As a student, how can you stay “in the know” with career related topics? Maybe you’re a first year student who is trying to figure out what college is really about, and you feel the pressure of choosing a major or what career to work towards. Maybe you’re a senior who just realized graduation is only 9 months away and you suddenly feel panicked about looking for a job, applying to graduate school, or volunteering after graduation. What can you do? Where can you go? The answer is… Career Services!

We launched our new website this summer and are excited about the resources and information available to you at your fingertips. With this new website, we have also made some exciting changes to Career Designs, which used to be our monthly newsletter. Starting this semester, we will be printing one issue of Career Designs at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters, which you will receive in your mailbox. During the rest of the year, you can stay “in the know” by going to the student page of our website (www.csbsju.edu/career/students) and checking out our new section, Career Buzz.

Career Buzz has been created to keep students up-to-date on career related topics, whether you’re a first year, sophomore, junior, or senior. We’ll have videos, workshops, articles written by our student Career Assistants, articles written by professionals/recruiters outside of CSB|SJU, spotlights on alums or interns who are doing exciting things, and any other resources we feel would be helpful for you. This section of the student page will be updated weekly, so when you’re remembering to check your Facebook, blog, or email account, add www.csbsju.edu/career to your “favorites” and stay up-to-date.

If there are any specific topics you would like to see, email our Career Resource Centers at csbrec@csbsju.edu (CSB) or sjurec@csbsju.edu (SJU).
Alum Spotlight: Aimee Montpetit Topp
Compiled by Stephanie Wegmann '10

Aimee graduated in 1997 with a major in Communication. She currently works as the Vice President, General Sales Manager at News America Marketing, a News Corporation Company. News Corporation is the parent company to over 40 businesses domestically including but not limited to the Wall Street Journal, the NY Post, Harper Collings, FOX (TV, Spots, Cable & Movies) and My Space.

Please give a brief description of your current position and what your work entails.
I joined News America Marketing in 1997 as an Account Coordinator immediately after graduating from the College of Saint Benedict. My responsibilities include overseeing the region while representing and consulting her clients on integrated marketing services. My team is responsible for generating over $90 million dollars in revenue annually.

What path did you follow to arrive at your current job?
In my 13-year tenure at News America Marketing, I have held over 8 different positions. This upward mobility can be credited to work ethic, drive and focus.

What advice/suggestions would you have for students who might be interested in your career?
Stay focused on the industry and market for which you have passion. Despite the difficult job market, be true to your desires and strengths, and parlay those elements into your career.

What skills are important in your field?
Regardless of what industry you are in, I believe in effort to set yourself up for success; you must exemplify a strong work ethic and motivation to want to be successful. Focus, drive, determination and passion can often times out hustle just intelligence alone.

If considering a sales related position such as mine, important skill sets include public speaking, relationship management and consultative persuasion. One must be able to take another’s business strategies and challenges and convert them into opportunities to drive your own business. Part of this process includes being able to handle rejection and objections.

What are the most challenging/satisfying parts of your job?
The most challenging part of my job is overcoming client challenges. As the sales manager I am responsible for overcoming these challenges and turning them into positive, revenue driving solutions.

The most satisfying part of my position is developing talent and promoting staff into advanced positions. I also enjoy building a strong, positive culture and office morale.

What activities/experiences were helpful at CSB/SJU (and elsewhere) in preparation for this career?
CSB/SJU provided me with an excellent academic curriculum coupled with a variety of extracurricular activities and appropriate class sizes that helped shape me as a student and future employee. I learned lifelong skill sets that I now use in my everyday business life and career.
Jason is a senior with a Psychology major and Management minor. He interned last year as a Counseling Intern at ROCORI High School, Cold Spring, MN.

How did you find out about the internship and what was the application process like?
My academic advisor knew that I was interested in pursuing a counseling career. He told me that he has had students intern with the Minnesota Workforce Center (located in St. Cloud). My advisor e-mailed me a link to get more details and an application for the internship. I submitted an application and contacted the Minnesota Workforce Center to set up an interview. The interview was fairly simple and straightforward, and they got back to me within a few weeks. Prior to the start of the internship, there was a meeting for all the Workforce Center counseling interns where we were provided with the basics of the job.

