

# The Career Journal

## Graduation Edition!



Caring about your future... Promoting success!

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## ATTENTION FUTURE ALUMNI!!! You can still use our services:



- √ **JobCat and MonsterTRAK** are internet - based recruiting systems on our website which include jobs as well as opportunities to post a resume and sign up for interviews
- √ **Cooperative Education** - Co-op is a program that allows you to work in your career/major field and receive directly related experience and credit WHILE you are still in school
- √ **Career Testing** - If you are having difficulty making a decision about your career, we offer career testing and interpretation
- √ **Interviewing Skills Assistance** - You can participate in the PerfectInterview program and improve your interview skills.
- √ **Career Days and Recruitment Events** - Career Services offers 10-12 recruitment events every year including Career and Graduate School Expo, Allied Health and Nurses' Career Day, Spring Job Fest, Summer Job Fair, Creative Professions Career Day, Education Recruitment Day and multiple etiquette development events
- √ **Resume Critiquing Service** - Drop off your resume (cover letter too!) and it will be ready (suggestions and all) in 48 hours.
- √ **Career Library** - Our Career Library offers books, directories, and videos to aid in your career decision
- √ **Career Counseling** - If you have a career concern that you would like to discuss, call for an appointment with a career counselor

### Career Counselors:

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See Page 3 & 4 ...

#### ◆ Job Search...

"Clearly, students view career services professionals as job-search experts for the tenth time in as many years, respondents ranked the career center as the "most helpful" job-search resource. "

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See Page 4 ...

#### ◆ Graduation Check list

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Located : 2nd Floor  
Killian Annex

Hours of operation:  
Monday - Friday.  
8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Phone: 828-227-7133  
Fax: 828-227-7344.

For information go to:  
<http://careers.wcu.edu>

For more information on any of these areas please go to <http://careers.wcu.edu>

# What Students Think About The Job Search

A Report on NACE's 2004 Graduating Student & Alumni Survey  
By Camille Luckenbaugh and Pattie Giordani  
From the Spring 2004 Journal  
Edited for *The Career Journal* by Michael Despeaux

Each year, through its Graduating Student & Alumni Survey, NACE provides a look into the perceptions and opinions of new college graduates. This year, the Class of 2004 shares its views on the job search.

## MAJOR DECISIONS

Most of the respondents (65.8 percent) said they chose their majors because they liked the kind of work it would enable them to do. The next largest group (15.7 percent) said they "sort of drifted" into their major field of study, while 7.6 percent said the decision was based on earning potential. An additional 5.7 percent followed the advice or the example of a family member or friend. The remaining 5.2 percent listed varying reasons—some were inspired by a teacher, professor, or counselor; some felt the major they selected would offer the most opportunities; and others combined two or more reasons, such as liking the work and the earning potential.

## VIEWS ON THE JOB SEARCH

**For the most part, students from the Class of 2004 are following suit with past years' classes in their opinion of the job search. Most appear to be aware that they'll have to work to find a job and they expect to begin the search, on average, 6.6 months before graduation. (See "[Conducting a Job Search](#)" for more information on when students plan to begin their job search.)**

The majority (57.9 percent) of respondents expect the search to be somewhat difficult, while 18.5 percent believe it may be fairly easy. An additional 15.9 percent expect it to be very difficult to find a job. A mere 4 percent think they will have a very easy job search, and nearly as many (3.8 percent) are already employed.

Among specific majors, healthcare and education majors are most positive about their job search. While 49.1 percent of healthcare grads expect the job search to be somewhat or very difficult, almost as many (45.5 percent) think it will be fairly or very easy. The gap is slightly wider among education majors. More than half (59.6 percent) anticipate that finding a job will be somewhat or very difficult, but 34 percent expect it to be fairly or very easy. Both groups' expectations are in sharp contrast to what other majors expect. Among all other majors, nearly three quarters (or more) of respondents anticipate a somewhat or very difficult market, leaving less than a quarter to believe they'll have a fairly or very easy time finding a job.

