

CAREER CORNER

Nov./Dec. 2011

Issue 22

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Switching Gears

Only 4+ weeks left of this semester. Advising and registration are well on their way; final exams are just around the corner. Stress is undoubtedly high, as is the anticipation of the upcoming holiday breaks. For some students, career planning may be one of the last things on your mind. However, Career Services encourages you to set some preliminary goals for yourself about how you are going to switch gears and go from homework management to career development. Of course there are many obligations and deadlines that take priority at the moment, but what about once things slow down for you?

We encourage you to incorporate a bit of planning into your upcoming holiday breaks to get in the habit of dedicating time to your career development. Not only will this lessen your stress later on, but it will help you to identify and improve upon the skills you will need to succeed. Remember, **even if you are barely finishing your first semester of college, career planning means thinking ahead and looking at the bigger picture of your future goals.**

So, grab a piece of paper or open a Word document and come up with a list of things you've been meaning to get to but haven't had the time yet. Need to draft a resume or get started on exploring graduate school options? Hoping to explore internship and/or research opportunities or get a head-start on your job search? Been meaning to catch up on the professional journals that your faculty members recommended? What about just taking the time to sit down and think about your interests and how they might translate into a field of study or career path?

Great! You've just started writing your **Holiday Wish list of Career Development**. Don't worry, you can put it away until your papers are written and your textbooks are closed. The important thing is that you've started the process!



Sample wish list that you can (and are encouraged to) use!



Start by doing some online research to gather information and familiarize yourself with the resources available through Career Services:

- Scroll through previous posts of our [BLOG](#) and past editions of the Career Corner newsletter.
- Watch our brief [WEBSHOPS](#) on topics such as Creating a Resume, Job Fair Prep, Job Center Tutorial, Getting Connected, or Interviewing Basics.
- Browse through the Career Services website, including some of our [Featured Resources](#): JOB CENTER, Focus 2, Career Connections, GradSchools.com, What Can I Do With This Major?, and The Big Guide Online (our new resource for living and working overseas!).

Other great options include:

- Consider including a few career related items on your holiday wish list: a nice interviewing suit or professional pieces for your wardrobe, high-quality resume paper, a few graduate school application fees, etc...
- Build your network by talking to family about what you want to do after college; you never know what connections you can make around the holiday dinner table.
- Conduct Informational Interviews with alumni mentors through *Career Connections* and seek out opportunities to job shadow.
- Read a professional book and catch up on professional articles and journals. Explore or become a member of the professional associations related to your industry. **See the back of this newsletter for more information and faculty advice on Professional Associations!**
- Work on preparing/updating your resume. Explore career and/or graduate school options.
- Volunteer to do something for your community or neighborhood. Don't forget to include volunteer/service work on your resume!

Professional Associations

What are they?

A professional association is an organization seeking to further a particular profession and the interests of individuals engaged in that industry.

Membership in an association relevant to your field is often encouraged and beneficial. However, if you would rather not become a paying member yet, plenty of information can still be gained through websites or publications.

Why should a student be interested?

You may be wondering how this applies to you. The answer is: **knowledge is power and networking is necessary!**

Familiarizing yourself with the associations relevant to your potential employers can set you apart from the competition. You will make a lasting impression if you are able to discuss current industry news and topics.

There may also be mentoring opportunities or discussion boards you can access. Imagine the valuable information you might obtain simply by asking: "what skills might you suggest I develop as a student to help me be more successful in this field when I graduate?"



Comments from LVC Faculty

Faculty members offer insight on the value of professional associations:

Dr. Lou Manza, Professor and Chair, Psychology:

One of the biggest advantages is being able to stay abreast on issues affecting the field. There can be a tendency, when studying a topic, to only look where it has been, and not look at current/future concerns; belonging to professional organizations helps to provide that perspective.

Dr. David Rudd, Professor and Chair, Business & Economics

As soon as a student decides what they intend to become, they should join and participate in the corresponding association to better understand the profession. If they are unsure, they can use association web sites to research and explore.



The value of membership in any association is a function of how much effort you put into it. Joining and getting the publications is a good start. However, members have a number of opportunities to participate, which come from the associations (*can you say networking!*)....a student can become as big a fish in their professional/industry pond as he/she wants to.

In my opinion, a student who does not link to their professional association is handicapping their future potential immensely.

Dr. David Setley, Assistant Professor, Business Administration

Students can often obtain discounted memberships to professional organizations and gain access to relevant publications and conferences. This allows students to network with the professionals who will be making the employment decisions for their organization.

What Fields do they Represent?

All fields! There are hundreds of associations. Some are industry wide, while others are specific to an occupation.

Finding Professional Associations

There are a number of ways you can learn of a Professional Association that may interest you. Several ideas include:

1. Internet Searches
2. What Can I Do With This Major?
3. Ask your own personal or professional contacts

You can certainly do internet searches using key words of your field. Just be sure to do multiple searches!



⇒ Example: search "professional associations for museum studies" to link to the **American Association of Museums**.

OR

⇒ Type "professional associations for archivists" for a link to the **Society of American Archivists**.

The point is, you want to search multiple times so as not to miss associations that may be pertinent to you.

You can utilize the resource What Can I Do With This Major? offered through Career Services:

<http://whatcanidowiththismajor.com/major/majors>

This information-rich tool includes 80 fields of study and typical career areas and employers who hire people from each major, as well as strategies on becoming a more marketable candidate.

In addition to these categories, the resource also offers links to Professional Associations that correspond to each major. All you need to do is select your major, read the career information provided, and then scroll all the way to the bottom for links to Professional Associations and other career information.

⇒ For example, if you are a **Biology** major wondering what associations may pertain to your interests, you will find **11 Professional Associations** under Biological Sciences. You might want to check out those listed under Biochemistry, Chemistry, or Environmental Studies/Science as well!

This extensive tool can be very helpful when career planning. I would encourage you to explore it, not just to learn of Professional Associations, but also to familiarize yourself with options that you may not be aware of!

Your personal and professional contacts (faculty, job or internship supervisors, mentors, family connections, etc) can also be a great way to familiarize yourself with professional associations.

⇒ Ask around to see what memberships your contacts hold and if there are any local meetings or student chapters that you could attend.