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## September 2012 Newsletter

Career Center, Illinois Wesleyan University

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# CAREER PROFILE

a look at life outside Illinois Wesleyan University

## Alumni Profile: Past Communications Specialists

**Joshua Butts '01**

Majors: History and English

**Jessica Wiley '08**

Major: English Writing

Minor: Spanish

**Tracy Lytwyn '12**

Major: Political Science

Minors: Business and Religion

Greetings Exalted Ones! My name is Luke Skywalker, the Jedi Knight son of my father before me, Darth Vader... yeah right. Sorry I had to start off with a Star Wars joke for us nerds out there. Disregarding that, my real name is Michael Kocourek. I'm the new Communications Specialist at the Hart Career Center here at home sweet home, Illinois Wesleyan.

For this Issue, we have some great alumni who've held this position before me. They'll talk about their experience as the Communications Specialist along with their post-IWU whereabouts. Let me introduce Joshua Butts, Jessica Wiley, and my predecessor, Tracy Lytwyn.



### 1. What's your current occupation, did you expect to be doing that after college?

I'm currently the Director of Development for Principal and Major Gifts at Harvard Medical School. I do major gifts fundraising for the Medical School's Health Care Policy and Therapeutics initiatives. I had no clue after college that I would be doing this! And I think that shows the importance of not getting so stressed out about your career path after graduation. You'll need a job to pay your bills, but you'll learn a lot about what you like or don't like through your first few jobs. I would bet that your career path will naturally unfold for you over time.

### 2. As an alumnus, what advice do you have for students to help overcome difficulties in the job market?

I've always found that the best way to find a job is networking. Talk to as many people as possible, and ask for 2 or 3 additional names of people to reach out to. Sure, applicants still get jobs the tradition-

al way by sending out resumes, but I think knowing someone within an organization can go a long way. Also, if you have to take a job that isn't ideal for you when you graduate, keep at it. Continue networking, join professional organizations, and tap into the IWU alumni network.



### 1. Who were some of your employers that you liked during and after your time at Wesleyan?

While I was at IWU, I worked as the Communications Specialist; a Writing Tutor at the Writing Center; the Chief Copyeditor for the Argus; and a Cycle Instructor at Shirk for the Student Fitness Program. The summer after my junior year, I had an internship at a small educational content development house called Shakespeare Squared. It was an amazing experience. I got to work on real projects ranging from high school literature books to middle-school-level social studies teacher Power Points. This convinced me I wanted to go into educational publishing. As I continued freelancing, they hired me as a full-time employee as soon as I graduated. After 3 years, the development house closed and I started working for McGraw-Hill as an editorial coordinator. I'm currently a Development Editor working on health professions books for McGraw-Hill.

### 2. Was the Career Center helpful in preparing for what was to come post-college?

I think the Career Center is a great resource for IWU students, regardless if they work there. I've learned that connections play a huge role in getting your foot in the door somewhere, and the Career Center

is a wonderful resource for that. This is how I got my internship at Shakespeare Squared, which introduced me to the world of educational publishing which is the best career I could imagine for myself. Students should take full advantage of career/internship fairs, internship postings, etc. if they want to find themselves with more meaningful options.



### 1. What brought you to where you are now after IWU?

I am currently a press secretary for the Indiana Senate Republican Caucus. I manage communications for seven Republican senators. This includes writing press releases, guest columns, corresponding with reporters or other government employees etc. A couple of things brought me to Indiana. First, being a Republican, I found it to be a bit friendlier to my political ideology than Illinois, although I love my home state a lot. Secondly, my long-distance boyfriend lived (and still does) in Indiana so I was hoping to close the distance between us.

### 1. What about being the Communications Specialist made it a great experience for you?

It really prepared me for my current job. My employers were really impressed I wrote and edited the newsletter on my own, and they said a lot of the work I'd do would be similar to my work in the Career Center. Also, it gave me a better perspective on what employees look for, how to present myself, and how to go about applying. I think the confidence and interviewing experience I developed through the Career Center helped me get the job.

