

# Campus CAREER COUNSELOR

The Eyes and Ears of the Career Services Profession

## Required Course Nudges Students to Be Proactive About Future Careers

By Peter Vogt

A combination online/in-person career course in the University of Houston's Bauer College of Business is showing solid signs of being the effective "early intervention" that college faculty and career services staff were hoping it would be.

**Connecting Bauer to Business** is a required, three-credit, graded experience that meets once a week in a classroom and once a week online. It's intended to help students answer three key questions:

- How do I fit into the world of business?
- Where do I want to go with my career?
- How do I get there?

Not the kinds of questions you want to leave to chance—as Bauer faculty and career center staff learned firsthand before the course existed.

"The college has large populations of first-generation college students, first-generation U.S. citizens, and nontraditional students," says Jamie Belinne, assistant dean for Bauer's Rockwell Career Center. "As a result, our employers were consistently telling us that our students were bright and driven, yet they lacked the professional polish and focus necessary to be truly successful in business."

Moreover, Belinne says, too many of the college's students were frequently chang-

ing majors, in the process delaying their graduations—sometimes by several years.

So faculty members in the college voted to create a mandatory course that would compel students "to have a basic understanding of the professional world of business before they could declare a major in business," Belinne says.

Belinne and her career center colleagues took ownership of the course, building the curriculum in consultation with faculty liaisons and members of the center's employer advisory board.

### "Basic" Skills Get Attention

Each semester, some 750 students take **Connecting Bauer to Business**, which features more than 70 guest speakers who offer their insights about real life in the business trenches.

The course is divided into thirds. During the first third, students tap online assessment tools like StrengthsQuest and Kuder, with lecture and lab sessions focusing on self-reflection and decision-making skills.

"We've found it necessary to teach skills we used to think were basic," Belinne says, "such as how to handle risk in the decision-making process, living with consequences, the ethical implications of decision making, and the long-term impact of today's financial decisions."

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# IN THE NEWS

## Students—and Parents—Mull Effects of a Down Economy

The declining economic situation in the United States (and around the world) has many college seniors—and some college parents, apparently—worried about the short-term future where entry-level jobs are concerned, according to a recent article in *The Financial Times*.

When, for example, accounting firm Ernst & Young announced that it would be decreasing its hiring of new college grads by 5 percent this academic year, college recruiting staffers started noticing an **increase** in the number of contacts from students'/grads' parents.

"I told one mother that she really shouldn't be calling firms directly, and she said, 'That's what my daughter said too, but I know that she's so busy,'" says Dan Black, director of campus recruiting for the Americas at Ernst & Young.

The job market for new college graduates is typically viewed as a sign of the overall health of corporate America, according to John Challenger, CEO of employment consulting firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas in Chicago. Fewer college-grad hires, he says, signifies a less-than-healthy economy—not good news for members of the Class of 2009.

"New hires are an investment in the future, and this [hiring decline] could be seen as an indication of companies shutting down the pipeline," says Challenger. "There's no question the economy is in difficult shape, unemployment is rising, and new college grads are bearing the brunt of it."

**Source:** *The Financial Times*, September 26, 2008.

## Boeing Ranks Schools Based on Work of Their Graduates

Aerospace giant Boeing has come up with an off-the-beaten-path way to determine which colleges and universities are

producing the company's best engineers, according to a recent article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

The firm has spent the last year "matching internal data from employee evaluations with information about the colleges its engineers attended," the article notes. The idea: To develop a ranking system indicating which campuses have produced the engineers Boeing sees as most valuable to the company.

"We want to have more than just subjective information" to evaluate the schools where Boeing recruits and hires new engineers, says Richard Stephens, senior vice president for human resources and administration. "We want to have some concrete facts and data."

Stephens will be sharing those facts and data with engineering schools. He'll soon be sending 150 letters to engineering school deans, telling them where their programs fall in Boeing's new internal rankings and offering them specific feedback based on the work records of the schools' graduates.

"It's really about improving the dialogue on curriculum, performance, and how we can build a stronger relationship between the colleges, universities, and us," says Stephens—"because ultimately, their students become our employees."

**Source:** *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, September 19, 2008.

## Country Seeks a Few Good Nuclear Engineering Grads

The United States needs "a new generation" of scientists, engineers, and skilled workers who have the education and abilities to work in the nuclear energy industry, notes a recent Associated Press Financial Wire article.

America "is on the verge of a building boom for nuclear plants," the article says, after nearly three decades of inactivity.

So "we need to increase the talent pool

### Investment Advisory Firms Increasingly Recruit New Grads

Some investment advisory firms across the United States are opening their recruiting doors to undergraduates instead of focusing solely on candidates with MBAs, according to a recent article in *Investment News*.

"We are heavy on recruiting young people right out of college," says Ken Fisher, founder and CEO of Fisher Investments in Woodside, California.

