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Employers Are Looking for WCU Grads on JobCat

More than ever, employers are relying on online job search engines to advertise available positions. But did you know that Western Carolina University has its very own job search engine?

JobCat is an online database of employers specifically looking for WCU graduates. Many of the employers are WCU alumni who know of the high quality education you are receiving here and want to hire someone from the same university from which they graduated.

Not only full-time jobs are posted on JobCat! Many internships and part-time positions can be found on the site as well. Also, if you connect your JobCat profile with your LinkedIn profile, more than 50,000 national and international positions are posted.

JobCat allows you to modify your search parameters to narrow your search. You can even search by your major. However, don't limit your search too much by using the job function filter on every search. Many employers are looking for students from all majors.

Find JobCat by searching for it on the WCU website. Login information is available on the page 6.

The Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education is a unit of the Office for Undergraduate Studies



FOCUS-2 Can Help with Choosing a Major and Exploring Careers

BY SARAH ALSPAW

People spend countless hours online taking various personality tests and trying to figure out who they are. Facebook alone provides hundreds of tests ranging from "Know your personality in 2 minutes," to "What color is your personality?" to even tests like "Which Avenger are you most like?" With all of these personality tests easily accessible on the Internet, it is easy to think that you are getting to know yourself. However, most, if not all, of these tests have no scientific background from which they base their questions and results, which creates inconclusive or inaccurate results.

Even though individuals often take personality tests for fun, getting to know yourself is the first step in the process of exploring which career path would be best for you.

FOCUS-2 offers personality, work interest, skills, values, and leisure interest inventories designed to evaluate several of your personal dimensions to help you identify what you enjoy doing. Also, this tool helps distinguish the difference between your leisure, personal, and work interests. It is important to distinguish between what you enjoy doing at work and what you enjoy doing at home because they are not always the same. For example, at work you may be very organized but not at home, or you may love painting in your free time, but would not enjoy doing it full time. This work interest inventory will help you make that distinction.

FOCUS-2 is based on the Holland Code, a scientifically proven and accepted theory. With the reliability of this test, you can be more confident in your results. Your results will be hierarchically ordered, beginning with your most dominant two or three traits. You can even

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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.edu/6663.asp

Career Services' PROGRAMS FOR SUCCESS

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

JobCat & Other Job Searching Services

Internet-based recruiting systems that include jobs as well as opportunities to post a résumé 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 or major field and receive directly related experience and credit while you are still in school.

Résumé Critiquing Service

E-mail your résumé (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. View them at careers.wcu.edu.

Career Services Website

Our website offers links, articles, event calendars, job search tools, directories, videos and FOCUS-2, a computer-aided guidance program to help you in your career decision. Available at careers.wcu.edu.

Interviewing Skills Assistance

You can participate in a mock interview and improve your skills through our online [Perfect Interview Program](#).

Career Days and Recruitment Events

Career Services offers multiple [recruitment events](#) every year, including Fall WCU Career Fair & Grad School Day, Health Services Career Fair, Etiquette Dinners, Summer Jobs and Internships Fair, WCU Career Fair, Etiquette Reception, &

Career Services INFORMATION

828.227.7133 | careers.wcu.edu

Mardy Ashe, Director and Career Counselor
mashe@wcu.edu

Michael Despeaux, Associate Director and Career Counselor
mdespeaux@wcu.edu

Sarah Alspaw, Graduate Assistant
slalspaw@wcu.edu

Carrie Hachadurian, Non Work-Study Student Employment Specialist
cphachadurian@wcu.edu

Peggy Tompkins, Administrative Support Specialist
ptompkins@wcu.edu

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*Publisher: Michael Despeaux
Editor/Photographer: Sarah Alspaw*

CIS Major Lands Internship Working on A-B Tech Computer Network

Western Carolina University student Thanh Tram, 25, is driven to succeed in the field of information computer technology. This passion brought her to the United States, where Tram had to overcome the many barriers an immigrant from South Vietnam would encounter. Five years ago, at the age of 18, Tram landed in California with her mother and sisters. Today, she is an information systems technology (IST) student intern at A-B Tech under the watchful eye of John Tucker, technical support specialist for campus hardware and software.

