

# Career Services

OUR MISSION IS YOUR FUTURE

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## Effective Job Search Strategies

### Assess Yourself and Your Goals:

How well do you know yourself? When someone asks the question, “So what do you want to do after graduation?”, can you answer it? What if someone says, “Tell me about yourself.”? Do you have a response? If you are struggling to answer these questions, take the time to read this section to get the information you need as you begin your job search.

In order to be successful in your job search, you must first know yourself well. You must conduct a self-assessment and identify your:

- **Skills, abilities, strengths and limitations:** To discover these, pay attention to the feedback you have received throughout your college career. What have your professors said you do well, what have your friends and supervisors said are your strengths? Have you been evaluated at work or at an internship? What was included in the evaluation?
- **Interests:** When identifying interests, think about the courses you have enjoyed best, the kind of work you like to do and even any outside activities that you’re involved in that you enjoy.
- **Values:** Following are a list of work values – variety, challenge, independence/autonomy, security/steady income, structure, significance of your contribution, ability to help people, high salary, prestige & social status, interacting with people, quiet/contemplative surroundings, working inside/outside/from home, number of hours in a work day, amount of vacation time. What’s important to you in your work? Do your answers fit with your career goals?
- **Experience:** What have you done in the classroom, in an internship, during the summers and breaks and here at Geneseo? What have you learned that an employer may value? What skills have you developed?

After completing an assessment of yourself, it’s time to define your goals. What kind of work do you want to do? Where do you want to be geographically to do it? What kind of organization do you want to work for? Can’t define? Then, research. The Career Library in Blake A 104 has hundreds of resources that can answer your questions about the world of work. You can learn what people in your major typically do, the types of organizations that hire in that field, earnings and advancement potential, additional training required and where to go for more information.

The Career Services web site is also a valuable tool in this assessment stage. Go to <http://careers.geneseo.edu>, click on For Students then Career Planning to find “What Can I Do With This Major/Degree?”, a review of specific majors, career paths within those majors and major focused career links. Or, click on “What are they doing now?”, which contains information about what Geneseo graduates are doing and where they have gone. Also, check out short video clips of a wide variety of career fields on our web site under Career Planning, Career Podcasts. Finally, go to “Alumni Career Partners Program”, where you can search our list of Alumni volunteers who are eager to help you explore career options, talk about internships and other job opportunities and discuss graduate school options in their field.

Even after you do a self-assessment and define your career goals, sometimes you’ll still have several careers/jobs that you would like to pursue. That’s fine and in today’s economy it may even be wise to have options. However, there is likely one field that you favor, one job that is your dream job. Here’s a suggestion when conducting your job search. Develop several plans, each with its own strategies. When you have Plan A, Plan B and maybe Plan C in place, then it’s time to implement.

Plan A - Dream Job - If you don’t try, you won’t get it.

Plan B - Another career position that you would consider that may lead to your Dream Job.

Plan C - Your back-up plan may include current or past employers until you achieve Plan A or B.

At this stage, you should be able to articulate what kind(s) of position(s) you prefer, what kind(s) of organization(s) you would like to work in and where you want to be geographically.

### **Prepare Your Tools:**

Now that you know yourself well and have a clear direction, it’s time to represent this information on paper. It’s time to write your resume and cover letter. There is a great deal of information available on how to prepare these documents whether it’s in book format in the Career Library, on-line, in one of our handouts available on-line or in our office or at a workshop. Use what format works best for you in developing your resume and cover letter. Once completed, don’t forget to have them critiqued by Career Services or someone in your field of interest. In addition to a resume and cover letter, you will want to develop your interviewing skills. Again, you can find a number of resources to help you, but you may also want to participate in a mock interview. Don’t let your first interview ever be for your dream job. Practice does help!

