

Students use internships for edge

Jennifer Middleton
STAFF WRITER

To say that the workforce is competitive is an understatement. So for college students preparing to enter into the working world, it is imperative to have an edge.

One very important factor in getting started in any career is experience. Employers look for people who have previous experience in the field. This, of course, raises the age old question—how is it possible to get hired without experience, and how is it possible to get experience without getting hired? It is a conundrum that has plagued job seekers for generations.

That’s where internships come in. Internships provide students with a chance to gain experience in their chosen field before they enter fully into the workforce.

“It can really help give a student that leg-up whenever applying for that full-time job,” said Sara-Margaret Mladenka, assistant director of student development at LSU Shreveport. “It gives the student the chance to make sure they really like the work. And it also gives the student the opportunity to network with people in their field.”

Julie Thomas, senior, public relations, is currently the communications intern at the Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourist Bureau.

“This internship is preparing me beyond belief,” Thomas said. “I have learned so much already from

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Photo by Jessica Ingram

The Spring Job and Internship Fair was held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. March 26.

Job recruiters come to LSUS

Christopher Talerico
STAFF WRITER

Students looking to prepare for the next rite of passage – getting a job – were given an up-close and personal opportunity at the Job Fair held in the LSU Shreveport Ball Room in the University Center on March 26.

“We want our students to get jobs. This helps our students which in turn helps us. We want our degrees to be as valuable as possible and we want our students out in the workforce doing what they want to do,” said SaraMarga-

ret Mladenka, Assistant Director of Student Affairs at LSUS.

Students registered with a nametag that had a colored sticker on it. The color of the sticker told the recruiters what the students were there for. Students participated seeking employment, an internship, graduate school, and general knowledge.

Some of the recruiters’ companies were well-known, with booths set-up by representatives from local businesses, graduate schools from around the state, and even the armed forces.

“I want to explore today. There was a job fair last semester and I didn’t come. It’s just exploration. It’s not, ‘I need something. I want something,’” said Malvya Chintakindi, sophomore, journalism major.

From 10 in the morning until 2 in the afternoon, students not in class browsed at their leisure and interacted with professional recruiters in a professional environment, something that many students may never had done prior.

“We can help LSUS students connect with employers. A lot of students’ biggest is-

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LSU Shreveport earns LERN excellence award



Director of Continuing Education and Public Service Tisha Samhan

Photo by Emily Wright

Emily Wright
STAFF WRITER

LSU Shreveport earned an excellence award for best marketing and best brochure from an international association.

“The brochure was designed on-campus and has been for many, many years,” said the Director of Continuing Education and Public Service Tisha Samhan.

She said that Allen Garcie, assistant professor of fine arts, created the brochure, and has been creating LSUS brochures for a very long time.

Samahn and Garcie met and brainstormed for ideas for the brochure. She said Garcie knew what a big fan she is of the game Words with Friends, and both decided to incorporate that into the design.

“I think that it’s really easy to attach yourself to a brand that everybody can im-

mediately recognize, and probably takes part in,” Samhan said. “Then we created the marketing plan to go with it.”

The international association, Learning Resources Network, or LERN, hosts an annual conference for association members.

When the brochure was finished, Samhan explained that there was just something about the brochure that made her believe the design could win at the conference.

“We submitted it for continuing education members of the LERN association, and less than two weeks later we heard back from them saying that we had won,” Samhan said. “The conference itself was in November, and we were notified about a week before the conference. Unfortunately, no one on my staff got to go.”

She added that there are over 1,000 organizations, higher education institutions, and other schools that are members of

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Freshman Focus aims to help, I didn't listen

An Almagest at LSUS Guest Editorial

Corey Drummond
STAFF WRITER

I still had questions during my sophomore year about LSU Shreveport. Questions about Common Hour, financial aid, and the bookstore remained unanswered until well into my second year. The worst part is that I had an opportunity to prevent this issue, but I didn't take it seriously.

Freshman Focus is a mentoring program designed to help new students ease into the transition of college by answering any questions and giving advice about preparing for classes. It is available to all freshman during their first semester. However, some students are required to participate in program. I ended up being one of them.

A scholarship I had received required me to meet once a month, for my first semester, with a mentor to evaluate my college performance and make sure I wasn't going to take the money and run. At least, that is the way I viewed it.

I arrived to each of our meetings in a small room with my mentor. We went over each of my courses, how I was doing, how I felt, and what I wanted to know about campus. I blitzed through the first few questions. She would ask me about my courses, and I would feed her what she wanted to hear.

I would repeat a handful of phrases to move things along: "I'm doing great!" "I could have done better on that test, but now I know the types of questions on it," and "I feel like I know how to handle the course."

I thought it was a waste of time. I was doing fine at LSUS and I didn't need to be watched.

We met each month until the next semester was around the corner. At the last meeting, my mentor told me I could continue the program in the spring. I told her I would think about it, but I didn't. I felt a bit of guilt after it was over.

I didn't know anyone else in Freshman Focus program. I thought that maybe most people didn't take it seriously like me. I felt bad that my mentor was being sincere about trying to help me and I wasn't interested. But I really wish I had been.