A bubbly, personable, intelligent and very computer savvy individual, Tram wasted little time responding to a posting at her university asking for a student intern for Tucker's department. Her interview here with several IST leaders was smooth and predictable. Tram knew her stuff and wanted to learn a lot more. Tucker could supply the projects that would enable Tram to receive credit at WCU and which would extremely broaden Tram's view of the field.

She was able to get to this point in her life by being persistent with her studies 13,000 miles away. One would imagine her biggest advantage would be the fact she was in an elementary school that taught English in second grade. In fact, Tram took many English classes throughout her 18 years in South Vietnam. She even won an English speaking, writing and story comprehension contest.

However, from the time Tram stepped on the plane for the flight to America she

knew she was in trouble. Her mother and younger sisters looked to her to interpret the directions from the flight attendants and to communicate with them. "I couldn't understand anything they were saying," said Tram.

You see, Tram's English teachers were Vietnamese, and they taught British English. "I felt completely lost," she said. In her native land she would concentrate on pronunciation and speaking clearly, slowly, and deliberately. Arriving here, she heard "people rushing their words and talking a lot of slang."

She was prohibited from enrolling in high school because she was just turning 18 years old, so she enrolled in basic skills and ESL classes. Now, in Asheville, Tram is a junior at WCU with a double major in computer information systems and management.

Tucker, her mentor, said, "I feel interns are a solution to our problem here of having so much on our plates and not enough hours in the day to accomplish everything." He didn't look at the prospect of having a student intern as taking a gamble. "I have a background in teaching so I found this is a way to share my life's experiences."

By the first of March, Tram had seven weeks of Tucker's guidance to her credit.



A-B Tech's John Tucker, technical support specialist for campus hardware and software, with intern and A-B Tech graduate Thanh Tram.

"Before I was working on a personal computer and here I'm working on a network. I was a little nervous at first but not after the first couple of days. He's very easy to work with," said Tram.

Tucker has taught Tram the methods and all the steps he uses to troubleshoot and to build a computer default profile. She also is working on printer issues. "Tram gets to see a mix of how everyone else handles many different things," Tucker said. She has learned deployment methods for Windows 7 and troubleshooting methods for repair. She has removed old computers, installed new lab computers and image lab, re-imaged existing labs, set up new faculty and staff computers and, of course, she troubleshoots issues with existing computers.

This article was originally published in March 2013 in A-B Tech's online publication Tech Talk. Access it at www.abtech.edu/news/articles/student-intern-ist-learning-most-best-here-a-b-tech.

Graduates and Alumni, We're Here for You!

Just because you've graduated does not mean we've abandoned you. Career Services is free for all WCU alumni! Need help writing a résumé? Thinking about changing career paths? Considering graduate school? Want to attend in a Career Fair? We can help!

We would be more than happy to communicate with you about your needs. You can reach us in person, over the phone, or via email. Our contact information and many of our services can be found on our website at careers.wcu.edu.



FOCUS-2 Can Help with Choosing a Major and Exploring Careers CONTINUED

view a list of positions that capitalize on those two to three dominant traits.

Focus-2 considers six dominant traits that constitute the Holland Code:

Realistic — Realistic occupations frequently involve work activities that include practical, hands-on problems and solutions. They often deal with plants, animals, and real-world materials like wood, tools, and machinery. Many of the occupations require working outside and do not involve a lot of paperwork or working closely with others.

Investigative — Investigative occupations frequently involve working with ideas and require an extensive amount of thinking. These occupations can involve searching for facts and figuring out problems mentally.

Artistic — Artistic occupations frequently involve working with forms, designs and patterns. They often require self-expression and the work can be done without following a clear set of rules.

Social — Social occupations frequently involve working with, communicating with, and teaching people. These occupations

often involve helping or providing service to others.

