

# **WABASH** **COLLEGE**

## **Job/Internship/Graduate School Search Guide**

*Schroeder Center for Career Development*



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## Welcome!

You came to college for a reason -- to compete for career prospects that aren't available without a college degree. Academics, athletics, and involvement keeps you busy throughout college, but you should spend time on your internship, job and graduate school search if you actually want the outcome you dreamed about when you entered college to come true. Graduating seniors invariably tell us they did not realize how much effort and time this would take, they wish they had started their searches sooner, and that they had taken advantage of more career-related programs and opportunities.

You can lessen this time commitment exponentially if you start your search early. Many students we talk with are unsure what they want to do. We have many resources you can use to help narrow down your choices and interests. Other students know exactly what they want to do career-wise from Day 1 freshman year, but many change their mind or don't make the GPA they thought they would. Having a Plan B or even C is essential. Bottom line: It is up to you to take advantage of our resources and start working toward your future goal in a directed and intelligent way. **We know, without a doubt, that whatever your goal, if you start early and participate regularly, you WILL be successful.**

This guide is a comprehensive resource you should refer to throughout your years at Wabash. Any time you need assistance you can connect with us at the office, by email, through our social networking groups, or on campus. Our sole interest is your success; however you choose to define it.

Most of our services are web-accessible, at [www.wabash.edu/careers](http://www.wabash.edu/careers). **You never need an appointment to see us – just stop by.**

**Location:** 502 West Wabash Avenue  
**Hours:** Mon – Fri, 8:00 – 4:30; Mon – Thurs, & Sunday, 7:00 – 10:00 p.m.  
**Website:** [www.wabash.edu/careers/](http://www.wabash.edu/careers/)  
**Phone:** 765-361-6414  
**Facebook Fan Page:** Wabash College Career Services Online  
**LinkedIn Group:** Wabash College Career Services  
**Twitter:** @WabashCareers

### Staff

- Scott Crawford, Director
- James Jeffries, Assistant Director
- Jill Rogers, Pre-Health Advisor
- Angie Bridwell, Administrative and Recruiting Assistant

### Peer Career Advisors

- Adam Miller '12
- Yangnan Liu '12
- Mark Osnowitz '12
- Brady Young '12
- Zeyu Lu '12
- Billy Powers '12
- Austin Weaver '13
- Jake Kersey '13
- Patrick Neary '13
- Nathaniel Borden '13
- Weijie Shi '13
- Ross Hendrickson '14
- Scott Campbell '14
- Alex Amerling '14
- Spencer Peters '14

# Choosing a Career Path and Researching Possibilities

Before you can start looking for a job, applying to graduate school, or even seeking an internship, you need to know what you're looking for and why.

## ***Why Career Planning Is So Important***

A recent study indicated that 54% of male executives were unsatisfied with their jobs. Why? They didn't properly plan their career, or chose it for the wrong reasons.

A career path is not just a series of jobs; it is a planned succession of educational experiences and employment positions that lead to your ultimate career goal. Choosing a career path is one of the most important things you do in life. Your career shapes how you live, where you live, and if chosen carefully, will help ensure you lead a satisfying and fulfilling life. Despite this importance, most people do not give their career choice the thought and planning it deserves. When you purchase a car, you research the vehicle carefully, test drive it, and compare it to other cars. Inarguably, you should be doing the same, on a larger scale, for your career. Your car will last you a few years – your career path will affect you for a lifetime.

You can navigate your career path successfully by making a few key decisions, based on simple ideas and concepts:

- ***What do you enjoy doing?***
  - If you truly enjoy your job, your life will be much more fulfilling and satisfying. Your work will seem less like a job and more like fun. Your goal should be to choose a career that gets you excited to go to work every day.
- ***What energizes you?***
  - People get their energy from different types of activities, situations and tasks. For example, if you get your energy from being around people, but your job involves working 100% independently, you're not going to be very happy in your work.
- ***What are other people always telling you that you should do?***
  - Listen to others. If everyone around you is telling you that you're great with kids, you may want to explore careers that involve working with children. Others can see talents in you that you may not have considered.
- ***What do you value?***
  - If your work does not reflect your personal values, it will not be a good fit. If you value status and money, you may want to re-think your interest in social services, for example. (see the Values section on Page 4)

## ***Career Planning Misteps to Avoid***

People often make the mistake of choosing their career path for the wrong reasons. They get poor advice from their friends, colleagues, the media, etc. and fail to do the inward-looking research into their own preferences.

## ***Choosing a Career Strictly For Money***

Just because something pays well doesn't mean you will necessarily enjoy it. If you enjoy your job and it pays well (and you value that), that's great. However, if you don't like your job, the great pay will not matter so much to you after a certain time. *Important Note: If you enjoy your job and you're good at it, the money will follow.*

## ***Choosing a Career Because It's 'Hot'***

You will often see 'hot' careers listed in the media. It's great that there is demand in the field, but if it's not for you, then so what? If you have a passion to be a blacksmith, you can get a job doing that. If you enjoy your job, and do it well, you will be successful at it, regardless of whether it's 'hot' or not. What's 'hot' today may not necessarily be so in five or ten years.

## ***Choosing a Career Due To Family or Peer Pressure***

Career counselors see many unhappy people who felt like they had to go into a career field because they felt pressure to go in that career direction. Choose your career path based on your own preferences, not those of someone else.

## ***Thinking Small***

There are literally thousands of careers and career fields out there, with new possibilities being created continuously. With expanding technologies, new career fields and industries are created continuously. Think big, and be open to the possibilities. Research and networking is the key to expanding your horizons.

## ***Career Planning Myths***

### **You will change jobs x number of times in your life**

You see this in the media quite a bit. Sure, you might change jobs that often, but then again you might not. Many people will change jobs or entire career fields several times, while others will begin in one field and stay in it for their entire career. It is not a one-size-fits-all world.

### **Your first job doesn't really matter –take anything**

Big mistake! Your first position after college will help shape your entire career, and can set you up for success in your future career path. If not carefully considered, you will spend an inordinate amount of time explaining that decision in subsequent job interviews. Employers and graduate schools want candidates who make deliberate, thoughtful decisions.

### **You have to go directly to graduate school to be a success in your field**

In some fields that's very true, while in others it is not. Most career fields now require or expect further higher education or training, but some do not expect that you will get that training until you have a minimum level of experience. Most fields in business and increasingly, law, expect you to have on-the-job training before you can be admitted to a good graduate program.

## ***Steps to Planning Your Career Path***

### **Step 1: Identify Your Values**

Both personal and professional values. If you are doing something you truly enjoy, your life will be more fulfilling. A few examples, based on what you might desire (or not desire) in your career:

Dealing with the Public	Using Cutting-Edge Technology
Prestige	Making a Contribution to Society
Working Independently	Money
Opportunity for Advancement	Helping Others
Time with Family	Travel
Casual Workplace	Stability and Security
Predictability	Decision-Making Authority
Creating Things	Leisure Time
Variety/Change	Physically Demanding
Working In Teams	Intellectually Challenging
Order/Structure	Professional Growth/Ongoing Learning

- **Use:** Complete a Values Exercise through our *FOCUS* system.

### **Step 2: Research Career Possibilities**

Once you have determined what's important to you, you can begin to identify options that are a good fit. Passion is the key. If you're passionate about a career field and it fits your values, you're good to go. For example, do you enjoy scientific research? Do you find that when you are performing research, time flies by? Do you read research journals for pleasure and enjoy talking with other researchers? If so, this may be a great career option. Employers and graduate schools can tell if you're passionate about a career and they love to see that.

- **Use:** Vault, Alumni/Student Networking System in WabashWorks, our career resources links

### Step 3: Get Some Experience to See If You Like It

You will never know for sure that a career is for you until you try it out. Potential employers and graduate schools are increasingly more insistent that you have experienced a career before they hire/accept you.

- **Use:** internships, externships/shadowing, professional conferences

### Step 4: Prepare For Success in Your Eventual Search

Once you have identified a career field, identify job titles and descriptions that fit your interests and then research job postings. Learn the norms of the job search in the field, including application timing, methods of recruiting, etc. Determine the level of educational preparation required and decide if you will need graduate school before you enter. Determine geographic area(s) of interest and identify key organizations you would like to work for or graduate schools of interest. Research them thoroughly. Begin preparing your resume to reflect the norms of the industry, your passion and preparation, and your fit.

- **Use:** *WabashWorks*, *Vault*, *CareerSearch*, Internships.com, career/graduate school/fellowship resources links, alumni, employers, grad school reps, faculty, career fairs, speakers, events. Career Services staff

### *The Career Planning Process Isn't Necessarily Linear*

When going about this process of exploration, it's important to keep an open mind and research more than one field or option. It's common for people to change their minds as they discover new possibilities. External forces may also force you to go in another career direction. You may want to be a physician, but your 2.3 GPA is not realistic for admission to medical school. Formulate a back-up plan. Career planning is a lifelong process, so keep your eye on the ball and your mind open to the possibilities.

## The Successful Job/Internship Search

Carrying out a successful job/internship search requires research, time, effort, diligence and patience. Proper research will shorten your search significantly. Be prepared for success and setbacks, and carve out some time in your daily life to make this work. You will need: a search plan, a base resume, a basic cover letter, spreadsheets, information on employers and job areas/titles, and a strong sense of who you are and what you'd like to accomplish professionally and personally.

### *Create Your Job Search Plan*

- Prepare spreadsheets to manage your search: input contacts, steps you've taken with these contacts, resumes sent, follow up needed. It's important to stay organized.
- Plan blocks of time each week to devote to your search. A successful search takes more time than you think it will.
- Treat your search as a project—create milestones and tasks to achieve. Set specific goals.
- Decide what search methods you plan to use - **The best approach is to use all possible resources. Selected include:**
  - Networking - by far the most effective method (use our online Alumni/Student Networking System)
  - Career and networking events we sponsor on and off campus
  - *WabashWorks* listings
  - On-campus recruiting/information sessions
  - Job/internship sites - those targeted to your goal/industry are always best
  - Social and professional networking sites
  - Professional association sites and events
  - Cold calls, prospecting emails, targeted applications
  - Executive recruiters - primarily for alumni job seekers
  - Career fairs
  - Volunteering, internships tell everyone you know you're looking. Send a networking email to every person you know. Don't ask for a job/internship - ask for advice.
- Let Career Services know what you're seeking. We send out targeted emails based on specific opportunities and manage targeted resume referrals for recruiters each year. **If we don't know you, we can't help you...**
- Line up your references in advance. Give each a copy of your resume and a description of the type of job you're seeking. Ask first if they'll be a positive reference for you.
- Get involved. Go to events. Set up informational interviews and externships. Many jobs/internships are filled via networking so devote time to networking activities.



- Create a portfolio of your work - writing samples, projects, and awards that you can provide to employers should they ask for it. *WabashWorks* features a Portfolio creation tool under the Experience section.
- Be proactive. Use a large chunk of your search time seeking out opportunities. Most openings are never advertised. Locate opportunities by actively targeting organizations you're interested in. Discover "hidden" openings by keeping track of relevant news sources indicating new initiatives or developments. The *Indianapolis Business Journal* (most other cities have one too) and our *CareerSearch* system are excellent sources. Organization websites and current employees of specific organizations are good information resources. There are specialized resources for specific fields too. Seek out these possibilities – we can help!
- Join professional societies for your field of interest. Every industry or sub-industry has associations. Besides being excellent posting resources, they hold networking events and conferences. You can find links to these associations in *CareerSearch*.
- It is vital you know the 'generally accepted' norms for job search timing in different industries/career fields of interest. For example, if you want to work in a corporate role, management consulting, or high finance, your search should be in full gear by late August in your senior year. If you want to work in the arts however, positions are usually posted on a "just-in-time" basis throughout the year. Knowing the expectations of your career fields of interest in advance will save you heartache, and increase your chances of success.
- Keep your resumes and cover letters updated. **Customize every resume and cover letter before you send it**, carefully considering the person or organization receiving it. Heed the feedback you get.
- Google is your friend – there is an enormous amount of information out there on careers. It can get overwhelming, so always let us know if you need help locating targeted information
- Be open to opportunities. There are things happening around you every day that can help you in your job search. Career fairs, academic seminars, workshops, networking events. Do not let ANY opportunity pass you by if it can help you reach your goal.
- Seek assistance. Schedule a strategy session with one of our staff.

## **Social Networking**

LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and the like are all superb job search resources. LinkedIn in particular is essentially a job search/professional networking site, and all job/internship seekers should create an account on the site and use it (creating an account is not enough...). Twitter is also excellent for networking and job search research, and increasingly includes job search resources and sites. Even Facebook has several job search resources and tools. The trick with all of these is to keep your presence professional, and properly manage your privacy settings, especially during the time you're searching for opportunities. Employers will most assuredly Google you and search these sites to check you out, and if they find anything negative may choose not to pursue your candidacy.