### **Implement Your Job Search Plans:**

There are a number of tasks you can do to complete a successful job search. Your first task should be to find out how employers in your field hire college graduates. You will usually learn this by talking to people, either in your field of interest or in Career Services. Do employers in your field hire through their internship programs? Do they hire by posting openings on-line and if so, where? Here are some ways to answer these questions:

- Join professional organizations and community groups and let members know you are job searching
- Network with family, friends, professors, past employers, and neighbors and let them help in your job search

Sometimes your job search will require you to approach employers before they widely publicize their jobs. If that's the case, consider these ideas:

- Research organizations that interest you – there are a number of resources on-line and in the Career Library in Blake A 104 that will help you find potential employers
- Conduct informational interviews with organizations of interest to you and follow up with any leads you generate
- Ask your networking contacts for help in identifying potential employers

Don't forget to apply to those jobs that are posted. Here's how you may find some of those posted openings:

- Utilize the Career Services web site for job listings and links to other web sites
- Attend job fairs and participate in recruiting events
- Read the on-line and classified ads in the geographic area in which you're searching

If you need to, consider these options:

- A temporary assignment or contract work through an employment agency – it may lead to a more long-term opportunity
- A "stepping-stone" job that may eventually get you into your dream job
- Graduate school or additional training in your field

### **Track Your Activity Carefully and Follow-Up with Contacts:**

It is critical that you stay organized in your job search. Keep a record of where you have posted your resume, sent your resume and any networking contacts you've developed. Track the results of any of your efforts and keep it on hand for easy access.

Continuously follow up with any leads you've uncovered. In a recent survey, 82% of hiring managers said that job seekers should get in touch with them within 2 weeks of sending a resume. If you haven't heard from an employer in that time frame, follow up with either a phone call (for a mailed resume) or an e-mail (for an electronic submission). Follow-up thereafter on a regular basis, if it's appropriate, to ask about their search to fill the position. Many employers value this kind of initiative and enthusiasm.

After any interview, follow-up with an e-mail or thank you note within 24 hours and express your interest in the organization and position. Again, your interest in the position and your extra effort could make the difference in that employer's decision.

### **Additional Issues to Consider:**

**TECHNOLOGY, TECHNOLOGY, TECHNOLOGY!** Yes, most of us appreciate technology, but it can hurt us in our job search if we don't do some editing. First, think about your voicemail/answering machine. Is your message appropriate? If others will answer your

phone, will they use their manners and speak respectfully? If not, fix it. Next, think about your on-line image. What is your e-mail address? Is it appropriate? Have you googled yourself lately? Are you on FaceBook, MySpace, do you have a blog or your own web site? If you answered yes, do you want an employer looking at what's posted? If not, fix it.

### **Rate Your Job Offers:**

When conducting a job search, understand that rejection is part of the process, but at some point you will have the opportunity to evaluate a job offer. Consider not just the salary, but the job responsibilities, benefits (health insurance, retirement, vacation/holidays, etc.), organization culture and travel/relocation issues. Accept an offer that is best for you and remember that the ethical path is to stop interviewing once you have accepted an offer.

### **Job Search Resources from Career Services:**

Career Services offers a wide range of services, available on both an individual and group basis, to help develop effective job search strategies. Everyone has a different goal and most often *one-to-one advisement* works best. We also encourage you to check the Career Services web site often. New events are posted on a regular basis. Here is a listing of several of the services provided by our office:

**Job Listings:** Looking for current openings? Go to <http://careers.geneseo.edu>, click on *For Students – Job Search*, then *Job Listings* to link to several databases of job listings. Be sure to use our own job posting system, *KnightJobs*, for regional postings.

**Geneseo Career Partners:** The Geneseo Career Partners program is a formal network of Geneseo graduates and parents of students who have volunteered to help current students and alumni in career exploration and the job search process. Go to *KnightJobs* on our web site, log in and click on the Mentor button for a database of alumni and parents.

**On-campus Recruiting/Job Fairs:** Visit our office or web site for information about visiting recruiters and local/regional job fairs.

**Placement File Information:** Do you want a place to store letters of recommendation? Open a placement file. The set-up fee is \$10.00 and we maintain the file for 20 years.

**What Are They Doing Now?:** What have past graduates gone on to do? Where did they go to graduate school and where are they working? Find out by viewing the web site or coming to the office to see our latest data on who hired our graduates.

**In closing, the job search can be intimidating, but you're not alone!! Geneseo Career Services staff is eager to help you achieve your post-graduation goals.**

*Revised August 2009*