Enterprising — Enterprising occupations frequently involve starting up and carrying out projects. These occupations can involve leading people and making many decisions. Sometimes they require risk taking and often deal with business.

Conventional — Conventional occupations frequently involve following set procedures and routines. These occupations can include working with data and details more than with ideas. Usually there is a clear line of authority to follow. (Source: www.onetonline.org/find/descriptor/browse/Interests/)

Once you have completed your profile, you will be given a list of potential careers that you could pursue. This list will be very long because with your two or three dominant traits, you may fit into several different careers. Not every career on that list will be perfect for you, which is why you should print your results and bring them into the office to speak with a professional career counselor. The career counselor will then help you provide guidance intended to help you decide what path you'd like to pursue

and what major you need to help you get to that career path.

Focus-2 also can be used to gather more information about each different career paths. If you utilize the information under "Research Any Career: Explore the Possibilities," you can search for careers by occupation name or industry. You can even search by WCU major. Once you select a particular career path, you can find information about the job duties, skills required, values, outlook, even salary information. If you are trying to decide between two different career paths, you can do a side-by-side comparison.

Regardless of your major or class, you can benefit from Focus-2 by growing deeper self-understanding exploring a multitude of career opportunities. Understanding yourself is the first step to identifying a potential career, and then researching an occupation can give you clarity and direction. Bring your results into the Career Services office to use as a starting point when discussing your aspirations with a professional counselor.

Sarah Alspaw is a graduate assistant in the Office of Career Services.

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

Informing students of how to dress in both business professional and business casual attire and how to identify when each look is required for what context. This features clothing guidelines for men and women.

JOB SEARCHING

This presentation briefly touches on how to write a résumé and cover letter, where students can look for a job after they graduate, and what resources are available to them through the Career Services office to assist with job searching.

RÉSUMÉ & COVER LETTER WORKSHOP

This workshop can be customized to meet the needs of its audience. For the first and second year students, it can focus on creating a first resume to be used as a repository for present and future activities. For students who are ready to apply for internships and jobs, it can expand in focus on strategy, answer more job-specific questions and improve existing documents.

SUMMER JOB PREP

Looking for a job this summer? This presentation explains the avenues for searching for a job close to Cullowhee, or if you are staying in your hometown for the summer.

INTERVIEW SKILLS & PREPARATION

This workshop will assist students in their preparation and practice for interviewing. The PerfectInterview program will be demonstrated as a resource.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES AT WCU

This presentation is designed to provide an overview of our services and a description of the ideal steps a student should take toward his or her career development during college. Actual resources will be described or demonstrated, including career counseling, FOCUS 2, résumé assistance, job search tools, PerfectInterview, and career fairs and events.

If you are interesting in booking a presentation for your student organization, please contact Career Services by emailing careerservices.wcu.edu at least two weeks prior to the potential date of the event.

On Resume Writing

BY MICHAEL DESPEAUX



As a career counselor, I see lots of résumés. Increasingly, students listen to us and begin building their first résumés during their first or second semester instead of waiting until graduation or the last minute. Many second- and third-year students will seek our assistance as they prepare to apply for internships or co-ops. Of course, proactive seniors visit Career Services before career fairs and as they enter their job searches.

Over the years, my recommendations for writing a résumé have evolved, and I've come to realize that there are exceptions to most "rules." For instance, while it's still true that most new college graduates should restrict their résumés to one page in length, in some science or health care professions, two or more pages may be acceptable, as long as the information is relevant. While it's usually conventional to avoid listing high school accomplishments, an increasing number of students begin interning, job shadowing and even seeking college-level credit before completing their secondary education. If these initiatives relate to their chosen field, describing them could show longevity of interest, or at least help them better compete for internships. Many "rules" are grounded in either convention or common sense, but exceptions are bountiful.