"Once a young person goes on to get a top-tier MBA," Fisher says, "it's hard for a small firm to compete for them."

Like similar firms, Fisher Investments has established a college intern program to identify and groom potential full-time hires. The 1,300-person company manages about \$40 billion in assets.

**Source:** *Investment News*, September 22, 2008.

# IN THE NEWS

across the board, all the way from Ph.D.s to skilled craft,” says Dale Klein, chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Much of the current talent pool is gray-ing. Last year, the Nuclear Energy Institute estimated that the industry could lose to retirement nearly 20,000 workers—some 35 percent of its overall workforce—by 2012. And another 6,000 workers will be lost to attrition, the Institute says.

In the meantime, college and university nuclear engineering programs are only now beginning to significantly boost their enrollments. The U.S. Department of Energy’s Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education reports that 729 people earned undergraduate or graduate degrees in nuclear engineering last year—almost double the 366 who did so in 2000.

“Ten years ago, students didn’t see a career” in the nuclear industry, says James Stubbins, head of the Department of Nuclear, Plasma, and Radiological Engineering at the University of Illinois—where nuclear engineering enrollment has risen from about 10 students per year in the late 1990s to 174 students this fall.

**Source:** Associated Press Financial Wire, September 12, 2008.

## Economy Drives Students to Work More to Pay the Bills

While there are no formal studies to prove it, anecdotal evidence suggests that college students are responding to growing economic struggles by working harder—and longer—than they already were in part-time and full-time jobs, not to mention internships.

Take New York University, for example, where the number of juniors holding at least one part-time job and an internship at the same time is usually around 70 percent. This past spring, that figure ballooned to about 85 percent.

“With the economy pressing, I think students all over the country are definitely

feeling how tight money is,” says Trudy Steinfeld, director of career services at NYU. “And if I’m a parent, maybe I can’t make up that difference anymore, whether it’s slight luxuries or basic stuff.”

Last year, 66 percent of college seniors said they work off campus for pay, a seven-percentage-point increase over 2006, according to the National Survey of Student Engagement. In another 2007 study—this one by the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators—two-thirds of students reported working, with one-third of them saying they put in 21 hours a week or more.

**Source:** *Newsday*, August 24, 2008.

## For Some Students, Unpaid Internships Aren’t Feasible

Even though a paid internship isn’t the rarity it once was, plenty of today’s college students still find themselves having to choose between an unpaid internship and a paying but non-career-related job.

University of Delaware senior Caitlin Birch is a prime example. She spent this past summer lifeguarding to earn money for school instead of taking an unpaid internship in her field of interest, magazine journalism.

“I love hearing about the unpaid internships my friends have taken, and I don’t resent the fact that they’re able to take them, but I definitely recognize the growing gap between me and them with each internship they take,” says Birch. “They’re able to get experience that I can’t afford right now, and that experience is pivotal in the job search.”

Management consulting company Intern Bridge.com says 18 percent of the 12,000 interns it has surveyed have taken unpaid internships for no academic credit. And of those students who have received credit for their internships, 71 percent have had to pay for it themselves.

**Source:** WetFeet.com, July 25, 2008.

## Hundreds of New Grads Take Teaching Jobs in New Orleans

Organizations like Teach for America and teachNOLA are hiring hundreds of recent college graduates and twentysomething career changers for teaching positions in New Orleans, according to a recent article in *USA Today*.

Louisiana state officials “fired virtually the entire city teaching force” in 2006, the article notes. Since then, Teach for America has recruited 444 teachers for the city, while teachNOLA has brought more than 300 on board.

Superintendent Paul Vallas is grateful for the new teachers, calling them “the best and the brightest.” But others, like United Teachers of New Orleans president Larry Carter Jr., aren’t so sure about the trend.

“It’s a good day for the city—don’t get me wrong,” he says. “But the frustration [among] a lot of veteran teachers ... is that we’ve experimented enough.”

**Source:** *USA Today*, September 11, 2008.

# GOOD IDEAS

## Internship Program Features Mentoring and Reflection

The 350 graduate students who are enrolled in the University of Michigan's School of Information must all participate in a credit-based internship initiative that takes them well beyond simply gaining real-world experience.

The school's **Practical Engagement Program (PEP)** offers students "a monitored, mentored, and reflective internship experience that is supported by a career services team and [students'] professional development activities," says Joanna Kroll, senior associate director of career services and practical engagement for the School of Information.

During their PEP internships, the students work with seasoned professionals who actively help the students create development plans, review the students' work, and offer the students advice and guidance as mentors.

Moreover, the students must develop online portfolios (throughout the internship experience) that include biweekly blog entries and biweekly reports. And at the end of their internships, the students complete self-evaluations and reflections on their experiences.

