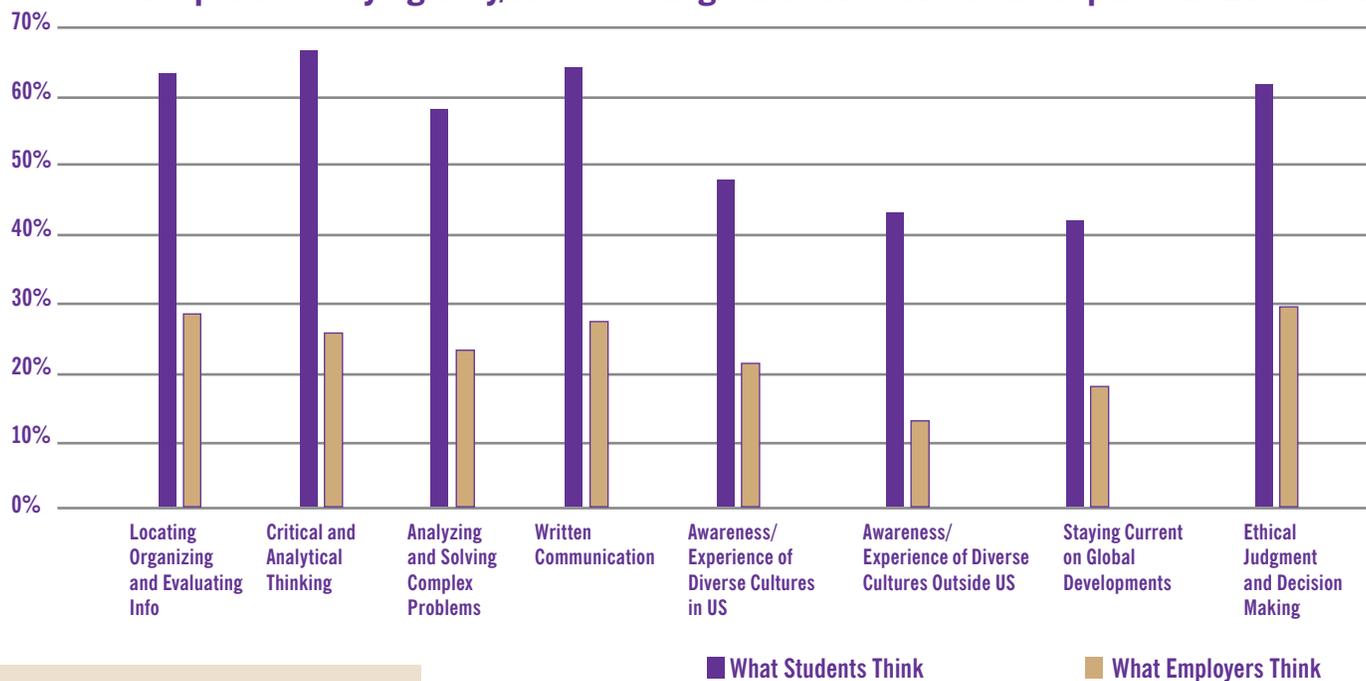


## Proportions Saying They/Recent College Graduates Are Well Prepared In Each Area



### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 3 Reporting to You from NCACE
- 4 Spring 2015 Career Goals
- 6 Alumni Career Services
- 7 Land the Interview, Score the Job
- 8 Become a Peer Career Mentor
- 8 Peer Career Mentor Mobile Schedule

### Career Events

Spring Career Events are open to all students and all majors! *Continued on page 8*

*The Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education is a unit of the Office for Undergraduate Studies, "A Pathway to Intentional Learning for Undergraduate Students at Western Carolina University"*

## Different Perspectives Point to a Gap in Career Preparation: Bridging it with Five Learning Outcomes at WCU

By Thomas West, Graduate Intern

Are college graduates truly prepared for employment after college? Depending on who is asked, the answers may vary. According to data collected from 613 students and 400 employers in a recent survey conducted by the Association of American College and Universities (AACU), college students consistently rate themselves higher than their employers do in areas of preparedness. Some of the deficits between the recent graduates' view and their employers' view of preparedness are vast, but the reasons for this are even greater. Why are recent college graduates ranked so low by employers? Perhaps most important, how can recent college graduates obtain the skills that employers say are lacking?

