

# CareerWatch

Fall 2006

CareerWatch

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## Notes from the Chair

**H**ave you made your plans to attend the 2007 Joint Meeting co-sponsored by ACPA and NASPA?

ACPA and NASPA are hosting a joint meeting in Orlando, Florida from March 31 to April 4, 2007. The last joint meeting occurred in Chicago ten years ago.

At the Joint Meeting, the Commission for Career Development invites you to become more involved in its work through volunteering with one or more of its committees and collaborating with career services professionals from all around the nation!

Come learn more about involvement opportunities and meet Commission members at a variety of venues at the Joint Meeting, including the Early Arrivals Dinner (where you can savor Orlando's diverse cuisine), the Directorate Meeting, and the Open Commission meeting. Check the ACPA/NASPA Joint Meeting schedule for dates, locations and times of these

valuable meetings and opportunities to become involved in the Commission!

Here are some additional tips on how to make the most of the unique Joint Meeting professional development opportunity.

1. The Joint Meeting is a way to learn about the work of both professional associations. Before the Joint Meeting, check with colleagues to see who is



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involved in ACPA and NASPA and in what capacities. Follow up on areas of interest to learn more about involvement opportunities before and after the Joint Meeting. The following are some resources that may be of interest to you.

Visit the Commission for Career Development's webpage at: <http://www.myacpa.org/comm/careerdev/>.

ACPA Commissions represent the functional areas of higher education ([http://www.myacpa.org/comm/comm\\_index.cfm](http://www.myacpa.org/comm/comm_index.cfm)).

ACPA Standing Committees represent various constituencies and their interests ([http://www.myacpa.org/sc/sc\\_index.cfm](http://www.myacpa.org/sc/sc_index.cfm)).

NASPA knowledge communities represent a variety of interest areas in higher education (<http://www.naspa.org/communities/kc/index.cfm>).

2. The state associations of ACPA and the regional associations of NASPA will also have a strong presence at the Joint Meeting. You can access information about the regional associations from the international associations' web pages.

ACPA State Association information is at: [http://www.myacpa.org/sid/sid\\_index.cfm#SID%20websites%20A-Ma](http://www.myacpa.org/sid/sid_index.cfm#SID%20websites%20A-Ma)

NASPA's Regional Community information is at: <http://www.naspa.org/communities/rc/index.cfm>

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3. The program slate will be extensive for a professional meeting of this size. Consider teaming up with friends or colleagues to plan out which sessions each of you will attend and share among each other information from the sessions.

4. Arrive at presentations early so that you can have a seat and be guaranteed handouts. Expect that the sessions you identify as valuable will also be popular with many others.

5. Volunteer. The Commission for

Career Development needs volunteers to assist candidates in placement. Volunteers respond to questions at the Questions & Concerns Booth; conduct mock interviews with placement candidates; and deliver placement orientation workshops for employers and candidates, and present Professional Development (PD) Snapshots during the conference. Contact Farouk Dey, farouk-dey@crc.ufl.edu or Greg Iaccarino, gjaccar@facstaff.wisc.edu to learn more about these opportunities.

6. There will also be opportunities to volunteer in other aspects of the Joint

Meeting (i.e. in registration, in placement, for hospitality). An enormous number of volunteers will be needed to make the Joint Meeting a success. Check the 2007 Joint Meeting website often for updates on volunteer needs.

Thanks to directorate members Mark Kenyon of the University of Maryland and Greg Iaccarino of the University of Wisconsin-Madison for their insights into this topic! See you in Orlando.

*By: Libby Westley  
Chair, Commission for Career  
Development*

## “Smart Moves” a Smart Choice for Career Services Professionals

As career services professionals, one of the greatest challenges that we face is convincing frightened and misinformed students that their future career opportunities do not rest solely upon their major or their first job after college. Try as we may, our strongest persuasive attempts are often met by a healthy dose of skepticism from students who believe that we lack a sense of reality when we tell them that passion and profession do not have to be two separate entities.

“Smart Moves for Liberal Arts Graduates” by Sheila Curran and Suzanne Greenwald provides career services professionals with a tool that will help quiet these doubts. What makes this book special is that it not only provides sound advice about the steps students need to take to position themselves for career success, but it also provides them with over 23 real-life examples of how people, just like them, have taken both unconventional and unexpected paths to reach a variety of fulfilling career destinations.