Because contradictions and counterexamples are so common, students often experience difficulty choosing a résumé format or effectively showcasing their experience, credentials, and skills. Based on the thousands of documents I've reviewed since I joined Western Carolina in 2002 (and many more before then, on various search committees), I offer some basic advice.

1. Your résumé is a strategic document. There is no "one size fits all" order or list of headings that you should follow or use. Think about the recipient and the job for which you are applying. Is it teaching? Then use the heading, "Teaching Experience" instead of something less specific. Did you intern in your field? Separate related experience and your internship and list them together

under a specific heading, and then list unrelated but meaningful work beneath "Other Experience."

Strategy also means thinking about what information is most relevant and how to describe job accomplishments. "Related Coursework" had better relate to the job you're seeking – that heading should not be seen as an invitation to re-create a transcript on your résumé. If two students majoring in history described their internships at the Mountain Heritage Center, and one sought employment in a museum, and the other chose to enter business or sales, the accomplishments and skills described by each might be very different. Take the time to think about your application, and customize your résumé to focus on that job and showcase the most relevant or transferable skills and experience, the ones that make you a better candidate.

2. Be consistent. Whatever format you choose, consistently present information and formatting. If you tab one date over toward the right, then do the same with them all. Use the same size and type of font for all headings and text. Use the same size margin on the left and right. Left-justify all headings, not just some. Italicize all of your job titles, not just one.

3. Avoid using an automated template. A simple Word document can be elegant and offers much more flexibility so that you can easily add experience throughout college (and beyond) and customize your résumé for different jobs.

4. Avoid overusing bold or other formatting. Too much bold font gives the same impression as an over-highlighted textbook. Just bold your name and section headings.

5. Tab things like dates and locations (city and state) over toward the right, and line them up with the first letter of the word, not the right margin. Using the space bar to position text on a page makes a mess, and right-justifying them looks choppy.

6. Not all résumés need an objective statement, and almost none need sweeping summaries or career objectives. If you write an objective, it should target the reader. It should "connect the dots" between who she wants and who you are. It should specifically state the desired position or company and succinctly describe what you can contribute.

7. Use bullet points to describe your accomplishments beneath each job. Use plain, automated Microsoft Word bullets, not fancy bullets. Do not manufacture them yourself using your keyboard. Start each bulleted phrase with an action verb and make sure the verb tense is correct.

8. Leadership, service and campus involvement are important. Find ways to gain or do these things. Better yet, find ways to integrate your academic work, your experiences and your extracurricular activities. Your faculty adviser or a career counselor can help you identify related student organizations or professional

Continued on page 6

FOCUS 2

This fall, we replaced our online Discover program with the FOCUS 2 Online Career planning and Major Exploration System. Customized with the majors offered at WCU, students' assessment results can be matched to career options and majors or programs. FOCUS 2 provides students with another tool to help guide themselves through a reliable career and education decision-making model and helps them choose their majors and make informed decisions about their careers.

1. *Career readiness: FOCUS 2 assesses students' involvement and introduces activities that support career and education decision-making.*
2. *Self-assessments: These provide reliable and research-based assessments of students' work interests (Holland code), personality, values, skills, and leisure interests. Students' assessment results are matched to occupations and supporting majors at WCU.*
3. *Career exploration: Detailed, current descriptions of more than 1,200 occupations and featuring more than 600 videos. Tools include a job board, occupation search, and suggestions for majors matching student interests.*
4. *Online career portfolio: Summarizes students' assessment results with their preferred majors and careers and personal comments/rankings, goals, and achievements.*
5. *Action planner: Students plan career-relevant experiences including their courses, internships, study abroad, and volunteering.*
6. *Counselor reports: The FOCUS 2 website will provide complete access to students' results.*



Researching Employers: An Article in NACE Job Choices

NACE, the National Association of Colleges and Employers, publishes a journal called Job Choices designed to inform universities and students about employment trends relevant to today's graduates and job seekers.

In the February 2013 edition, the authors of one article, Alicia Bervine, Anne Orange, and Jennifer Whetstone-Jackson, explain the importance of having an in-depth understanding of a company before an interview and exactly how to make an informed employment decision.

