



The Changing Face of Career Services



Career Services at Wentworth has taken on a whole new meaning in recent years. With an evolving cooperative education (co-op) program and a focus on career development as early as freshman year and extending well after graduation, the department is helping students and alumni think about more than classes, majors, and employment.

Wentworth's innovative, holistic approach to career development incorporates a range of services, including opportunities for networking, professional development, and job placement. The co-op program has been helping students find rewarding and relevant work experience for 35 years, which often translates into full-time employment opportunities. In its annual post-graduation survey, career services learned that 67 percent of the class of 2009 respondents had received a job offer and 66 percent were currently employed by a co-op employer.

Beyond Graduation: Resources for Alumni

Whether alumni are looking for career development assistance or transitioning between jobs, there are numerous resources available to them, including one-on-one counseling and LeopardLaunch, the Institute's online searchable networking and employment database. Alumni and students can meet with career counselors for input on basic job-search skills and resume and cover letter writing. They can also engage in discussions about how to translate knowledge, talents, and skills into a meaningful career path.

Many Wentworth alumni employ students through the co-op program, but the benefits of connecting alumni with students go beyond job placement, as

Karin Cahill-Santos, ABC '10, learned firsthand. Cahill-Santos was utilizing tutoring services from the Center for Teaching and Learning as well as using the counseling center, but she was still struggling with one of her classes. Career Advisor Vanecia Harrison-Sanders connected her with the National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC), which found a Wentworth alumna willing to tutor her. She finally feels confident in her class, and she has formed a meaningful relationship with the alumna.

Career Services works closely with the Office of Alumni Relations and the Wentworth Alumni Association (WAA) to facilitate networking and keep alumni informed of the resources on campus. The increasing popularity of social media inspired the WAA to invite a panel of experts to share how LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook can be used to network and to grow businesses and careers.

The panel featured Christine Pilch of Grow My Company, Joselin Mane of LITBel Consulting, and Jeff Widman of Brand Glue and was moderated by Nelson de Witt, BSM '05, of Coto Solutions. The panel stressed that whether someone is updating a work-related success on LinkedIn, posting a photo of a family vacation on Facebook, or tweeting an article about a personal interest on Twitter, social media is an important means of establishing and maintaining

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relationships, akin to attending a networking event or taking a client to lunch.

Of the nearly 150 attendees, almost half participated via the online broadcast. They were able to chat live, ask questions, and give feedback, which moderator de Witt relayed to the panel. You can view the panel discussion at: www.wit.edu/go/WAANetworking2010

Social media is good for more than career development. Career Services uses it to generate ideas, establish and maintain relationships with alumni and students, and solicit feedback from alumni related to career or industry information. "LinkedIn allows us to find alumni that are working in a specific field that a student is interested in," says Greg Denon, director of Career Services. "Having the ability to make that connection and introduce them provides both parties with a great mentoring opportunity."

Preserving the Student Experience in a Challenging Economy

With the addition of new events and modifications to the co-op program, students are gaining more than ever from Career Services. By receiving career development counseling and interacting with alumni and industry representatives at formal events such as Mock Interview Day, the Career Fair, classroom presentations, and panel discussions, students are continually improving their professional skills and readiness to enter the workforce.

The economic downturn reduced the co-op opportunities available for students and opened the door to reevaluate the co-op program. Requirements are more flexible now. In the past, co-op positions had to be full time with one company. Now students can work varying hours at more than one company. Professional training programs, competitions,

and independent projects are also acceptable co-op options. Wentworth even facilitated two training programs on campus at a reduced rate for students, allowing them to learn Revit, a building information modeling software, and to

learn about sustainable building practices related to Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED).

The need for alternative experiences has brought about many positive changes for Career Services, including a co-op cohort program, which gave students an opportunity to apply their skill sets and collaborate with their classmates across disciplines. Twenty-two students in architecture, construction management, and civil engineering technology spent five weeks working and studying at Arcosanti, an urban laboratory located in the Arizona desert, as part of their Spring 2010 co-op. Working together on complex real-life projects gave students insight into the challenges of the other professions.

Seeing Real Results

The success of Career Services can be seen in areas such as student job placement and successful alumni careers, but the greatest reward is when students make a connection and grow. Denon recalls one student who participated in Mock Interview Day. "The industry volunteer who met with him said the student wasn't presenting himself very strongly: wasn't making eye contact, didn't have a strong resume, and couldn't speak to his achievements in classes," he says. "The volunteer gave the student constructive feedback. Upon meeting again at the career fair a year and a half later, the employer immediately noticed a big difference. The student was very impressive during the interview and accepted a co-op offer with them. He had taken all of the advice the volunteer had given him, and through his experiences at Wentworth in that year and a half, his confidence had grown and it really showed."

For more information on Career Services, e-mail careerservices@wit.edu or go to:

www.facebook.com/WIT.CareerServices





Photo: Lauren Jolly Roberts

Arcosanti is an experimental town in Arizona designed around the concept of arcology (architecture and ecology). Arcology incorporates systems that work together, including multipurpose buildings, greenhouses, and solar orientation for lighting, heating, and cooling. The experimental building practices are used as a model for sustainable urban planning and development. Students had the chance to be involved with construction projects, surveying, greenhouse design and construction, retaining wall excavation, and welding. They had the privilege of taking part in meetings with Paolo Soleri, the Italian architect who founded Arcosanti. They also toured Taliesin West, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright as his home, studio, and architectural campus.



Photo: Matthew Smith, BSA '11



Photo: Matthew Smith, BSA '11



Photo: Daniel Moran, BCMT '11