Students will be intrigued by the stories of people like Thad who graduated from college with an English degree and ended up as the senior director of baseball operations for the Colorado Rockies. They will then be motivated by the courage of people like Ray who majored in math, worked in the consulting field, and then went on to become a professional stuntman.

It is important to mention that, although this book was designed with the liberal arts student in mind, it still has a universal appeal. While the majors of the 23 interviewees in this book may be liberal arts in nature, their stories along with the guidance offered by the authors will be useful to any student from any college or university.

The book also features an extensive index that divides each story into specific ideas or career searching concepts so that students and career advisors can use it as a quick reference tool. The index is divided into categories such as family and life balance, risk-taking, self-discovery

and many more. So if you're looking for a quick story to illustrate a point during an advising session a great example will only be fingertips away. Besides its stories, Smart Moves also includes a wealth of practical advice that will aid students in the job search. The “Myths and Realities of the Job Search” section includes statistically supported information that will give junior and senior students a greater perspective about the job search. The “Dealing With Unsupportive Parents” section offers advice to students struggling to convince their loved ones to support their professional dreams. The “Smart Moves” section provides students with simple steps they can take to improve their chances of landing their ideal positions.

Due to its combination of inspiring stories, advisor-friendly layout, and practical advice – Smart Moves is a great addition to any career services library.

*By: Malcom C. Riley III, Career  
Advisor, Duke University*

# Is there a Link Between Career Services and Higher Retention at Universities?

**R**aising retention at public four year institutions is increasingly becoming a priority. Students seem to be going to colleges but for some reason they are not staying. Many universities are also faced with cutting services due to lack of federal aid. The services they choose to cut are those with little or no significant role in retaining students. Is Career Services one of those services that can be cut? Does Career Services play a role in raising retention? These are the questions I searched for answers to and this is the research I found.

At The University of Texas at San Antonio, Sternberg, Costantino and Cisneros looked at the Self Directed Search (SDS) and the impact it had on retention. They looked at data analysis of 3,278 students who took the SDS and found 80% of the students found the SDS helpful or somewhat helpful and 89% of the students who took it as a freshmen graduated from UTSA. That is extremely significant in relationship to UTSA's average retention rate of 28% in 6 years. Students who participated in career exploration were retained at UTSA at rates higher than 50% of the average retention rate. It was found that career exploration and career focus can in fact predict retention.

Florida State University conducted research on the impact of a career planning course on graduation. They found the career planning course increased problem solving and decision making skills. Participating in a career planning course facilitated educational and career planning goals, decreased time for students to graduate, increased the use of career related workshops to acquire job skills, and fewer credits were taken to earn a degree. This study found that those participating in career planning courses had higher retention rates.

A study conducted by Waslow and Mellott (2006) entitled Impact of Vocational and Personality Factors on Career Development of Students found that career planning and college retention assisted with lowering career anxiety while increasing feelings of success, contentment and retention. Career counselors, like Anna Lisa Vargas at UTSA state "If I can help students develop lifelong

**Students who participated in career exploration were retained at UTSA at rates higher than 50% of the average retention rate. It was found that career exploration and career focus can in fact predict retention.**

career development skills, then I have done my job." Not only does career planning increase retention but the goal of career counselors' is to assist students in their career planning.

Southern Illinois University, 2003, conducted research on career counseling and retention. They researched information on 300 participants and found students who engaged in career counseling were retained at "significantly greater numbers than the control group." This study also found career counseling was an effective retention strategy.

Reaching freshmen and helping them to feel connected to the university is paramount in retention. There are many research articles on freshmen

and retention. The Freshmen Experience (Improving the First Year of College, Research and Retention, 2005) is a research study that found final decisions about majors and careers do not occur before students enter college. Although many students think they know exactly what they want to do before they reach college, most decisions are made during their college experience. Jessica Craig, a freshman at UTSA, stated "I always knew I was going to be a coach, until I entered college, took the Focus assessment and did some research and soul searching about my career focus. Now I am focusing on a degree in education." This research study suggested orientations include Career Services to assist in identifying career options. Again, the findings show career planning programming increases retention.