Carol Geary Schneider, the president of the AACU, states that employers, educators, and students have a similar understanding of the skills required of college graduates. Schneider believes that students are knowledgeable of what they need to do to earn these skills, but colleges do not always help the students. Where does Western Carolina University stand in its intent to help students develop and practice these invaluable skills? The answer is clear. Foundationally, Western Carolina University supports students in their efforts to obtain the necessary skills that employers seek, and this is made evident when looking at the university's five institutional learning outcomes. The skills outlined in the learning outcomes

*Continued on page 5*

## Looking For More Advice?



Previous issues of Career Journal can be found at our online archive. More advice and resources are just a click away.

## WCU Career Journal

## Career Services INFORMATION

828.227.7133 | [careers.wcu.edu](http://careers.wcu.edu)

Mardy Ashe, Director and Career Counselor  
[mashe@wcu.edu](mailto:mashe@wcu.edu)

Michael Despeaux, Associate Director and Career Counselor  
[mdespeaux@wcu.edu](mailto:mdespeaux@wcu.edu)

Cassie Spencer, Graduate Assistant  
[crspencer@wcu.edu](mailto:crspencer@wcu.edu)

Carrie Hachadurian, Non Work-Study Student Employment Specialist  
[cphachadurian@wcu.edu](mailto:cphachadurian@wcu.edu)

Deneen Landis, Administrative Support Specialist  
[dslandis@wcu.edu](mailto:dslandis@wcu.edu)

Thomas West, Graduate Intern  
[tlwest@wcu.edu](mailto:tlwest@wcu.edu)

*The CAREER JOURNAL is a publication of the Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education at Western Carolina University.*

*Publisher: Michael Despeaux  
Editor: Cassie Spencer*

WCU is a University of North Carolina campus and an Equal Opportunity Institution. This public document was created for electronic distribution by the Office of Creative Services | March, 2015 | 15-177



## Career Services' PROGRAMS FOR SUCCESS

STUDENTS AND ALUMNI: TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE MANY SERVICES WE OFFER!

For More Information and Direct Access to the Following Programs, Visit Our Website at [careers.wcu.edu](http://careers.wcu.edu)

### JobCat

Internet-based recruiting system that includes jobs as well as opportunities to post a résumé and sign up for interviews.

### Career Counseling

Set an appointment with a career counselor or seek immediate assistance from Peer Career Mentors on campus.

### Career Testing

Take tests on our website assessing your values and skills. Schedule an appointment for interpretation.

### Cooperative Education (Co-op) and Catamount Externships

Work or shadow in your field of study, receiving related work experience and class credit or a certification of completion.

### Resume Assistance

Email your resume/cover letter to [mdespeaux@wcu.edu](mailto:mdespeaux@wcu.edu) or [mashe@wcu.edu](mailto:mashe@wcu.edu) and make an appointment to discuss the document.

### Interviewing Skills Assistance

Participate in a mock interview and learn from the interaction through the online [Perfect Interview Program](#).

### Career Days and Recruitment Events

Multiple recruitment events are held every year, like the Fall WCU Career Fair & Grad School Day, Health Services Career Fair, Etiquette Dinners and Receptions, Summer Jobs and Internships Fair, and the Education Recruitment Day, to name a few.



# Reporting to you from NCACE

By Michael Despeaux, Associate Director of Career Services

In January, I participated in a “Coffee and Conversations” web-based meeting with other career services professionals and corporate recruiters, sponsored by the North Carolina Association of Colleges and Employers (NCACE). In addition to learning from the employers who recruit our students here on campus, such discussions help us keep up with trends and issues that influence our program and our students. In no particular order, here are some points from the day, some new and some timeless but worth repeating:

- Students must be mobile! It is OK to be transparent about long-term location goals, but successful candidates are willing to move for an opportunity.
- Employers continue to value career fairs, but they also appreciate targeted opportunities to reach students, such as speaking in your classes or holding an information session in an academic building; in these settings students are most engaged and prepared.
- Students should understand the technology a company uses to recruit. Most larger companies use their websites.
- LinkedIn is extremely useful. If a student meets a recruiter at a fair or is interested in a particular company, s/he can “follow” them on LinkedIn, receive timely announcements, and prepare for an interview.
- On resumes, campus and community involvement such as leadership and service shows that students are committed to developing themselves and are ready to grow professionally.
- On resumes, describing class projects and team-oriented accomplishments is the next-best thing to related experience.
- On resumes, students should show any accomplishments using technology.
- Resumes should have targeted objectives, identifying the company and what the student can contribute in a job there.
- If they have one, resumes should include key words taken from the job description and employer website.
- At career fairs and in recruiting, employers value a wide range of different majors and backgrounds, *if* the applicant can describe the benefit they offer.

## JobCat Get an Account!

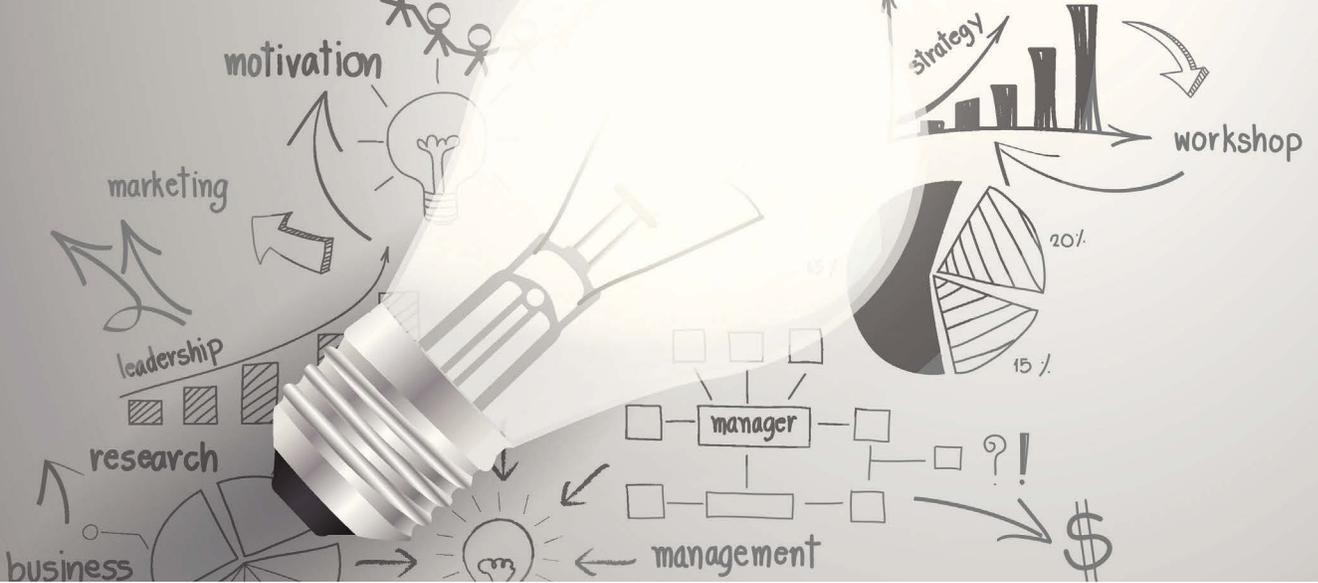
### WHY YOU NEED ONE:

To keep updated with regular postings for on-campus and local jobs, To strengthen your network and seek advice from volunteer mentors, To set your resume in the sights of future employees

### HOW TO GET ONE:

1. Log in to JobCat at [careers.wcu.edu](http://careers.wcu.edu).
2. Complete a personal profile.
3. Upload a résumé.
4. Submit your online application by the deadline.

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



# 10 Career Goals for Spring 2015

By Cassie Spencer, Graduate Assistant

With the spring semester underway, it's time to think about the changes you want to make and the goals you want to accomplish. Setting career development goals is a great way to make sure you're on track to be the most employable candidate possible.