"Unfortunately, many students overlook the importance of research when undertaking a job search or looking for an internship. In

fact, it's common for employers to complain that potential job candidates haven't 'done their homework,' and instead come into the interview with little or no knowledge about the organization. These candidates flounder, asking questions that could be easily answered by a cursory look at the company website or literature. Needless to say, they make a poor impression, because employers often assume lack of research means lack of interest."

To read the rest of the article, please check out the February edition of Job Choices at www.nxtbook.com/nxtbooks/nace/JobChoices0812/index.php?startid=38#/39.

On Resume Writing *continued from page 5*

associations, internships and service opportunities that allow you to get professionally involved or put theory into practice. And it looks great on your résumé.

9. Provide complete contact information. Use an email address that incorporates your name and avoids unprofessional phrases. As soon as your résumé is "in play," be sure that callers do not hear music while their party is reached, and record a simple greeting.

10. Be accurate, honest and correct. Accurately state your degree – I regularly see things like, "bachelor's degree in whatever." This is incorrect – you may earn a bachelor of science or a bachelor of arts and so on, but make sure your

terminology is exact. Be honest – do not round up your GPA, inflate your titles or claim to have done things you haven't on a job. Lastly, proofread! Incorrect grammar, misspelled words and typos will get your résumé rejected.

For more information on résumés, visit our website at www.wcu.edu/6685.asp to access resources and see a great sample. I enjoy helping students and alumni improve their résumés. Career Services is here to help!

Michael Despeaux is a career counselor with WCU's Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education.

Want to get on the career path?

USE **JobCat**

1. Log in to JobCat at 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!

Engineering and Technology Major is 2012-13 Student Employee of the Year

BY CARRIE HACHADURIAN



Theodore "Theo" Waltz, Western Carolina University's second annual student employee of the year, wants future employers to know he takes his job seriously and helps wherever he can.

"I've always been happy to help," he said. "It's how I return the favor of all the experiences WCU has given to me, and I'm happy to see [my supervisor] is satisfied with my work."

Waltz, from Apex, is a graduating senior in the engineering and technology department. He works as a lab assistant and is responsible for ensuring policies for usage are observed and

providing assistance to other students when needed. He also does demonstrations during open houses for prospective engineering and technology students and their families.

"What differentiates Theo from his peers is his continuous focus on process improvement for the department and the Kimmel School," wrote Patrick Gardner, department head of the engineering and technology department and Waltz's supervisor. "Students within the engineering and technology program regard Theo not only as a resource for assistance but as a colleague who can advise on specialized instruments or help with project need. In everything he does, Theo exhibits an enthusiasm and a passion for excellence which is refreshing and contagious."

Upon graduation in May, Waltz hopes to continue his education with a master's of science degree in technology from Western Carolina in hopes of securing a career with Lockheed Martin, a leading company in the design, manufacture, and support of military aircraft. "Hopefully a master's degree will take me that way," he said.

The Student Employee of the Year program is an annual competition. Winners receive a \$500 reward, an engraved plaque presented at the winner's college award ceremony, and a feature in the Career Journal. Campus winners also are submitted to a regional competition for a chance to receive an additional \$1,000 award. For more information about the program, visit the website at wcu.edu/30035.asp or contact Carrie Hachadurian at 828.227.3888 or cphachadurian@email.wcu.edu.

Carrie Hachadurian is the Career Services non-work-study student employment specialist.



2012-2013 Student Co-Op of the Year

BY MICHAEL DESPEAUX

This year, out of approximately 100 students who co-oped or interned through Career Services, four students of those nominated by their employers made it to the final round. The 2013 winner is Spike E. Dog a senior, majoring in computer science with minors in art and mathematics.

Spike co-oped during the summer of 2012 for the United States Marshals Service in Washington, D.C.