When the School of Information's career center surveyed 175 of the school's graduates in 2006, 84 percent said their participation in the Practical Engagement Program was one of their most important and valuable graduate school experiences, Kroll stresses.

"It enables—and requires—students to couple what they've learned in the classroom with what they observe and experience elsewhere," she says.

## Online and In-Person Chats Help Interns Share Insights

Being an intern can be awfully isolating, especially if you're spending an entire summer in a new city with new people in a

new environment. Sometimes, you just find yourself wanting to talk to other interns so that you can share ideas and struggles, or learn how to make the most of your experience.

The career center at Mount Holyoke College (MA) is facilitating these fruitful types of discussions—and more—through its **Student Experiential Education and Development (SEED)** program.

Through the initiative, MHC students who participate in summer (or January) internships "form a cohort together as they learn and support each other throughout their internship experience," according to Joanna Adler, director of employment and experiential learning for the school's Career Development Center.

"The purpose of the program," says Adler, "is to build in specific reflection opportunities and support programs throughout the internship experience—from before [students] leave through well after they return—to help them be more intentional and proactive in their career development."

For example, the career center hosts online chats with MHC alums and administrators, as well as other "career allies," during internship periods, Adler says. The center also arranges networking events with alums living/working in some of the cities where MHC students are doing their internships.

Once students return to campus, they have even more opportunities to talk about their internship experiences thanks to a "Welcome Back Party" as well as discussion groups facilitated by career center staff members.

## Group Hails Students Who Pursue Experiential Activities

The University of New Haven (CT) has developed an innovative way to recognize students who participate in career-building activities like internships/co-ops, service-

### "Checkup" Sessions Get Sophs Thinking About Future Careers

The career center at Kutztown University of Pennsylvania recently launched a **Sophomore Career Checkup** initiative to compel more second-year students to take advantage of the center's many offerings.

The program encourages sophomores to sign up for a "brief yet informative" half-hour presentation on the career center's services and events, assessments, and experiential learning opportunities, according to graduate assistant Jenelle Laird.

"It's a quick overview that encourages them to begin focusing on their future career," she says, "and it showcases the office to them."

The key payoff so far: An increase in the number of individual career counseling appointments with sophomores.

"And we hope the program will increase the percentage of internships among those students who are not required to do one," Laird adds.

# GOOD IDEAS

learning, study abroad, and undergraduate research.

The school's **Society for Experiential Education** honors students who have completed two or more experiential education activities and have earned a GPA that is in the top 20 percent of their graduating class, according to Christie Boronico, associate dean for experiential education.

"We believe these experiences enhance learning and personal development, and we would like to see all our students pursue as many of these opportunities as their degree program will allow," says Boronico.

Some encouragement helps, and that's where the Society comes in. Among other things, a Society-affiliated student organization holds regular events to raise money for students' myriad experiential education endeavors.

"Students can request financial support to help them present their research at a national conference, or for gas money if they've secured an unpaid internship, or for airfare related to study abroad," says Boronico.

So far, 26 students have been nominated for the Society.

## Online "Workshop" Teaches the Basics of Resume Writing

Career center staffers at Palomar College (CA) have developed an **Online Resume Workshop** that gives students a fairly concise, yet still thorough look at how to create a solid resume.

The web-based program is composed of six sections:

An "Introduction" that offers an overview of the workshop and resume writing strategies.

"Preparing a Resume," which describes the basic steps involved in creating a resume.

"Resume Clinic," which addresses common resume problems.

"Online Resumes," which explains how to post a resume on the Internet.

"Cover Letters."

"Resume Samples," which features actual resumes developed by Palomar students.

The "instructors" of the workshop are Maria Miller (director of the career center) and Karie Lord (employment services coordinator for the career center).

If you'd like to take a look at the workshop yourself, visit: [www.palomar.edu/counseling/resume/index00.html](http://www.palomar.edu/counseling/resume/index00.html).

## Profiles Bring Future Career Options into Realistic View

If students at the University of Idaho want to get a credible, close-to-home sense of where their future degrees might take them, all they need to do is visit the web site of the school's career center.

There, they'll find a **Student Spotlight** page with extended articles on 10 UI students and recent alums who are pursuing a variety of career ambitions.

The page recently featured stories on:

A graduate selected for the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) program, which promotes grassroots international exchange between Japan and other countries (including the United States).

A current UI student who landed a summer internship at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in California.

A graduate who is now in training to pursue a career in osteopathic medicine (which examines the relationship among the body's nerves, muscles, bones, and organs).

Who better to motivate students than their fellow students (and grads)?

Read a few of the UI profiles by visiting: [www.capp.uidaho.edu/default.aspx?pid=107135](http://www.capp.uidaho.edu/default.aspx?pid=107135).

