

The Benefits of Networking

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With the increasing trend in social media outlets and online networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace, and LinkedIn, university graduates now more than ever are taking advantage of the benefits they offer. On the collegiate scene at Western Carolina University, students have the opportunity to network and meet board members, alumni, faculty, and staff members at various campus events, community activities, career fairs, and professional conferences. With this, students and alumni can start to develop and build their social and professional relationships for continued success in their professional career. For current students, once you have declared your major, it is important to get to know individuals in that specific field. Joining major-specific clubs and organizations may also be beneficial in the future for character references or when fostering a mentor/mentee relationship.

With an alumni base of 57,000 members, Marty Ramsey, Director of Alumni Affairs states, "Whether you want to find old friends, make new ones, or stay up-to-date with your WCU family through news and events, our staff is here to assist you with this process. In our office, we provide many opportunities and resources that alumni and young alumni can partake in that can assist in bridging the gap between the two roles."

Starting in August 2010, the Office of Alumni Affairs, Family Association, and Career Services will be hosting a professional career mentor program that will connect current students to alumni, employers, and friends of the University to provide students with experience and opportunities. By using JobCat, interested students can contact Professional Career Mentors in their field to gain résumé tips, advice on career-related decisions, and assistance when securing an internship or cooperative opportunity.

Distinguished guests of the university and Alumni are eager to provide outlets for students where they can be mentored and provide opportunities to foster and teach about their specific field. Ramsey stated, "Our Alumni and Alumni Board have been very successful in their careers and wish to share that knowledge with our current students. They want to pass on their knowledge to students and possibly provide internship opportunities in the future."

For more information regarding the 2010-2011 Career Mentor Program, please contact Mike Despeaux or Mardy Ashe in the office of Career Services at (828) 227-7133.

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