- Security Guidelines: <http://www.microsoft.com/security/online-privacy/social-networking.aspx>

## **Have a "Plan B"**

Probably the most common mistake students make is not having a Plan B (and C, D, etc...). Many students start their job/internship search focused on one particular industry, geographic location, or type of position, and change their mind once they start searching or interviewing, realizing their original job target is (a) no longer of interest, or (b) unrealistic considering their grades, the economy, etc. All sorts of things could happen: you could be set on following your significant other to a particular location, but break up mid-year, and are stuck seeking opportunities in a location you no longer find of interest. We see students have to re-trench every year, who then have to quickly come up with a new plan, having missed many opportunities. We strongly encourage you to look at a number of different career possibilities as you go through this process, and not focus too specifically on any one target. Your career/industry/employer research plays a vital role in making sure you have these options, and are ready to refocus your search if you need to.

## **Applying Online**

You will almost always apply online. There are certain tricks that can help ensure you're successful. Make sure your resume and cover letter are **tailored specifically** to the position and employer. Just as important, incorporate specific 'keywords' into your resume and cover letter. Employers often receive thousands of resumes for each position, and the enter keywords into their resume management system to select resumes for consideration. In other words, if your resume doesn't match their qualifications or use the keywords they use, they'll probably never see it. *Examples of keywords:* self-starter, detail-oriented, B.A. experience, etc. You can also significantly increase your chances of being selected by addressing exactly how you meet each of the qualifications they're seeking. **If you do not do these things, your chances of being selected for consideration are almost zero.**

Employers' sites often require you to complete a registration process and possibly an application as well. Fill out each item completely and if something doesn't apply to you, enter "not applicable". If you have the opportunity to submit a cover letter, do so, but tailor it to the specific position you're applying for. If there is more than one position you're interested in, select the one you like best and apply only to it. If you apply to more than one it makes you look desperate or unsure of yourself. Once you've submitted your application materials, if you have any contacts at the organization, let them know you applied. They can then follow up with Human Resources for you **if they wish**.

## ***Don't Get Scammed***

College students are prime targets for scams. Not every listing on job search websites are real jobs - from multilevel marketing schemes to selling magazine subscriptions in malls to home-based pseudo employment, there are all types of job search scams. Marketing/advertising is often a unifying theme with such organizations. The best way to protect yourself from scam artists, and identity theft as well is: **never post your resume on a public job search site**. Monster, CareerBuilder, and other large national sites seem to attract these scam artists, who troll posted resumes for victims. Instead of posting your resume on a job search site, you should be searching them proactively for possibilities. Almost no one gets a job/internship by simply posting their resume somewhere and waiting for a phone call. It just does not happen like that.

### **Tip-offs to a scam:**

- Ad uses words like 'sports-minded', 'travel the country', 'management - no experience needed', 'rock n roll', 'entry level management' and/or indicates you'll be a manager in a few weeks
- Lots of words in ALL CAPS or exclamation points in the ad
- The website is beautiful but has little info on their actual product, and the main contact is a Human Resources representative. There often is no physical address listed
- If you apply, they contact you back surprisingly quickly, often only minutes or hours later, to offer you an immediate interview – which often turns out to be a group interview
- You are offered a job on the spot or the 'interview' really is quite short and lacks any substance
- Everyone is unusually excited, but vague, about the product
- Compensation is based on how many other people you sign up to sell the product, which may be rather ordinary, like vitamins or laundry detergent
- There is an investment required
- It sounds too good to be true: why would someone want to 'share their secret to making \$50,000 a month' with you?

**Not a scam, but not for everyone:** if you are starting a business relationship, sometimes there might be a small investment required. Examples include Southwestern Company, Vector Marketing, etc. These opportunities, while they can be lucrative for some people, are not for everyone. Note that such opportunities are essentially franchise-type businesses, not jobs, and require a great deal of effort and time management skills, and someone with the right personality.

In general, if your gut feeling says that something is shady about the job or employer, you're probably right. To check out companies to see if they are on the up and up, go to [www.ripoffreport.com](http://www.ripoffreport.com) or Google the company name + scam.

**If you're ever in doubt about an employer and its legitimacy, ask us in Career Services. We can tell you quickly if it is legitimate or not.**

## ***Background Checks: The Criminal Record Question, Your Credit, Your Grades***

Most employers will submit you to a background check before you're hired. They may check criminal records, driving records, your credit, and your transcripts, and may give you a drug test as well. On job/internship/grad school applications, you're often asked to detail this information. We have had a several students lose job offers because they mishandled these questions in an application. (For those going into a graduate program, see the Graduate School section at the end of this packet, as this is extremely important). The key to answering application questions properly is to not leave anything out and to be totally honest. Most employers will not automatically disqualify you if you have few indiscretions or a poor driving record, but some will. They will all disqualify you, however, if you omit something and they find it. Also, be smart: if you have a DUI on your record, don't apply for a job which involves driving.

**Criminal Record** - You're often asked to detail any arrests and convictions. Regardless of whether they are expunged or current, or what your lawyer may say, do not leave any off. The employer wants full disclosure, so answer the question honestly. You will not necessarily be eliminated from consideration for having a record, especially if they see it as a youthful indiscretion. If you have a

pattern of offenses, talk with the staff at career services to weigh your options. **Important: alcohol/drug offenses can certainly eliminate you from possible careers/graduate schools. Do not drink and drive – ever.**

Credit Record – Employers can usually legally check it, and they will for finance or banking-related jobs. Get a copy of your credit report before you start your search and make sure everything is correct.

Your Grades and Graduation Status – You must report your comprehensive GPA accurately. If you do not, or you indicate you graduated when you actually didn't, you can be fired, even years later, if the employer discovers inaccuracies.

Drug Test – If you want to work for a government or police agency (FBI, CIA), do not do drugs - ever.

## Internships and Experiential Programs

Employers and graduate schools strongly desire experienced candidates, and internships and experiential programs are the best way to gain this valuable practical knowledge. Over 70% of Wabash students complete one or more internships by the time they graduate, and because they have the opportunity through their internship(s) to try out a career field and gain work experience, these students are much better prepared for their job/graduate school search.

An internship is a substantive work and learning experience related to a student's major or career goal that involves working under the direct supervision and monitoring of practicing professionals. Internship experience is fast becoming an expectation that graduates schools and employers take into account when making their admissions and hiring decisions. According to the 2006 NACE (National Association of Colleges and Employers) Experiential Education Survey, performing an internship really does pay, in terms of the starting salary a new hire can expect. 46.2 percent of employers said they offer higher salaries to incoming college hires with internship experience than they offer to new college hires without such an experience.

Career Services offers a wealth of resources and opportunities designed to help you locate and apply for internships. We have 6 experiential programs that provide financial support to students in qualified internships, and provide short-term externships and immersion programs as well. For more information on internship topics, see the Internships section on our website.

### ***Wabash Internship Programs***

Wabash College provides funding through these programs to help support interns with regard to housing and travel expenses while they complete their internship experience. Each specific program has its own requirements and method of application. Students are limited to utilizing each funded program only once.

**Dill Fund:** Proposals, arising from interests stimulated by a student's course work and Wabash experiences, should expand or deepen an area of study in a way not available through Wabash's traditional programs. Projects should be entirely student-generated, although students are encouraged to consult with faculty or staff as they plan their projects and prepare their proposals. A Dill Committee considers proposals. Proposal information is available in the Registrar's Office. All opportunities presented must be unpaid. These opportunities are student initiated, and are not posted in *WabashWorks*.

**Opportunities:** Approximately 15

**Deadline:** varies – January – March

**Open to:** Freshmen through Juniors

**Lilly Business Internship Fund:** The purpose of this program is to help fund internship opportunities in business or with a business focus within the state of Indiana. Some of these internship sites are already in place and are posted in *WabashWorks*, with a February application deadline. All applicants must complete an application form to request funding. These and can be in the for-profit or not for-profit sector. Interns must complete a reflective blog entry and the Business Leaders Program Director conducts a site visit.

**Opportunities:** 25-30

**Deadline:** February

**Open to:** Freshmen through Juniors

**Small Business Internship Fund (SBIF):** The purpose of this program is to provide students with internship opportunities with alumni in a small business or entrepreneurial setting. The bulk of these opportunities are located outside Indiana. SBIF is an endowed fund managed by Career Services and funded by Wabash alumni. Qualifying opportunities are posted in *WabashWorks* and are specified as eligible for this program. You must also complete an SBIF application and submit it to Career Services by the application deadline date. Interns must complete a reflective blog entry and Career Services conducts a site visit.

**Opportunities:** 10-14

**Application Deadline:** February  
**Open to:** Freshmen through Juniors

## ***Experiential Programs***

**Wabash College Externships:** A 1-4 day experiential learning opportunity (externship). An externship is a career-related immersion/job shadowing experience that offers no pay and no academic credit. Examples of an externship experience may include sitting in on an office/staff meeting, observing client interactions, assisting with projects, conducting informational interviews with both professional and administrative staff to further explore potential career paths within the organization and the profession.

**Opportunities:** varies, many are student-initiated

**Application Deadline:** varies

**Open to:** All students

**Marketing Immersion:** The purpose of this Spring Break program is to provide Wabash students with an opportunity to delve into the world of marketing and advertising. This program is funded by the Business Leaders Program grant from the Eli Lilly Foundation, and combines classroom learning with field visits and alumni presentations. Students stay in an Indianapolis hotel, and travel throughout the state.

**Opportunities:** 12

**Application Deadline:** January

**Open to:** All students

### **Business Immersion Program (BIP):**

This eight-week summer program introduces students to the principles behind entrepreneurship and consulting. The program runs from late May through mid-July. Participants spend classroom time discussing readings, case studies, and projects. Guest speakers, many of whom are Wabash alumni, will visit to discuss facets of business and share their own experiences. Students take field trips to businesses and events throughout Indiana. The program includes two intensive team projects: creating an original business plan and working on a consulting project for a local organization. Teams give presentations on both projects, and a panel of experts evaluate the business plans. Applicants must submit an application form and apply via WabashWorks.

**Opportunities:** 12

**Application Deadline:** March

**Open to:** Freshmen through Juniors

## **The Resume**

Promoting yourself effectively is crucial in a job search. While there are many ways to market yourself, the most popular way is through a resume. The goal of a resume is to give an organization insight into the skills and capabilities you have to offer, and to determine if you would be a good fit with the organization. The interview then allows you to elaborate and determines how you will do the job by assessing your performance and behaviors. In short, the resume gets you the interview, and the interview gets you the job. You will obviously need a resume when applying for jobs and internships, but **you will also need one for applying to graduate or professional school**. Start preparing your resume in your freshman year and continually update it as you progress through school, and beyond.

### ***The Wabash Format***

To help you make a solid first impression, and actually land interviews, Career Services has created a format we recommend for our students and alumni. This format is based on positive feedback from recruiters, and from our staff's collective experience with corporations, non-profits, and higher education organizations based in the U.S. You are not required to use this format, although it is strongly recommended.

The goal of our resume format is to showcase your strongest selling points first, to grab the reader's attention, and encourage him/her to keep reading further. The sections we suggest are as follows:

- **Header:** your name and contact information (address, phone and email)
- **Profile:** a short 2-4 sentence introduction at the top to draw the reader in and create interest
- **Education:** details the formal educational experiences you have had leading to a degree
- **Experience:** details the experiences you have relevant to the opportunity you are seeking

- **Professional Development:** includes details on your training, campus and community involvement and leadership, technology skills, volunteer work, language skills, etc.

We suggest a simple font, no fancy graphics, lines or italics. Since many organizations are now using Resume Management Systems, it is vitally important that your resume be “scannable.” When an organization receives your resume, it is usually processed electronically before it is read by anyone. These systems often may not recognize fancy fonts, graphics or other aesthetic features. Simplicity will ensure that when scanned into the system, your resume will appear and print the way you intended.

Work on your format first (easiest to do), and then focus on your content. You will find more formatting and content suggestions later in the guide. Note that for some specific industries or employers, a different format may be required. For example, federal government applications require a specific resume format and some international organizations may request a CV (curriculum vitae) or the style may vary by country. If you need a different format, contact Career Services.

## **Formatting Guidance and Checklist**

### **Header**

Your header (centered on the page) contains your name and contact information so organizations can identify and contact you. When completing this section:

- Be sure your name stands out: it should be in the largest font size on your resume. If you have a different name you go by, you can include it in parentheses
- Include one phone number where you can be easily reached (home or cell) and be 100% sure the contact information is correct; ensure your voicemail message is professional and simple (no humor, vulgarity, etc.)
- Use one email address that is professional; superfreak@domain.com is not acceptable. Remove the hyperlink from your email address.
- List only one mailing address. You will normally use your campus address, but if you are from Seattle, for example, and you’re applying for a position on the west coast, you may want to use your home address instead. That shows the recruiter that you’re from the area, which they may see as a plus.