According to Spike, "Personally, I gained a great deal from my experience. During my time with the United States Marshals Service, I was able to learn about additional careers in technology that, like digital forensics, would allow me to serve federal law enforcement in a substantive capacity while leveraging my aptitude for technology."

Spike's computer science faculty supervisor for the experience, Dr. Mark Holliday, said, "The U.S. Marshals Service is quite selective. That he was selected this summer reflects well on him and our university. That he did as well as he did in his co-op work is even a stronger positive reflection."

Dr. Holliday added, "That Spike was able to work well with his co-workers and supervisor and create quality software in a rapidly changing environment is a testament to his technical and interpersonal skills. The very positive review of his work by his supervisor is noteworthy."

Given each year by the Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education, the WCU Student Co-op of the Year award consists of an engraved WCU wall plaque and a check for \$500. Congratulations to our 2013 winner, Mr. Spike E. Dog.

This is the 29th year that Career Services will award the WCU Student Co-op of the Year Award. In 1984, the award was created by a local CPA firm wanting to recognize excellence in experiential education. A nominated student must meet four criteria:

1. Exemplary work performance
2. Contributions to employer
3. Professional development
4. Personal growth

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF A MISSED OPPORTUNITY:

Contacting Past Career Fair Recruiters

BY SARAH ALSPAW

Didn't get a chance to make it to one of our career fairs this academic school year? Well, it is not too late to take advantage of that missed opportunity. All of the employers who have attended or were scheduled to attend this academic school year's career fairs are still listed on Jobcat. Our website, http://wcu.experience.com/stu/cf_list?aff=13894, will lead you to a list of career fairs and etiquette events sponsored by our office this academic year. Just select the career fair that you'd like to search, and then click the link on the top of the page marked "registered organizations." This will produce a list of all the employers who were scheduled to attend the events, and when you click on a specific company, you will be given information about that organization and a website.

Remember, all of these organizations were actively pursuing Western Carolina University students and graduates, and they all had positions available that they were seeking to fill. If these organizations have not filled these positions, they may still be looking for qualified applicants like you! Don't hesitate to call and inquire!

Once you have gathered the contact information from their website, it is time to call the organization. "Hello, my name is ___ and I am a student at Western Carolina University. I understand that your organization attended the ___ career fair in an attempt to recruit students for positions with your company. I am calling to inquire if you have filled those positions, and, if not, I would like to get some information about how to apply." This is a good way to explain your intention as well as open the lines of communication between you and the company. Make sure that you introduce yourself and explain that you are a student at WCU, and mention which career fair they

were scheduled to attend. Practice exactly what you are going to say to feel more prepared and to come across as confident and collected to the employer.

From there, if they are interested, they may request a copy of your résumé, references, and possibly a cover letter. Hopefully, you already have those items prepared and are able to send that information immediately. We recommend that you write a specialized cover letter for each job for which you apply, and that you customize your résumé as well.

If you need help preparing any of these items, information can be found on our website. There, you can find valuable outlines and tips for writing an eye-catching résumé or cover letter.

In addition to preparing for the phone call, we recommend creating and practicing a "30 second elevator pitch" to deliver when the employer asks you to describe yourself. What is a "30 second elevator pitch," you may ask? It is a practiced introduction describing yourself in about 30 seconds, explaining who you are, what degree(s) you are pursuing/have received, and your immediate career goals. Your practiced introduction can be used in social networking events, interviews, and even career fairs.

Finding a job takes persistence and dedication. It takes confidence to make a cold call to a potential employer to inquire about available positions. This confidence and tenacity is what will set you apart from the hundreds of thousands of students who will graduate this year and enter the job market.

ATTENTION PRIORITY ALERT: **WANTED**

- Looking for a career mentor?
- Interested in becoming a mentor?
- Know someone who should be a mentor?

Brought to you by WCU's Office of Alumni Affairs,
Family Association, and Career Services.

For more information regarding our 2012-2013 Career Mentor Program,
please contact [Mike Despeaux](#) or [Mardy Ashe](#) in the office of Career Services.

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