

After You Select Your College Major, There Is Much More To Do

by Bob Roth
“Putting Student Employment Success First”

When you select your major you may very well be selecting a career direction and a list of jobs for which you may qualify. No student should select a major without knowing where that major can take them. That would be like entering an unfamiliar house with your eyes shut. You are bound to bump into a few walls. A little research early on can prevent a great deal of disappointment and pain when it is time to look for a good job.

The best employment candidates do ten things:

1. In the freshman year, research and identify the jobs that will be available to students who graduate with your major. In that way, you can better decide if the major you have chosen is the right one for you. By the way, your minor should also support the direction you have chosen.
2. Select a few jobs that hold the most interest for you. Do some research. Find out which employers have those jobs and what they need, want and expect from students applying for those jobs. Give yourself a target.
3. Take some time to analyze the jobs you identify to determine why they are of interest to you. Make certain that they match up well with your interests, abilities and direction in life.
4. Take courses, join clubs and participate in activities, pursue internships and part-time jobs to gain the knowledge and experiences that will lead directly to the jobs and employers that are of interest to you.
5. Identify the technical skills that are needed for the jobs that are of interest to you. Be certain that you find a way to obtain those skills.
6. Use your network to build a list of people associated with your industry or field of choice. Once they are identified, you must try to build a strong relationship with them. If your relationship is solid, they will lead you to the employment opportunities you are seeking. However, when a strong relationship is not established, they will not feel any obligation to help you.
7. Join a professional association in the field where people with the desired jobs are members. To benefit, you must attend the meetings and make a strong effort to get to know the officers and members. This works well when you volunteer to work on a committee. If you take the time to get to know them, the committee members will be extremely helpful to you.

8. Seek out internships, part-time or summer jobs that are related to your area of interest. Employers love candidates who have some job-related work experience. Additionally, your employer can serve as a great reference or may even consider you for a full-time job when you graduate.

9. Gradually work your way into a position of responsibility or leadership in the clubs, activities and jobs in which you participate. Employers want to learn about your capabilities. Stories and examples of your personal experiences will do exactly that.

10. Build a list of accomplishments and successes that are directly related to your goal. This is what employers will look for on your resume and will ask questions about during interviews. Students who participate in campus, work and community activities will have much more to talk about and will generate more interest than students who remain inactive.

There are big differences between no job, just any job and a good job. When the pay back of large college loans loom large in your future, you must do everything possible to make certain that you do not end up with no job or just any job. A good job takes a comprehensive plan that is carried out with enthusiasm and determination over a long period of time. Selecting your major is just the beginning.