### **Profile**

Your profile is designed to catch the reader’s attention and give an overview of who you are, what you bring to the table and what you are seeking. When completing this section keep in mind:

- It should be 2-4 lines at the top of your resume, just under your header
- Do not use first person (I am...) or third person (Mr. Johnson is...)
- Your Profile content should support your resume (ex: if you indicate you are very involved you need to back that up by examples in your resume)
- **It is not about what they can do for you, rather it’s what you can do for them.** This is an important point to remember in this entire process.
- Put your biggest sellers here - speak a foreign language or have related internship\work experience? Highlight that in both your Profile AND your Professional Development section
- Change your Profile to match each position you apply for. Let the employer know right off the bat that you’re a viable candidate

#### **Example:**

Highly skilled in written and verbal communication and heavily involved in on and off-campus political organizations. Motivated and organized professional seeking a position in political communications. Speak fluent Mandarin Chinese and proficient in Dreamweaver.

*Important: make your Profile specific to who you are and what you have to offer. Do not copy this profile.*

### **Education**

As a new college grad, or intern candidate, your Education section should go before your Experience section. Once you are an alumnus with work experience, you will reverse this order. In your Education section you are selling your degree, not your school; in that vein, do not discount the power of minors, double majors, etc. Highlight such information by bolding it. Include:

- List your degree and any minor(s) first, in bold. Be formal—do not write sentences (i.e., B.A. Art, not “received BA in art”)
- Your graduation date month and year only. Do not bold. Right-justify all dates
- Wabash College goes on the line **below** your major/minor and is not bolded

- Include relevant academic projects (group or solo), upper level coursework, study abroad trips, awards, etc...sell your degree/academic experiences. In your Projects/Research section, be detailed, but just enough just enough to get the reader interested. Results of your project are always a great touch.
- Indicate that you passed comprehensive exams (when you do so) and that you graduated cum laude, etc.
- Only include your GPA if it's a 3.0 or above. See us with questions on this as this 'rule' differs for some organizations/schools. Do not bold your GPA, and make very sure it's correct. Never 'round up' your GPA
- Scholarships need not be included on a resume unless you have lots of open space or have earned prestigious scholarship awards that set you apart from your competition
- **For all sections:** No Wabash shorthand, jargon, professor's names, class numbers are necessary.

## Internships/Experience Section(s)

This is the meat of your resume. Your task is to convince the employer you have relevant experience for the position or program. When completing this section **there is no need to include everything you've done - only include results-oriented information that will pique the reader's interest.**

- Highlight accomplishments, not duties. This is not a job description. Quantify whenever possible and give specific, example-oriented detail. Generalizations will excite no one
- Sell - don't overstate your experience but make sure to detail how important it is
- Use power verbs to sell your accomplishments, but don't repeatedly use the same one or two. A list of power verbs is at the end of this section
- List your most recent position first, then work backward
- There is no rule that you have to go back a certain amount of years or jobs - include info that helps your candidacy regardless of when it occurred
- If you have more than one job at an employer/have been promoted, combine the entries (see Bruce Wayne example in this packet)
- Dates need only years (not months) unless it was seasonal or the job lasted less than one year
- Whether you were paid or not is irrelevant - if you can sell an experience, put it in this section. Example: If you're applying for a position in finance, and you were the treasurer for your campus group that is experience! Detail that under your Experience section
- Bullet entries and do not use periods - use dashes or colons/semi-colons to connect thoughts
- Use correct tense - current positions are detailed in present tense, past positions in past tense
- Make each word count. Avoid orphans (lines with just one or two words)
- Internships should always be detailed under a separate Internship Experience heading

## Professional Development

The professional development section is designed to showcase all of the additional work and effort you have undertaken to develop professionally. When completing this section:

- Include any campus or community involvement related to your goal and **detail** accomplishments – don't simply list something you were involved in. You must describe your involvement and/or the organization.
- Wabash-specific groups like the Sphinx Club, Sons of Wabash, Dork Club, etc. must be explained to the reader. It is up to YOU to make it clear what the group is, and what you accomplished/learned
- Use # and \$. If you managed a budget, how much \$? If you led a group with 15 guys, say so.
- Use formal titles of computer packages and be sure to spell correctly
- Highlight all leadership roles you have undertaken – all employers/grad schools like to see leadership
- Do not include controversial information. If you volunteered at your church, do not name the religion, instead say 'local church'. If you were in the Big Game Hunting Club or College Democrats/Republicans, we would suggest not including that unless you know the employer would see that as an asset. You don't know the reader's biases. Along that line, be careful when you include your involvement title. Your fraternity or club may have a 'strange' title for Treasurer, but just say "Treasurer".
- For volunteer experience, detail exactly what you did – don't just list random groups you volunteered for. Note that "100 hours community service" sounds like a prison sentence....

Once you have your resume in a format you are comfortable with, use the checklist below to ensure that you haven't made any missteps in the process.

## Formatting Checklist

### Overall:

- As a new grad, your resume should be one page, except for grad school or teaching resumes – they can be 2 pages. - Do not use a resume template from a computer program.

**Style:**

- Do not go any smaller than a 10 point font, make all margins .7 or larger
- Do not mix fonts in the resume or font sizes in your content, or use fancy fonts or graphics
- Do not overdo the use of bolding or other stylistic tools
- Do not use all caps, except for headings - it's too hard to read

**Resume Management Tools Scannability:**

- To ensure your resume is scannable, your font type should be rather basic. Avoid italics, graphics or underlining.

**Tense:**

- Use correct tense throughout your resume—never use first (“I”) or third person (believes....).

**Justification:**

- Do not end-to-end justify your text (this is where paragraphs are even on either side) instead, manually right justify dates and left justify bullets and titles, or set tabs

**Consistency/Parallelism:**

- Make sure your spacing and formatting are consistent; if you indent the job title in one section, make sure you indent all job titles - if you capitalize one header, make sure you capitalize all headers, etc.

**Capitalization:**

- Only capitalize formal titles and names

**State:**

- Use the correct postal abbreviation and no periods (i.e., IN, MI)

**Citizenship/Birthdate/SS#/Other Personal Info:**

- Never include such info on a resume. If you have an international-sounding name and are a U.S. citizen, it is OK to include that in your Profile.

**References:**

- Do not include them on your resume. “References available upon request” is a waste of valuable space. You should use a separate sheet for references.

**Header matching:**

- For cover letters or reference pages, use the same header as on your resume for consistency

**E-mail Test:** Email your resume to yourself (or us) to make sure the formatting remains intact. Once you upload it into WabashWorks, print it from the system to make sure it looks good.

## ***Creating Powerful Resume Content***

When creating content, the most important thing to remember is that your resume is a marketing tool. It must sell you as the most qualified candidate in a very professional but concise manner. Your job is to make it easy for the reader to determine if you are a qualified candidate. Enable the reader as much as possible—don't assume you will have the chance to explain more details in an interview. **You have only a few seconds to make a good first impression and draw the reader in.**

## ***Planning Your Experience Content***

While it is helpful to start with a base resume, you should customize your resume every time you send it. Just like marketers do when selling a product, your content should sell what is most important to your audience - the reader) Because a resume is meant to highlight the most relevant experience from your academic and work experience and your involvement, one way to manage resume customization is to list all of your positions in a separate document including all of your detailed content for each position. You can then cut and paste bullet points each time you prepare to send out a resume. It is important to do several crucial things:

- Never just list a job responsibility
- You have to help the reader understand not only what you did but how you did it better than someone else with the same job description
- Quantify whenever possible
- Include the amount of the budget you managed as treasurer, the number of people you worked with on a project, the percentage increase in results, etc. This gives the reader more to go on and shows you are detail-oriented
- Lead all entries with action words - active language is good, passive is bad
- **Grammar and Spelling:** A resume must be completely free of all grammar and spelling errors. Review each word and *always* have someone else look your resume over for errors
- Use apostrophes correctly and only to show possession
- Read it out loud - this is the best way to catch errors

- Eliminate all vague words and phrasing
- **Jargon/Technical Terms:** Make sure you spell out abbreviations and then put the acronym in parentheses the first time you use it – for example: Alpha Phi Omega (APO). Jargon is only acceptable if you are completely sure the reader will know what the word means
- Using words like *some* or *various* or *many* gives the impression you are too lazy to be specific. Never use the word *relevant* - this assumes everything else is irrelevant.
- Never use the words “responsible for”- it can leave the reader wondering: “he was responsible for that but did he actually do it?”

## ***Creating Experience Entries***

If you are struggling to take your content beyond just listing job responsibilities, try to answer these questions for each bullet:

### **who/what/where/when/why/how?**

You need not address all these questions in every bulleted entry, but be sure to incorporate some mix of them. While this may be time-consuming, this method not only ensures your content is powerful, **you will get actual interviews**. Doing this is also very useful when preparing for interviews as well.

An example: “Managed budget for fraternity”. On the surface the entry is vague and boring, but it screams that there are details you left out (readers *hate* that...) Which fraternity did you do it for? What exactly did you do? How did you do it? Once you answer some of those questions, indicate the results. **This is the key to a great resume entry.** Whenever you detail results, the reader becomes more interested in your candidacy. They assume that if you accomplished something in your previous experience, you could do the same for them.

For the above example, “***Managed budget for fraternity***” would be much better written as “***Managed \$145,000 yearly operating budget for 52-member fraternity; cut costs \$820 by creating Excel spreadsheet to better track accounts receivable***”

**Do This:** Review the following content examples to help you become more efficient in crafting results-oriented and accomplishments-focused content for your resume. Note that you can use such entries to describe your academic projects as well.

- Created detailed informational brochure to better explain the volunteer process which resulted in a 23% increase in participation over 6 months
- Created original lesson plan on Namibian reptiles to fully engage class of 23 fourth graders on international habitats. 5 students inquired about further readings after the lesson
- Successfully presented business plan to local executives to develop a birthday cake delivery operation on campus. Acquired \$1000 seed financing from 3 investors, developed marketing plan and netted \$5412 in 12 months
- Authored one-act play on a topic of campus interest, *Greatest Moments at Wabash*, and promoted the play to sports coaching staff; play attracted audience of 110, a 200% increase over average campus play attendance
- Utilized primary research and forecasting techniques to provide competitive market assessments and policy analysis to evaluate emerging trends in the telecommunications industry

*Once you have drafted your resume, it is strongly suggested that you have someone look it over for errors, readability, and impact. Our staff will be happy to meet with you to help you develop and proof your resume. Stop by our office at 502 W. Wabash, or email it to [career@wabash.edu](mailto:career@wabash.edu).*



# Wabash College Resume Example

## Clark S. Kent

2001 Marlon Brando Drive, Metropolis, IL 02254  
(212) 555-2222 (c)  
superhero@wabash.edu

### PROFILE

Faster than a speeding bullet, able to leap tall buildings in a single bound and stop a locomotive with bare hands. Significant experience in print and web-based journalism. Seeking a position in news gathering and online distribution.

### EDUCATION

**B.A. Superheroism** GPA: 3.98/4.0

May 2012

**Minors: French and Classics**

Wabash College, Crawfordsville, IN

**Study Abroad:** The Sorbonne, Paris, France; intensive French language and culture studies

Fall 2011

**Research Project:** Developed independent theory of existence based on the teachings of Confucius and Gandhi. Theory was adopted by *The National Society of Existential Thought* as the official groupthink belief.

