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WE'RE MOVING!!! After the holiday break, the Career Services office will be located just down the hall in Killian Annex, Suite 205!



December Class of 2007

By Brandy Kiger

This is it. After years of diligently pulling all-nighters, drinking way too much coffee and writing more papers than you ever thought possible, you've made it. No more classes stand between you and graduation. Everything has been turned in, and you've bought the cap and gown. Now what?

We here at Career Services would like to say, "Congratulations, Seniors. You have worked hard, you are finally getting your degree and we are proud of you." You have already accomplished a lot, but there's more ahead. We'd like to help you keep that momentum going.

Our services are still available to you as alumni, and we would like you to take advantage of those resources. We have a ton of career-related material, career testing and resume help at your disposal, free of charge. We also have career fairs happening several times a year where you can network and meet potential employers.

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How Service Learning Fosters Synthesis and Prepares Students for Careers

By Dr. Glenn Bowen



Dr. Glenn Bowen is the Director of Service Learning at WCU.

Preparing students for careers is not the primary purpose of service learning. In fact, when it comes to career development, service learning is the road less traveled by students.

Service learning is aimed primarily at meeting community needs while enriching and enhancing academic course content. Still, service learning contributes to career development in various ways. In this article, I will explain what service learning is, and how it works, in relation to career development and preparation for the workplace.

A form of experiential education, service learning intertwines community service with classroom instruction and critical reflection. It has two goals: service to the community and student learning. It involves learning by doing. What makes service learning special is that it involves learning by doing *and by reflecting*.

Students participating in service learning may serve as math and reading tutors to elementary school pupils, assist the county's Habitat for Humanity organization in building houses for homeless people, support entrepreneurial projects in low-

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Career Services Programs for Success

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

JobCat, MonsterTRAK, and Localjobs.com

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

Career Testing

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

Career Counseling

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

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.

Career Days and Recruitment Events

Career Services offers 18-20 recruitment events every year, including the Career and Graduate School Expo, the Allied Health and Nurses' Career Day, Spring Job Fest, Summer Job Fair, Engineering, Math, and CS Fair, Construction Management Fair, Education Recruitment Day and multiple etiquette-development events.

Resume Critiquing Service

Email your resume (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. Visit them at <http://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 <http://careers.wcu.edu>.

Interviewing Skills Assistance

You can participate in a mock interview and improve your interviewing skills through the Perfect Interview program.

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Want to get on the career path?

Use JobCat.

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

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

Do You Know Where You're Going?

Great Reasons to Attend a Career Event

By Brandy Kiger



A lot of students are still asking themselves, “What am I going to do?” as they near graduation. Many more begin asking that question when they are first year students. It’s not uncommon to be unsure about your career choice. That’s why we’re here.

Our career events are designed to give you, the student or recent graduate, a leg up on the competition by putting you face-to-face with potential employers. The benefits of having the opportunity to meet with these regional employers are numerous.

- Employers want to meet you. They want you to ask questions, and they want to know that you are interested in their field. Career fairs give you the opportunity to give them what they want.
- Your professors want you to have contact with people who are active in your chosen field. They really do want you to succeed, regardless of what you think the workload they give you says.
- Career fairs give you the opportunity to take a reality check: find out starting salaries, what employers are looking for, and how much your GPA *really* matters.
- You get free stuff, and some of it’s really, really cool.
- Having a chance to interview with employers not only gives you real practice, but sometimes leads to real jobs.

Dr. Ken Burbank, of the Engineering Technology Department at Western, strongly encourages his students to attend career fairs. He feels that the ex-

perience of job searching is “more real at a career fair” and that by going, students are exposed to jobs in their field that they might not have considered.

“It gives them the opportunity to experience the whole social side of the network,” Dr. Burbank continues, “giving them practice at talking to companies.” It’s a great chance to network and just see what’s out there.

When asked about successes of attending a career fair, he points to Xiaoxi Martin, an Engineering Technology senior who was hired by Eaton’s at October’s Engineering, Math, and Computer Science Fair.

Mardy Ashe, the director of Career Services, says the most important aspect of career events is simply that they get information out to students. The exposure to real companies that are hiring is excellent, and gives students the chance to ask themselves, “Is this something that I might want to do?”