The sophomore year is one of moratorium, as found in the research entitled "The Exploration of Factors that Effect Academic Success of College Sophomores" (Gardner, From Adrift to Engagement, 2000). Gardner found sophomores want to solidify career decisions and personal goals and sophomores stated "deciding on an appropriate career was their biggest personal problem." This would suggest sophomores need assistance in making their career goals concrete. As research suggests, if they do not get help and solidify a career focus, they may drop out of college. To increase sophomore retention, career programming is of paramount importance.

Bowling State University conducted research with 625 undergraduate participants, Exploring Student Transition from College to Career, 2005. Not surprising, they found "students who participated in these

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types of career-related programs and services felt more prepared to transition to a career after graduation."

Career related programming can be found in Career Services offices all around the nation and most universities. Based on the research, Career

Services not only helps to raise retention, but equips students in successfully transitioning from college to career.

Retaining and graduating students is not only the goal of the university, it is one that is shared by Career Services offices. Career Services programming has been researched and the findings

are in: Career Services plays a crucial and significant role in raising retention at universities.

*By: Martina M. Sternberg, M.Ed., Assistant Director, Career Services at The University of Texas at San Antonio, martina.sternberg@utsa.edu and Anna Lisa Vargas, M.Ed, Career Counselor, The University of Texas at San Antonio*

## Keeping Academic Advisors Informed

I don't know about you and your university but we get a flux of students looking for immediate answers to this question: "What should I major in?" With that question students repeatedly state: "I hear that you guys have a "test" that will completely figure out my life [major]." Of course, as career development professionals we know that assessments will not "figure out" a student's life. They provide guidance and can assist students in exploring new options, solidifying their current options, or expanding on their horizons. But where do students get the preconceived notion that assessments provide them with the "magical" answer?

Every semester around registration time, students were lining up during drop-in advising or for appointments with the same intentions. They were coming to the career center for the "test," and hoping to leave that same day with an answer to what they should major in. Upon further investigation, we found that many of these students were being misinformed by their academic advisors. Their advisors were the ones advising them to come to the career center for the "test." Most advisors do not have formal training in career development or career counseling. Academic advisors are usually trained to advise students in any way they can. They do a great job with helping students find campus resources and pointing them in the right directions. The Career Center is usually the first department advisor think of when students say they are "undecided," or "need

help finding a major." Therefore we found it extremely important to educate our academic advisors about the different services we provide for students.

About three years ago an event that allows academic advisors to meet with other advisor and career center staff was launched. Its formal title was *Annual Partnership Day*. *Annual Partnership Day* was a creative way to educate and inform campus advisors of our services. We found it to be extremely successful!

### Annual Partnership Day

Toward the end of summer semester all academic advisors from the different colleges received an invitation from the career center to attend its *Third Annual Partnership Day*. The actual event was held during the first month (September) of the fall semester. We reserved a room on campus large enough to accommodate at least 30 people, and ordered a continental breakfast for the participants. We also gave away career center paraphernalia in order to show our appreciation for coming to the event. Prior to the event advisors were asked (via e-mail) to prepare a 5-10 minute update about their department. Their updates were presented towards the latter half of the event. The first thing we did was provide the advisor with career center updates. The updates included recent hires, new programs and contact information as well as anything worth mentioning (e.g. upcoming events). We

then proceeded to share a PowerPoint presentation on the different services we provide students. During the presentation we made sure to emphasize our assessment program. It was not our goal to train advisors to become assessments experts, but to simply have them thoroughly understand the role assessments play in career counseling. We then asked all the advisors to update us on their department. Doing this has really opened the lines of communication between the different departments. No longer is the College of Arts and Letters in the dark about what is going on in the College of Engineering. At the conclusion of the Partnership Day we asked all advisors to leave behind any kind of literature they would like posted within our career center as well as complete an anonymous evaluation form so we can improve the event. All evaluation came back with positive feedback.

Since the first year of *Annual Partnership Day* (currently in its third year) we have seen the numbers of students asking for the "magical" career assessment significantly reduce. We also find that every year advisors look forward to the opportunity to meet with other advisors and share their stories as well as hear about what's going on in the career center. We all have one common goal- to serve students. By effectively communicating with other departments we have found that students have greatly benefited.

*By: Brian Montalvo, M.S., Ed.S., NCC, Florida Atlantic University, bmontal1@fau.edu*



## Using Podcasts to Reach Millennial Students

It's no secret that Millennial students crave technology. The question this poses for Career Services offices is: "How can we capitalize on this trend to reach students?" While practically all offices have at least a website they direct students to, there are many other ways Career Services offices can use technology to reach students. Websites have grown to include online job boards, online resource libraries, and can now expand to a new format: Podcasting.