As in the past, those concerned with their experience may be concerned that they don't have experience directly related to their majors or experience in the business world.

***That is not to say they don't have experience.*** Among the entire group of respondents, nearly all reported some type of experience. For example, 76.6 percent said they had *part-time* work experience, 60.6 percent said they had *summer* work experience, and 57.5 percent reported *volunteer* work experience. In addition, one-third (33.4 percent) reported *work-study* experience, 10.3 percent have *co-op* experience, and 42.2 percent have *internship* experience.

***Career services practitioners receive high marks from students for being there to guide them.***

As has been the case in every survey since NACE first posed the question in 1995, career services staff score highest when students are asked to rate who has been most helpful to them with their job search. Using a 5-point rating system (1 is "not helpful" and 5 is "very



Western Carolina University

**Job Search continued on page 3**

## Job Search Continued...

helpful"), career services received an average rating of 3.5, topping all others by at least a half percentage point. Interestingly, more than half of students responding (51.7 percent) gave career services ratings of either 4 or 5—very high ratings.

### CONDUCTING A JOB SEARCH

On average, respondents said they plan to begin the job search 6.6 months before graduation—up slightly over last year's average of 6.3 months. However, looking at the data by age and gender gives a better overview of what respondents are planning.

The biggest variation exists among the different age groups, with the younger group planning a much earlier job search than the older group. Students under age 25 report that they'll begin their job search, on average, 6.9 months prior to graduation.

These students plan to use a variety of techniques in finding a job. While the average ratings indicate that students use the Internet, career web sites, and postings to corporate and career center sites fairly often, just about a third of students said they use career web sites and postings to corporate and career center sites all the time.

### SALARY EXPECTATIONS

Overall, respondents' salary expectations are modest, and consistent within reality. The largest group (41.6 percent) expect to earn between \$20,000 and \$30,000 as they step in to the working world. Just under a third (32.7 percent) expect to begin their careers earning between \$30,001 and \$40,000, and nearly 15 percent think they'll earn between \$40,001 and \$50,000. Those remaining (nearly 11 percent) expect to earn less than \$20,000 or more than \$50,000.

### WHAT IS AN EMPLOYER OF CHOICE?

Integrity tops the list of criteria for choosing an employer, and stability and ethical business practices were ranked second and fourth, respectively, with similar rankings last year. However, in the 2002 and 2001 surveys, integrity was rated seventh, stability eighth, and ethical business practices ninth. Apparently, at least for now, students are just as concerned with the character of the company as they are with the more tangible offerings. However, those tangible offerings have remained consistently important to students over the years. As in prior years, opportunity for advancement, a good benefits package, and job duties all came out near the top of the list this year.

### IMPLICATIONS

Clearly, students view career services professionals as job-search experts—for the tenth time in as many years, respondents ranked the career center as the "most helpful" job-search resource.

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# Congratulations Graduates!!!

# GRADUATION CHECK LIST!!!



So I have finished my resume...*Check!*  
I got it critiqued at career services...*Check!*  
And uploaded it into JobCat...*Check!*

I set up an account using Perfect Interview...*Check!*  
And I'm getting pretty good at interviewing.

As I look for jobs, I will follow up with a career counselor  
and get help. I'll keep an eye out for on-campus interviews  
and fairs in the fall...

Since I'm going to be an alum, it's nice to know  
Career Services is still there for me!

## Attention Alumni!!! You still get to use JobCat!!!

JobCat will be updated with new jobs almost everyday, so you should check for updates regularly!

For more information, go to <http://careers.wcu.edu/jobcat.asp>

To apply for jobs located on JobCat you must do the following first:

First, Log into JobCat at <http://careers.wcu.edu>

Next, Complete a personal profile,

Then, Upload a resume,

Finally, Submit your online application by the deadline.



For more information go to <http://careers.wcu.edu>