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October 2011 Newsletter

Career Center, Illinois Wesleyan University

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Beyond the Bubble

a look at life outside Illinois Wesleyan University

What do you do at your job?

I work in the FBI Laboratory in the Hazardous Materials Science Response Unit (HMSRU). My primary duties involve responding to contaminated and/or high-hazard crime scenes, serving as 24/7 “reach back” to the field, writing scientific assessments, and training both internal and external entities in proper field screening and evidence collection techniques.

Were there any particular experiences you had or things you did in college that influenced you to work for the federal government?

Although I wanted to work for the FBI since I was 14, the internships I undertook at IWU affirmed my interest in forensics. I interned at the McLean County Coroner’s office (where I realized forensic pathology was not for me), the Northern Illinois Police Crime Laboratory in Vernon Hills, and the Illinois State Police lab in Morton.

How did you apply to be in the FBI?

While working towards my master’s degree at UIC in Chicago, I applied for and received a summer internship with the FBI. In recent years they have

really utilized former interns as a candidate pool, so I went online and applied like everyone else, and I received a conditional offer prior to graduation. I initially worked for two years in the Chemistry Unit at the FBI Lab prior to joining HMSRU.

What sorts of skills does the FBI look for in your particular field?

With the sciences in general, the primary requirement is a 4-year degree, preferably in the “hard sciences.” A chemistry degree is sufficient for almost any area of forensics, with the primary exceptions of biology/DNA. Advanced degrees can certainly make you more competitive, and I had a great experience at UIC earning my M.S. in Forensic Science. One of the strengths at the FBI is the diversity of its employees, so any kind of specialized experience is useful. In my current position, we write many scientific assessments, so writing skills certainly come in handy.

What would you encourage students to do if they’re hoping to work for the federal government?

I found that having a strong academic record and internship experience both go a long way. Sometimes even entry-level jobs prefer some sort of “real-world” experience, so internships are a great way to show that you are passionate about your career. Also, many jobs in the federal government require security clearances, so staying away from drugs and mile-long rap sheets would probably be a good thing.



What makes your job interesting for you, besides the obvious of it being with the FBI?

What I love most about my current position is that no two days are the same. We do a lot of training, and I enjoy constantly learning new things, and teaching others as well. At times, we have unexpected travel with little to no notice. While people know that *CSI* is nothing like real life, I feel this is about as close as it gets!

ALUMNI PROFILE
Kevin Latman
Federal Bureau of
Investigation -
Hazardous Materials
Science Response Unit
(Chemist)

Learn more about
federal government
careers and internships
at the Career Center’s
Federal Employment
Workshop!

Oct. 17 at 4:00 p.m.
Welcome Center
Auditorium

Editor/Writer: Tracy Lytwyn | Director: Warren Kistner

www2.iwu.edu/ccenter

Career Connections

a newsletter from the hart career center

October 2011

Employers Urge Students to Attend Oct. 12 Internship Fair

For most people, practice makes perfect, unless you're Rafael Nadal. He was born flawless. But for the rest of us, it takes a lot of effort to make sure we're doing something right or that this is what we want. Because of that, some wonderful person invented internships. They are the perfect way to gain experience, learn about your chosen field, and build connections in the professional world.

Every year, a large number of employers sign up to be a part of the IWU Internship Fair. They, too, realize the importance in hiring students and helping them obtain a better understanding of what they want in their future career.

"Sometimes when you're studying a particular subject area, you don't understand how what you're studying can apply to different settings in the real world," McLean County Museum of History's Mary Anne Schierman said. "I really like talking with students and showing them how what they're studying might apply to something they haven't even thought of."

As an English major, Schierman did not expect to be working as a volunteer and intern director for a museum, let alone a history museum. But to her surprise, a great deal of writing was involved in what her job required.

"I think it's neat to show that, especially in the employment climate

we have today, you really need to think outside the box," she said. "You never know when a new experience will lead you somewhere else."

Advocate BroMenn's Manager of Volunteer Services, Sue Seibring illustrated the truth behind that statement.

"We have a lot of great opportunities that college students would benefit from," she said. "There are about 65 volunteer areas that use college students two hours, one time a week. Oftentimes, we have people who say they want an internship, but after knowing they're not getting school credit, they decide to volunteer instead. In the volunteer program, we have a music program, and sometimes there are different opportunities at our nursing station. They change all the time depending on the needs of the department."

The idea of using one's interest in music in a hospital may not seem like a logical step for most, but for Seibring, it's a typical example of how companies take in a wide variety of talents and experiences.