**Coursework:** Benefits of Superheroism, Musings on the Fantastic Four, The Perils of Kryptonite, Saving Societies and Planets, Consulting Practices in Web Journalism, French Culture and Mores, The Perils of Poseidon

### INTERNSHIP

**Kryptonite Destruction Technician and Writer**

Summer 2011

Luthor Industries, Radioville, IN

- Learned to identify kryptonite within 3 milliseconds via internal and external sensory techniques
- Researched, created, and perfected kryptonite disposal system resulting in 100% success rate
- To befuddle the competition, authored weekly articles for *LuthorLinks* newsletter on world domination

### EXPERIENCE

**Mild-Mannered Rep**

2008 -present

*The Bachelor*, Wabash College

- Investigated newsworthy topics, interviewed students and staff and wrote original articles, including a national Newberry Award-winning expose on shenanigans at *The DePauw Daily Planet*
- Authored weekly "Truth Justice and The American Way" advice column; increased readership 34% through humor

**Superhero**

2000 – present

Omnipresent, The Universe

- Performed 2690 good deeds to date without hesitation, including saving the world from utter destruction
- Protected the lives of citizens here and abroad through the development of WorldWatch, a 24/7 monitoring device
- Awarded keys to 73 cities for heroic efforts, including rescuing babies and stopping runaway trains

**Additional Experience:** Television Actor, Supermarket Ribbon Cutting Ceremony Dignitary, Phone Booth Repairman

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- **Founder, Wabash Comic Book Society**, created 32-member group dedicated to superhero comics; began annual Campus Comics masquerade party, attracting 570 participants the first year through flyer development and chapel presentation
- **Rush Chairman, Social Chair** Sigma Upsilon Pi Fraternity, increased 2006 pledge class size 23% through summer RushFest in Naples, Italy. Planned and executed 45 successful parties attracting 1578 guests, with a combined budget of \$25,956 including the annual SuperBall, which raised \$2200 for Capes for the Community
- **Forward**, Wabash College Frisbee Golf Team – team won the GLCA championship each year

### Computer/Technical Skills

- Proficient in MS Publisher, PageMaker; experience with JavaScript; knowledge of Flash, Visio

### Training

- X-Ray Vision Certification, LensCrafters
- "Quick Changes to Your Professional Wardrobe" seminar, *Details* magazine
- **Languages** Fluent in French; conversational in Czech, Swahili, Farsi; read Yiddish
- **Volunteer** Crawfordsville Bizarro World for Kids – Tutor 12-year old weekly on alternate universe issues; Capes for The Community - Coach Recreational Flying to 14 students aged 4-93

### Professional Affiliations

Justice League of America, Screen Actors Guild, President - Lois Lane Fan Club

## Wabash College Resume Example 2

### Joe T. Wabash

614 Martindale Hall, Crawfordsville, IN 47933  
(765) 555-5555 (c)  
name@wabash.edu

#### PROFILE

Grab the reader's attention. Create 2-3 sentences that tell the reader who you are, what you bring to the table (specific hard and soft skills) and what you are looking for (the kind of position you seek.) Write a general profile to start and then customize it to every job to which you apply. The profile is an overview of your resume—save specifics for the body of the resume. Include information most relevant to the position. **Do not copy a sample profile. Write your own profile that is unique to you.**

#### EDUCATION

**B.A. Subject GPA:** 3.45/4.0

Graduation Date – Month/Year

**Minor: Subject**

Wabash College, Crawfordsville, IN

**Study Abroad:** School, City, Country; detail what you studied or learned

Semester Year

Optional lines here could include: Passed comps, Scholarships or other awards (be specific regarding why you got this award)

**Academic Projects:** List academic projects completed, with details on results, methods, successes.

**Coursework:** (include only upper-level coursework directly related to the position or your goal) Most Exciting Class, Upper-Level Class, , Another Fantastic Class, Still Selling It, Include All Classes You'd Like To Discuss In An Interview

#### INTERNSHIP (or Field Work, Research...whatever your situation)

**Your Title (make it descriptive)**

- Employer Name, City, State
- Emphasize results and accomplishments in all descriptions
- Never say 'responsibilities/duties included'
- Sell! Make your descriptions action-oriented and detailed

Season or Year

#### EXPERIENCE

**Your Title**

- Employer Name, City, State
- Be sure to use the proper tense
- Quantify whenever possible – use # and \$ entries liberally
- Get the reader excited. Sound positive

Year-present

**Additional Experience Includes:** For miscellaneous jobs that show you're not sitting around watching TV, ex: Lifeguard, Landscaper, Dog Walker, Server, etc. Dates/employer names not needed

#### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (dates not needed in this section)

- **Office,** Organization name, Be specific about your particular role and contribution. Detail the organization as well.
- **Leadership Role, Organization,** Sell your specific accomplishments in these offices. Use # and \$
- **Position Played,** Team or Sport, If you are on an athletics team, list your position(s) played, and awards - team and individual

**Computer/Technical skills**

- List those specific to your goal; be sure to indicate level of proficiency if appropriate

**Training**

- Optional section for certifications or training outside strictly academic pursuits

**Languages**

- Fluent in French, conversational in Spanish

**Volunteer**

- Be specific in how you volunteered. Do not just listed places you volunteered or # of hours

**Professional Affiliations**

List organizations separately and if you have leadership roles, detail them. Were you an Eagle Scout? If so, list it. Climb Mt. Kilimanjaro? Detail the experience. Make the resume reflect YOU.

## List of Power Verbs

accelerated	chaired	eclipsed	increased	performed	sanctioned
accommodated	charted	edited	indexed	persuaded	satisfied
accomplished	clarified	educated	indicated	pioneered	scheduled
achieved	classified	elevated	inferred	planned	screened
acquired	coached	elicited	influenced	polished	scrutinized
acted	collaborated	eliminated	informed	prepared	secured
activated	collected	employed	initiated	prescribed	served
adapted	commissioned	empowered	innovated	prioritized	set goals
added	committed	enabled	inspected	processed	set up
addressed	communicated	encouraged	inspired	procured	settled
adjusted	compared	endorsed	instituted	produced	shaped
administered	compiled	enforced	instructed	programmed	simplified
admitted	composed	engineered	insured	projected	smoothed
advanced	computed	enhanced	integrated	promoted	solicited
advised	conceptualized	enlarged	interceded	publicized	solved
aided	concluded	enlisted	interpreted	purchased	sought
alleviated	condensed	enriched	interviewed	queried	spearheaded
allocated	conducted	enumerated	introduced	questioned	specified
allowed	confirmed	envisioned	invented	raised	spoke
altered	consented	established	investigated	rated	staffed
ameliorated	consolidated	estimated	involved	realized	stimulated
amended	constructed	evaluated	issued	recommended	streamlined
analyzed	contracted	examined	judged	reconciled	strengthened
anticipated	contributed	excelled	justified	recorded	studied
appointed	converted	executed	launched	recruited	submitted
apportioned	convinced	exercised	lectured	rectified	substantiated
appraised	cooperated	expanded	led	reduced (losses)	suggested
apprised	coordinated	expedited	licensed	refined	summarized
approved	correlated	explained	lightened	referred	supervised
approximated	corresponded	extended	linked	reformed	supplemented
arbitrated	counseled	extracted	maintained	regarded	surveyed
arranged	created	fabricated	marketed	regulated	sustained
ascertained	critiqued	facilitated	measured	rehabilitated	synthesized
assembled	cultivated	familiarized	mediated	reinforced	systematized
assessed	customized	fashioned	minimized	rejuvenated	tabulated
assigned	debugged	figured	mobilized	related	tailored
assisted	deciphered	finalized	modeled	relieved	taught
attained	dedicated	forecasted	moderated	remedied	tested
attested	delegated	formulated	modernized	remodeled	traced
audited	deliberated	fostered	modified	repaired	trained
augmented	demonstrated	founded	monitored	reported	transacted
authored	designated	fulfilled	motivated	represented	transformed
authorized	designed	generated	multiplied	researched	translated
balanced	determined	grew	negotiated	reserved	transmitted
bolstered	devaluated	guaranteed	officiated	resolved (problems)	updated
boosted	developed	guided	operated	restored	upgraded
brainstormed	devised	hired	orchestrated	retrieved	validated
budgeted	diagnosed	identified	organized	revamped	valued
built	directed	illustrated	originated	reviewed	verified
calculated	disbursed	implemented	overhauled	revised	visualized
catalogued	discovered	improved	oversaw	revitalized	wrote
centralized	dispatched	improvised		revived	
certified	displayed				
	drafted				

# The Cover Letter

The importance of a strong, well-written cover letter cannot be overstated. A cover letter is used to explain essentially why you're applying for the position, and convince the reader you're the ideal candidate. Without a cover letter, the reader is left to make their own assumptions regarding your qualifications and candidacy. Not all posted opportunities require a cover letter, but unless instructed otherwise, you should always send a cover letter along with your resume.

A cover letter should consist of 3 or 4 concise, marketing-oriented paragraphs that fit on one page. Each sentence should be powerful and convincing. Grammar and spelling are extremely important, as is your choice of words. Most readers skim the cover letter at first (just like the resume), so it should be visually pleasing and contain buzzwords that capture attention. Use full-block style and use an easy-to-read font. Be sure to date the letter.

**IMPORTANT: Students often have a tendency to write these letters in a 'what's in it for me' style – a huge mistake. Put yourself in the reader's place. They are not as interested in what this opportunity will do for you as they are in what you can do for them. Write your letter with that in mind and it will be much more effective.**

**1<sup>st</sup> Paragraph:** Tell the reader what you're applying for, how you learned of the opening, and add a sentence about why you're a great candidate. If you were referred by someone, mention their name if appropriate. This paragraph should be short – 2 or 3 sentences. Note that most people have no idea what *WabashWorks* is/means – if you found out about the opening via *WabashWorks*, say, instead "through Wabash College Career Services". Always put yourself in the place of the reader!

**2<sup>nd</sup> Paragraph:** Summarize the reasons why you are a great candidate. Highlight specific items on your resume and/or give concrete examples of your directly relevant experiences. If you're applying in response to an ad, address the specific qualifications they're seeking. Use the words they use in the ad. Topics might include your educational background, work, internship and volunteer experiences, involvement and personal qualifications. If this paragraph gets unwieldy, break it into two paragraphs.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Paragraph:** This is your action paragraph. You're either telling the reader what action you're going to take, or inviting them to take action. Wrap up the letter and be very specific about what you'd like to happen next. End on a warm and friendly note.

## Cover Letter Tips

- Use full-block style – no indenting
- Put your full contact information or the same header as your resume at the top of the page
- Center your letter on the page and use the same font as your resume
- Use direct, simple language, and declarative, action-oriented sentences. Big impressive words and overdone sentences may create a negative impression. **This is not an essay, it is a business letter.**
- Do not repeat your resume verbatim - give further details about items on your resume instead
- Use powerful, action-oriented language - get the reader excited about your candidacy
- Create three full detailed paragraphs – anything less and you will seem uninterested or unqualified
- Give specific reasons why you want to work at this particular organization. The reader wants to know two things: that you can do the job, and that you are excited to work at this particular organization
- Check all grammar and spelling thoroughly. Your writing must be perfect. Do not rely on spell-check
- Create a "shell" cover letter and change it to fit each position you apply for. **Thoroughly tailor each letter to the specific opening.** HR officials can tell quickly if your letter is "canned", which is the kiss of death in this process
- When e-mailing, attach the letter in Word, rather than using the body of the e-mail as the cover letter
- Do not use fancy software packages - if they can't open it, they can't read it
- If mailing, don't forget to sign. If e-mailing, you don't need to sign, but you can use an electronic signature
- In your final paragraph, be very careful when choosing your words: "I will contact you to set up an interview" is not acceptable as it's inappropriate for you to set up your own interview. "I will contact you to next week to further discuss the position" is infinitely better
- Be sure to back up your statements - if you say you'll call in a week, do so
- Use humor at your own risk - your sense of humor may be vastly different from the reader's
- Keep your ego in check - you don't want to come across as boastful
- Avoid technical jargon and abbreviations
- If asked for salary history/requirements, include in the next to last paragraph

## Cover Letter Example

Your Name (alternatively, you may use your resume header for this section)

Your Full Address

E-mail (optional)

Date

Recruiter's Name (Correct Spelling) and Correct Full Title

Their Full Address

Salutation (Mr./Ms./Dr. Last Name):

Say exactly what you're applying for and how you learned of the opening. If you were referred by someone, mention their name here. Grab attention by detailing specifically why you would be a great candidate for the position and why you are specifically interested in this particular job and organization. A creative opening can work as well, but first consider your audience and the industry. Do this in 2-3 sentences, using the final sentence as a bridge to the next paragraph.

This is your **MARKETING PARAGRAPH** (and can be separated into two paragraphs if you have a lot to sell). Using your research into the organization and the job description/ad, detail *specific* examples of your skills and experiences that are relevant to the opening and organization. Discuss your education, academic projects, specific work experiences, and personal qualities that will make the reader sit up and take notice. A detailed example is always stronger than a general statement. Write from a "what's in it for them" point of view and write how you speak. The reader is interested in how you can make a contribution to the organization. Do not bring up negative information or apologize for a lack of experience, etc. Be very positive – do not 'think, hope or feel' anything. Your grammar must be perfect. **Once you've completed the letter, read it out loud – a great way to catch mistakes.** Never go over one page.

Your final paragraph is the **ACTION PARAGRAPH**. You're either telling the reader the action you will take or trying to convince the reader to take action. It's important that you **ask for an interview**. Do not tell the reader you will call to set up your interview. The subtleties of such phrasing can easily offend. If appropriate, refer to your resume for your contact info. If you are detailing how you will follow up, be realistic in your timing and method. If this is a "hidden" opening (not advertised), it is always your job to follow up.

Closing,

Your Name (if you e-mail, there's no need to sign)

## ***Actual Cover Letter Example***

Matthew J. Dodaro  
8760 Schillton Drive, St. John, IN 46373  
(219) 555-5555 (c)  
xxxx@wabash.edu

January 29, 2009

Janet Merrick  
Manager, Educational Leadership Programs  
Museum and Education Programs  
25 Main Street  
Cooperstown, New York 13326

Dear Ms. Merrick:

The purpose of this letter is to express my interest in the 2009 Steele Education Internship with The National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum. This internship offers an incredible opportunity to further utilize my skills as a rhetorical scholar, and it would be an invaluable component of my education and training in public relations. I fully believe that with my significant experience and enthusiasm as an orator, I will be able to enhance the learning experience for all ages – not just children.