“The majority of employers come looking for specific majors, but they all come looking for employees.” Employers are usually not dead-set on a certain degree program; often, they want employees from any major who have the skills to meet their needs.

Career Services served 771 students through career events this past semester and anticipates doubling that number through the spring semester. It is our goal to host over 300 employers on campus for the year, a 22% increase over last year’s numbers.

No matter what year you are in school, career events can be helpful to you. For freshmen and sophomores, career events are a good way to get a handle on who is out there looking, what majors they are recruiting, and simply how to go up and talk to an employer and learn to network. It’s also a good way to start looking for internship or co-op possibilities.

Juniors, career events allow you to start stepping up to the plate. You can start networking, find a co-op or internship, discover who is actively recruiting, and start narrowing down the field for career choices.

Career events are even more beneficial to seniors. This is where you can start setting up interviews, boost the networking aspect of your career and build confidence in who you are and what you have to offer. Employers want you. Take advantage of that.

If you have a less than stellar GPA, don’t let that keep you from attending career events. Ms. Ashe says, “In any major, a good GPA is valuable interview material and what many employers are looking for, but if you have less than a 3.0 GPA, work experience and extra-curricular activities can offset that,” and make you just as valuable in a future employer’s eyes.

income neighborhoods, produce documentaries for nonprofit organizations, or prepare business plans for a small enterprises. Students may create Web sites and databases for human service agencies, collect litter in public parks, make presentations on the state of the environment, conduct voter registration drives, or raise funds for charitable organizations. These are examples of community-service projects that may be integrated effectively into the curriculum through the process of reflection.

Synthesis

Service learning is an integral element of Western's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), designed to help students make meaningful connections between their in-class and out-of-class experiences. The QEP is rooted in the concept of *synthesis*, which, simply put, is the integration of knowledge and skills from separate areas into a coherent whole (see Carol Burton's *Career Journal* article, September 2007). Our Center for Service Learning is playing a pivotal role in the implementation of the QEP. Clearly, service learning fosters synthesis. Reflection ties together the community service and the course work. Stu-

dents taking service-learning courses demonstrate synthesis through the reflection process itself as well as through reflection products (e.g., papers, documentaries, and business plans). Service learning shifts the role of students from passive to active learners. As such, students can effectively interconnect campus and community experiences, as well as the knowledge and skills gained from diverse areas, so they will learn and develop holistically.

Career-Related Outcomes

Service learning contributes significantly to career planning and professional preparation. Through their participation, students can clarify values and develop both self-awareness and self-efficacy. A well-designed service-learning project will allow students to acquire and hone professional skills, including teamwork, critical-thinking, problem-solving, communication, and leadership skills, which are vital for success in the workplace. It will also allow students to exhibit productive work habits. Further, service learning often provides students with opportunities related to their majors and career interests. As students provide service to the community,

they explore career options and opportunities and gauge their readiness for the workplace. Students can use the experience to seek clarity about their career choice and to finalize their career decision.

“Service learning shifts the role of students from passive to active learners.”

Service learning can influence career decisions in significant ways. Students have been known to change their majors and their career goals because of the kind of experience they had at a community-service site. Moreover, participation in service learning has led students to choose a service-related career, especially in one of the “helping professions,” such as social work or nursing. Also, as a consequence of their community-service experiences, some students choose a career through which they can contribute specifically to the pursuit of social justice.

Students know that community service



can help them get their foot in the door at a place where they would like to work. They know that community service provides new contacts and new opportunities. To be sure, more than a few have reported that they landed their first real job at the place where they did community service. Indeed, getting to know people in the community and in the workplace will yield higher returns than sending out scores of job application letters and résumés.

In career-focused service-learning classes, students should be required to articulate their career choices based on an assessment of their interests, abilities, and experiences. They should be expected to make strong connections between classroom and community-based learning and to document knowledge and skills gained through service learning. Additionally, they should be expected to express a clear understanding of the complex world of work and to articulate the characteristics of a preferred work environment.

Service learning provides motivations for choosing a career and can enhance the career development process. It helps students gain marketable experience and a competitive edge. To ensure that it does, faculty and students should carefully design or select the service

projects and service sites. This does not mean that a nursing student, for example, must serve in a hospital or nursing home (A school or community center may be an appropriate site for the nursing student.). What it means is that the service projects and sites should facilitate the achievement of both the service goals and the learning goals specified in the syllabus.