## 1. Make/Update Your LinkedIn

If you don't have a LinkedIn profile already, your top priority for the spring semester should be to make one. Already have a LinkedIn? Update your profile; make sure your picture, current job, and summary are all up to date.

## 2. Visit the Peer Career Mentor Table

Peer Career Mentors are available at various locations around campus Monday – Thursday from 11 a.m. – 2:15 p.m. Stop by to ask them career related questions, to get help with a resume or to learn what you can do with your major.

## 3. Attend a Career Fair

Whether you're a senior looking for a job following graduation or a first-year student unsure about your career path, attending a career fair is an important goal for this semester. Career fairs can not only lead to a potential job but also give you a chance to network. Career fair dates can be found at [careers.wcu.edu](http://careers.wcu.edu).

## 4. Attend a Career/Professional Development Event

Learn the proper way to handle a professional dining event by attending the spring etiquette reception, or ask your RA or club/organization president to host a professional development presentation.

Career Services is happy to present on resume writing, interviewing skills, professional attire and many other topics.

## 5. Meet with a Career Counselor

Our career counselors are here to help! If you're a senior whose preparing for life after graduation, a first-year student without a career path, or anywhere in between, our career counselors can get you on track to reach all of your Spring 2015 career goals.

## 6. Practice Your Pitch

So often in the job searching, networking and interviewing worlds you will be asked one simple question: "Tell me about yourself." Practice your pitch; what do you want to make sure every potential career contact knows about you? Look for networking events based on your major, reach out to alumni, or contact professionals in your field to gain more insight.

## 7. Write Long-Term Goals

Where do you see yourself in five years? 10 years? Even if you're not 100% sure, starting to think about long-term goals will give you a way to start thinking about the short-term goals you need to put in place. Additionally, employers often ask about career goals; think about where you see yourself in the future, and how that fits with their organization.

## 8. Make a List of Companies

Knowing who you want to work for is just as important as knowing what you want to do. Research companies and make a list of the ones you are interested in. Follow companies on LinkedIn to see what they are doing on a daily basis and to learn about job openings.

## 9. Know What Employers Want

Even if you are not ready to start applying for jobs, it's important to know what your field looks for when hiring a new employee. Look at job descriptions to see what qualifications companies seek. What qualifications do you have, and what can you do to make yourself more employable?

## 10. Schedule Time

Schedule time to work on your resume, job search, network and more. Applying for jobs and preparing your application materials are within themselves a full-time job. Lessen your stress by scheduling it in to your weekly tasks and taking it one step at a time.

*Spring 2015 is bound to be a great semester with these career goals in mind!*

# Different Perspectives Point to a Gap in Career Preparation *Continued from Cover*

are core to a student's development as an intentional learner, just as they are core to the values held by all members of the Western Carolina University community. WCU's institutional learning outcomes are:

1. Integrate information from a variety of contexts
2. Solve complex problems
3. Communicate effectively and responsibly
4. Practice civic engagement
5. Clarify and act on purpose and values

<http://www.wcu.edu/about-wcu/institutional-learning-outcomes.asp>

How do these institutional learning outcomes tie with the data provided by the AACU? There proves to be a great deal of overlap between WCU's Learning Outcomes and the areas of preparedness that employers are looking for, as shown in the graph.

Learning Outcome #1 aligns with: *"Locating, Organizing, and Evaluating Information"*

Learning Outcome #2 aligns with: *"Critical and Analytical Thinking"*

*"Analyzing and Solving Complex Problems"*

Learning Outcome #3 aligns with: *"Written Communication"*

Learning Outcome #4 aligns with: *"Awareness and Experience of Diverse Cultures inside and outside the US"*

