Student Stumbles over Steps to Success; Sleeps There

By: Ryan Lesch

ST. CLOUD, MINNESOTA - A poorly oiled gate is all that separates the quasi-community from the hustle and bustle of the skyscrapers in this sprawling city center. Contained in the barrier is the epicenter of those who could be labeled as “degenerates”, by those with a more cruel attitude, as “failures” only by the most pessimistic, but by those educated realists, these people would be labeled as “The ones who didn’t utilize the Career Resource Center during their freshman and sophomore year”.

Upon entering the compound, my eyes were immediately drawn to the most prominently dressed man there. He caught my gaze and beckoned me forward, recognizing my recorder and notebook as symbols of journalism. Strolling as nonchalantly as possible past the clusters of people gathered around garbage can fires and sleeping underneath makeshift huts, I finally grasp a firm handshake from the man who introduces himself as Paul Forrester.

A pleasing gentleman I’ve never met. Immediately, it is obvious that Paul is able to run a conversation like a professional businessman, driving points home like it was his job. I wondered aloud how any man could become such a fluent orator. His answer, delivered just as smoothly as an everyday conversation, didn’t surprise me one bit: “It’s actually quite easy to learn the art of answering questions and being an impressive force in interview situations,” answered Paul. “All I had to do was visit my school’s Career Resource Center and practice interview skills through a resource called Interview Stream. I also participated in practice interviews with different Career Assistants! The Career staff is great!”

Such enthusiasm for career advancement not only made me feel all warm and fuzzy inside, but it also prompted me to ask about other endeavors Mr. Forrester had experienced. He outlined his whole plan to me, noting how starting his work by his sophomore year in college was one of the most important steps he has ever taken. The key points he really pushed were to start writing cover letters and resumes early, take advantage of the internship software the Career Resource Center offers, E-LINK, and CANE files. The Career Resource Center, which can be found in the Academic Services Building at CSB and Mary Hall 025 at SJU can help a student find different methods of getting involved during sophomore year, in order to promote all future aspirations any student may have.

“Why,” I queried Paul, “if you have taken all of these steps to be literally the perfect candidate for any job, are you without job or proper shelter?” His thought provoking reply summed up the goals of the Career Resource Center perfectly. “When you’ve gone through the process correctly, you have the ability to hit the ground running in any career you want. All you have to do is start applying your skills towards a goal. Because of this I’m able to guide my life comfortably in any direction I choose, knowing that whenever I am ready, I have the skills to present myself to a company and obtain a position I want. For now I’ve decided to experience different aspects of life by living this way, which has helped me gain immeasurable amounts of knowledge that I’ll apply to my career in the future.”

For more detailed information on Career Services resources, check out www.csbsju.edu/career/students.htm