Senior Year has the potential to be the best year of your college career – you’re taking advanced classes, you’ve developed strong friendships, and you’re heading for new and better things. Below are some considerations for wherever you might be heading and some tips to help you get there.

**Thinking About Employment?**

If you’re thinking about employment after graduation, it’s crucial that you have at least a general idea of what you want to do first! If you’re unsure, then it’s time to start asking questions and taking advantage of all of the available resources.

- Talk to professors or staff in Career Services about what alums in your major are doing.
- Contact alums using the CANE database (CAREer NEtworking), located in the Career Resource Centers on either campus (CSB – Academic Services Building, SJU – Mary Hall 25) and consider conducting informational interviews or job shadows.

When you begin searching for jobs, come up with a rough plan. Meet with a career counselor to discuss your goals and how you might achieve them – where you can start, how to obtain the necessary skills, and who to contact. You might consider creating an A, B, and C categories, with A being your dream jobs out of college, B being strong opportunities, and C being backup opportunities.

Once you’ve developed a job search plan, you’ll need to polish your skills as a job applicant, including resume and cover letter writing, interview skills, and networking skills. Sixty to seventy-five percent of jobs are found through networking – you should be talking to your parents, siblings, friends, professors, alums, or anybody that might have a connection to your field of interest. Remember to always ask for information – what somebody’s experience has been, how they got started, what their future plans are – rather than simply asking if they know of job openings. By focusing on career experiences and goals, you’ll develop a more meaningful and long-term relationship, rather than one that is built upon getting hired for one specific job.

Networking is definitely the best way to find a job, but remember to also search websites for job opportunities – general, industry specific, and company specific sites. Update your profile in E-link, our on campus job search and recruiting tool specifically for CSB|SJU students. By doing this, you are able to view opportunities you qualify for, apply to them, and even request on-campus interviews. On campus interviews begin in October during the fall semester, so make sure you are updating your profile right away!

For more information and resources, visit www.csbsju.edu/career/students and click on "Jobs/Internships".

**Thinking About Grad School?**

Graduate school is a much more focused and specific period of study than undergraduate education. Seniors interested in attending grad school should know specifically what subject they intend to study and how they plan to apply their knowledge in the future. For some students, volunteering may be a chance to further explore an area of interest. For others, it may be an opportunity to develop skills and experience in a particular area. Searching for answers to these questions will make you a stronger applicant and make your volunteer experience more worthwhile in the long term.

Once you know which programs you want to apply for, find out what their application process is like and begin putting materials together. Register for necessary admission exams (such as the GRE, MCAT, LSAT, or others) and request letters of recommendation from faculty and employers.

The next step is to arrange for official transcripts to be mailed. Many graduate schools require a “personal essay.” Utilize the Writing Center, Career Services and others for critiques.

Complete and mail/upload all application materials.

If you are still undecided about grad school, use this semester to obtain more information and contact alumnae/i who have completed grad school and are working in your area of interest. For more information and resources, visit www.csbsju.edu/career/students and click on "Graduate School".

**Upcoming Events:**

- **Graduate School Process**
  - Sept. 14, 7 p.m., Gorecki 204, CSB
- **MN Law School Forum**
  - Sept. 16, 5-7 p.m., Alumnae Hall, CSB
- **Graduate School Fair**
  - Oct. 14, 10-2, U of MN, Minneapolis

**Thinking About Volunteering?**

There are several well-established volunteer programs for graduates. These include The Peace Corps, Americorps, the Benedictine Volunteer Corps, as well as other location- and subject-specific programs. When looking at volunteering, it is important to consider what you hope to gain from the experience and how it will help your long-term career goals. For some students, volunteering may be a chance to further explore an area of interest. For others, it may be an opportunity to develop skills and experience in a particular area. Searching for answers to these questions will make you a stronger applicant and make your volunteer experience more worthwhile in the long term.

Begin researching volunteer programs and consider the following:

- What are the goals and philosophy of the organization?
- What skills or demographic traits (e.g. age or gender) are required?
- What will the living situation will be like including safety and transportation?
- Is there a stipend/health insurance, and what do past volunteers have to say about the program?
- What does the application process involve?

Remember that full-time volunteering doesn’t mean that you’re not paid – normally, it means that you earn only enough to support your living expenses.

Once you know which programs you want to apply for, find out what their application process is like and begin putting materials together. Remember that many programs hire during fall semester, so watch for opportunities and make sure to attend the following programs:

- **Thinking about Volunteering after Graduation?**
  - Oct. 26, 7 p.m., Gorecki 204, (Panel of alums)
- **CSB|SJU Annual Volunteer Fair**
  - November 3, 2010, 11 a.m. – 3 p.m., Alumni Lounge, SJU

For more information and resources, visit: www.csbsju.edu/career/students and click on “Volunteering”.

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**By Trevor Drake’10**