## Institute's Students "Learn Business by *Doing Business*"

The Owen Graduate School of Management at Vanderbilt University (TN) offers an intensive 30-day program each summer where undergraduates and recent grads from around the U.S.—and from a variety of majors—get a heavy dose of applied business experience.

Participants in the **Accelerator Summer Business Institute** assume the role of consultants to participating businesses and nonprofits, working in small—not to mention competitive—teams to tackle specific business problems.

The students also receive 100 hours of "grab it and go" classroom learning, according to program director Michael Burcham.

It all adds up to a unique learning opportunity that often leads to **job** or **internship** opportunities.

"By [focusing] on real projects—that range in scope from marketing, finance, logistics, and operations across an expansive industry spectrum that includes companies in the entertainment, real estate, health care, travel, financial, restaurant, nonprofit, and manufacturing spaces—Accelerator provides students with a chance to learn business by doing business," says Burcham.

# — TOOLS & TECHNIQUES —

## Movie Clips Help Students Open Up About Their Many Career Concerns

*Each month, we interview a career counselor about a tool or technique he/she uses to effectively address a career development issue. Consider adding this one to your own bag of tricks.*



Glenda Schulz is a career counselor and instructor in the School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University, where she teaches a career development course for undergraduates.

Glenda received her bachelor of arts degree from the University of Nevada-Reno and her master of divinity degree from Princeton Theological Seminary (NJ). But her own career wanderings (or wonderings) occurred after she graduated from seminary, not while she was living in Nevada's great basin.

Her career journey includes working for Emory University and other nonprofits in Atlanta; for Gustavus Adolphus College as well as an elementary school in Minnesota; and for a hospital in Philadelphia where she spent a year as a chaplain.

This article is based on a presentation Glenda gave at the 2007 National Career Development Association conference. The session was entitled "Using Cinema to Engage College Students in Early Career Decision Making."

[www.indiana.edu/~speaweb/careers](http://www.indiana.edu/~speaweb/careers)

**The Career Counselor:** Glenda Schulz, a career counselor in the School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University.

**The Tool/Technique:** Using movie clips to spark thought-provoking career discussions.

*What is the movie-clips approach, and what do you use it for—particularly with students in a career course?*

The idea to use movie clips came to me while I was interning at the Emory University (GA) Office of Career Services. The counselors there wanted first-year students to know that there was more to the career search than coming in and having a resume or cover letter reviewed—that looking for a job meant looking at yourself first.

The actual concept of using movies to help students at least consider self-reflection and exploration of their career interests came when I saw the 2004 movie *In Good Company*. Toward the end of the film, actor Topher Grace says to his former employee and now potential boss, played by Dennis Quaid: "I don't know what I want to do with my life. I know I want it to mean something the way this means something to you."

This interaction made me realize that movie clips might be a way to help students realize that it's OK to not have all the answers.

*Please describe how the movie-clips strategy works.*

After you decide what theme you want to address, look for clips that raise the issues related to it. The theme I chose during my internship at Emory was vague but included looking for clips in which people

were struggling with who they were and what they wanted to do with their lives.

Since none of us knows or has time to watch every movie ever made, you'll need to narrow the scope (I chose to use recent movies) and broaden the possibilities (I asked people for movie ideas, looked online for lists of movies used in classes, and hunted around for clips that would bring together a diverse cast of characters).

Watch and re-watch the movies, taking notes about possible clips (e.g., their length, the issues they raise, where you might begin and end a clip). My supervisor at Emory, Paul Bredderman, suggested using the storyboard technique to focus and clarify my ideas—so that I could write out all the themes and place them in some kind of logical order. Eventually, I moved from a storyboard to a script.

I used a converter box and iMovies to get the clips and create a DVD, which let me add slides between clips to ask specific questions for discussion.

*What are the typical outcomes/results of using this technique?*

It creates good discussions about real-life situations surrounding career decisions. The movie clips provide a safe way for students to talk about some of their own dreams, fears, and expectations through the characters they watch on the screen.

Using movie clips taps almost all of the senses, so it gets students' attention in multiple ways. And even though I've seen the clips literally hundreds of times, my students still see and hear and experience things I've never thought of before—which of course keeps the conversations lively and exciting.

# EMPLOYER INSIGHTS

## Employers Don't Hire GPAs; They Hire Critical Thinkers Who Are Resourceful

Each month, we interview an employer about a key career issue college students—and career services professionals—need to better understand ... from the employer's perspective.

**The Employer:** Amanda Newsome, a recruiter for CenterPoint Energy.

**The Issue:** It's one thing to say you're a critical thinker; it's another to prove it.

*In a recent article, you said the following with respect to what you seek in new college graduates: "[Critical thinking] is extremely important. We're looking for people who cannot just read a book, but can understand beyond what they're reading."*

*Why is critical thinking such an important trait for new grads to have?*

New graduates must have the ability to read and comprehend, but being able to interpret data and information provided is what can set them apart from others.

