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SUMMARY OF MAY 2004 GCRC GENERAL MEETING

By Bruce Bloom, Career Consultant/Adjunct Faculty DeVry University, Chicago

The spring 2004 GCRC general meeting was held at Dominican University in River Grove, IL. On Friday May 7th. Susan Felice welcome members and guests to Dominican University and introduced Mary Pat Fallon, Assistant Director of Dominican University's Library. Bruce Bloom introduced Frances Roehm, reference librarian at Skokie Public Library. The topic of their presentation for the first part of the program was "*Help Wanted Help Found @ The Library*".

The employment process

Ms. Roehm opened by focusing on the following trends in today's employment market: demand for employment is high and supply is low which means typical methods of seeking employment may not work (responding to newspaper ads). On average, she said it takes longer for job seekers to find suitable employment, with many employment seekers becoming desperate and willing to lower expectations. One suggestion was to emphasize "*The Hidden Employment Market*" for best results.

Ms. Roehm reminded everyone that the employment search process consists of, finding and researching employers, (employment leads, networking, and the hidden employment market) and contracting and interrelating with employers (resumes and portfolios, developing interviewing skills, and researching employers. She referred to the following sites for career exploration:

- Job Hunters Bible www.jobhuntersible.com,
- Definitive Chicago Area Job Guide www.chicagajobs.org,
- Career Info www.acinet.org,
- O'Net www.online.onet.center.org, and
- Careerclick www.workforceinfo.state.il.us.

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Returning to school websites are:

- Peterson's www.peterson.com,
- Adult/Continuing Education www.adulted.bout.com, and
- Back2College www.back2college.com.

Websites for online classes:

- www.freed.net,
- MIT Open Course Ware www.ocw.mit.edu/index.html, and
- Worldwide Learn www.worldwidelearn.com.

Ms. Roehm advised users that they need to be aware that Monster.com and the other big employment sites sell the information gathered from individuals registering for their services. She recommended checking out www.job-hunt.org/privacy.shtml. The internet contains millions of pages of information, some authoritative and up to date and others are not. She also suggested checking www.illinoisclicks.org

The resume: A lifetime of experience

"A resume is a marketing tool so, you need to be able to create a resume that consolidates a lifetime of experience into one or two pages of text," she said. "And you'll need to create and keep updated both an electronic and paper resume,"

She suggested keeping a list of bulleted items to add to a resume for specific jobs and highly recommended Rebecca Smith's E-Resumes & Resources www.eresumes.com as an excellent how to resource for employment seekers wanting to learn more about electronic resumes and employment marketing. To develop your paper portfolio, use Professional web pages, other web based projects, PowerPoint presentations, policy reports, successful grant submissions, special reports, and articles and again emphasized the importance of "The Hidden Employment Market" consisting of associations, recruiters, networking, employment fairs, and cold contacts.

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Looking for leads

Employment leads can be found on Monster.com, newspaper websites like the Tribune and Sun-Times, specialized employment sites for a specific field or industry, community college board, and employment listings. But she added, that most positions are not filled through listings. Often positions listed are already filled from within or through recommendations. People are more likely to hire someone they know who has been personally recommended. Candidates are likely to find better positions through a network than through listed positions. She offered the following networking tips:

- Inform your friends, relatives, and acquaintances that you are looking for employment;
- Take advantage of face to face meetings
- Attend employment fairs in your area
- Take a class; join a professional association
- Join career/support and networking groups
- Join list serves and mailing lists
- Use online networking tools like valut.com or yahoo groups.

Other networking tips include:

- Keep a business card, resume, and promo sheet;
- Practice a 30 second elevator speech explaining your situation, skills, and desires while not sounding desperate;
- Schedule information interviews with professionals in your field, and
- Do not sit by a computer all day. "It's important to get out and meet people"

Proper netiquette

Using online resources for job searches requires a knowledge of proper netiquette. Ms. Roehm informed the audience that information can be found at www.chicagolandjobs.org. She also suggested using directories to find contact information for a company or organization, executive recruiter or headhunters, and contact industry and occupational professionals. Examples of Online Executive recruiter Directories are Oya's directory of recruiters www.recruit.com, Recruiters Online

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www.recruiteronline.com/matchsearch/html, and Directory of Executive Recruiters www.kennedyinfo.com/dbl/db_der_bus.html. Resources for associations and organizations are Encyclopedia of associations, Yahoo organizations, Riley Guide www.rileyguide.com, and Google it by using Google to search by key words with "association".

Interview preparation online

In preparing for an interview Ms. Roehm stressed research potential employers, research salaries in the industry, and for the position, and lots of practice. When researching employers try business directories for basic information, use a periodical index. For larger employers use a networking website like www.vault.com or www.websfeet.com and make discreet private investigations by visiting the location and talking to employers. When researching salaries check the Bureau of Labor Statistics/National Compensation Surveys bis.gov, salary.com, webseet.com, and careerjournal.com.