The Letters and Science/Human Ecology Career Services office at the University of Wisconsin-Madison created the Badger Career Podcast in the fall of 2006 as a means to reach more students with common messages. Advisors found they were relating the same, or very similar, messages over and over to students in their appointments, and employers were doing the same at career fairs. So they decided to pursue podcasting as a way to record some of those common messages and make them available to students.

What exactly is podcasting? Most simply, it is the process of recording an audio file, and making it available for distribution over the internet. This could be recording an interview, monologue, presentation, or other conversation. While the term podcasting might sound confusing, complex, technical and expensive, it's

really not. Podcasting can be started for as little as \$50, which includes purchasing a microphone that can be plugged into a computer, and downloading free software that allows you to record a message, edit it, and save it as an mp3 file. This mp3 file can be listened to on almost any computer, or even downloaded onto a portable mp3 player such as an iPod or Zune. The whole process, from recording to editing to uploading, doesn't take too long after a little practice.

Podcasts in the Letters and Science/Human Ecology Career Services office at the University of Wisconsin-Madison center include two types of messages: "Career Topics" and "Employers." The "Career Topics" podcasts feature interviews with career advisors, university staff, and other guests on topics including interviewing, networking and other general career-related issues. Instead of spending time during an advising appointment teaching students about the basics of job searching, resumes and interviewing, the advisor can direct the student to a podcast for the basics and spend the advising appointment covering more personal or relevant issues.

The "Employers" podcasts consist of either conversations with recruiters or monologues promoting career opportunities for students. A typical conversation includes the recruiter talking about what opportunities they have in their

organization, what type of student they recruit, what they are looking for in candidates and why students should consider working for their organization. Basically, it allows recruiters to personalize a message for the students at a particular school, informing them about options with their organization. Often alumni from the College of Letters & Science serve as the interviewees, giving students the opportunity to make a connection between their major (or a liberal arts degree in general) and potential career opportunities. The variations on what employers can talk about are endless. If an employer wants to highlight their organization's culture, they can talk about that. Podcasting allows employers to customize and target their message to students.

So how has podcasting been received? Even without any substantial publicizing to students, the Badger Career Podcast has been well-received in its first few months of existence. The site has received over 150 hits per month, and employers are very excited to be part of the program when approached. Only time will tell how effective and useful it is in the long run, but if preliminary indicators persist, podcasting is a very efficient way to reach millennial students with common messages.

*By: Matthew Nelson, Career Advisor, L&S/Human Ecology Career Services, University of Wisconsin-Madison*

### Commission for Career Development Vision Statement

**The Commission for Career Development seeks to examine and address the changing and diverse role of career services in higher education within a student development framework. We work to fulfill this vision by attending to the needs of our constituents; current and potential career development professionals in higher education.**

**Those needs, as we see them, are:**

- **Professional Development and Information Exchange**
- **Knowledge Development Regarding Professional Standards and Issues**
- **Affiliation and Networking**

## Book Review - Career Development and Planning: A Comprehensive Approach

Career development courses are becoming more and more prevalent on college campuses, and instructors of these courses are faced with the difficult decision of choosing a textbook that will best shape and guide their course. *Career Development and Planning: A Comprehensive Approach* presents practical solutions to career issues and career development theory in a clear and straightforward manner. It is an all inclusive text and instructor's manual providing instructors with everything necessary to teach an effective career development course. The text is broken down into three sections: Career Concepts and Applications, Social Conditions Affecting Career Development and Implementing a Strategic Career Plan.

The authors (Robert C. Reardon, Ph.D., Janet G. Lenz, Ph.D., James P. Sampson, Jr., Ph.D., and Gary W. Peterson, Ph.D.) draw upon years of experience and research in the area of career development to develop a framework for successfully making career decisions in Part I of the book. This framework is based on Holland's RIASEC theory and the Cognitive Information Processing (CIP) approach to career development. The CIP approach, created by the authors, encourages readers not only to develop knowledge about themselves, their options and career decision-making,

but also to consider how negative thinking about decision-making may be influencing their ability to effectively make a career decision. One of the strengths of the book is that, at the end of each chapter, the authors briefly revisit that chapter's material in the context of the CIP approach, thereby relating each step of career decision making and the job search to one common theory.