*"Staying Current on Global Developments"*

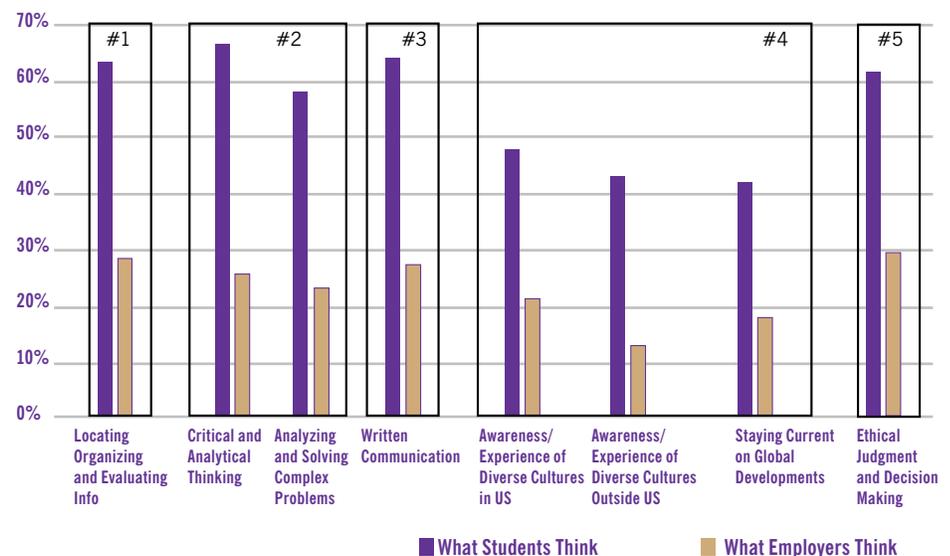
Learning Outcome #5 aligns with: *"Ethical Judgment and Decision Making"*

With these institutional learning outcomes in mind, it is clear that WCU strategizes to provide students the ability to learn these skills, and the University implements this plan in a variety of ways: with externships, with service learning reflections, in many real-world business or engineering projects, in clinical or community-based health care experiences, and with internships across the curriculum. In 2014 alone, Career Services coordinated 75 internships and co-ops, as well as over 40 Catamount Externships. It offered 10 career fairs and events each academic year, reaching approximately 1,800 to 2,000 students and bringing between 250 and 300 employers to campus. Similarly, Career Services partners with Alumni Affairs to offer an alumni shadow day in Atlanta and is expanding to other cities. In collaboration with other offices and academic departments, Career Services helps thousands of students pursue opportunities to practice and market these skills on resumes.

Career Services continues to extend its reach each year by connecting with students, partnering with offices around campus, and providing continued support to alumni. While keeping the institutional learning outcomes in mind, its mission includes equipping WCU "students with the information and tools needed to make well-informed career decisions" (Career Services website) and succeed in the workplace by demonstrating skills that meet our own high expectations, not the lower perceptions represented in this national study.

*Jaschik, S. (2015, January 20). Well-prepared in their own eyes. Retrieved February 10, 2015 from <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/01/20/study-finds-big-gaps-between-student-and-employer-perceptions>*

**Relating Key Workplace Skills and Job Preparation to WCU's Institutional Learning Outcomes**



# Alumni Career Services

## Navigating the College-to-Career Transition By Cassie Spencer, Graduate Assistant & Thomas West, Graduate Intern

Last semester, Career Services and Alumni Affairs partnered together and launched the [Alumni Career Services](#) webpage. This webpage, found by visiting either the [Career Services](#) page or [Alumni Affairs](#) page, provides alumni with information about career support, attending or recruiting at career events, hosting interns and externs, the spotlight shadow experience, and more.

The Alumni Career Services program is offered in partnership through both Career Services and Alumni Affairs and seeks to enhance students' opportunities while strengthening Western Carolina University's network of alumni. It is our hope that building a stronger alumni career services will provide continuity of support to our students, assistance with post-graduation transition, and a continued lifelong connection with WCU.

Dr. April Perry, assistant professor of College Student Personnel here at WCU, studied college students' post-graduation

transition as her doctoral dissertation. Through this research, Perry (2012) found several themes in the experiences that students had following graduation. These themes include: shifting identities, searching, unmet expectations, and stabilizers. The theme which correlates most with Alumni Career Services involves students' unmet expectations. This theme refers to students' "expectation of themselves, their degree, job searching, the workplace transition, earning potential... and other challenges in the post-university transition..." (Perry, 2012, p.218-219).

