People like to stay in the [Pacific Northwest]," Swank said. "The most popular spots are Portland, Seattle and San Francisco."

Though the majority of students stop by the Career Center within three to six months from graduation, the center encourages freshmen and sophomores. But the best time for students to come in for help is early in their junior year.

"We can talk to them about getting internships, about getting involved in some of our classes that will help with the job search," Swank said. "So they've got a couple years to do that kind of background work."

The number of students who come to the Career Center for help has increased during the past years. Swank said about 400 students come into the center every day, whether to register, check out the career library or scan through the job binders, which contain more than 10,000 job listings.

More and more students continue to stop in the center. To get an approximation of how many have come, gone and then succeeded in the job market, the center does a survey every even-numbered year. June 1994 statistics are not available. But Swank said in the June 1992 survey, within six months after graduation about 70 percent were in career-related jobs.

An important aspect of the Career Center is the one-on-one career counseling students can receive and help for the graduating seniors to develop their own job search strategies, especially if the seniors have a major with a broad range of choices. The Career Center can give them options and help them get a focus on what they want in terms of a career.

The Center makes its services available to all currently enrolled students and University alumni. Starting this fall, the Career Center will have eliminated its user fees, which include fees for placement files and registration, for currently enrolled students. Alumni will still have to pay a basic fee for certain programs and registration.

To register, a student needs to attend an office orientation, at which they learn information about the services the center offers and get a tour of what is available. Once they are registered, students will have up-to-date knowledge of opportunities and they can submit their resumes into the resume book.

The center also has the resources for students to do a job search independently and the counselors there have helpful tips to prepare students for the job search.

"What's probably most important for students and the ones that have the best prospects for getting jobs are students that have done internships in the field that they're interested in," Swank said.

"The other thing that employers really look for is extracurricular involvement. So getting involved in campus organizations or community service organizations where they can really show leadership skills," she said.

Also, Swank said students need a good sense of their strengths and skills. That is the focus of the Career Center — to help students by offering classes and workshops. If students know their abilities and have confidence, it is relayed on the resume and through interviews.

— Kim Weiss



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