

Field-specific events typical for campuses

Students, faculty, businesses profit

BY ERIC JOHNSON
ASSISTANT STATE & NATIONAL EDITOR

With many students shouldering a heavy debt load during college, officials at UNC-system campuses are working to make sure new graduates can put their degrees to quick use.

Career services administrators have set up a variety of events to connect students with potential employers, arranging career fairs that focus on specific fields and encouraging students to take advantage of on-campus opportunities for networking.

Administrators said events organized around specific professions often provide greater benefit to both students and employers.

"It seems to be a win-win situation," said Karen Thompson, employer relations coordinator at UNC-Wilmington. "It allows (companies) to focus in on their target audience."

Thompson said the move toward more specialized career events was partially driven by feedback from different companies.

At Western Carolina University, officials are planning a number of fairs oriented to specific career paths.

Michael Despeaux, career-services coordinator at WCU, said the school is planning two events focused on public service, law enforcement and criminal justice.

"There will be a variety of federal and state type of agencies there," he said. Most of the employers represented will probably be local and county law enforcement agencies from around the state, he said.

Western also will be hosting a construction-management fair, complementing the new construc-

tion-management major the school added a few years ago.

East Carolina University also is planning a construction management career day.

Administrators at several institutions said career events organized around education professions were often some of their largest.

"It's a tremendous career day," Despeaux said. "Just about every school district will be represented, and we also bring in folks from upstate South Carolina, eastern Tennessee and north Georgia."

Specialized career days are not just an opportunity for students.

Thompson said faculty members often use them as an opportunity to meet with business professionals in their fields of interest, discussing current trends and field priorities.

"It allows key faculty members in those specific areas to connect with key employers that hire their majors," she said.

Most schools also hold a special event for students seeking internships or part-time jobs during their time at school. Thompson said the university works closely with local employers to seek out student-friendly positions.

Despeaux said one of Western's most popular career fairs is organized around finding summer employment for students. Local golf courses, country clubs and summer camps all turn out in force to recruit WCU students, he said.

"That will be hugely attended," Officials say they work hard to publicize events, since higher student turnout means businesses are more likely to attend. Thompson said some career fairs at UNC-W attract up to 2,000 students.

"Employers like it because they know when they come to UNC-Wilmington there's guaranteed to be a huge student turnout."

UNC provides range of services

BY JIM WALSH
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

For students who are unsure about what they want to do for a living — or a major, for that matter — the University offers a wide variety of services to help them out.

University Career Services, located on campus, offers many different options for students who are looking to take their professional careers by the reigns.

"We provide students with career help and we can probably assist them with any need they have that's related with their career goals," said Marcia Harris, director of UCS.

Harris' office can help students find internships, improve résumés and choose a major. The staff also can facilitate the planning stages of a career path.

In addition to person-to-person counseling, the office has an extensive Web site that includes templates for résumés and cover letters and outlines tips that students can use to put such documents together.

Harris said the office provides different services for students who are at different points in their career paths.

"For the student that's more or less deciding on some career

choice, we can help them prepare to be in the best position when they apply," she said.

Upperclassmen often have different objectives when they come to the center.

"For the student who's going to be graduating soon and thinking about full-time employment, we can work with them on those employment goals," Harris said.

Students who visit UCS will find out about the common mistakes young professionals make when applying for a job, such as forgetting to include contact information on a résumé or failing to proofread a cover letter for spelling errors.

Harris, who has been the director of UCS for 23 years, said students often have misconceptions about the job-search and application process.

A common mistake, she said, is to bury information about education at the bottom of the résumé, where potential employers are less likely to see it.

"(Students') primary asset to offer their employer is their UNC degree," she said.

In addition to helping with drafting documents for job interviews and helping students identify career goals, UCS also offers an environment to practice inter-

Undergraduate enrollment by major

The list includes students seeking both a first or second major in the subject area.

RANKING	MAJOR	TOTAL ENROLLED
1	Undecided	3,240
2	Biology	1,710
3	Business Administration	1,290
4	Psychology	1,266
5	Journalism and Mass Communication	1,181
6	Political Science	1,019
7	Communication Studies	800
8	History	594
9	English	592
10	Economics	568

SOURCE: HTTP://REGWEB.UNC.EDU

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views.