Alumni Career Services addresses the issues within this theme by providing free one-on-one career counseling, career exploration and resume/CV help, job searching assistance, interview preparation, an open invitation to career fairs, on-campus recruiting as well as career development and networking events for current students and alumni, all in addition to providing internships, externships and alumni shadow experiences for current

students. These services encompass a number of the suggestions that Perry (2012) recommended for institutions to support students before, during, and after their transition out of college.

The transition from college to career can be exciting and terrifying for many students. It's a common misconception among students that job opportunities will fall into their laps following graduation (Perry, 2012) and that earning a degree will automatically make them competitive in the job market. Alumni Career Services is here to provide the necessary resources to help students navigate this transition. If you're a student or alumni looking to enhance your post-graduation preparation or transition, contact Career Services at 828.227.7133 or online at [careers.wcu.edu](http://careers.wcu.edu).

*Perry, A. (2012). Treading through swampy water: Graduates experience of the post-university transition. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand.*

The Career Services office is currently offering the following presentations for any student organization on campus, free of charge, to help develop the students professionally.

### APPROPRIATE ATTIRE

Learn to identify the context in which business casual or business professional is required. Guidelines for men and women are both featured.

### JOB SEARCHING

Explore job search resources available at Career Services while briefly reviewing how to write resumes and cover letters.

### RÉSUMÉ & COVER LETTER WORKSHOP

Methods of how to craft a resume based upon the needs of the audience:

- Creating your first resume, and how to use it later as a repository for future activities
- Modifying a pre-existing resume to focus on strategy and answering more job-specific questions

### NETWORKING AT EVENTS AND THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

Learn how to professionally and methodically grow a beneficial network by finding networking arenas, pursuing contacts and maintaining correspondence.

### INTERVIEW SKILLS & PREPARATION

Provide students with a space to prepare and practice for an interview. The Perfect Interview program will be demonstrated as a resource.

### CAREER DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES AT WCU

This presentation describes the ideal chronological progression of career development for students while providing an overview of services within our office. Actual resources will be described or demonstrated, including career counseling, FOCUS 2, resume assistance, job search tools like JobCat, and Perfect Interview.

If you are interested in booking a presentation for your student organization, please contact Career Services at [careers.wcu.edu](http://careers.wcu.edu) at least two weeks prior to the potential date of the event.



# Land the Interview, Score the Job

By Cassie Spencer, Graduate Assistant

On average, anywhere from 118-250 resumes are received by hiring managers after posting an open position; of those 250 resumes, 50% will actually be read (Hicks, 2014). Given that the job searching process is not always in favor of the “searcher,” how do you set yourself apart? How do you ensure that your resume is not only in the 50% that are read by hiring managers but is also one that leads to an interview and hopefully a job?

## Use the Job Description:

The job description is your best friend when applying for a job. The job description tells you exactly what an employer is looking for and will help you highlight your relevant skills. Many companies also use Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) that scan resumes for keywords used in the job description. This isn't to say that you should fill your resume with as many keywords as possible – hiring managers can spot this trick and thus may not take your application seriously. Use the keywords that apply and accurately describe your experience and skills. Tweaking your resume to each specific job you apply for is in your best interest for landing an interview.

## Think Like the Hiring Manager:

If you were hiring a candidate what would you want to see on their resume and in their cover letter? With the mindset of a hiring manager you can begin to think about what the most important qualifications are for the position and how your experience and skills can not only fit those qualifications but can also stand out against the pack.

## Perfect Your Resume:

With over 200 resumes to review hiring managers will use any and every excuse to throw one into the “no” pile. Your resume must be perfect. Proofread your resume. Spelling errors, simple grammatical errors, or slight inconsistencies in your resume are all easy aspects to fix and an easy way to keep your resume out of the trash.

## Cover Letters are Key:

There is no denying that cover letters can be a big pain for job seekers; however painful they are to write, cover letters are often the key to success when it comes to job applications. Cover letters are your chance to not just tell, but to show the company why you're a great fit for the job. Unlike resumes, cover letters allow the applicant to tell more than just the facts. It's your chance to show your personality, to engage the hiring manager in your experiences, and to make them want to meet you!