The community-service assignments – for upper-class students, in particular – should allow them to explore careers, develop job-related knowledge and skills, and ultimately make the transition from college to work. Accordingly, faculty should ensure that students examine their service experiences in relation to the course content and classroom instruction. For their part, students should seek the most that they can get from service learning and, in the process, become active agents in their own career development.

In the final analysis, students should engage in community service, use the service to enrich their learning, and use what they learn to make wise career decisions. They will then graduate as active citizens prepared not only to make a living in the workplace but also to make a difference in the community.

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JobCat and DISCOVER can be accessed through <http://careers.wcu.edu>, so feel free to search the job listings there and post your resume as well.

Enjoy your graduation! When you are done celebrating, remember that we are still here supporting you 100 percent.



To achieve synthesis during college students must integrate “academic and community service experiences with career plans.”

-WCU’s QEP:
Service Learning



Calendar of Events : Spring 2008

February 6

Construction Management Career Fair *

9:00 am - 12:00 pm, UC Grandroom

1:00 pm - 5:00 pm Interviews

Meet with the experts in multiple segments of the construction and construction related industry.

You do not have to pre-register to attend the career fair portion of the event. Interviews may be available with some attending organizations from 1pm -5pm following the career fair.

19

Physical Therapy & SLP Career Fair*

4:00 pm - 6:00 pm, UC Grandroom

The Physical Therapy Fair is a great opportunity for students and alumni seeking employment in these fields. See JobCat for a list of employers who will be coming to this event.

12

Etiquette Dinner *

6:00 pm - 8:00 pm, UC Grandroom

This event is intended to teach students the rules of proper dining and conversation in a formal setting. Attire is business casual. The event is \$15.00 per person, cash, check or student meal ticket/CatCard is accepted. Tickets can be purchased at Career Services in Killian Annex.

26

Primp Your Resume

12:00 pm - 2:00 pm, UC Grandroom

&

27

Does your resume need a facelift? Let the Career Services staff take a look at it and provide suggestions for revision.

March

11

Summer Jobs & Internships Fair*

11:00 am - 2:00 pm, UC Grandroom

Not graduating until August and/or looking for summer employment on or near the WCU campus? This is the event for you! Businesses, campus and University departments set up booths to recruit for summer jobs and internships. Students are not required to sign up for this event, but are encouraged to bring copies of their resumes.

11

Etiquette Reception *

5:30 pm - 7pm,

UC Multipurpose Room A&B

Students are welcome to participate in this special reception where you can meet potential employers and how to network! This event is intended to teach students proper etiquette during a reception. If you are interested in participating,

12

Corporate, Non-Profit & Government Career Expo *

1:00 pm - 4:00 pm, UC Grandroom

Employers in the Public Service, marketing, management, finance, accounting, computer programming, engineering and engineering technology fields will be present at this event. Please join us and meet experts in this field, receive information on careers and hiring advice. You do not need to pre-register for this event.

13

Engineering, Math and Computer Sciences Career Fair *

9:00 am - 12:00 pm, UC Catamount Room

1:00 pm - 4:00 pm, Interviews

Employers in the fields of engineering, engineering technology and math and computer science will attend this fair. Meet experts in these fields and receive timely information on careers, occupational trends, hiring qualifications & job openings. It is not necessary to pre-register for this event.

13

Teaching Opportunities for Non-Teaching Majors *

3:30 pm - 4:30 pm, UC Catamount Room

So, you have (or are getting) a degree and you don't know what to do with it. Have you considered teaching? There are lots of ways to get into the system for non-education majors. Come check out the information and see what you might be missing out on!

April

8

Education Recruitment Day*

9:00 am - 12:00pm, UC Grandroom

Education Recruitment Day is a great opportunity for students, alumni and general public interested in opportunities within schools and school systems.

***For all Expos and Career Days:**

Business casual to professional attire is required. Students and alumni are encouraged to bring several copies of your latest resume. We also suggest uploading a resume into JobCat. If you need assistance with developing a resume, please visit Career Services (2nd floor, Killian Annex) or schedule an appointment with a career counselor 828.227.7133.

Lists of attending organizations will be available at

<http://careers.wcu.edu> and on JobCat. Lists will be updated as registrations are received.