This characteristic is important to employers because critical thinking usually results in new ideas, business plans, or processes. Critical thinking can also minimize business mistakes at all levels of an organization. Moreover, it can help a manager determine if he/she can depend on an employee to independently (with little direction) solve complex problems.

Companies don't expect new graduates to know everything, but they do want to know that the graduate has the ability to figure out what they do not know.

Obtaining a college degree illustrates that a student has the motivation, determination, and ability to complete major undertakings—but acquiring a college degree **plus** illustrating critical thinking skills makes a new graduate worth hiring and later promoting. The most impressive candidates are graduates who can explicitly explain situations **and** articulate how their own thought processes brought them to a conclusive resolution.

*How can a college student/grad demonstrate to you that he/she indeed has solid critical thinking skills?*

Start early in your college career. Engage in classes where there is an opportunity to work on meaningful, complex projects. Include concise details about those major projects or internships on your resume.

The best opportunity to demonstrate critical thinking skills is during the interview. Be explicit and detailed about class projects or internships where you had to analyze problems and create solutions. Any experience where you had to review a problem and attempt to solve it will show that you have critical thinking skills.

*What can Campus Career Counselor readers do to address with their students/grads the issues you've raised here?*

I recommend motivating students to learn above and beyond. Since companies are looking for well-rounded employees who can think beyond their textbook memories, encourage students to read literature outside of their curricula.

For example, if an engineering student wants to work in the power industry, encourage him/her to read about laws that may impact the industry. Most students will learn that the additional knowledge will demonstrate to employers not only their interest in the industry, but also their ability to grasp applicable concepts.

As well, motivate students to obtain thought-provoking internships or participate in study abroad programs. Encourage them to treat projects and internships as an opportunity to build critical thinking skills.

Remind students that companies don't hire GPAs—they hire people, with GPAs, who can think and who are resourceful.



Amanda Newsome is a recruiter with CenterPoint Energy in Houston. CenterPoint is a domestic energy delivery company that provides electric and natural gas services in several states.

Amanda began her career with CenterPoint Energy in 2004, after graduating with honors from Spelman College in Atlanta. She worked in the Human Resources Employee Services department, where she was responsible for developing and maintaining HR policy and HR-sponsored programs.

In 2006, Amanda obtained her Professional in Human Resources (PHR) certification. For the past two years, she has partnered with CenterPoint Energy's management teams to recruit professional and technical employees.

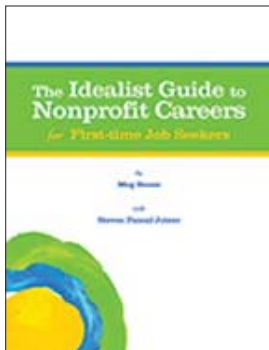
Amanda volunteers with INROADS in Houston as a presenter and mock interviewer. She also volunteers with several nonprofit organizations, such as I Have A Dream-Houston and the National Alumnae Association of Spelman College-Houston Chapter.

[www.centerpointenergy.com](http://www.centerpointenergy.com)

# RESOURCE REVIEWS

## *The Idealist Guide to Nonprofit Careers for First-Time Job Seekers*

Review by Peter Vogt



*The Idealist Guide to Nonprofit Careers for First-Time Job Seekers*, Meg Busse and Steven Pascal-Joiner, Action Without Borders, 2008 (available for free online at [www.idealists.org/en/career/guide/firsttime/index.html](http://www.idealists.org/en/career/guide/firsttime/index.html)); bound, printed version available for \$53.10 by visiting [www.lulu.com/content/2544289](http://www.lulu.com/content/2544289))

This resource is impressive on several critical fronts.

Perhaps most importantly of all, the guide will give your students (and alums) a balanced sense of what it's like to pursue a career in the world of nonprofits—something that's long overdue.

Authors Meg Busse and Steven Pascal-Joiner waste no time in that regard, offering an extended discussion of the “Advantages and Disadvantages of Working in Nonprofits” right in the Introduction to the book. Best of all, that discussion focuses as much on the pluses as the minuses, which quickly establishes the authors' credibility and expertise.

Students will also no doubt enjoy the book's conversational tone as well as its attractive layout.

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**“The decision to start a nonprofit organization is not one to take lightly.”**

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Last but not least, two of the book's descriptors will undoubtedly seal the deal for both you (i.e., your career center) and your students: “free” and “online.” Yes indeed, the folks at Action Without Borders have put *The Idealist Guide to Nonprofit Careers for First-Time Job Seekers*—in its entirety—on their web site at [www.idealists.org](http://www.idealists.org).

You can download a chapter at a time if you'd like, or you can pull up the whole book at once. (You'll get Adobe Acrobat/PDF files in either case.) If, on the other hand, you're like me and you still crave

that physical book in your hands, you can easily order it (for \$53.10) via the Action Without Borders web site.