# CAREER CONNECTIONS

a newsletter from the hart career center

September 2012

## It's Fair Season... Time to gear up!

"Time to gear up"... I'm sure that's music to your ears upon arriving back to school. Though it is my last year here, it hasn't even hit me yet. Wesleyan, I know I am going to miss you dearly. However, and more importantly, why am I getting sentimental already? It's only the first month of the academic year! We're getting settled in at our new residences, meeting with friends that we haven't seen in a while and yes, our favorite part, starting class. One of my biggest concerns coming back to campus every year has been without a doubt, will I be able to find a job and what will I be doing post-graduation? Well ladies and gentleman, there are events that students of all years can attend to help answer these questions. Our problems are solved and we're no longer doomed because we have the **Job and Internship Fairs!**

I know you are all jumping with joy when you see the word Fair. Let's face it, if there weren't events like these, think about how much harder it'd be to not only find a job or internship but also to make connections! I'm right, correct? It's crucial to realize that our studies can only last so long in life. Being a student in college cannot last forever, unfortunately. Now is the time where job and internship searching

needs to take place. Let's look at some helpful reasons why career fairs are worth attending and some ideas from your fellow students.

### 1) "It's never too early to get started."

When you come to college, first and foremost, the number one obligation is to be a student. In just 4 years, that obligation will be probably over. One thing that lots of students don't realize is that that it's never too early to get started on the job/internship search. Haley Kitchell '13, business marketing major, recalls that she was told quite often that she was 'too young to hold the position' she was applying for. Yet, for her, it seemed like that was the only thing holding her back. Don't let this be discouraging. Not all jobs are the same. So, it never hurts to start early on the search. The earlier the search starts, the more experience you'll have in searching to find the perfect fit. Lots of headaches and work can be saved when it's senior year and there comes that question, "What am I going to do after I get out of here?"

### 2) "Get your name out to various companies and people."

There are tons of students in the United States and from around the world that are competing for jobs and internships today. It definitely isn't getting any easier. Employers are looking for skills that are useable and bring new value to their companies. If you choose to only go to a few companies through online websites, that's not enough of a viewing audience. With the option of the fair, there are multiple employers in one convenient setting. This is your chance to "get your name out to companies," says Max Polisky '13, business major. Sometimes the opportunity won't turn out as you foresee it. Over the



past summer, Elizabeth Kennell '14, accounting major, worked at Kraft Foods in Northfield, IL. She had learned some important lessons on the style and mentality of recruiters after initially meeting them at an Internship fair. She had seen that "within a first glance they could tell if the candidate was even worth it" after that first look at the resume. In essence, there is another underlying principle from this reason: Make a good first impression! The overall objective is to get as many eyes on that resume as possible. You may be surprised what can result from it.

### 3) "A mistake at the job fair is undesirable but it's better than a mistake at the formal interview."

Now I did say that it is important to get as many eyes on your resume as possible, but, don't just go up to the employer's table and hand them your resume. That's only half the battle! Be aware of the position you're looking for, why you qualify, and what the company is doing at the time etc. It's okay to be a bit nervous and make a few mistakes. This is the time for you to gain experience when talking to HR representatives. Daniel Kenny '13, environmental studies/Spanish major strongly feels, "This is the time to get practice speaking about yourself in a professional setting." By going to these fairs, you learn a lot about how one interacts. (Continued on page

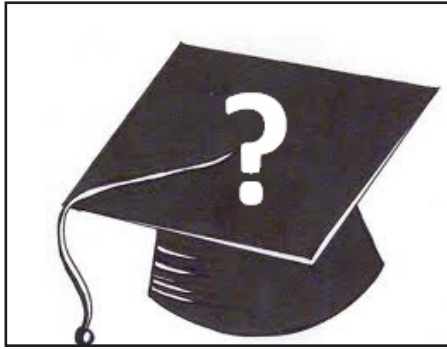
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# Should you consider Graduate School?