Afterwards, every time I would have a question about a subject on campus, I would think back to my Freshman Focus meetings. When I wanted to know about the Bookstore, or what time Common Hour started, I had a blast of déjà vu. I felt really dumb.

It became a major epiphany at the start of my sophomore year. I figured things out eventually, but the transition to college could have been much smoother for me. I could have learned specifics about how courses and credit hours worked.

I could have learned how to prevent my early battle with apathy and procrastination. I could have done a lot of things.

The point is the Freshman Focus program provides a major advantage to incoming students. Advisors are incredibly swamped with students to manage, and they work really hard to help them all. The program offers students a guaranteed one-on-one meeting to get to know their campus and how to truly do well with their classes.

I frequently overhear students complain about how terrible their professors are at teaching their courses. Some of these students declare that they are going to tell the professor off and why the professor should teach the course for them.

Hearing this makes me think about a moment I had in one of my Freshman Focus meetings regarding a course I was genuinely struggling with. I confessed about my less-than-adequate test scores in a history class.

After speaking with my mentor, I came up with a new way of listening to lectures and studying for the course. I would treat the lectures as if I was being read an epic tale of fictional characters and events to engage my interests. My test scores skyrocketed after this revelation.

Freshman Focus can teach students that sometimes, they need to take an initiative to help themselves.

JOB cont.

sue is not knowing where to look for jobs or who to contact about those jobs. So many jobs aren't even posted anywhere and we don't know when they're available," Mladenka said. "The more contact students have and the bigger their network is, the better opportunity they'll have of finding positions."

Other students, especially those graduating, seemed to know what it was they were looking for – even if they did not know what that specifically was.

"I am graduating in May, so I'm looking for, hopefully, some full-time job leads so I could work as soon as I get out. I would like to do something with video production possibly," said Elizabeth Murray, senior, electronic media journalism major.

Some students with a year or more to go sought a variety of opportunities the job fair could provide.

"Actually I'm just looking for a way to be an asset to anyone with my skills and further my education and get a good job. I'm interested in whoever will take me to be a part of their company," said Ariel Petteway, junior, psychology major.

Petteway also expressed interest obtaining an internship, and she was not alone. Underclassmen normally are not seeking active employment, but often they desire or require for graduation an internship.

"I am looking for an internship over the summer. This gives students a better opportunity to find work and internships, and they're better prepared for when they graduate," said Tiaerra Sanders, sophomore, software development.

Students who are seeking employment or internships could speak to the recruiters about what qualifications they are looking for, however the recruiters know that many students do not have appreciable experience and look for other qualities instead.

"Kind of know what you're interested

in, what area you're interested in. We have a lot of them that will come up to us and say 'I'm majoring in Biology. What can I do with that?' Well you tell me what you would like to do with that," said Jessica Carter, Nursing Recruiter with University Hospital. "We shouldn't tell them where they should work, they should tell us what they would like to do with their degree. Then we can see what we have available."

Recruiters stressed a sentiment from table to table, profession to profession, from graduate school, to internships to jobs: professionalism.

"We have a lot of our managers when interviewing, some of them aren't even sure how to go through an interview process. They don't really answer questions appropriately. They just kind of sit there like they're not real sure how to answer things," said Jessica Carter, Nursing Recruiter of the University Hospital. "We've had them come in in flip-flops before – with their gym shorts on. That's just not appropriate if you're seeking a professional position."

But different companies had different requirements and different criteria to judge applicants.

How has their attendance been at college, because that's very important when looking for an employee – that they are going to show up for work," said Dale Beasley, business manager of KMSS Fox 33. "Their grades and what their major is are main things too, because being a television station we have different areas that we can hire you in, computer operation, sales positions, and software engineering for example."

Regardless of an LSUS student's plans for the future, they may now be a bit better prepared to face the uncertainty of the future and the inevitability of life after college.

INTERN cont.

this internship that I will use forever in my career, such as writing and distributing news releases, collecting text for PR projects and assembling and implementing marketing projects."

Thomas said that the internship has helped her to build her portfolio. She added that she plans to attend graduate school after finishing at LSUS, and then she wants to find a job in tourism.

"This internship has really opened me up to a new world of PR that I would really like to stay in," she said. "It has given me real world experience that is unteachable in the classroom. My classes gave me the foundation, but this internship helped me build the house."

LERN cont.

LERN.

This annual conference allows members to showcase their school's program through programming, excellence in catalog or brochure design, a marketing effort, or exemplary management practice, or a noteworthy contribution to your community, according to the organization's website. The winners represent the best of the best in lifelong learning and continuing education.

"It is a professional organization internationally known where continuing education departments and higher education institutions are members," Samhan said. "They go and they learn the best practices in the business. They learn what the hot topics are, and what is the most income-producing training out there."

In addition to the accomplishment of the excellence award, the Continuing Education department at LSUS enables students to continue learning information and skills, and offers the chance for students to just enjoy life with the practical applications from the various courses, such as cooking classes.

"We are the next step as students graduate. A lot of times students are seeking certification, or seeking to brush-up on knowledge in other areas where they might be a little weak in," Samhan said. "When they finish their college degrees, we're that one-stop shop."



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