The primary focus of my bachelor's degree is Rhetoric, as well as studies in German that have increased my communication abilities in both English and German. Over the past three years, I have explored the depths of rhetoric and communication with classes focusing specifically on persuasion, reasoning, advocacy, and legal debate. Furthermore, this past fall, I was chosen as the only rhetoric major to present their project at the 2009 Celebration of Student Research at Wabash College, in addition to having the possibility to have my work published in a scholarly communications journal. This example not only shows my ability to speak publicly but to also critically assess and evaluate a variety of different artifacts.

I am extremely passionate about my relationships with others and I believe this opportunity will add to the already extensive work I have done with the community. Along with my hands-on work to promote campus unity as the Interfraternity Council (IFC) representative and Social Chair of my fraternity, I founded a mentoring program in Pittsburgh, PA last summer with children ranging in age from 6-13. I would like nothing more than to contribute my skills as an orator in whatever manner and measure I can to the already incredible success of the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum.

I would be greatly honored to have the chance to further discuss this internship with you. The attached resume provides additional information as to my qualifications and contact information. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Matthew J. Dodaro

## **Actual Cover Letter Example 2**

### **Nathan Jeffrey Line**

Wabash College: 106 Chase Hall, Crawfordsville, IN 47933  
(765) 555-5555 (c)  
xxxxx@wabash.edu

Dr. Melissa MacGuyver, Principal Scientist  
Eli Lilly & Company  
143 S. East Avenue, MS-645  
Indianapolis, IN 46654

January 7, 2009

Dear Dr. McGuyver:

The purpose of this letter is to express my interest in working in your research lab this summer through the Lilly internship program. This program offers an incredible opportunity to perform research, and will be a priceless addition to my education and training as a scientist. I am a hard-working chemist with a proven record of academic success. With my training and background, I believe I can make a beneficial contribution to the research performed in the labs at Lilly.

I am interested in pharmaceutical research pertaining to both drug discovery and drug production. Chemistry and medicine have always been topics of personal interest. As Chemistry major and Mathematics minor, I have had significant science-based lab experience as well as an in-depth understanding of the concepts and processes associated with both organic and analytical chemistry. In addition to my class-related laboratory experience, I have completed two full summers of research-based internships with a professor at Wabash College. During these internships, I worked on a project experimenting and observing the degradation of porous silicon in organic solvents, both functionalized with an alkyl monolayer and unfunctionalized controls.

I am very passionate about research and I believe I would be a valuable member of your summer research team. I will bring a strong work ethic, a great social personality, and a passion for learning from others to the lab. Your lab work is of particular interest because of your international reputation as a creative facility dedicated to pinpointing the root cause of autoimmune diseases.

I would welcome the opportunity to schedule an interview at your convenience. Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Nathan Line

# Networking

Networking is by far the most effective method of looking for a job. Various studies have indicated that 60% to 80% of all job openings are filled through networking. Why is networking so effective? Essentially, it serves as a pre-interview—a live sales tool. It gives a contact an opportunity to meet and learn about you in person, rather than just through your resume. It also connects you to ‘hidden’ opportunities either before they are posted, or opportunities that an organization is looking to fill but never formally posts. It is important to build and grow your network throughout your career. If you have a strong network of contacts, your search will always be faster and more efficient.

## ***Who Is In Your Network?***

Everyone you know. Fellow students, Wabash alumni, former supervisors, social networking contacts, your contacts from community and religious organizations, neighbors, friends, relatives, your barber, teammates, friends from other schools, professors, your friends’ parents, your parents’ friends, and yes, even your Career Services staff. A common misconception is that you need to network only with people at high levels within organizations. We strongly encourage you to network with people your own age, or those in more junior roles too. When you’re in your professional prime, they will be too, and these relationships will pay off substantially.

## ***How Is A Network Used?***

You will develop and expand your network throughout your career. Some people have the idea that networking has a negative connotation – that you’re ‘using’ people. Well you are, in a way. You’re using their contacts and knowledge. They in turn can then tap your contacts and knowledge. When you tell someone you’re seeking a job/internship in a particular industry, that’s networking. They can then turn to their own network, which exponentially increases your connections. An excellent resource is LinkedIn - [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com). LinkedIn is set up somewhat like Facebook, but is geared toward those seeking information related to professional contacts, career information, and job opportunities. There are several thousand Wabash students and alumni who use this valuable system. Be sure to join the Wabash Alumni and Career Services groups.

## ***How Can I Start Building A Network Now?***

There are several things you can do: (1) If you work, intern, or volunteer, do a great job. You want to develop a good reputation in your current position and be the kind of person that people feel comfortable referring to others. (2) Do well academically. Professors often recommend or refer students for jobs, internships or graduate school programs, and they normally only refer their top students. (3) Get involved. Participate in as many Career Services networking events, seminars as you can. These are all excellent networking opportunities. (4) Use our online Alumni/Student Networking (Mentor) System in *WabashWorks*. Participating alumni *want* to be networking contacts. Once you build a reputation for success, people will be proud to recommend you to others. Keep in mind that when they do so, they are putting their reputations on the line as well, so you must manage this process correctly.

## ***Managing and Utilizing Your Network***

To take full advantage of your network, it’s important to keep good records, including contact lists, with job titles and career path, your connections with them, and full contact information. Set up a spreadsheet. Collect and save business cards and jot down a note on the back of each card to remind you where you met the cardholder and what you discussed. When you need to contact someone in a specific industry or organization for job leads or advice, you’ll have the information you need at hand.

## ***Utilizing Alumni Contacts***

Wabash alumni are an excellent networking resource if you utilize their expertise in a professional manner. If you approach them in an improper or unprepared way, however, their willingness to assist will disappear. In addition to our Mentor System in *WabashWorks*, you can also access alumni through our networking events, both on and off campus, and our various dinners, workshops and seminars. The secret to success is how you approach them, how you present yourself, and how you follow up.



Before you begin, you need to decide what you're seeking career-wise, and how an alumnus can assist. For email contacts, prepare a networking email, outlining your interests (specific career fields, industries or organizations) and your specific need for information/contacts. Ask for information about their field /industry/organization, but do so in a way that gives them specific questions to answer. Asking vague, open-ended questions puts too much of the onus on the alumnus, and lessens the chances he will respond. **This is not a job request email – never ask for a job, and do not send your resume unless they request it.** If they do ask for your resume, make sure it is absolutely perfect before you send it. For phone or in-person contacts, prepare in advance a quick 30-second 'commercial' about yourself, introducing your background, your skills and your interests, and what type of career you're considering. When attending in-person events where alumni are present, or when meeting with an alumnus, act and dress professionally (see our Wabash Man's Guide to Professional Expectations in this guide). The importance of this cannot be overstated. If you act or look unprofessional, the alumnus will not just be appalled, he's likely to let other alumni know about his negative experience with you as well.

## ***Follow Through***

It is of vital importance that you follow up quickly whenever you connect with an alumnus, or any networking contact for that matter. They are doing you a favor and you should always keep that in mind. You may be busy, but you can bet they are busy too. The "I'm so busy..." excuse just does not cut it in the real world. Thank each contact with whom you've spent time regardless of how helpful you perceived that person to be. A handwritten note is a surprisingly effective way to say thanks and really be remembered. Additionally, follow up on any promises you made, whether to send a resume, make an appointment or contact another person. It is always helpful to end an interaction with: "You have been so helpful, I really appreciate it. Can you suggest anyone else I should talk with?" If you take this extra step, your contacts will always keep you in mind for opportunities in the future.

# **The Interview**

## ***Preparing For an Interview***

Advance preparation is the key to interview success. To win, you must go into the interview prepared. **Prepare properly, and your job search will be infinitely more efficient and effective.** To make a great first impression, to capture the interviewer's interest in your candidacy, and to ultimately land the job offer, you must thoroughly know yourself and your resume, be knowledgeable about the organization and industry, and make a winning personal presentation. People hire other people they would be comfortable working with, who fit in well with the organization and its culture, and who would represent the organization in a positive manner. Before you go into an interview, you should be able to confidently address why you want this particular job with this particular organization, and how you can make a positive contribution to the organization and their success.

## ***Know Yourself and Your Resume***

Before each interview you first need to **research you**. Think of yourself as the product and put yourself in the interviewer's shoes. Why should they hire you? What specific qualifications and experiences do you have that make you unique? Take your resume and go through each item and prepare situational examples detailing everything you listed. Doing so helps you better illuminate your skills and experiences. Think of examples from your non-professional life as well. Be prepared to discuss both successes and challenges in a positive manner.

## ***Know the Organization and Industry***

The interviewer is essentially trying to discern if you're a good fit for the organization and the industry, its culture, and its customers or constituents. Your job is to convince the interviewer that you are the right person. Talk with people who work with the organization or in a similar type of job. Research the organization and industry through their website, articles, etc. Get all the information you can about the organization's culture, reporting structure, expectations, constituents, and how this position fits into the overall picture. Determine the organization's place in the industry and research industry trends and current events. You should sound like an expert in the interview. On the other hand, you're also trying to decide if you want to work there. Prepare, in advance, questions regarding the above issues. You want to make sure you're a good fit for this employer and that this position will help you meet your short and long term career goals.

## How to get This Information

The Internet is a wonderful tool for research on the organization and industry. For larger organizations, check out our *Vault* system through *WabashWorks* for “insider” information on what it’s really like to work for the organization. In *Vault* there are a number of downloadable guides on specific industries as well. Tailored resources are always best. For government agencies for example, check out [www.ourpublicservice.org](http://www.ourpublicservice.org). For education, [www.k12jobs.com](http://www.k12jobs.com) has a wealth of information and resources links. In addition, if you can talk with people in the organization, they can give you the inside scoop. The Mentor system on *WabashWorks* is perfect for this. Research salary ranges for the position/industry/geographic location through [www.salary.com](http://www.salary.com) on *WabashWorks* as well. The above resources also contain information and tips on the interviewing process. Your interviewer will expect that you’ve done your research. The easiest way to ace the interview is to research these topics exhaustively. Google is your friend.

## Practice

Practice before an interview is crucial. **Interviewers can immediately tell if you have prepared for the interview in advance.** If you haven’t practiced your interviewing skills, you’re just wasting your time. Career Services offers individual mock (practice) interviews to help you prepare. We also sponsor a number of mock interviewing opportunities with employers and alumni throughout the year, in addition to speakers and workshops. We have a number of web resources and links that address interviewing issues. Talk with us about your personal situation and interview strategies.

## The Actual Interview

Interviewing is all about first impressions. Your appearance, demeanor and attitude are the keys to success. **Here’s how to be successful:**

- Prepare a strategy to get to the interview location at least 20 minutes early.
- Make sure your interview attire and your look are the best they can be. Err on the conservative/business side. The assumption is this is the best you ever look.
- Prepare situational examples detailing major events in your life (leadership, pressure, failure, etc.). Be prepared to discuss both your successes and challenges, focusing on results. Tailor your responses to the specific organization/industry.
- Prepare for the ‘tell me about you’ question. A good strategy: pretend the interviewer is asking ‘why should we hire you’, and prepare your answer accordingly.
- Practice, practice, practice. If English is not your first language, practice speaking clearly. Practice your answers out loud.
- Before the interview, put yourself in a friendly, self-marketing frame of mind. Smile and be confident.
- Never call the interviewer by his/her first name unless asked to do so.
- Always let the interviewer guide the conversation. Any humor or small talk should be introduced and controlled by the interviewer.
- Listen very carefully to each question and answer exactly what is asked. Cover all the relevant points in your response. Do not interrupt the interviewer.
- Say only positive things about previous jobs and coworkers. For negative issues (a previous bad boss, for example), emphasize how you turned the experience into a positive and detail what you learned from it.
- You must convince the interviewer you can add value to the organization. Proactively sell your skills and experiences, emphasizing how you can add value.
- If you can’t think of an immediate answer ask for clarification of the question. This gives you time to formulate a proper response.
- Give concise, 2-minutes-or-less answers, using real-life examples, for all questions. If the interviewer looks distracted or bored, shorten your answers.
- Ask several thoughtful questions about the organization and job when invited to do so. Asking questions regarding salary/benefits and vacation are inappropriate until the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> interview.
- If the interviewer asks you about salary expectations, you need to have an answer ready. Research the position and industry in advance, and know a realistic salary level for the position. When asked, give a range instead of a firm number, and indicate the salary is negotiable. Check out [www.glassdoor.com](http://www.glassdoor.com) for salary info.
- The final question you ask should address the decision-making timeline and process. Get business cards/contact info for all parties involved.
- Thank the interviewer and if interested in the position, say so. Be enthusiastic.

