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Career Search Seminar Prepares Students for Interviews

Michael T. Aide, Wm. W. Ellis, and William E. Meyer

Introduction

Agricultural students from Southeast Missouri State University traditionally pursued careers with family farms or local agri-businesses. Currently, many agricultural students are considering careers that require relocation or employment not affiliated with production agriculture.

In the spring of 1984, the agricultural faculty at Southeast Missouri State University initiated an informal discussion with a wide range of agri-businesses. These agri-businesses were generally impressed with student academic achievements, but expressed concerns about their "professional orientation." Criticisms ranged from the lack of research about potential employers prior to the interview to inexperience in selfpresentation.

Discussion

The faculty decided to improve this situation by creating a seminar dedicated to the career search process, cover-letters, and interview preparation. To gain suifficient expertise the faculty engaged the experience of community leaders and professional interviewers to advise and to give an initial orientation for the seminar's structure. The result of this advice created a unique approach towards teaching professional orientation.

The seminar stresses the importance of student self-evaluation and research of agri-businesses. Student self-evaluation centers on identifying which personalilty characteristics may be held in high esteem by potential employers, then privately assessing personal attributes and professional motivations. Self-evaluation allows the student to provide potential employers specific, well articulated answers to questions that are likely to arise during the interview process. Questions to be considered range from personal goals. work experiences, leadership and responsibility acceptance to willingness to relocate, communication skills, and technical competencies.

To further demonstrate the need for a complete self-evaluation prior to the employment interview, each student arranges with the instructor for an interview appointment. This appointment is accomplished by mailing a complete well formulated resume and cover-letter. The cover-letter states that the student will telephone on a specific date to arrange

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for a personal interview. The interview is video-taped for faculty and student analysis.

Mock interviews are also conducted wherby two students interview a third student. All three students must become well acquainted with the company represented. This interview situation permits the student an opportunity to serve as interviewer; hence, become more oriented to characteristics a company may be seeking in new hires. Each interview is video taped for analysis by the specific students involved, the instructor and the class as a whole.

The interview format encompasses a series of interviewer asked questions concerning college preparation, work experiences, agricultural background, position requirements, and knowledge/interest about the company. An opportunity is provided the applicant to ask pertinent questions about the company. Student based questions may include inquiries about personal growth, typical career paths, employee evaluation procedures to specific questions about product lines or marketing techniques.

After the interview is completed the instructor and student view the video-tape and discuss alternative answers and merits of the interview. Additionally, the instructor critiques the resume and cover-letter.

A major obstacle to a successful interview is the inability or lack of desire by the applicant to fully research a potential company. Students are required to carry out a successful research project with an Agribusiness as the research topic. Sources of information may include direct conversations with an employee, the campus interview office, stock brokers, corporate and product line literature, advertisements, and prearranged office visits. All students must obtain the name, title, address, and telephone number of the individual(s) responsible for granting personal interviews. Other information deemed desirable to obtain includes company size, financial holdings, product lines and annual sales, history, entry level training pograms, and an appropriate estimate of a beginning salary range. The company research is presented to the class.

Conclusion

The effectiveness of the career search seminara cannot be quantitatively described; however, two qualitative measures of the seminars effectiveness are provided. The first is provided by companies or institutions which interviewed students before and after the introduction of the seminar. Interviewers reply that students better understand the interview format, possess knowledge about specific business activities, and maintain a confident, positive, professional orientation during the interview. The second line of evidence is provided by recent alumni who have stated that the career search seminar was a major factor in their successful employment.

USER'S REPORT

The Washington State University And the University of Idaho Instructional Television System

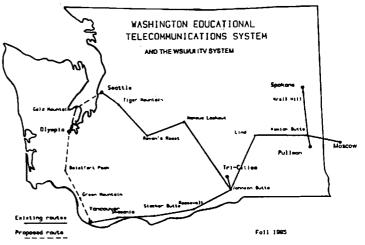
Betsy Boehm Hsu

Introduction

In 1981 the Department of Instructional Television at Washington State University (WSU) and the Engineering Outreach Department at the University of Idaho (UI) began to offer courses over a two-way interactive microwave system. WSU and UI are located only eight miles apart from each other. The development strategy for the system was to reduce travel time between the two institutions, increase the visibility of educational programming, and enhance the educational opportunities in general throughout the region. Educational programming over the WSU/UI ITV system includes a variety of courses in undergraduate and graduate education. Both the WSU and the UI campuses are transmitting as well as receiving centers for educational programming.

The goal for additional development in instructional television in the state of Washington was accomplished in 1983 through the Washington State High Technology Education and Training Act which authorized the development of the Washington Higher Educational Telecommunications System (WHETS). The legislature appropriated an initial \$1.5 million to build a two-way interactive microwave system around the state in order to provide graduate instruction in engineering and related fields. WHETS programming is currently transmitted between WSU in Pullman and the University of Washington in Seattle. It is received at off-campus stations in Spokane, Richland and Vancouver, as well as in Moscow, Idaho at the UI.

Fig. 1 WSU/UI System and WHETS Location Map



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