Most employers know what attracts them to particular candidates for an internship. The general consensus is students who are confident, prepared, and well-informed tend to leave the best impressions.

COUNTRY Financial College Relations and Employment Coordinator, Carly Miller said, "We look for a student who is driven, involved on campus, and eager to learn. We also look for students who possess critical thinking and communication skills. When a student approaches me at a career fair with a clear intention, knowledge about the company, and key questions about the company or position, I am impressed. It's this easy preparation and practice that



can take someone from being a good candidate to a great candidate."

"I think when you make good eye contact, that tells a prospective employer a lot," Schierman said. "Good verbal communication skills on an initial contact obviously really does stick in my mind. I try to keep my mind open but I recommend practicing good eye contact and communication skills."

For students expecting to attend the internship fair, our employers offered suggestions to get the most out of the event.

"I think students should try to go to as many booths as they can because there might be something at an organization that will fit into their needs," Seibring said. "A lot of people think hospitals only take pre-med and nursing majors, but we need other majors, too."

"Last year, business and accounting majors were all there, but not liberal arts," Schierman said. "There are so many ways you can use your interest and skills to get some good job experience. You can't talk to enough people, interface with enough people, make enough contacts, or put yourself in enough places."

The Fall Internship Fair will be held on Wednesday, October 12th from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. in the Memorial Center. For a full list of attending employers, go to the Hart Career Center website.

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Seniors! This is how you search for jobs!

How to Succeed in Business by Dressing like a Pro

My favorite piece of clothing is my black and white prom dress. I know, gentlemen. You're already not listening to me. But really, I love this dress. I don't even want to have it altered to wear to a wedding. That's how much I love it. If I had it my way, I'd wear it all the time, but as you and I both know, wearing a prom dress wherever I go isn't exactly socially accepted. In the same way, when you're preparing for an interview, wearing jeans or shorts or flip-flops isn't appropriate for the setting you're about to enter. Before you get ready to blow everyone away with your fantastic resume and excellent interviewing skills, make sure that you look the way you want to be perceived.

There are two types of business dress styles, and they are used for different events. Business professional attire is the more formal of the two, but it is most appropriate to wear to an interview or job fair.

For men, a conservative business suit is the basis of professional wardrobes. A dark solid or pinstripe suit is ideal with pants hemmed to the top of the heel at the back of your shoe. For a shirt, wear solid color dress shirts that are cotton or cotton blend. Ties should

be medium-sized with patterns that are conservative and match or slightly contrast your suit color. Socks should match the color of your pants, not your shoes, and shoes should be shined. All visible piercings must be removed, and facial hair should be groomed or shaved.

Women's business professional wear is actually very similar to men's. You should wear a women's business suit with a matching skirt or pants. The skirt should be at mid-knee or below and without deep slits. Shirts should be soft pastel colors, not low-cut or revealing, and with conservative accessories. Full-length pantyhose must be worn with your skirt and should be sheer, not opaque. Low or medium-high pumps with a closed toe are fine, and they should match the color of your suit. As far as jewelry goes, the less, the better. Earrings should be small (studs, small hoops, etc.) and not dangly. If you wear makeup, make it look natural, and your hair should be neat and well-groomed.

Another style of dress is business casual. Generally, this is great to wear to work and occasionally to interviews or job fairs. This is not your chance

to show off the new cocktail dress you bought. Instead, conservative, crisp, neat styles are the way to go.

For both men and women, khaki or dark pants with a long-sleeved, buttoned shirt is always safe. Sweaters and polo shirts are acceptable if you know the environment will be casual or outdoors. Athletic shoes are not acceptable; wear a leather belt and leather shoes instead. Make sure whatever you are wearing is not worn down and looks clean.

Men do not have to wear a tie with business casual attire, but it obviously doesn't hurt to slightly overdress. A solid shirt or one with conservative stripes is fine, and a long-sleeved shirt is considered nicer than a short-sleeved one. Socks should be mid-calf length, and facial hair, if worn, should be well-groomed. If you choose to wear jewelry or a watch, be conservative. Don't wear earrings or large watches.

Women should be careful when it comes to length in their clothing. Cleavage is never okay, and skirts should come at least to your knees while you are standing. While seated, your thighs should be covered. Slits

Continued on page 3...