Have you ever considered pursuing graduate school after college? Are you not sure on how to get started? Well, in this article we will scratch the surface on some of the ins and outs of considering graduate school, if it's necessary for your major, the personal statement, and what the trend of students has been over the past 5 years.

If there were one job I'd like to have, it would be as an acting or sports agent. Just to give an example, Ari Gold, the chaotic agent who works for the famous Vincent Chase in the show *Entourage* is someone who fits such a title. In order to have such a profession, law school would more than likely be a requirement. With the help of Robyn Walter, one of our Career Consultants at the Career Center, I was able to get insight of some important questions students may have in regards to the nuts and bolts of graduate school.

Starting off, one important question to think about is why students should consider graduate school. There's probably that toss-up of whether getting a job is more important or if graduate studies should be pursued. An important mindset to have is that either of these options do not happen with the snap of a finger. Whichever route taken, the graduate level applying process takes time and so does searching for work. Both will require patience and a driven work ethic. Back to the question, Walter strongly believes that graduate school is useful for students who know exactly what they want to study and for fields in which a graduate degree is required. Her examples of such fields were: law school, health professions, and social work. There are other fields too, but these are just a few examples. Sometimes graduate school won't be the option to take right out of

college.

There's also the option of getting a job first and seeking graduate school options after. A trend in many graduate schools according to Walter is, "admissions committees appreciat[ing] real-life professional experience candidates obtain after completing an undergraduate degree." The choice is up to you, just remember, have patience and don't fall behind on working through the process!

One part of the application process, just like when applying to college, is the personal statement. This statement is quite crucial because "it is considered to be one of the more difficult parts of the graduate application process," said Walter. In other words, get started on it early! Do not put this off. It more than likely will take time for the statement to sound good to you. After the statement is drafted, you can go to the Writing Center for grammar revisions. Then Walter suggests bringing it in to the Career Center for a staff member to look at it. A professor in your field of study can proofread it as well. Don't forget that the Career Center has a lot of helpful resources on how to write personal statements.

What about trying to find out where a program is that would coincide with the major you're studying? "Websites like the national association for that occupation will provide a list of accredited graduate programs," suggests Walter. The Internet is key here. There are plenty of great web resources. Faculty also can be a great resource to help start searching for possible programs.

So, how's the sentiment towards graduate school? Not too sure yet? Maybe this will give you some extra insight. Looking at Robyn Walters' evaluation of the past 5 years, she has noticed that more students consider graduate school during a tough economy. More applicants lead to more competition in any program. Be ready to really stand out. Take into consideration if your education really needs to be furthered into graduate school. "It's not a place for further exploration," reports Walter.

## Upcoming Career Center Events

**9/17 ~ Resumania @ 2 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.** -Hart Career Center

**9/18 ~ ISU Internship Fair @ 4 p.m. - 7 p.m.** -ISU, Bone Student Center

**9/19 ~ ISU Fall Career Fair @ 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.** - ISU, Bone Student Center

**9/25 ~ Big City Internships @ 4 p.m.** -Welcome Center Auditorium

**9/26 ~ Majors and Minors Fair @ 3 p.m. - 5 p.m.** - Young Main Lounge, Memorial Center

**10/1 ~ Resume Drop-In Blast @ 2 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.** - Hart Career Center

**10/2 ~ ISU Central Illinois Graduate School Fair @ 3 p.m. - 7 p.m.** - ISU, Redbird Arena

**10/3 ~ IWU internship Fair @ 4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.** - Young Main Lounge, Memorial Center