With these "mock interviews," students sit down with a counselor and go through the process of an interview from start to finish. After the interview, they can watch a recording of the process and discuss with a counselor what they did and did not do well, and how they can improve.

Harris said watching a recording of an interview can help students pick out distracting mannerisms and poor body language.

"That's a very helpful service," she said.

UCS offers something for just about every student, whether

they are starting their path toward a career or are looking to improve an already impressive résumé. Harris said students should take advantage of the services offered.

At any given time, she said, the office has listings for more than 2,000 jobs and 1,000 internships.

Plus, Harris said, the office extends a welcoming environment.

"We have a very warm, friendly, inviting staff that is not in the slightest bit intimidating. And we get rave reviews from students who have met with our counselors."

Preparation key before attending fair

Résumé, appropriate dress important

BY LINDSAY MICHEL
ASSISTANT UNIVERSITY EDITOR

About 100 employers eager to find young minds to add to their staffs will flock to UNC this Thursday.

For any student, the crowd of veteran interviewers can be quite intimidating.

Marcia Harris, director of University Career Services, said there are a few things students can do before career fairs, so they can keep calm and go for the gold.

First, Harris suggests that students visit the UCS Web site, careers.unc.edu, and browse the list of organizations that will be in attendance.

is available at the career services Web site.

When someone approaches a potential employer, Harris said she recommends students have a prepared introduction about themselves.

"We also recommend that each student prepare a five-minute introductory pitch, so that they're not stammering at the last minute about how they approach an employer," she said.

Dressing appropriately also is important before heading out the door, Harris said.

Freshmen and sophomores who want to browse and explore need not worry about their clothing.

But for students looking to score a job or an internship, she provides the following tips:

Students looking for an internship should wear business casual.

Seniors and graduate students in search of a job should wear professional business attire.

Men should wear gray or navy suits with dark socks.

And don't forget to iron. It's best for a suit to look pressed and straightened, Harris said.

Women should stick to a suit and skirt or a pantsuit, with a small design or a solid color.

Stay away from bright colors and big designs, and make sure long hair is held back neatly and away from the face.

Aside from the standard interviewing tips, Harris said, students who are most successful at career fairs never forget to let their personality and enthusiasm shine.

Specialized career help available

Caters to business, journalism majors

BY JENNY RUBY
ASSISTANT UNIVERSITY EDITOR

The search for internships and jobs can be overwhelming.

But students within the School of Journalism and Mass Communication and the Kenan-Flagler Business School can find specialized support within their respective programs.

Jay Eubank, director of career services in the journalism school, said having a resource focused on aiding students within the school is important because of its large population.

"I think with the number of students that we have in the school, it's important to have somebody that keeps up with the career field of journalism and mass communication who has a background in it professionally," he said.

And Shawn Graham, associate director of MBA career services, said he agrees.

"The professional schools are primarily the ones that have specialized career services ... because our students are so specialized in their focus," he said.

The business school's career services focus on placement for full-time MBA students, who often have five years of work experience.

Every year, the office holds panels, career fairs, on-campus interviews and résumé workshops to help students prepare for interviews.

"Our primary focus is to provide them with the tools necessary to find the right job," Graham said. "It really is a career-development focus."

Eubank also holds workshops and meets with various groups, but said he prefers having one-on-one contact with students.

"I've found that students generally get more out of the whole process if someone can sit down and talk through the issues they may be facing," he said.

Eubank said one of the first things he works on with students is the résumé — providing handouts and offering his input. He also looks at cover letters and essays.

Both career services provide students with the opportunity to link up with a number of resources within their respective interests.

Eubank said he connects students with alumni and others who can give advice and additional support for students during their career and internship search.

And during the academic year, more than 100 organizations come to the business school to make presentations about career opportunities and to answer any questions from students.

Graham also said MBA students organize trips to different companies across the country. Last year, students traveled to New York and Atlanta — among other places — speaking with professionals and learning about different businesses.

Eubank encourages students to actively participate in all the services available. "I believe that the best internship search is one that a student is very active in," he said.

Eubank said he begins meeting with students as early as their freshman year, noting that it's never too early to begin working toward a specific career.


"I think it's important to start early in what you want to do," he said. "Those that start early give themselves a chance to gain much more experience."

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