What were some of the internship highlights?
One part of my internship was working with a class of sophomore students. This was really fun and interesting. I did not think that I would have enjoyed being a teacher, but it was really rewarding. It was gratifying to see students grasp the certain aspects of the class. Another part that was really enjoyable was being able to work with the school counselors. I worked in a setting that I would like to be in for my career, so it was important to be able to get the full experience. I was able to sit through meetings, meet with students, work with standardized tests, and hear about everything that happens throughout the day. I think that some internships only show certain aspects of the job, but this internship showed me exactly what it is like to be a school counselor. This was extremely valuable to me.

What was a typical day like? What were some of your major responsibilities?
This was what made the job interesting to me. There was never a “typical day.” Each day had different responsibilities. Some of the tasks that were common for me were working with my class that I helped organize and teach, meeting with junior and senior students to talk about plans for college, and organizing standardized testing materials. These are just a couple of the duties that I performed over the course of the semester.

What were some of the challenges of your internship?
The first month of the internship was somewhat difficult for me. I had a difficult time knowing what I needed to do. In all the jobs I have had before, I was given specific directions and my managers made sure that I did everything correctly. This internship was very different from that. My supervisors gave me a lot of freedom and allowed me to structure my day however I needed to. They trusted that I knew what I was doing and gave me very little instruction because of that. It took a while to get used to this, but once I realized that they were not going to be looking over my shoulder, I started becoming more independent and gained a lot more pride in my work.

What did you learn?
I learned that I love this job. Before the internship started, I thought that school counseling would be a good fit for my personality, but now I know that this is something that I will enjoy as a career. I think that is one of the most important things for an intern to get out of their internship.

What advice would you give other students interested in internships?
Figure out what you want to do early. I applied for this internship in February and didn’t start the job until August. Talk to people about possible internships that would be helpful for your field of study and send in your application/resume as soon as possible. When you are at your internship, learn as much as you can about the specific aspects of the organization. I gained a lot of insight about the specific processes by simply asking questions and observing. Also, try new things. There were a few tasks in my internship that did not sound enjoyable to me, but I agreed to do them because I knew the experience would only benefit me in the end. By doing this, I learned what I did and did not like about the job.
Your first year at college can be very exciting, challenging, and also confusing at times. Luckily for you, you attend a school full of staff, faculty, and other students who genuinely care about your well being and want to see you succeed. Although you may be thinking to yourself, “Gee, I’m 18, have four more years of school, and don’t need to worry about something called Career Services,” remember that these four years go by faster than you think. We want you to know that Career Services is here to assist you, beginning your first year. You may be asking yourself at this point, “What career related issues concern me?” or “Why should I visit Career Services now?” I am here to answer these questions for you and provide you with some resources to learn more.

Q: What can Career Services do for me, as a humble first year?

A: Career Services and the Career Resource Centers, located on both campuses, offer a wide range of services on learning more about yourself, exploring majors and careers, gaining experience, and planning for after graduation. As a first year, you can meet with a career counselor to begin taking steps towards major and career exploration. We offer free interest and personality assessments, to help you begin looking into who you are and how that can relate to majors and careers. We also host many career panels throughout the year in which we bring alums to campus to discuss various topics, such as “What Can I Do With A Major In Psychology” or “Careers in Healthcare.” Watch your email for events related to your areas of interest! Check out the “Upcoming Events” listed on our website too! The more information and knowledge you gain when exploring your interests, the better informed your career decisions will be. Another thing to keep in mind, you can visit either Career Resource Center (CSB - Academic Services Building or SJU - Mary Hall 25) to meet with one of our trained student career assistants on a walk-in basis. As a college student, chances are high that your interests and major will change during your time here. Let us help you navigate your career path and get started on the journey!

Q: I want to be focusing on school now. Why should I be thinking about my career already?

A: By connecting with Career Services during your first year, you are taking steps towards reaching your future goals. You have four years to work with us, explore and test out your interests, and most importantly gain experience and build skills related to those interests. Whenever we meet with a senior who is working with Career Services for the first time, he/she often says they wish they would have met with us much sooner. As a senior, you are busy with school and applications to jobs, graduate school, or volunteer opportunities. The last thing you want to add to that is career exploration or beginning to put a resume and cover letter together for the first time.

As a well rounded liberal arts student, you will come away from these fine institutions with more than a diploma; you will have an enriched understanding of the world around you. This starts with personal development. Becoming involved with things that interest you and actively participating in clubs and organizations on campus is something that will prepare you to be successful in whatever it is you choose to do after college. Most students would agree that the combination of their academic coursework and being involved in activities is the best way to meet people and have great experiences at college. At the same time, you will be building your resume and improving your image, often times without even realizing it!
Congratulations, you have one year under your belt. You have survived the full year of FYS and taken many entry level courses experimenting with different majors. Although you are not an upperclass student, there are a few important things you need to begin thinking about: your major, whether or not to study abroad, graduate school and even looking ahead to a summer job or internship.