**How** you and your students use the guide doesn't really matter. **That** you use it is what counts—because while portions of the book would truly make sense in any career guide (not just one geared toward nonprofits), several chapters stand out in that they feature information you're not likely to find elsewhere (not quickly or easily, at least).

Cases in point:

Chapter One—“What Exactly Is a Nonprofit?”—covers the characteristics that are common among all nonprofits and describes how nonprofits often fill the “gap” between the work of government agencies and for-profit companies.

Chapter 12—“Nonprofit Hiring Practices”—describes three critical nuances job seekers need to understand when pursuing employment with a nonprofit. It also highlights “Five Reasons Why Finding Your Ideal Job in the Nonprofit Sector May Be a Complicated Process.”

Chapter 13—“It's Not What You Think”—outlines “10 Common Myths About Working for Nonprofits.”

Of course, a few of your students will be less interested in **working for** a nonprofit organization than in **starting** one from scratch. The guide has them covered too. Chapter 14—“Starting Your Own Nonprofit”—offers tips, 11 “first steps” students/grads can take, and, wisely, a few warnings as well. As Busse and Pascal-Joiner point out:

[D]espite the essential services that nonprofits bring to the community and the dedication and passion of the people who start them, there are no fail-proof methods guaranteeing the success of nonprofits. **The decision to start a nonprofit organization is not one to take lightly.** (p. 206)

# RESOURCES

WITHIN REASON

Each month, we highlight several low- or no-cost resources you can use yourself, pass along to the students or recent graduates you work with, or both. Enjoy!

## Online Guide Outlines Career Possibilities for Dog Lovers

Next time you encounter a student who wants to somehow make a living out of his/her love of dogs, be sure to mention the web site of the American Kennel Club.

There, your student will find a comprehensive resource called “Careers in Dogs” that features descriptions of more than 20 different dog-focused jobs. Among them: groomer, trainer, animal behaviorist, animal control officer, and even writer and photographer.

The guide also features a “Recommended Reading List” and a listing of related professional associations.

To learn more, visit: [www.akc.org/public\\_education/careers.cfm](http://www.akc.org/public_education/careers.cfm).

## Article Describes Careers in Competitive Internet Media

A recent article in *Graduating Engineer & Computer Careers* magazine targets students/grads who have career aspirations related to the many sounds and images available online, particularly on web sites like YouTube and iTunes.

In “Internet Media Careers: The Coolest Job Out There,” Beyond.com CEO Rich Milgram notes that the Internet media industry offers “the combination of creativity, analytics, and traditional software development.”

Thus, the field is highly competitive and exciting at the same time, the article says.

Read the piece at: [www.graduatingengineer.com/articles/20080319/Internet-Media-Careers](http://www.graduatingengineer.com/articles/20080319/Internet-Media-Careers).

## Keeping Plants Healthy Is the Focus of Plant Pathologists

Much like physicians specialize in helping us humans stay healthy, *plant pathologists* work to keep plants at their best.

The web site of the American Phytopathological Society offers a glimpse at the field via the “Careers in Plant Pathology” section of its web site.

Among the many topics covered: what plant pathologists are and what they do; where plant pathologists work; and the educational background they need.

Visit the site at: [www.apsnet.org/careers/careers.asp](http://www.apsnet.org/careers/careers.asp).

## Columnist’s Questions Help Students Identify Passions

*Los Angeles Times* career columnist Susan Miller recently wrote a piece that offers eight thought-provoking questions for anyone who is trying to pinpoint his/her true career passions.

Whether you’re working with a 19-year-old sophomore or a 40-year-old career changer, you’ll find some real counseling allies in Miller’s questions. Among them:

What is easy and effortless for you to do? What’s as easy as breathing?

Who are your role models and mentors? What are their qualities that you most admire?

If money were no problem, what would you do?

Read the article at: [www.latimes.com/classified/jobs/counselor/la-counselor-topten-one,0,726061.story](http://www.latimes.com/classified/jobs/counselor/la-counselor-topten-one,0,726061.story).

## Geoscientists: “Caretakers of Resources and Environment”

The American Geological Institute’s online guide to “Careers in the Geosciences” covers what geoscientists do, where they work, how much money they earn, and more.

Visit: [www.agiweb.org/workforce/brochure.html](http://www.agiweb.org/workforce/brochure.html).

## Web Site Highlights Career Opportunities in Sonography Field

The American Registry for Diagnostic Medical Sonography devotes a portion of its web site to introducing college students and others to employment possibilities in the sonography field.

The “Careers in Sonography” section of the site discusses what sonography (ultrasound) is, what job opportunities exist in the field, schools that offer sonography programs, and more.

