Career Journal

September 2007, Vol. 5 Issue. 1 Published by the Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education

QEP, Service-Learning, and Co-ops

By: Michael Despeaux
Career Services Counselor

This year, we will be publishing a series of articles describing individual components of Western’s Quality Enhancement Plan from a perspective of career development. In this edition, you can read about Dr. Carol Burton’s vision for how the QEP will help graduates shine with competence as they enter the job market. Next month, Dr. Glenn Bowen will write about how career-focused service learning can help students apply and practice classroom knowledge along the way. Following that, Mardy Ashe, director of our office, will discuss how cooperative education and internships can help students explore career areas, learn job skills, and gain strong experience. Other articles about job-search strategy, resume writing, and regional opportunities will help students tie things together and graduate having built quality foundations for their careers.

Diamond in the Making: A Quality Enhancement Plan Designed to Shine

By: Carol Burton
Assistant Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Studies

As we embark on another academic year at WCU, several factors make this year different from preceding years. Unprecedented campus construction, a reorganized academic structure exemplified by the existence of new or reconfigured colleges and corresponding changes in leadership, and the promise of a very successful first capital campaign for the university are all impacting life on campus on one level or another. However, one key initiative’s potential impact is cemented in my mind: our commitment to enhancing the educational experiences of our undergraduate students as a result of developing our Quality Enhancement Plan.

The buzz on campus as well as the regional and national attention our QEP is generating is highly encouraging. Faculty, students and staff can expect to see opportunities and challenges related to implementing the QEP. The Office of Career Services, through Career Services and Co-op Education, is highlighting the benefits of the QEP through an article in each edition of the Career Journal. We are looking forward to the impact of the QEP on our students as they prepare to enter the job market.

“The Quality Enhancement Plan, Synthesis: a Pathway to Intentional Learning, was developed as a part of the SACS review and it is a critical initiative for preparing our graduates for life in the twenty first century.” John W. Bardo, chancellor of Western Carolina University

Carol Burton, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Studies

IN THIS ISSUE

Services Offered - Page 2
Numerous opportunities exist for WCU students through Career Services and Co-op Education.

The Perfect Interview - Page 4
Making use of the tools for a perfect job interview is paramount for burgeoning college students.

Calendar of Events - Page 5
Improve your job-seeking qualities with a bevy of workshops and
Career Services programs for success

Students and Alumni: take advantage of our many services offered.

- **JobCat and MonsterTRAK** are internet-based recruiting systems on our website that 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.

- **Career Days and Recruitment Events** - Career Services offers many recruitment events every year including Corporate, Public Service and Government Career Expo, Allied Health and Nurses’ Career Day, Summer Jobs & Internships Fair, Criminal Justice Career Day, Education Recruitment Day and multiple etiquette development events.

- **Resume Critiquing Service** - Email your resume (cover letter too!) to mdespeaux or mashe@wcu.edu and set up an appointment to review 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. See them at http://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 http://careers.wcu.edu

- **Interviewing Skills Assistance** - You can participate in a mock interview and improve

**Career Services Information:**

Telephone: 828-227-7133  
Website: http://careers.wcu.edu/

Ashe, Mardy, Director / Career Counselor  
E-mail: mashe@wcu.edu

Despeaux, Michael, Coordinator / Career Counselor  
E-mail: mdespeaux@wcu.edu

Eisenman, Brantlee, Graduate Assistant  
E-mail: beisennan@email.wcu.edu

Ferrara, Donna, Secretary / Office Manager  
E-mail: ferrara@wcu.edu

Wilson, Steven, Career Resource Specialist / On-Campus Employment  
E-mail: wilsoms@wcu.edu

Woodruff, Jill, Special Events Coordinator  
E-mail: jwoodruff@wcu.edu

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

Publisher: Michael Despeaux, direct line 227-3891  
Editor: Brantlee Eisenman, direct line 227-3815
our QEP, *Synthesis: A pathway to intentional learning at WCU*. They will see it materialize in myriad programs and units, including in the Office of Career Services.

What are the implications of the QEP for students? What are the implications for faculty? How soon will the QEP be implemented? What are the objectives of the plan? How was the theme of the QEP selected? The new Office for Undergraduate Studies at WCU will coordinate activities related to helping students make connections between their in-class and out-of-class experiences, i.e., the focus of the QEP. The office will also provide oversight for the Center for Service Learning, the Liberal Studies Program, and the American Democracy Project, all programs or projects which rely on integrating and applying knowledge.

**So what is synthesis, and why is it valuable to learning?**

Simply, Synthesis is the ability to integrate knowledge from different areas into an original whole, and as the cornerstone of WCU’s QEP, students can expect, (1) to be more intentional and focused in their learning, (2) to have more formal and informal opportunities to apply their learning, and (3) to create a life plan for integrating their collegiate experiences during their undergraduate years and beyond. During the first year in college, special programming will prepare students to recognize the value of liberal studies, participate in activities designed to foster self-awareness, introduce the skills necessary for synthesis to occur and foster the development of partnerships with faculty to conduct research.