**10/3~UIUC Grad School Fair @ 3 p.m. - 4 p.m.** -U of I at Campaign-Urbana, Illini Union

**10/4 ~Interviewing for Introverts @ 11 a.m. or 4 p.m.** - Welcome Center Auditorium

**10/4 ~UIC Forum Chicago Graduate & Professional School Fair @ 3 p.m. - 7 p.m.** - U of I at Chicago, UIC Forum

**10/11~ Idealist.com Graduate School Fair, @ 5 p.m. - 8 p.m.** -U of I at Chicago, UIC Forum

**10/12 ~Student/Alumni Law Mentoring Session @ 4 p.m.** -Welcome Center Auditorium

**10/19 ~ ISCPA Fall Interview Day @ 8:45 a.m. - 5 p.m.** -Ashton Place, Willowbrook, IL

**11/14 ~ IWU Nursing Fair @ 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.** -IWU Memorial Center

3) Like I said, you can make some mistakes, it's okay! Practice makes perfect.

4) **“Meet your competition and learn from what they're doing but don't give out your secrets!”**

Fairs are that one time where you can see who your relevant competition is. In many cases you will be waiting in line to speak with a company representative and your competition will be in line ahead. Sometimes some small conversations with other people can help give some insightful tips on what a company favors, or what to do to really get the attention of employers. Take their advice with caution and feel free to ignore what might not work for you. With your own personal success secrets, keep those to yourself! The more knowledge and confidence you have, the better your pitch can become. In case the nerves start to settle in at the fair, read over the notes you've taken to prepare for this day. Also, watch a few people from a distance talk to employers and see how their interactions go. Don't worry; the companies there won't bite! They'll want to hear from you, so go out and show them what you've got.

Now that you have four good reasons to go to a job/internship fair, I will share with you when these important events will be taking place. **The ISU Internship Fair** will be on Tuesday, September 18th from **4 to 7 p.m. at the Bone Student Center on Illinois State's campus**. The following day (September 19th), Wednesday, will be **the IWU/ISU Career Fair from 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. in the very same location**. Lastly, **IWU's Internship fair** will be on Wednesday, October 3rd from **4:30 to 6:30 p.m. in the Memorial Center's Young Main Lounge**. Further information can be accessed from the Career Center's website. Get into gear, find that lucky tie or shirt for the day, and don't forget to bring your resume!



## Navigating the Careerlink: Titan Careerlink 101!

Titan Careerlink is an online recruiting system that tries to connect students and alumni with employers who are seeking workers. It can be easily accessed through the Career Center's website. Careerlink allows you to create a profile, search for jobs or internships, upload your resumes and cover letters, and apply for jobs.

In order to make an account, read the instructions on the top right hand side of the webpage. It says to use your IWU email account. What this means is the first part of your email, everything that comes before “@”. Use that and then add `__iwu`. This makes up the user name. For the password, the default password is the last 6 digits of your social security number. You can change it after your first visit if you'd like.

After entering the login name and password, the main page will appear. This may seem a bit overwhelming at first. But, I am here to walk you through this! There are different sections on the page for various purposes. There are options to stay connected to the Career Center through Facebook and Twitter, along with all of those other celebrities you follow. Do it! There's a list of upcoming events, and to the right of that is a search key for either jobs or internships.

Moving down along the page, there are about 4 to 5 other links to websites for job searching. These are extremely helpful in case Titan Careerlink doesn't have what you're looking for. There are some one-click searches such as “Jobs in Bloomington

or Chicago, IL” or “Opportunities with upcoming application deadlines” that are further down the page too.

Finally, I know this is all so exciting to you, but we have reached the bottom of the webpage! Yes, no more of Mike's boring instructional talking like an automated voicemail commanding what to do! The last portions of the webpage feature a recommended jobs section where if you tell the site a bit about yourself, it will e-mail about upcoming opportunities that suit the interests you put in. In addition to that, at the very bottom there is a list of the 2012: 50 best places to work along with a salary search that lets you put in the job title, the country, and then gives the salary amount usually paid for such a position.

If my description of the website was a bit too confusing or unclear, don't worry I've got your back. Access the Career Center's page at <http://www.iwu.edu/ccenter/students/eRecruiting.html> for a tutorial that will work you through Titan Careerlink.