## ***After the Interview***

- **Immediately send a thank you note**, whether you think you want the position or not. The longer you wait the less effective it will be. Depending on the organization and interviewer, either a handwritten thank you note or e-mail may be appropriate. Affirm your interest in the position and re-emphasize why you'd be the perfect candidate. Re-address any answers you gave in the interview if appropriate. Keep the note short but powerful.
- A well-timed phone call or e-mail is appropriate if you haven't heard anything by the pre-determined 'deadline', but only contact once or twice. Hounding doesn't work. Be aware that other business is often prioritized over hiring decisions. Be prepared for delays and respectful of staff, such as receptionists (who may have hiring input!)
- Get all offers in writing. Do not quit searching/interviewing until you've accepted a *written* offer.

## **Special Interview Situations**

### ***Panel Interviews***

To save time and to gain a group consensus, many organizations use panel interviews. Normally, panels are made up of 3-6 people from various divisions, but that can vary widely.

#### Negatives:

- You need to persuade each panel member you're the ideal candidate.
- Questions may be varied, come quickly and be divergent.

#### Positives:

- You have a greater chance of eliminating personal bias/personality conflicts in the interview.
- You will not have to interview with each candidate individually and repeat yourself – all parties hear the same answers.

Strategy: Choose the person(s) on the panel who seem to favor you and give them attention. Don't ignore the others, but this will ultimately be a group decision, and your advocates on the panel may be able to sway any doubters.

### ***Group/Team Interviews***

In some industries, group interviews are popular in the on-site screening process. These interviews can be set up in all types of ways. Some may consist of teams of candidates discussing an issue or case, or solving a problem while being observed. Others may be a panel of interviewers asking questions of the entire group and having candidates speak out if they know the answer.

Interviewers are determining how candidates fare in a team, social or group setting. **Teach for America and the U.S. State Department, for example, use this interview format.**

#### Negatives

- It is often hard to tell specifically how the successful candidate is determined.
- The pressure is high to stand out "in a good way" within the group.
- If you are reserved or soft-spoken, you may get lost in the crowd.
- You may be at the mercy of your other group members to impress the interviewers.

#### Positives

- You can utilize the interaction with other candidates to showcase your talents, providing a 'live work sample'.
- With any group of interviewers, the chance for individual interviewer bias is lessened.

Strategy: Speak up, and as always, pay close attention to the interviewers/observers to get nonverbal cues to help determine proper conduct and answers. Do not try to outshine the other team members by dominating. Use perfect manners.

### ***Meal Interviews and the Pre-Interview Cocktail Party***

These types of interviews/situations are almost exclusively used to observe you in a relatively relaxed, social setting. The interviewers are determining if you would fit in with the organization's culture and your co-workers and if you would represent the organization well. This is a very important component of the interview process. Consulting, corporate, and investment banking employers rely heavily on this type of interview situation to make their final decisions.

#### Negatives

- Candidates often get too relaxed and begin letting their guard down
- Conversation topics, sense of humor, manners, and potentially your personal habits and presentation

#### Positives

- You also get to observe the interview team in a relaxed social setting. This may help determine if you really want to work for this organization

- Questions are not being thrown at you constantly so you can somewhat relax and show your true self. However, the personal interactions may be tricky.

**Strategy:** You are being judged, whether they're asking questions or not. Any interaction with the interviewer is part of the selection process, so do not let your guard down. Do not talk about matters that are too personal or ask personal questions. Your manners must be impeccable. Do not drink, or keep drinking to a minimum, and never smoke or use profanity. Have a pleasant and open attitude, and never discuss your dietary preferences/restrictions. The old adage is true: politics and religion are subjects you do not want to breach in this situation. We suggest researching current events to help in conversation. For practice, participate in one of our Dining-For-Success Dinners to learn how best to handle this type of situation.

## ***Telephone Interviews***

You will have lots of phone interviews. They are primarily used for first-round or screening interviews. The organization is determining if you are a viable candidate they would like to get to know further. Your interview may be with one person or with a group via speaker phone.

### Negatives

- There is no non-verbal communication to help determine the interviewer's reactions.

- If English is not your first language, language barriers may be heightened.

- Environmental distractions can be an issue. You **MUST** have privacy.

- Cellphone signals may be less than desirable. **Use a landline, not a cellphone.**

### Positives

- You can generally be more relaxed in a quiet space.

- You can refer to a copy of your resume and prepared answers and make interview notes.

**Strategy:** Schedule the time and place so you can be completely alone with no distractions. **We offer an interview room in Career Services specifically for phone interviews.** Schedule it in advance. If you feel you must use your own room, get your roommate out and turn off all TV's/stereos/cell phones, etc. Have a copy of your resume with you, a sheet of paper and a pen. Pull up the employer's website as well. If the interview is with a panel, jot down each person's name and title when they introduce themselves. Since you have no non-verbal cues, silences tend to be awkward, but when you've wrapped up your answer to each question, simply stop talking. Smile and be pleasant - your attitude/demeanor will definitely come through on the phone. Create inflection in your voice - guys in general tend to sound kind of deadpan on the phone and it makes you sound uninterested. Speak clearly. Thank each person interviewing you, and ask what the next interview step will be. Send a thank you note to each interviewer.

## ***Stress Interviews***

Although you may argue that all interviews are stressful, some organizations deliberately add stressful elements to the interview process. This can take a variety of forms ranging from purposely scheduling interview interruptions to asking obviously illegal questions to making the interview deliberately confrontational. Organizations that do this usually are in industries that are inherently stressful, and the position may require an individual who must deal well with stressful situations.

### Threats

- You may overreact to the situation or take it personally. Realize this may simply be part of the interview process.

### Opportunities

- If you do not appreciate or 'enjoy' the stress, this organization or position may not be for you. It's always a positive when you find that an organization is not for you *before* you accept the position.

- You can showcase your ability to deal with stressful situations, increasing your attractiveness to the recruiter

**Strategy:** Relax and go with the flow. Keep in mind that interviewing is a two-way street (you're also determining if this job is for you) and the worst the interviewer can do to you is say no. Don't take the bait and return the confrontational attitude. If you're relaxed and play the game, you should be fine.

## ***Illegal Questions***

It is likely in the interview process that you'll be asked illegal questions. This is especially true at smaller organizations without trained interviewers and in situations where you interview with potential colleagues. Illegal questions are essentially any that aren't related to your ability to do the job. Any question concerning race, nationality, marital status, family issues or background, sexual orientation, religion, etc. are illegal. However, it is important to determine the context in which the question is being asked before crying foul. If a Human Resources rep is asking illegal questions, you may want to think twice before accepting the position because

they are not acting professionally (they know better). If you're interviewing with a department manager or potential colleague, he/she may not be well versed in the law and may not realize the questions/topics are illegal.

#### Negatives

- You may overreact to the question and hurt your chances for the position

#### Positives

- Your answer to the question can be framed in a way that really sells you and shows your skill in dealing with this type of situation

- You need to decide if the employer asking the question is really the best fit for you

Strategy: Determine why the question is being asked, and answer accordingly. If a potential co-worker asks if you are married/engaged, he/she may just be trying to be friendly or getting to know you. If you're comfortable that there's no harm in answering, do so if you wish. If a potential boss is asking the same question, he/she may really be asking about your commitment to the organization/work hours, etc. You can deflect by answering *that* question instead. Once you leave the interview, determine if you truly want to work in that organization. Never say "That is an illegal question and I refuse to answer". Your candidacy will probably be ruined and you won't get the chance to think about it later.

## ***Skype Interviews***

Skype interviews are increasingly popular as organizations cut back on recruiting travel budgets. Your preparation in many ways is the same as for a typical face-to-face interview. However, for a video interview, there are particular issues to keep in mind: (1) Enunciate and clarify. Because of potential sound-quality problems, be sure to enunciate clearly and keep your answers short -- 30 to 45 seconds initially. Ask if the interviewer would like you to further describe specific topics. (2) Keep gestures to a minimum. On video, expressive gestures may seem exaggerated and often detract from what you are saying. Do not rock in your chair. (3) Attire - The camera prefers solid colors, and of course, you should dress as you would for an in-person interview (suit and tie). Avoid plaids, stripes, small checks, polka dots, or other intricate patterns. They cause "vibrating" effects and are very distracting. Do not wear any jewelry. (4) Video/Audio Issues - There is a short delay when using video. Give each person time to make a comment or ask a question, and be certain they're finished speaking before you speak. Avoid fidgety movements. Look directly at the camera to answer the question. (5) Other Considerations: To minimize problems with audio, try to avoid side noise -- shuffling papers, clicking pens, etc. Speak a little more slowly and distinctly than usual. (6) Background: Make sure the 'scenery' behind you is spare, and if in your own room, professional. (7) Practice before the actual interview: Our Skype system is available in our office for both practice and actual interviews.

## **On-Campus Interviews and Information Sessions**

Organizations conduct on-campus interviews and information sessions to identify suitable candidates. Because campus visits cost them a great deal of time, expense, and manpower, they are very selective regarding the schools they choose for interview sessions. Graduate schools will normally conduct information sessions in lieu of actual interviews, but are also selective in the schools they visit. In short, employers and graduate schools want the most 'bang for their buck'. If students are professional, engaged, and prepared, the recruiter will continue to keep Wabash on their recruiting schedule for the future. If not, they will drop Wabash without hesitation. **Therefore, it is of utmost importance that you abide by the expectations and manage the interview process ethically and professionally.** Note that such interviews are almost always 'screening' interviews, which means there will be follow-up interviews if they are interested in your candidacy.

### ***On Campus Interviews***

All such opportunities are posted in *WabashWorks* in the job listings section - designated in all caps as On-Campus Interviews - and all are prescreen schedules. Prescreen means that the employer will gather the resumes on the deadline date, select candidates to interview, and indicate their selections in *WabashWorks*. When you click the 'Apply' button in *WabashWorks*, your resume/cover letter is submitted directly to the employer. It is expected that you will research the organization prior to applying. If you are selected to interview, you will receive an email via *WabashWorks* indicating you're selected and asking to you sign up for an interview slot through the system. Once you select your time slot, you're all set to interview. The timing of this process is extremely important. When you receive the 'sign up' email, do so immediately.

If you are not selected, you will also receive an email through *WabashWorks* indicating such. Occasionally the employer will tell us why you weren't selected. You're welcome to contact us if you have questions regarding the decision.

To make it more likely you will be selected, tailor your resume and cover letter specifically to the position/organization/industry, clearly indicating you are a good fit. Anything less and your chances diminish significantly.

## Expectations for On-Campus Interviews

- Do not apply for an interview opportunity if you will not be able to interview the day of the campus visit. If you know you'll have a conflict contact us for alternatives.
- **If you apply for and are selected to interview you must sign up for an interview slot – no exceptions.**
- Only apply for positions for which you have a genuine interest. Interviewing 'for practice' is not allowed. We conduct multiple mock interviews programs that give you plenty of opportunities to practice.
- Dress for all interviews is professional – suit and tie. You will not be allowed to interview in casual clothing. Our SuitYourself room, with professional clothing for free checkout, is available for your use if needed.
- You must apply via *WabashWorks* to be considered for an on-campus interview. Employers who post opportunities through us do not want you to contact them directly. Doing so messes up their reporting statistics and clogs up their email. Do not try to circumvent our system, as it will significantly lessen your chances for success.
- You must meet all the qualifications stated to apply, including GPA (do not round yours up – ever), citizenship, and class year. *If you misrepresent your GPA on an application or on your resume, you will be permanently removed from WabashWorks.*
- Cancellations must be made 48 hours in advance. To cancel, you must have a valid excuse (see below). If you are an alternate for a schedule, we may contact you to schedule a slot if we have a cancellation.
- If you do not show for an interview without a **valid excuse (death of a family member or you are ill - with a Dr.'s excuse)**, you will lose all further interviewing privileges and will be removed from any subsequent interviewing schedules you may be on at the time. Our policy – one strike and you're out. You can appeal this decision directly to us in person, but be aware that your chances of having your privileges reinstated are very slim.
- On interview day, show up at Career Services 15 minutes in advance of your scheduled interview time. If you are late, your chances of getting the position decrease exponentially. Note that some employers use a greeter to talk with you before the actual interview.

## Information Sessions

There are two types of information sessions – those connected to an On-Campus Interview visit and those that are stand-alone. All are listed on the *WabashWorks* calendar and require an RSVP in advance to attend.

**Information Sessions connected to On-Campus Interviews** are either held well in advance of, or the day before, an interview visit. If you are considering submitting your application and the information session is held well before the interview, it is strongly recommended you attend. If the information session is held the night before an On Campus Interview, it is *required* that those selected to interview must attend. Others may usually attend as well – we will make that clear in the *WabashWorks* calendar listing.