Visit: [www.ardms.org/default.asp?ContentID=209](http://www.ardms.org/default.asp?ContentID=209).

# RESEARCH BRIEFS

## Most Students Have Little Anxiety About Workplace Terrorism

Despite the horrors of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, most of today's college students have "little or no anxiety" about terrorism in general or a terrorist attack on/in their future workplaces, according to a recent study in *College Student Journal*.

The authors of the research—who had conducted a similar study of college students' attitudes immediately following the attacks in 2001—surveyed 749 students (from all class years) at a small campus in the Northeast in 2006.

On the one hand, the researchers found that the percentage of students expressing "some" or "much" anxiety about workplace-related terrorism has remained roughly the same since 2001. But that percentage is small at only 14%.

"This outcome would seem to indicate that this generation will not become the '9/11 generation,' whose life choices will be highly influenced by the attacks," the researchers conclude.

**Source:** Susan M. Bosco and Diane Harvey (2008). "Effects of Terror Attacks on Students' Anxiety Levels and Workplace Perceptions—Five Years Later." *College Student Journal*, 42(3) (September), pp. 895-906.

## Loan Debt Has Significant Impact on Career Decisions

If the results of a recent Experience poll are any indication, about half of today's college students and new grads would—in the name of repaying their student loans—accept a job that offers higher pay but less career satisfaction.

Experience's 2008 *Student Loan Survey* questioned 336 students and recent grads about their career plans and job search activities as they relate to loan debt.

Among the study's other key findings:

27 percent of the current students and 47 percent of the new grads said student loan debt has affected their decision to pursue a particular career (or not).

61 percent of the current students said they'd be more likely to accept an entry-level job that offers student loan assistance and/or repayment.

40 percent of the new grads surveyed said they have actually accepted a job that offered higher pay but less career satisfaction, all so they could handle their loan payments more easily.

"College graduates are taking preemptive measures to deal with the financial ramifications of student loan debt," says Jennifer Floren, CEO of Experience.

**Source:** Experience news release, September 24, 2008.

## Psychiatric Disabilities Still Give Some Employers Pause

If you work with students/grads who have "hidden" disabilities—particularly those of the psychiatric type—a recent study in *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin* will offer you some food for thought as you prepare those students for job interviews and other hiring-related interactions with employers.

The study involved 60 employers, each of whom was randomly chosen to view (on

videotape) one of five different job interview vignettes. All the vignettes featured the same two actors—one playing the interviewer, the other the job candidate—and they were essentially the same in overall content.

But each video had its own twist. One included no mention of any type of disability. In two others, the "candidate" disclosed an invisible physical disability (insulin-dependent diabetes)—either briefly (first experimental condition) or in more detail (second experimental condition). And in the final two videos, the "candidate" disclosed an invisible psychiatric disability (bipolar disorder)—again, either briefly (third experimental condition) or in greater detail (fourth experimental condition).

The employers in the study were then asked to complete two brief questionnaires—one on whether they'd hire the "applicant" they had seen in the video they had watched, and the other on their perceptions of the "applicant's" employability.

One of the study's key findings, the authors note: "The lowest ratings for hiring decision were associated with a detailed disclosure of a psychiatric disability, and the lowest ratings for employability were associated with a brief disclosure of a psychiatric disability."

"Unfortunately," conclude authors Rebecca Dalgin and James Bellini, "the negative bias regarding psychiatric disabilities ... continues to be a possible factor in the decisions and opinions that get formed during an employment interview."

Role-playing the disclosure process with counseling clients "is essential," Dalgin and Bellini add.

**Source:** Rebecca Spirito Dalgin and James Bellini (2008). "Invisible Disability Disclosure in an Employment Interview: Impact on Employers' Hiring Decisions and Views of Employability." *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin*, 52(1) (October), pp. 6-15.

# RESEARCH BRIEFS

## Grads Take Organizations' (Lack of) Ethics Seriously

New college graduates who are looking for their first jobs aren't afraid to assess prospective employers based on the organizations' ethics (or lack thereof), according to the *2008 Graduating Student Survey* conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers.

Indeed, 59 percent of the more than 19,000 students who participated in the study said they wouldn't work for an employer that "produc[es] a harmful product." Similarly, 46 percent said they'd rule out organizations that "[pay] women and/or minorities less."

Interestingly, compared with their counterparts who graduated in 1982, today's students/grads are more likely to act on their convictions where their perceptions of employer ethics are concerned.

For instance, 98 percent of the respondents—in both the 2008 and 1982 studies—characterized "producing a harmful product" as unethical. But while 59 percent of the 2008 grads said they wouldn't work for such an organization as a result, only 42 percent of the 1982 grads went that far.

