

The Career Journal

Power Your Mind!

Caring about your future... Promoting success!

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Catch-22: Getting Experience

By: Michael Despeaux

*Career Services Coordinator
and Career Counselor*

After choosing a major, developing career goals, and embarking on a course of study, many graduates encounter a *catch-22* situation when they go to find a job. You will hear the statement, "we are looking for someone with experience."

How then can students acquire this experience if working in their field first requires some level of both academic and practical training? During your college years, you have many opportunities. By applying what you learn in your major in a co-op, internship, or other on-the-job setting, you learn concrete skills first-hand, you build your resume, and you might get a foot in the door of your chosen profession.

First of all, as soon as you declare a major, add finding a co-op to your list of important priorities. As our website states, Cooperative Education, or co-op, is an academic program in which students combine academic study with a career-related work experience in business, industry, government, education, or service organizations. The program is called Cooperative Education because universities and employers work together to provide a unique and exceptional learning venture for students. Work experiences are closely related to the student's major field of study. Western has a proven record of leadership and success in Cooperative Education since its establishment in 1977.

You are eligible to participate once you achieve sophomore status, have at least a 2.00 GPA, and are enrolled as a student at WCU at least half-time. You may submit your resume and other pertinent information via JobCat or come visit a career coun-

Catch continued on page 3

Planning Success

By: Jessica Elwell

Career Services Graduate Assistant

Recently, I was fortunate enough to interview a very successful Western alumnus, Nikhil Khandelwal.

Now an analyst for an investment bank in New York City, Khandelwal graduated from Western in 2004. While Khandelwal was obtaining his degree from Western, he began frequenting career services and utilizing as many available services as possible.

Being an international student, Khandelwal feels he was extremely lucky that he found a knowledgeable professor to lead him in the right direction toward our office. He said that he also noticed the promotional efforts for career services from seeing flyers and banners around campus.

Khandelwal stated that the services he utilized most were career events, career resources, and website-based job search engines. He attended "almost every event" possible, conducted numerous interviews in the career library, and researched jobs from the many books and computer tools such as JobCat.

Khandelwal also took advantage of the on-sight career counselors on a regular basis, taking career tests, having his resume and cover letter reviewed, and even taking part in mock interviews. His best advice to current students was, "have an idea" of what you want to do. The career counselors will help to further your career goals in any way possible, and they are "subject matter experts."

When speaking to Khandelwal, I asked him if career services did in fact help him further his career goals. He said, yes, but it's "really up to the student" to seek

Planning continued on page 3



Catch...

"we are looking for someone with experience."

Planning...

"all the small things build up for the future."

See Page 2 for...

◆ **Available Services**

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>

Chart your way to success



Students and Alumni take advantage of our many services offered.

- √ **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
- √ **Career Counseling** - If you have a career concern that you would like to discuss, call for an appointment with a career counselor
- √ **Career Testing** - If you are having difficulty making a decision about a major or a career, we offer career testing and interpretation
- √ **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
- √ **Resume Critiquing Service** - Drop off your resume (cover letter too!) and it will be ready (suggestions and all) in 48 hours.
- √ **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. See them at careers.wcu.edu
- √ **Career Library** - Our Career Library offers books, directories, and videos to aid in your career decision, including DISCOVER, a computer-aided-guidance program. Also available at careers.wcu.edu
- √ **Interviewing Skills Assistance** - You can participate in a mock interview 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

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

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Career Services/Cooperative Education



Helping to make a difference in your future!

Catch Continued...

selor to discuss opportunities. Positions usually require students to have some course background in their major. Read more about the co-op program and what you can do with your major at <http://careers.wcu.edu>.

In addition to coordinating the co-op program and many internships, our office can help you identify and market yourself for all such opportunities. Co-op at WCU is a centralized program, and internships are usually obtained through the academic departments, but career services can offer assistance to students seeking any kind of job opportunity.

In addition to co-opping, you may consider several other ways to build your experience. Instead of working in any job to make ends meet, try to find part-time work that somehow relates to your major or career interests. You can also take advantage of Western's service learning program. You can read about service learning at http://www.wcu.edu/studentd/service_learning/ where you can learn how it "clarifies a student's career objective, provides hands-on experiential knowledge to students about community issues and populations, and fosters a sense of civic responsibility." In addition to your resume, service learning even goes on your co-curricular transcript.

By seeking co-op or internship opportunities or participating in service learning related to your coursework and major, you show initiative and a passion for a particular occupation or profession. Especially if they relate to the skills or experience needed, employers value these qualities!

Planning Continued...

this assistance and further their goals. Although we helped, he also said, "I had to map the road."

When asked what advice he would give to current students on how to utilize career services, Khandelwal stated several excellent points. He emphasized "it's really important you start thinking early." He made the point that to get results, you need to follow through on career advice and do your homework. Find out what skills the employer is looking for and make sure you have taken advantage of every chance to gain those skills and state them on your resume.

He said, "all the small things build up for the future." This is how you plan success.



Building Success one block at a time!

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

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



The Career Journal was updated on October 1st.

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>

Career Services Calendar



Career Happenings for October & November 2004

Event Showcase!

Career & Graduate School Expo

Wednesday, Oct 27
Ramsey Center Main Arena
10am - 3pm

Juniors and seniors will find the Expo to be most beneficial in the search for a job, internship or co-op with a variety of businesses, organizations and government agencies. This is also an excellent opportunity for those wanting to continue their education to shop for a graduate school. Business casual to professional attire is required and several copies of your latest resume are suggested.

Put your resume into JobCat (on our website <http://careers.wcu.edu>) or get help in the Career Resource Center (1st floor Graham Building) to develop one. Some interviews may take place following the Expo or at another date and location.

Construction Management, Engineering & Technology Career Day

Wednesday, November 3
Ramsey Center Auxiliary Gym
9am - 12pm - Career Fair
1pm - 5pm - Interviews

Career Services & Cooperative Education is hosting the Construction Management, Engineering & Technology Career Day in the Ramsey Center Auxiliary Gym. Students can network with businesses for internships, co-ops and post graduate permanent employment from 10am - 12pm during the career fair. Interviews will be held in the afternoon from 1pm - 5pm. Students must have a resume posted on JobCat in order to sign-up for interviews. To be pre-selected for an interview, students must sign up by 5pm, Friday, October 29. Open interview schedules will be open until 5pm Monday, November 1.

Allied Health & Nurses' Career Day

Thursday, November 18, Ramsey Center Auxiliary Gym, 4pm - 6pm

Juniors and seniors majoring in Clinical Laboratory Science, Emergency Medical Care, Health Information Management, Nursing, Nutrition and Dietetics, Social Work and Recreational Therapy and graduate students in Physical Therapy and Communication Disorders/Speech Pathology should attend this event to find out about full-time jobs after graduation. Students should dress professionally and bring copies of resume for an opportunity to talk to over 45 health care companies from the southeast region.



Happy Halloween!

For more
information go to
[Http://careers.wcu.edu](http://careers.wcu.edu)