## The Follow Up:

Following up after applying for a job is one of the most important and most forgotten aspects of job hunting (Hicks, 2014). Krystal Hicks (2014) shares a story in her career blog about an applicant who got an interview because he was the only one out of 100 applicants to follow up with the company. Following up after applying lets hiring managers know that you are serious about your interest in the position. Further, calling to follow up is another chance to have your name be heard and hopefully

remembered when your application hits the top of the pile.

## Prepare and Practice for an Interview:

Preparing for an interview is essential. Think about questions that you might be asked and experiences that are relevant to the position. Prepare for the interview by researching the company and the position. Additionally, it is important to have your own questions ready. Is there something about the job that wasn't in the description? Did the employer tell you about training opportunities? Don't be afraid to ask about the company's 5-10 year plan or to ask the hiring manager about how they got started in the company/field.

## Send a Thank You:

Sending an e-mail or a hand-written note after an interview thanking the recruiter for their time and highlighting an important aspect of your conversation is a great way to stand out as a candidate. By sending a thank you, your attention to detail and thoughtfulness is sure to be noticed.

Whether or not you are offered a job, the hiring manager is sure to remember you and if nothing else, that is a networking opportunity and a foot in the door for future opportunities.

*Hicks, K. (2014, November 17). Your degree is only one piece of the employability puzzle. Retrieved November 17, 2014 from <http://www.krystalhicks.com/blogs--articles/your-degree-is-only-one-piece-of-the-employability-puzzle>*

# Spring 2015 Career Events

Spring Career Events are open to all students and all majors! Prepare for the fair by updating your resume and practicing your pitch to employers. Don't forget to dress professionally and to follow up with companies of interest after the event!

## EDUCATION RECRUITMENT DAY

March 17 | 10 a.m. – Noon | UC Grand Room

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

## SUMMER JOBS AND INTERNSHIPS FAIR

March 24 | 1 – 4 p.m. | UC Grand Room

Looking for summer employment on or near the WCU campus? This is the event for you! All majors are invited to participate!

## PROFESSIONAL ETIQUETTE RECEPTION

March 24 | 6 – 7:30 p.m. | Ramsey Center Hospitality Room | \$5/per person

This event will help to prepare students for interviews conducted in a reception-type atmosphere. The attire is business casual.

## WCU SPRING CAREER FAIR

March 25 | 1 – 4 p.m. | UC Grand Room

The Spring WCU Career Fair is an excellent opportunity for any student looking for a full-time job, internship or co-op. ALL MAJORS ARE WELCOME!

# Peer Career Mentor Mobile Mentor Schedule 2014-2015

The Peer Career Mentor Mobile Mentor Station can be found at the following location during the coinciding dates:

Monday through Thursday

11:00 a.m.–2:15 p.m.

March 16-19	Belk
March 17	University Center 3rd Floor Education Recruitment Day
March 23-26	Forsyth
March 24	University Center 3rd Floor Summer Job & Internship Fair
March 25	University Center 3rd Floor Spring Career Fair
April 6-9	Courtyard
April 13-16	Forsyth
April 20-23	Library
April 27-30	Bookstore

# Become a Peer Career Mentor

The Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education is calling all campus and academic student leaders to apply to become a Peer Career Mentor (PCM) for the 2015-2016 academic year. PCMs are trained to present on a variety of career development topics, assist with student outreach, and promote the importance of early and continuous career planning and preparation. PCMs will provide résumé advice, assistance with job search technology, and assistance with career exploration to students on a peer-to-peer level.

## How to Apply

- Complete the application found on the Career Services' Website
- On the Career Services' Homepage, look on the purple side bar to the left of the screen. Click on "Career Mentors." The application will be found on that page
- Email a completed application with a current copy of your resume to Cassie Spencer at [crspencer@wcu.edu](mailto:crspencer@wcu.edu)
- Applications are due by 5pm on Friday, March 20
- Plan to interview on Tuesday, April 7 in the event that your application is selected



Find us on  
**Facebook**

Facebook is a registered trademark of Facebook, Inc.



WCU Career Services has a Facebook page!

Become a fan, and we can send you updates on Career Services and Co-Op Event happenings.

Find us online by searching keywords: "WCU Career Services" on Facebook.