Part II Interning, Learning and Earning

The second part of the meeting topic was Interning; Learning and Earning featured Dennis Evans, Senior Personnel Analyst, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago moderating a panel of former interns sharing their experiences. The panel consisted of the following: Sarhonda Brown is a student attending South Suburban College, while interning as a human resources assistant with Cook County Bureau of Human Resources; Adam Lintner, a civil engineering graduate of Purdue University and a former co-op with the Illinois Department of Transportation, currently working with IDOT; Felipe Manriquez, an electrical engineering student attending the University of Illinois at Chicago, who interned with the Metropolitan Water reclamation District of greater Chicago and Turner Construction and Ben Ogle, a Political Science student attending Northern Illinois University, who interned with the Department of Justice, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF).

Mr. Brown explained that he worked with other employees and with accounting software which he found interesting and challenging. He performed various human resource tasks and had the opportunity to work directly with the public. Working face-to-face allowed Mr. Brown to experienced issues human resources

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professionals deal with, such as, selection and classification, practical human resource procedures, and how to select future employees.

Mr. Ogle found working in different areas like Special Agent and Forensics a "great experience". "I had an opportunity to view how a case progressed that involved conspiracy and fraud, which was both dynamic and complex," he said. M. Ogle also receiving clearance for Grand Jury information made him feel more connected to his team. One surprise though was the amount of paper paperwork required to a document case. During his internship, Mr. Ogle mentioned that he was interviewed by a panel of ATF personnel that are part of the federal governments interview process and that that provided him with a real world experience of being with the government investigating and prosecuting a case.

Mr. Manriquez interned at the Metropolitan Water District of Greater Chicago. He said Dennis Evans e-mailed the his school with available internship opportunities because of that he was ended up working on the deep Tunnel System in the interceptor sewer. This job involved Mr. Manriquez suiting up and investigating sewer control. During his internship he reported to a number of supervisors while performing daily tasks including processing necessary paperwork for documentation and creating a spreadsheet to pay bills. One of his more fond memories of his internship was how the student inters and department heads would discuss their experiences over lunch.

Mr. Litner, a Civil Engineer graduate from Purdue University and former co-op at the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), is currently employed full time with IDOT. According to Mr. Litner, he was a co-op for IDOT where he was given a two-day orientation prior to starting his internship. He said he was involved in a nine million dollar reconstruction project involving two bridges. While at IDOT he worked on a variety of projects including expressways. His internship proved to be a such good experience that Mr. Litner was offered and decided to accept fulltime employment with IDOT. "I knew what to expect because of my internship," he said. "I also knew that since IDOT is a large company, I would have the opportunity to work in different areas of the business."

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Panelists tell how to get students involved with internships

The panelists commented on how to get students involved with internships. Mr. Manriquez stressed that career services should conduct workshops, host career fairs, and market to the students, especially freshman and sophomores all the resources available to them. He also felt students should be used as resources to share their experiences with freshman and to create alumni panels of former internship participants. Mr. Ogle encourages career services to market internships to freshman and sophomores and not wait until their junior year. Mr. Brown strongly believes in joining different student organizations and clubs, many which are linked to professional organizations. Students participating in coop and internship programs have more confidence and gain valuable experience. Mr. Litner suggested students broaden their search by looking at other fields to expand your experience and skills, such as, medical and electronics.

The panelist concluded with the following advice. Mr. Brown emphasized that students need to take risks, get advice, and information. He felt this would motivate students to move forward. Mr. Ogle stressed that interview skills are critical in securing internships and recommended practice panel interviews with other students and career services staff. He said the mock interviews conducted when he was at ATF were invaluable. His final advice was to "do the research on companies and do not be afraid to do cold calling". Mr. Manriquez emphasized marketing your skills and abilities from previous employment, including family business or retail employment. "If you have no work, get some student employment experience," he said. "Working a a volunteer is an excellent way to gain work experience -- and the more experience the better." He also said he felt people learn best when they are out of their comfort level and to include working with groups or on teams if possible. Mr. Litner emphasized when interviewing express your confidence to an employer that you know the job because you previously performed it. "Students need to push themselves harder in order to challenge themselves to succeed," he said.

During the business meeting Nancy Wajler reviewed the budget and assured everyone that GCRC is financially sound. Then the new slate of GCRC Officers were introduced, voted, and approved by the members. The 2005 Executive Board for GCRC is President Dennis Evans, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago, Vice-President Lavetta Houston, Secretary Susan Felice, Dominican University, and Treasurer Nancy Wajler College of DuPage. Congratulations to our 2005 Executive Board. ●