**Stand-Alone Information Sessions** are held in lieu of an On-Campus Interview visit. Organizations conducting such sessions are often 'checking out the talent' at Wabash or do not need or want to go through the full interview process here on campus. Follow-up interviews may take place on campus, or may be held at the employer's site instead. Stand-alone info sessions are posted on the *WabashWorks* Calendar only, not in the job listings.

## Information Session Expectations

- All information sessions **require an RSVP** in advance via *WabashWorks*.
- If you have been selected for the On-Campus Interview, it is required that you RSVP for and attend the organization's information session.
- We will indicate the required dress and what you need to bring with you, if anything. It is often a good idea to bring a copy of your resume, printed on good cotton bond paper. Business casual dress means button down shirt, nice pants (not jeans) and good shoes (no tennis shoes). Professional dress means suit and tie and polished dress shoes. Dress just a little better than you think you should, but don't overdress
- Sit in the front, pay rapt attention, and take notes
- Ask questions: They definitely remember those who do. Do not ask questions regarding salary, benefits, etc.
- Approach the presenter(s) after the session, introduce yourself, and state your interest. Take all handouts and business cards, and follow up with them a day or so after the session.

**To increase your chances for success for both On-Campus Interviews and Information Sessions, it is strongly recommended you do the following:**

- Check *WabashWorks* regularly for new opportunities. Deadlines may require a quick response and we post new opportunities continuously.
- Read all application instructions and requirements very carefully; each listing may require that you do or submit something different.
- **Do not wait until the deadline date to apply. Employers want applications to come in quickly and it reflects poorly on your time management skills if you wait until the last minute.**
- If a writing sample is requested, submit one that is less than 3 pages. An excerpt of a paper is fine. If you have a sample that is directly related to the position or industry, that's a plus.
- If a transcript is requested, you may mail it to the employer, or scan it and download it into your *WabashWorks* account as an 'Other' document, and send through the system. Be sure to note if they require an official or an unofficial transcript. An official transcript will need the registrar's seal and must be mailed.
- Have your resume and cover letter reviewed by Career Services before you apply, or attend the session.
- Research the organization and the opportunity thoroughly. This will help you to (1) determine if the position is a true fit for your skills and interests and (2) develop your tailored resume and cover letter to best represent you.
- Send a thank you note to the interviewer(s) *immediately* after the interview.

## The Thank You Letter

Thank you letters are an integral part of a complete job search. Do not underestimate the power of a well-written thank you letter. Studies have shown that candidates who send thank you letters are consistently more successful in the job search/networking process.

### ***When to Send One***

A thank you is appropriate when you've been assisted by someone in the networking process and whenever you have an interview. In both cases, a thank you makes you look professional, and will serve to increase your chances of a positive outcome. In the networking process, sending a thank you letter for a contact or referral will always encourage your contact to continue to refer you to others. In the interview process, your professionalism will certainly be a plus for you when the final hiring decision is made.

### ***The Networking Thank You***

This letter can be hand-written or emailed. Hand-written, using stationery or a card is best for maximum impact. Consider your audience. If your contact is older or higher up the employment ladder, go with the card. If he/she is technically savvy and at your level, it may be appropriate to send an email. In either case, thank them for their efforts and offer to serve as a contact for them as well. Once you do accept a position or have a positive outcome, another thanks is appropriate.

### ***The Interview Thank You***

The interview thank you may be hand-written or emailed. Hand-written is usually best. Email your thank you note if you believe your audience would prefer it that way, or if the decision timeline is too quick to get the letter there in the mail. **The impact of a thank you letter correlates directly to how soon it's received.** For best results, send it immediately after the interview. Do not use the interviewer's first name. The letter should be short, the writing succinct. **Best strategy:** Purchase and pre-address/pre-stamp thank you notes and bring them with you to the interview. Write your letter(s) immediately following the interview and drop in the nearest mailbox. If you interview with a group of people, you may want to send more than one note. In general, if you meet with a group of people, they are probably making individual decisions based on their own interests and dealings with the position in question. When you write each letter, keep that position relationship in mind. Be sure to differentiate the letters – don't make them all the same. If you've decided you aren't interested in the position, write a thank you anyway – you just might change your mind (it's best not to decline an offer until you get one...).

## ***Thank You Letter Example:***

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. Employer:

Date

Thank them for the opportunity to interview or discuss the position and use the formal name of the position. If you are interested in the position, say so.

Detail what you liked about the position and why you believe you would be a great candidate. Refer to elements of the interview conversation. If you noticed that they seemed to be concerned about an aspect of your candidacy, emphasize your positive qualities/experiences with respect to that. If you neglected to mention something important regarding your qualifications, point that out. In many ways, this is a continuation of the interview – you’re still selling. Wrap up the letter by re-thanking them, offering your contact information and indicating you are looking forward to hearing from them.

Sincerely,

You (first and last name)

## **Career Fair Success**

A career fair is, in essence, a networking event focused specifically on careers and job opportunities. Seasoned career fair recruiters often rank the candidates they meet. These rankings are based on first impressions of each candidate –grooming, attitude, professionalism, resume quality, intelligent questions, etc. Recruiters will make notations on candidate resumes and group them. Your primary goal is to get in the “good pile” of resumes they collect. With proper preparation, you increase your chances of success enormously.

Employers participate in career fairs for several reasons:

- (1) Gather resumes for specific job openings
- (2) Identify candidates for future job openings
- (3) Create or strengthen a presence in the community or on campus
- (4) Create greater brand awareness for their organization through networking

It is important to take these reasons for participation into account in order to get the most out of the experience.

### ***Advance research is the secret to career fair success.***

Research each organization by doing web research. Talk to people who have worked at or are familiar with the organizations. Our staff can be of help as well. You need to become familiar with each organization and determine if you would be interested in working there. Determine how you would fit in considering your experiences, skills and interests, taking into account the “culture” of the organization. If you decide there is a match, research the organization thoroughly. Prepare a resume specifically targeted to the organization and prepare a 30-second “elevator speech” explaining your interest and how you fit in.

### **Before The Fair**

- Research *all* the participants – do not discount a potential employer based on hearsay. After you’ve done the research, rank the employers in order of your interest. Do not contact employers in advance.
- Prepare your 30-second introduction. When you approach each recruiter, you’ll need to be prepared to quickly summarize who you are, why you’re interested in that organization, and what you can do for them. If English is not your native language, practice speaking slowly and clearly.
- Memorize your resume. Be prepared to discuss everything you listed on it. Have quick examples of your experiences/successes ready.
- Block out a sufficient amount of time to attend the fair. Be prepared to stay for several hours.
- Prepare to dress just like you would for a job interview. Wear a suit – anything less is not appropriate for a fair. Borrow a suit from our SuitYourself program if you like. Wear an undershirt. Do not wear cologne. Make sure your hair, fingernails, breath, and shave are perfect. Carry breath mints. Pay particular attention to quality/appearance/detail of your shoes – studies have shown that many people make initial judgments based on shoes. **If you do not dress properly, employers will not take you seriously.**
- Take plenty of resumes on quality white paper.
- Carry a portfolio binder to keep your resumes looking neat and to better gather handouts.



## At the Fair

- Don't be a wallflower, and just as importantly, do not hang out in groups. This is not a team activity. As with any networking event, you will only get out of the fair what you put into it. Go to every table.
- Choose the organization you find least interesting, and go to that table first. This helps you gather your composure and practice your elevator speech. Do not approach your dream employer until you're completely ready.
- When approaching a recruiter extend your hand, smile, and introduce yourself. Make a great first impression.
- Always collect business cards. Some recruiters purposely do not bring them, so make sure you have a pen to jot down names and e-mail addresses.
- If the recruiter indicates they are not recruiting for your specialty at this fair, ask who the proper contact is at the organization.
- Collect as much organizational literature as you can carry. You will need it following the fair.
- Be prepared to stand in line. Sometimes lines can be long, but remember this is a networking event. Talk to others in line – get their contacts as well. Share info. You never know who you might meet.
- Don't hog the recruiter's time. Once the recruiter is finished talking with you, move on.
- Be prepared for interview possibilities at the fair. Serious recruiters may hold interviews on the spot.
- If the fair is scheduled to end at 4:00, don't show up at 3:00. Recruiters notoriously leave early.
- Never ask questions regarding salary, vacations, etc. The recruiter may often talk about those issues (they're trying to market to you too) but too many "me-focused" questions will leave a bad impression.
- Keep an upbeat attitude. People want to hire pleasant people whom they would enjoy working with and who will represent the organization well.

## After The Fair

- **To ensure success you *must follow up* with the organizations you are interested in.** Use the business cards and literature you collected and send a targeted cover letter and another copy of your resume to the recruiter. Indicate you met them at the fair and are very interested in the organization. Mention specific reasons why you believe you'd be an asset to the organization. Recruiters may meet 100+ candidates at a fair. Stand out by showing your true interest. Don't wait until the recruiter contacts you – many purposely do not contact candidates. If you want the job, contact them first. Trust us, this works.
- If you liked the organization, but not the jobs they were promoting at the fair, it is still worth a try to follow up to get further contacts within the organization for the type of position you want.
- If the organization indicated they are not hiring right now, but will be in the future, a follow-up letter is appropriate. Since hiring statuses can change quickly, you want to reiterate your interest and keep your candidacy active should they decide to begin hiring. They'll be impressed and will be more likely to remember you when it is time to hire.

For specific questions or assistance regarding Career Fairs, talk with one of our staff members.

## References for Jobs, Internships

A professional reference is a current or past professor, supervisor, co-worker or other contact willing to recommend you as a candidate for a position. References can be any individuals who have managed, worked alongside, or taught you. It is important to choose references carefully because their opinions and the information they share can make a significant difference in a hiring or admissions decision.

Employers check references when they are close to making an offer or are trying to narrow their decision to a few strong candidates. Most employers actually check your references, but not all of them will. Some might use a formal reference check process and others might simply call your previous employer (typically asking for your permission first.) Regardless, you'll want to create a one-page reference sheet. Only rarely will an employer ask that references write a letter for a job/internship search.

### ***Choosing References***

Line up at least 5 references who know you well – that can speak about your quality of work, level of experience, capacity for success, etc. Personal references are usually unnecessary. Do not utilize family or personal friends as professional references.

**Teacher candidates must use their supervising teacher, principal, and others who have observed them actually teaching or coaching** and may need personal references as well.

Line up your references *before* you start your search. When approaching potential references, ask: “Will you act as a *positive* reference for me?” If they hesitate at all, do not utilize that person. If they agree, give them a current copy of your resume and let them know the types of positions you’re applying for. Keep them up to date as you apply and let them know in advance when they will be contacted (if the prospective employer tells you). It is your responsibility to provide them with job descriptions if needed.

## ***Preparing a Reference Sheet***

Your reference sheet should mirror your resume and cover letter - same font and heading. Be sure your name and contact information is included. Indicate each reference’s name, title, complete contact information (including email) your relationship to that person, and the best time to contact. **Follow employer instructions explicitly -- if the employer asks for 3 references, do not include 5.** Make the reference sheet look pleasing to the eye (centered, spaced well). Do not send your reference sheet when applying unless asked to. Take your reference sheet to your interview in case an employer requests it. Do not insist that they take a copy.

## **Salary Negotiation**

New college graduates are normally not in a position to negotiate salary, but on occasion, students do get an opportunity to negotiate. In addition to the information provided here, you are encouraged to talk with Career Services before you begin negotiations, since this process can be tricky to manage. Negotiating your salary and benefits package is similar to negotiating the price of a new car. Everything is negotiable. One party has the power, but the other party may have done their homework and the resulting knowledge shifts the power base. The goal is to try to make both parties happy with the deal, ensuring a successful transition to your new career.

### ***When Is It Appropriate To Negotiate?***

Entry-level employees usually have very little negotiation leverage and should negotiate only with extreme caution. For others, the short answer is most of the time. However, economic factors, employer factors, interviewer situation and your personal qualifications carry a lot of weight. The best possible negotiation situation for a candidate:

- The economy is excellent and industry demand is very high
- The employer is very busy and profitable and desperately needs employees
- The hiring manager needs to fill the position ASAP and has a strong budget
- The candidate is uniquely qualified with a great depth of experience

All other not-so-perfect situations can negatively affect the negotiation process.

### ***What Is Negotiable?***

Base salary, benefits, bonus, stock options, performance review dates, work hours/schedule, vacation time, and even job responsibilities, are all negotiable. This, of course, depends on the type of employer and the specific job. In general, some industries (education, government, etc.) are historically less amenable to negotiation than private employers. Unionized employers may not negotiate at all.

### ***To Win, You Must Prepare In Advance***

You must do your homework prior to negotiation (prior to the job search is even better).

Determine the minimum salary and pay package you’ll accept. Calculate your budget.