**MAJORS:** If you are still undecided, this is the semester to seek assistance. Most departments require sophomores to apply for majors at the beginning of spring semester; some departments may have earlier deadlines. Here are some ways to help you with the process...

- Attend a CES (Career Exploration Series). This is a panel put on for students with alums who come back to talk about their current position, their past experiences, and how their major helped prepare them for their current position
- Go to events/panels put on through your interested department
- Brainstorm possible careers you’re interested in and use our online “What can I do with a major in...” information to see what majors best suit your interests and skills
- Conduct informational interviews and arrange job shadows to learn about majors/jobs
- Utilize our online list of alum profiles and see the many different jobs our alums have within a certain major

**STUDY ABROAD:** Talk to your academic advisor and parents about studying abroad for either a semester or short-term program during junior or senior year. You will need to be responsible for asking a couple of key questions:

- Will you get required classes fulfilled on the trip?
- Will you complete your necessary classes here at school to graduate on time, or will you need to consider summer courses or an extended stay here at CSB/SJU?
- Why are you interested in studying abroad? How will it be helpful to you?

**GRAD SCHOOL:** It is not too early to begin thinking about whether or not grad school is on the horizon. Some occupational areas require an advanced degree and have specific admission requirements that must be completed for admission.

- Have conversations with your professors and adviser about different options for programs and schools and the requirements they are looking for
- Develop a 4-year plan to ensure that you are prepared to apply when you are a senior.
- Most graduate schools like to see that students have conducted research and have related experience. Talk with your professors about possible research opportunities here at CSB/SJU or at other institutions during the summers.

**SUMMER EXPERIENCES:** It may seem early, but it’s not too early to start exploring summer opportunities that give you an inside look to a possible career, equip you with related experience, and look great on your resume. Some of these experiences may have a deadline as early as October/November.

- Internship (paid or unpaid, the experience is what matters)
- Research position in your interested field (some are available through CSB/SJU)
- Volunteer positions (possibly in addition to a typical summer job to gain additional related experience for your future career)

In addition to Career Services, use the Internship Office, E-link, professors, advisors, friends of your family, neighbors, and others!

Oofta! This all sounds like a lot, but if you actively work on figuring out your major, consider studying abroad and graduate school, and look into summer opportunities, things will begin to fall into place. Don’t put it off like that research paper for FYS; I promise, it’s not NEARLY as bad!
Junior year is a very busy time for college students—you are starting to explore and look ahead to what you might do after graduation, whether it be grad school, getting a job or volunteering. In order to prepare for these decisions, there are many things to consider and many opportunities in which you will want to take advantage.

No matter which direction you are headed, a few things are a must:

**Resumes**—Your resume gives others an overview of who you are and what you have accomplished. During the fall of your junior year, make sure to fully develop your resume, note areas where you may be lacking in experience, and make a point to fill in those gaps throughout the next year. Also keep in mind that every resume you make should be tailored to the specific position or organization for which you are applying, so be prepared to edit, edit, edit!

**Cover Letters**—Knowing how to create a cover letter/email is also a crucial skill for juniors. Many organizations will require you to submit a cover letter in addition to your resume, and, like your resume, your cover letter should always reflect the position for which you are applying.

**Interviewing**—Interviewing skills are necessary for students from every major. Employers and recruiters want to know that you can communicate effectively and present yourself in an appropriate manner. It’s important to practice and improve your skills. One of the best ways to practice is with Interview Stream, available on the Career Services’ homepage. This program allows you to conduct a practice interview on the computer; it will record your responses so you can look back on how you answered the questions and what your body language could communicate to employers. If you have a nervous habit or tend to say “um” a lot, you will know to work on those before entering an actual interview.

**Experiential Learning**—Gaining experience is huge no matter what you plan to do after graduation, and one of the best ways to gain experience is through some form of experiential learning. This includes internships, undergraduate research, clinicals and service learning programs. Experiential learning programs allow students to gain real-world experience in professional situations. There are many different kinds of programs that students can do, and they can be done for credit, pay, or just for the experience. These programs are also important for developing your professional network and making connections that can help you in the future.

Another way to gain experience is through volunteering or joining clubs on campus. With over 80 campus clubs and organizations, students can certainly find some that apply to their interests. By being involved with groups both on and off campus, students can gain real-world experience and practice their networking skills by interacting with others both inside and outside the organization.

