Transferable skills important in new economy
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Are you a student who has strong skills in the liberal arts, research design, data analysis, computer application skills, or general skills in business?

If so, according to Dr. Gibbs Knotts of the Political Science and Public Affairs department, these are the skills that will be most sought in our “new economy.” Someone with these skills can apply them to almost any job field, regardless of their undergraduate major.

When someone is informed of career fairs on campus, they typically assume that only students whose majors are in those fields are marketable in the job selection process. This is not the case.

At the Public Service, Government, and Criminal Justice Career Fair held on October 11, employers were on-campus to recruit competitive candidates to become members of their staffs.

Contrary to popular belief, one is not required to be a political science or criminal justice major to be of interest to employers in government, non-profit or law enforcement. A number of employers attended the career fair to recruit top students from all majors and fields of study because all collegiate departments have marketable aspects.

For example, under the liberal arts curriculum, students take courses in written and oral communication. Every job requires students to be proficient writers and speakers. No matter the occupation one chooses to pursue, one will always be expected to communicate well both orally and through writing.

Remember those countless hours of working on research papers? This skill, if properly communicated on a resume and through the course of an interview, is a highly coveted skill by all employers. This skill, when communicated as data collection, hypothesis development, and questionnaire construction, is an area in strong demand according to Dr. Knotts.

Courses taken in mathematical statistics or courses that require the use of statistical software also help students appeal to potential employers. Though these courses may seem to have fewer practical applications when taken, many jobs involve statistical packages that must be learned to be successful in the job market.

When it comes to the Public Service, Government, and Criminal Justice career fair, were you a student that marketed their skills to obtain employment? Or, were you a student that thought your skills were not applicable? In either instance, there will be another opportunity to sell your skills to the public sector next semester.

This semester provided the opportunity to meet with representatives from the federal, state, county, and municipal governments. Many of these representatives and others will return to the spring career fair to recruit more Western students for their positions.

You might ask, “What can I do to improve my chances of employment between now and next semester?” The answer is simple. The Office of Career Services can help students better market their skills for career fairs to come by helping to tailor resumes to fit each job opportunity.

Moreover, one can practice communicating their skills through scheduling an appointment to use Perfect Interview. This program will allow students to practice their skills before they have to showcase their merit in a live interview.

Students that wish to better represent their skills for any occupation should schedule an appointment with a career counselor. Or, they should visit Career Services on the 2nd floor of Killian Annex.

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http://www.wcu.edu/WebFiles/PDFs/careerservices_cj_oct-05.pdf