In the sophomore to senior years, the QEP will emphasize critical thinking and problem solving skills, analytical and decision-making abilities, and evaluation skills as well as major-related or content knowledge. Students will be expected to participate in internships, cooperative education (co-op) placements, service learning, capstone experiences and mentored research opportunities, or some combination of the same. We hope a greater number of our students and faculty will participate in international travel experiences.

Academic departments will work in concert with affiliated units such as career services as well as academic advising, residential living, orientation programs, student leadership and international programs to create the experiences that will reinforce synthesis as a valuable teaching and learning tool. Many departments are already doing a fantastic job of integrating their curricular and co-curricular experiences for their students, and they can expect to receive even more support to enhance their current efforts.

For example, a new technological tool will be designed to foster the synthesis that must occur for all students, and this tool will be available for every student. The Education Briefcase is a collaborative electronic portal where students and university personnel will exchange information to facilitate the type of student planning and reflection necessary for high levels of synthesis to occur. Students will grant access to their Education Briefcases so that faculty, professional advisors, program directors and career counselors can maintain ongoing dialogue about their university experiences and their direction for life beyond college. Typical artifacts to be housed in the Education Briefcase include learning plans, reflection essays, degree audits, internship evaluations, research protocols, results from career inventories, resumes, journal entries from study abroad, and major papers, to name a few. Students will work with counselors in Career Services to create documents to be housed in the Briefcase and the counselors will serve as a source of information about applying for internships, co-ops, and jobs.

Synthesis reflects the highest levels of learning, and our goal is to facilitate synthesis across all programs so that our graduates are even more prepared to live rich and productive lives in the 21st century.  

2006 Etiquette Dinner speaker Jane Hight McMurry.  Jane is a professional speaker on business etiquette from Wilmington NC.  This year’s speaker will be Beth Lofquist, Associate Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs.
There is a saying: first impressions are the most important -- this is especially true when it comes to job interviews. When many qualified applicants are vying for the same position, an applicant's performance during a job interview often provides the basis for an employer's decision.

But even knowing the importance a job interview holds, many interviewees come to the interview unprepared, unpracticed and wind up looking unprofessional in the eyes of their potential employer.

Career Services offers students a chance to increase their odds by using Perfect Interview, a computer program designed to prepare potential employees for real-life interviews.

Perfect Interview puts users on a virtual hot seat, fielding questions from a simulated interviewer on the computer screen. The interviewee responds to questions via a camera atop the monitor that records answers for playback and review.

Interview questions are selected randomly from a database representing a general selection that would be asked in most fields of employment. Virtual interviewees can choose to receive video hints from the program that explain what the employer seeks to know and advise the proper way to answer each question.

For each question, there are also alternative model responses which provide video of proper answers from different viewpoints.

One of the most useful features of Perfect Interview involves the video capture of an interviewee's responses to questions. As in real life, those who use the program must answer questions on the spot, and video playback of those answers gives the option of immediate feedback on the user's tone of voice, body posture and ability to answer quickly and precisely -- the same observations that potential employers will be making.

The recorded interviews can then be saved by users for the purpose of later review. With over 1,500 interview questions, answers and hints, interviewees can take multiple interviews to practice their skills and view tutorial videos to prepare for real-life interviews.

Interested?
To schedule an appointment to use Perfect Interview, call Brantlee Eisenman at 227-3815.
Etiquette Dinner
Tues, Sept 25, UC Grandroom, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm:
This event is intended to teach students the rules of proper dining and conversation in a formal setting. Attire is business casual. This event is $15.00 per person - cash, check or student meal ticket/CatCard is accepted. Tickets can be purchased in the Career Services, Killian Annex.

Primp Your Resume
Wed & Thurs, Oct 17 & 18; UC Atrium, 12:00 pm - 2:00 pm:
Please visit the UC Atrium and let the Career Services counselors help get your resume ready for the fall and spring job-recruiting seasons. Counselors will be available from 11am to 2pm.

Teaching Opportunities for Non-Teaching Majors
Tues, Oct 23, Catamount Room, 3:30 pm - 4:30 pm:
This is a workshop for students who have an interest in teaching but did not major in education. Ways of getting into the field, obtaining the required education classes, and teaching with your current degree are discussed.

Criminal Justice Career Day
Thurs, Oct 25, UC Grandroom, 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm:
Meet with career consultants in various fields of law enforcement.

Education Recruitment Day
Tues, Oct 30, UC Grandroom, 9:00 am - 12:00 pm:
This is a great opportunity for students, alumni and general public seeking employment in education.

*** For all Expos, Fairs and Career Days: ***
Business casual to professional attire is required. Students and alumni are encouraged to bring several copies of their latest resume. Career Services also suggests that applications be uploaded into JobCat. Students in need of assistance in developing a resume, please visit the Career Resource Center (2nd floor of Killian Annex) or schedule and appointment with a career counselor: 227-7133.

Lists of attending organizations will be available at http://careers.wcu.edu and on JobCat. Lists will be updated as registration is received.

For more information, see http://careers.wcu.edu