If you are thinking about employment after graduation:

Two big events for juniors to attend are Career EXPO (November 10) and the MN Private Colleges Job/Internship Fair (February 2011).

**Career EXPO** gives students an opportunity to explore/learn about different companies and career areas through seminars, a career fair, and a networking reception with alums.

The **MN Private Colleges Job/Internship Fair** is a professional event where students can speak with recruiters from many different companies and apply for summer internships. Be sure to have your resume prepared, cover letters written and have practiced your interviewing skills before this event!

If you are planning to attend **graduate school** or volunteer after graduation:

Ask yourself, “What do I want from a grad school or volunteering experience?” The more you know about what you want to get out of the experience, the better you are able to find schools or programs that match your goals.

**Research programs.** Every program is different, so you will want to find ones that are consistent with your goals and that fit your interests and skills. Attend the Graduate School Fair or Volunteer Fair to talk with reps.

**Get to know your professors.** This may seem obvious, but students underestimate the power and influence they may have. Having a good relationship with your professors will come in handy when you need letters of recommendation or professional references.

**Start preparing for grad school exams.** Since most students take these exams in the fall of their senior year, junior year is the perfect time to begin studying. The task of preparing for these exams may seem overwhelming, so the earlier you start, the more confident you’ll feel when you take them.
Senior Year – Tips and Advice
By Trevor Drake ’10

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. Pre-professional students (medicine, law, dentistry, etc.) may have already made the decision to attend grad school. However, for students who are undecided about a specific graduate program, some may recommend taking at least a year or two off between undergraduate and graduate school, giving you time to reflect on your undergraduate experience, gain additional work experience, and evaluate your long-term career goals.

- If you planning to go to graduate school immediately after graduation and haven’t already done so, begin requesting school catalogs and applications for admission and financial aid to the schools you researched and would like to apply to.

- 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 alumni/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:
- The 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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Upcoming Events

Career Exploration Series

The Graduate School Process
September 14, 7 p.m.
Gorecki 204, CSB

MN Law School Forum
September 16, 5-7 p.m.
Alumnae Hall, CSB

What Can I do with a Theology Major?
September 21, 7 p.m.
Quad 264, SJU

Engineering Careers
September 28, 7 p.m.
Alumni Lounge, SJU

What Can I do with a Psychology Major?
October 12, 7 p.m.
Gorecki 204, CSB

Thinking about Volunteering after Graduation?
October 26, 7 p.m.
Gorecki 204, CSB

Careers in Healthcare
January 25, 7 p.m.
Gorecki 204, CSB

Careers in Advertising & Marketing
February 8, 7 p.m.
Gorecki 204, CSB

Working with Asia
February 15, 7 p.m.
Gorecki 204, CSB

Law Careers
March 1, 7 p.m.
Alumni Lounge, SJU

Job Search Strategies
March 29, 7 p.m.
Alumni Lounge, SJU

Fairs

St. Cloud Area Job Fair
September 21, 1-5 p.m.
St. Cloud Civic Center, St. Cloud

College of Business Career Fair
October 6, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Atwood Center, St. Cloud State University

Science & Engineering Fair
October 7, Noon – 3 p.m.
Atwood Center, St. Cloud State University

Graduate School Fair
October 14, 10-2
Coffman Union, U of MN, Minneapolis

Fashion Group Career Day
October 15, 8:30—3:30
Sheraton, Bloomington, MN

Government Fair
October 22, 10-3
Coffman Union, U of MN, Minneapolis

Nursing Career Fair
October 25, 4-6 p.m.
Gorecki 204, CSB

Volunteer (after Graduation) Fair
November 3, 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Alumni Lounge, SJU

MN Private Colleges Job/Internship Fair
February 22/23
Minneapolis Convention Center, Minneapolis

Non-Profit Career Fair
April TBA
Minneapolis

Education Career Fair
April 11, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Special Events

Career EXPO
November 10
Career Seminars: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Career Fair: 2:30 – 5 p.m.
Networking Reception w/Alums: 6:30 – 8 p.m.
Gorecki 204, CSB

Pathways to BioScience Careers
April 5, 3:30 – 7 p.m.
U of MN Continuing Education & Conference Center, St. Paul

Roundtables

Numbers
September 16, 6:30 p.m.
Alumni Lounge, SJU

Finance
September 21, 6:30 p.m.
Alumni Lounge, SJU

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