**Source:** National Association of Colleges and Employers news release, September 26, 2008.

## Social Networking Sites Are Seeing More Employers Visit

Nearly a quarter (22 percent) of hiring managers say they use social networking web sites to research job candidates these days, compared with just 11 percent who said the same thing in 2006, according to a recent CareerBuilder.com study.

Another 9 percent of the 3,100 employers surveyed said they don't currently use social networking sites to screen potential employees but that they plan to start.

Chances are many of them will find something to give them second thoughts in the process. Of the respondents who said

they indeed have screened candidates via social networking sites, more than a third (34 percent) said they've dismissed a candidate as a result of the content they've seen on those sites.

Among the most common sins the employers discovered: information about alcohol and/or other drug usage; provocative or inappropriate photographs; poor communication skills; and bad-mouthing of one's previous company or colleagues.

Lying about one's qualifications, making discriminatory remarks, and using an unprofessional screen name were also common mistakes that candidates made in their social networking profiles.

**Source:** CareerBuilder.com news release, September 10, 2008.

## 2008 Grads Less Confident About Finding Ideal Jobs

College graduates of the last several months are less confident than their Class of 2007 counterparts when it comes to their perceptions about finding a satisfying job, according to a recent survey by consulting firm Right Management.

Of the 236 recent and soon-to-be college graduates who participated in the *College Graduate Career Confidence* study, 72 percent said it would be "somewhat to very difficult" for them to find the ideal job—up from 59 percent who said the same thing last year.

Similarly, only 26 percent of the 2008 respondents said it would be "somewhat to very easy" to land the jobs they want—down from 37 percent who said the same thing in 2007.

What are new grads looking for in a prospective employer? Most of all, opportunities to develop new skills, the survey found, along with appreciation for work/life balance and good rapport with their managers and supervisors.

**Source:** Right Management news release, September 4, 2008.

## Credit Card Debt + Student Loan Debt = Diminishing Options

More and more college students are willing to adjust their post-graduation career plans in the face of crushing student loan debt (see page 10). But it turns out that loan debt probably isn't the sole culprit.

A recent study by Zogby International found that nearly a quarter (24 percent) of the more than 3,600 college-grad respondents had left school with more than \$5,000 in **credit card** debt.

Moreover, about 1 in 10 of the respondents said they had graduated with more than \$10,000 in credit card debt.

The study was commissioned by TrueCredit.com, a subsidiary of credit and information management company TransUnion.

**Source:** TransUnion news release, August 20, 2008.

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## “Connecting Bauer to Business” continued from page 1

The second part of the class centers on career choice and features a series of a dozen career panels in the course's lab sections. Among other things, the panel participants tell students how they've parlayed their academic majors into various career paths and opportunities.

The final third of the course, meantime, covers fundamental job search skills.

“We take a somewhat different approach,” Belinne says. “All 750 students do a web-based, videotaped mock interview through InterviewStream. They're then divided into small groups and trained on interview evaluation strategies so that they can do group peer reviews of each others' interviews.”

### Measurable Improvements

Belinne and her colleagues do pre- and post-testing of all the students in the course to see what impact it's having.

So far, so (very) good. Some key findings from the Spring 2008 semester:

During pre-testing in January 2008, only 51 percent of students were “clear on what to include on their resume.” By May 2008, that number was 86 percent.

In January, only 44 percent of students felt they had “strong” or “extremely strong” resumes. That number had soared to 83 percent by May.

While 69 percent of the students had decided on a major before the course began in January, the number grew to 91 percent in May.

Perhaps the most intriguing statistic: 58 percent of the students “felt informed about their choices in business” in May—more than double the 24 percent who had said the same thing in January.

“Beginning this fall, we'll be able to start compiling statistics about retention and time to graduate,” Belinne says. “Based on anecdotal information from students and our surveys, we expect to see a tremendous improvement on both of these numbers.”

# PAM'S COLUMN

## Do Grads Skip Right Past Happiness?

By Pamela Braun



My son Zachary, at almost 8 years old, has taken to often asking, “What do you think I should be when I grow up?” He always receives the same answer from both my husband and me: “Happy—we think you should be happy.”

After giving us a look suggesting that neither of us grasps the gravity of his question, he responds: “No, really. What do you think I should be?” (This second go-round is always infused with a certain amount of whiny insistence.)

For now, he is suspicious of our answer. He cannot comprehend how contemplating whether or not a particular activity makes

him happy could possibly help him figure out what he should be when he grows up. It's OK—he's just a child.

But I wonder how often our prospective college graduates ask themselves whether or not they'll be happy carrying out the daily grind of their chosen career paths. I don't want them to confuse the fleeting satisfaction derived from a good grade, a successful semester, or a potential job lead with the long-term contentment that accompanies a well-chosen career path.

Your clients may not be overly playful 8-year-olds. But it's never too late to start emphasizing to them how important deep-seated happiness can be to ensuring the longevity of their career ambitions.