Part II focuses on social conditions affecting career development, including career and family roles, an always changing global economy, and alternative ways to work (such as flex-time, job sharing, and working from home). The authors encourage readers to use this information as a lens through which to view the world of work.

Concrete steps necessary to carry out a job search, including topics such as resume and cover letter writing, interviewing, networking, negotiating and evaluating job offers and beginning a first job are all covered in Part III. These chapters give more than a cursory overview of the information and include practical resources like sample resumes, interview questions and a timeline for negotiating a job offer. The text incorporates activities that illustrate the ideas and theories in the book, including reflective activities such as an autobiography assignment

and valuable group exercises, like a values auction. Each assignment and activity included in the text encourages readers not only to learn the material, but to reflect on how the material relates to themselves and their career path. These assignments are included in the textbook, which is a new feature of the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Other new features of the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition include reduced cost due to the combination of the text and workbook, updated occupational and labor market information and several chapters that have been condensed and simplified.

The complementary instructor's manual is also a useful tool for instructors of the course. It includes detailed PowerPoint presentations, classroom activities, additional information on student assignments and a 170-item test bank, which are easily adapted to the needs of each university's students.

*Career Development and Planning: A Comprehensive Approach* is easily understood and offers practical instruction in addition to theoretical information. Although primarily written as an academic textbook, it is a valuable resource to anyone dealing with a career decision as well as those in the field of career development.

By: Sarah Clark, Ed.S., M.S., NCC, Career Development Counselor, UNC

### 2007 ACPA/NASPA JOINT MEETING Co-Sponsored Programs

Global Connections On-Campus: Collaboratively Facilitating International Students' Career Development

Career Center Directors: Who are They and How did They Get There?

Transformative Education: Lessons Learned for Assessing a Job Search Course

## Renew Your Commission and List-Serv Membership

It's that time of year when many ACPA members renew their membership. **Please note that every time you renew your ACPA membership, you should also renew BOTH your Commission membership AND your list serv registration.** Failure to re-join the Commission may prevent you from voting in elections and receiving important email updates.

Once you renew your ACPA membership, follow the directions below to 1) join the Commission for Career Development and 2) register for the Commission list serv.

### 1) To join the Commission for Career Development:

Go to <https://members.myacpa.org/Scripts/4Disapi.dll/4DCGI/logon/logonmain.html> and log in using your ACPA user name and password.

Once logged in, scroll to the bottom of the Welcome page to the section titled, "Committees." Here, you may view the list of committees to which you belong and/or join a new committee by clicking the "list of committees" link. Scroll down to find the Commission for Career Development and click the link to join.

### 2) To register for the Commission for Career Development list-serv:

Go to <https://members.myacpa.org/Scripts/4Disapi.dll/4DCGI/person/Listserv.html> and log in using your ACPA user name and password. Once logged in, type your email address in the space next to the Commission for Career Development and select whether you wish to receive messages as they are sent, or in digest style, where messages will be bundled and emailed to you once weekly. Please contact Jennifer

Browning at [jbrowning@rollins.edu](mailto:jbrowning@rollins.edu) if you have any questions about joining the list serv.

The Online Career Development committee of the Commission for Career Development is in the process of developing regional networks so that the information sharing doesn't end after Convention is over. Our web site is also being grown to include resource sharing opportunities and benchmarking data. You can visit the Commission website at <http://myacpa.org/comm/careerdev>.

If you have suggestions of material to include on the webpage, contact Jennifer Browning at [jbrowning@rollins.edu](mailto:jbrowning@rollins.edu) or Andrea Dine at [ADine@wheelock.edu](mailto:ADine@wheelock.edu).

*By: Jennifer Browning, Directorate Member and Co-Chair of Online Career Development Committee*

# CareerWatch

## INTERESTED IN HELPING WITH THE CAREERWATCH NEWSLETTER?

We are always looking for help editing stories, design and lay-out, and fresh ideas of how to identify more writers!

If you are interested, please contact:

Kacee Ferrell, [ferrellk@ipfw.edu](mailto:ferrellk@ipfw.edu) or

Amy Ites, [ami22@georgetown.edu](mailto:ami22@georgetown.edu)