THIS

Professional Dress for Men



Professional Business Dress for Women



Photos courtesy University of Arkansas

NOT THIS



Photos courtesy Herald Sun and OfCelebrity

From page 2...

should not be slit to above the knee unless the skirt comes to just below the knee. Women can also wear casual pants or skirts, but neither should be tight. Blouses, sweaters, tailored shirts, and sweater sets are great, but velvet or shiny fabrics are not. Jewelry and accessories should be conservative, but if you are in the creative industry, you may have more flexibility. Make sure your nails are clean and groomed, and your makeup should be natural looking. Shoes should be close-toed with a conservative heel, and you should be able to comfortably walk in

them.

Overall, the way you dress should be able to tell employers about your work ethic before you say a word. Looking as though you're about to go to a club is not the impression you want to make. If you're still not sure what to wear or want someone to look at an outfit you're planning on wearing to an interview or job fair, stop by the Career Center during our drop-in hours. We'd be happy to help you!

Buying on a budget? Try here!

- Bergner's
- H&M
- Burlington Coat Factory
- TJ Maxx
- Maurice's
- Kohl's
- Marshall's
- JC Penney
- Overstock.com

...and don't forget to check clearance racks and in-store sales!

Navigating the Senior Year Job Search

I once said that my ideal job would be the person who picks out ties for newscasters. I definitely have an eye for excellent designs, patterns, and colors, and I have been known to shake my head and say, "That is the ugliest tie I have ever seen" while flipping through the channels. If anyone ever finds a job application that is titled "Assistant Tie Coordinator," please send it my way. You will be making my dreams come true.

Seniors, if you, too, would like to find the career of your dreams, the time to start looking is, well, now. It may seem too early to start the job search, but many industries are choosing new hires for next year already. If you're asking yourself, "Should I start applying now?" the answer is almost always "Yes." Think about how far in advance you started your college search back in high school. There is sort of the same mentality behind it.

But for people who are still unsure how to start the job or internship search process, Charles Purdy of Yahoo! HotJobs explained some of the biggest mistakes they can make in their search via a Monster.com article. The most pertinent of these was relying solely on the Internet.

"In a Yahoo! HotJobs poll, 57 percent of respondents said networking was a factor in landing their current or most recent job," Purdy said. "Brad Karsh, president of JobBound, says, 'When thousands of candidates are applying to the same jobs online and posting their resume to the same job boards, candidates need to stand out by making connections and networking

their way into a company.' Job boards are an important tool, but Karsh says new grads also need to focus energy on networking."

He is not alone in saying this. Richard Bolles, author of the New York Times best-selling job hunt guide, *What Color is your Parachute?*, found that only one percent of jobs are obtained through using the Internet to post a resume or look for a job opening. What is the number one method?

"Doing what is called 'the creative approach to job-hunting or career-change,'" Bolles said, "doing homework on yourself, to figure out what your favorite and best skills are; then doing face-to-face interviewing for information only, at organizations in your field; followed up by using your personal contacts to get in to see, at each organization that has interested you, the person-who-actually-has-the-power-to-hire-you (not necessarily the human resources department)."

Other effective methods, according to Bolles, include using the Yellow Pages to call employers to see if they're hiring, knocking on the door of any employer that interests you, and going to the state or federal employment office. Seems a little bold, right? But considering just how many people are potentially applying for the same position you are, it is not crazy to expect that you will need to stand out.

In Purdy's article, he quoted Emily Bennington, co-author of *Effective Immediately: How to Fit In, Stand Out, and Move Up at Your First Real Job*, who said, "This isn't the time to sit back and

be casual in your approach. Create a hit list of five to ten target companies and really utilize your network to locate an 'in' at each."

Additional mistakes college graduates make, Purdy said, are failing to follow up after submitting a resume, setting their expectations too high, not creating a customized resume, and not using their college's career office.

He quotes career expert, Liz Ryan, who explained that the career center's job is to "prepare you for your job search, not conduct it for you. Use LinkedIn, reach out to everyone you can, and begin researching employers who'd be likely targets for your job search."

Overall, it is important to be proactive, determined, and assertive in your job search. After all, once graduation day arrives, it will be the source of your income, where you spend your time, and how you structure the rest of your working life.

"Researchers discovered that one third of all job-hunters never find a job because they give up too soon," Bolles said. "And the ones who give up most easily are the ones who are using only one job-hunting method (such as sending out resumes). 51 percent of those who use only one method of job-hunting abandon their job-hunt by the second month. On the other hand, of those who are using two or more methods, only 31 percent abandon their search by the second month."

When all the experts are saying the same thing, it is difficult to ignore them. So get out there and start that job search now!