Know what you’re worth; research the norm industry pay level considering your desired position and your level of work experience. Use Salary.com ([www.salary.com](http://www.salary.com)) or GlassDoor ([www.glassdoor.com](http://www.glassdoor.com)) to research pay levels in particular industries, job positions and geographic areas.

Research your desired employer and determine the strengths and weaknesses in their negotiating position, taking the factors mentioned above into account.

Determine your **desired salary range**. Choose a range, not an exact figure.

Factor the cost of benefits into the salary package.

## ***The Negotiation Process***

- Never try to negotiate salary until you have received a firm offer.
- He who speaks first loses. Do not be the first to broach the salary subject.
- Determine if you're ready to walk away from the offer should you not get the salary you want.
- Do not try to negotiate immediately when you receive the offer. Ask for time to consider the offer, and then respond by opening the negotiations.
- Above all, be friendly, open, and enthusiastic about the offer. Discuss specific reasons why you believe you are worth more than they have offered, and back those up with your research. It is your job to convince.
- **Be realistic and do not overvalue your worth.** Your offer may be rescinded if you offend the employer or come across as unrealistic.
- If the employer is firm on base salary, you may be able to negotiate benefits and other terms. This can include signing bonus, annual bonus, vacation, health benefits, 401K, etc. All may be negotiable.
- Try not to take it all too personally. You are negotiating job and salary, not your worth as a human being.
- Don't push too hard or drag out the process too long. If the employer makes a good faith effort to work with you, either accept or permanently reject the first or second counteroffer.
- You must get the final offer in writing for it to be legally binding.
- Do not postpone your job search. Continue your job search until you get the written offer.

## **Accepting or Declining an Offer**

We often talk with students who are in the process of weighing offers from employers or graduate schools and are confused by the logistics and ethics of this process. Here is how to manage the process:

- When given a verbal offer, request the offer in writing, asking the organization or school to clearly state the terms of the offer (position title, salary, benefits, and start date). Once you receive the offer in writing, you'll need to accept, or decline/delay the offer, if you have other offers pending. When you are presented with an offer, the employer or graduate school should give you a reasonable time to make your decision. **This is a very important decision and you should not be pressured to make your decision within an unreasonable time (within 24 hours for instance).** If you need additional time to consider an offer, notify the person who extended you the offer as soon as possible. Ask for a reasonable amount of time to consider the offer. In general, a few days to a week is considered reasonable. Many graduate schools and employers may give you an even longer time to decide, but others will want a rather quick decision. Within the given time frame, you'll need to make a firm yes or no decision. It is appropriate to inform other sites you've applied with that you do have an offer pending. Doing so gives them the opportunity to speed up their process with you or make final decisions with regards to your candidacy. Do not try to play one offer off of another with regard to salary. You are likely to create ill will and you can potentially lose both offers. Never stop applying for other opportunities until you have a firm offer in writing. Do not wait for a decision from an employer or school to continue your search.

- **To ACCEPT** an offer you can do so verbally, but then you will need to follow up and accept the position in writing. **Once you have accepted an offer in writing, your search is over. Stop applying and withdraw your application(s) from all the places you have applied.**

- **To DECLINE** an offer, do so verbally and then follow up in writing with a thank you note for the offer. You never want to burn any bridges that might be of help in the future.

As always, you are encouraged to stop by Career Services and discuss your individual situation

## **Graduate School Preparation and Admittance**

### ***Graduate and Business School Programs***

Increasingly, graduate studies are required for entry into career fields, or to climb the occupational ladder. Over 80% of Wabash graduates eventually go to graduate school. The decision to go to graduate school is very important as it often costs a great deal of money, requires intensive study, and may require that you postpone or take a leave from your employment. Before you make the decision to go to graduate school you need to determine the answer to a number of questions:

- Is graduate school necessary for your goal?
- Should you go directly to graduate school after Wabash or gain some work experience first?
- Should you go full-time or part-time?
- How will you pay for it?

## Is Graduate School Necessary?

If you want to teach, research, or administrate at the college level, the answer is yes. If you plan to go into a business career, the answer may be yes, or it may be no. If you want to teach children, the answer is yes, but not right away. You need to carefully research your field of interest to determine the exact answer. You should also talk with alumni, Career Services, faculty, and industry professionals to determine whether or not graduate school is required or desired for your career goal. The absolute worst thing you can do is go to graduate school just because you do not know what you want to do career-wise. Unlike a liberal arts undergraduate program, you will be concentrating in-depth solely on one subject. If that subject is not your passion, you will not last long in the program. Graduate school is not the place for you to ‘find yourself’ – you should be doing that at Wabash or through other experiences.

## When Should You Go?

Graduate schools are often very choosy regarding admissions, especially with regard to experience. Ranked MBA programs in particular rarely admit candidates unless they have significant work experience, 2 years at least. In general, the higher the graduate program or school is ranked, the more selective they are regarding experience required for admission. You also need to determine if you’re ready. You have been in school for 16 years – do you need some time to work and/or make more focused career decisions? If you feel you are ready, and you have the necessary grades and academic experience, you may want to go ahead and complete the program immediately post-Wabash.

## Full-Time Vs. Part-Time

Full-time programs obviously take less time to complete, but you have the opportunity for assistantships and possibly more in-depth reflection and study. Not all graduate programs have a part-time option, but many do. Some may allow part-time work at some stages of the program but still will require a full-time component. Doctoral programs often require that at least some part of the study be full-time. Part-time programs are becoming more popular, but do take longer to complete and may limit you more to working with part-time or adjunct professors.

## Who Is Paying?

The answer to this question may also influence the part-time vs. full-time decision. Graduate schools offer loans, assistantships, and some scholarships and fellowships. Pell Grants are not available for graduate studies, but you can defer your undergraduate loans if you take at least 6 credit hours each semester. Many employers offer tuition assistance or reimbursement, especially for part-time programs, and some even offer a sabbatical to complete a graduate program. In general, you should probably not be paying the cost for a doctoral program. Many schools will not admit you to such programs unless you are qualified for and receive an assistantship.

## Choosing A School and Program

Once you decide to go, the most important decision is choosing the right school and specific program. A common mistake is to choose the school first, and then try to make the program fit your needs. You need to determine the type of program necessary to achieve your goal, and then you can determine which schools offer that program. Research the faculty, their specific research areas and focus, the location, cost, types of financial aid/assistantships, program outcomes (what type of work do graduates get?), program length and requirements, and admissions requirements and procedures. Wabash faculty can be very helpful in this process, as can alumni and Career Services. There are also a number of web-based resources to help you identify programs; the best and most comprehensive is [www.petersons.com](http://www.petersons.com). Once you determine these factors, narrow the number of schools down to a manageable list, and then schedule a visit to the programs of your choice. Be sure to visit at a time when school is in session. You’ll want to talk with current students and faculty, sit in on a class, meet with admissions representatives, check out the location, amenities and cost of living, and visit the university library. It is also a good idea to meet with the Career Services office. Just like a job search, you want to make sure the fit is right. Programs vary greatly, as does the faculty and their research/specialty. For

instance, if you want to study and work in abnormal psychology, you want to make sure the school and faculty specialize in that specific area. If they do not, then do not go to that school, regardless of the other factors (location, etc.). You also want to make sure that you like the faculty and students and share their passion for the subject matter.

## Joint Degree Programs

Many schools offer joint programs that combine studies in two disciplines. Example: MA French/MPH (Master of Arts in French and Master of Public Health). Joint programs may take longer to complete, and the application requirements may be even more stringent, but you will graduate with degrees in both academic disciplines. You may sometimes be able to add (apply for and pursue) the joint degree even after you've been admitted to your initial graduate program. It is of utmost importance that you know specifically how you plan to utilize a joint degree before you enter the program. Your career path following a joint degree program can either be extremely specialized in the disciplines or can be broader, utilizing both fields.

## Online Options

You may be tempted to seek out online graduate school programs as well. At this point, we would recommend only utilizing online options that are connected with a well-regarded college, which have a physical site and require some on-campus study as part of the program. There are a number of online programs which are not well-regarded, and study through those programs will not help you with regard to employment. Questions on specific programs should be referred to faculty and Career Services.

Specific graduate and professional fields require different types of programs, application procedures and timing. Business School – Normally can be completed in 2 years if you go full-time. As a liberal arts grad, you will probably need to take basic business courses to be fully admitted. Most programs offer those courses as a part of the overall program – some offer pre-admission short courses as well. An MBA or related business program may be required for advancement in the business world but is not required for entry-level positions. It is expected that you will have at *minimum* two years of professional work experience before you apply, for ranked colleges. You will be expected to contribute to class directly from your work experience. Many employers will offer tuition reimbursement. Do not apply to such an MBA that is nationally ranked directly from undergraduate school. The exceptions are International MBA Programs and other specialty MBA's that are specifically for liberal arts graduates who have just completed college.

Specialized programs (Masters and Doctorate) Examples; Psychology, History, Music Theory, etc... Length of programs varies. The timing for applying and matriculating depends on your overall goal, the academic discipline and your level of personal preparation/focus. If you are prepared and focused, you can apply and attend immediately post-Wabash. If you're not, you may want to get some work experience under your belt first. Graduate programs can be extremely specialized or more general. The key, before applying, is to determine that this is the specific discipline you want to work in career-wise.

## The Importance of Having a “Plan B”

Probably the most common mistake students considering graduate school make is not having a Plan B (and C, D, etc...). Many students start their graduate school search focused on one particular type of program, geographic location, etc., and change their mind once they start researching and applying, having realized that their original graduate school goal is (a) no longer of interest, or (b) unrealistic considering their grades, preparation, goal, etc. We see students do this each year, who decide to either apply to different types of graduate programs, decide to postpone graduate school, or decide to enter the job market instead. They have often missed many valuable opportunities by the time they make this decision. Therefore, it is extremely important to have a Plan B. We strongly encourage you to look at a number of different options as you go through this process. Your research plays a vital role in making sure you have these options, and are ready to refocus your search if you need to. If your Plan B is going into the job market, it is vital that you determine the 'generally accepted' norms as far as job search timing for your different industries/career fields of interest. For example, if you want to work in a corporate role, management consulting, or high finance, your search should be in full gear by late August in your senior year, and completed by early December. If you want to work in the arts industry however, positions are often posted more on a "just-in-time" basis throughout the year. Knowing the expectations and timing required in other possible career fields of interest in advance will save you significant heartache, and increase your chances of success in many ways.

## ***The Application Process and Best Practices***

### **Testing**

For the majority of graduate and professional programs, pre-admissions testing is required. For specialized programs, it is usually the GRE. For Business School the generally accepted test is the GMAT. It is recommended that you take these tests early in your senior year; late junior year if at all possible. For all tests, re-takes are possible, but most schools count *both* scores if you do, so DO NOT take such a test 'for practice' in a score-that-counts setting. Before you begin testing, determine how your chosen schools treat the re-test situation. Test preparation books and programs are offered extensively. It is extremely important to prepare before taking the actual test.

GRE – required for specialized programs. The GRE is a computer-based timed test which measures verbal, analytical and quantitative skills. In addition, some graduate programs will require you to also take a specific GRE subject test. The GRE is offered multiple times throughout the year at locations throughout the U.S. and abroad. Go to [www.ets.org](http://www.ets.org) for details. Schools will utilize your GRE scores in different ways. For example, some programs may give more weight to your verbal and quantitative scores than analytical scores. Check with the program's admissions office for specifics. If you plan to take the GRE, stop by our office for personal assistance and tips.

GMAT – required for most, but not all, business schools. Some schools, primarily those with part-time programs, substitute significant work experience for the test. Ranked business schools will always require the GMAT. The test is primarily quantitative and verbal. Career Services offers practice GMAT tests each year, plus you have access to practice tests and materials at [www.gmac.org](http://www.gmac.org).

### **Other Admissions Factors**

In addition to testing, your undergraduate grades will be a factor, as will your package of application materials. Schools have widely varying grade requirements, but high grades (3.5 or better) certainly increase your chances for admission. You'll also need a personal statement (also called statement of purpose), essay(s), resume, reference letters, an application, and possibly an interview. Your candidacy will be judged on all these factors, so your materials must be prepared professionally and thoughtfully.

Your application and personal statement will make a huge impact on admissions decisions, especially if you are a borderline candidate with regard to your grades and test scores. Your admissions essays should be well-planned, written perfectly, and be interesting and creative. Depending on the size of the program, admissions counselors may read literally hundreds of essays, and you can bore them to tears with a canned essay. See [www.gradschooltips.com](http://www.gradschooltips.com) and [www.petersons.com](http://www.petersons.com) for good examples. Many application forms will be online – whether online or paper-based, be sure to answer each question completely and honestly. The reader will make assumptions about you (detail-oriented? thorough?) based on your application 'presentation'. Make sure those assumptions are positive. You will normally need a resume as well. To get started on a resume, see our Resume Guide in this packet

### **The Admissions Process**

It is important to note that you will actually need to be admitted twice – once to the overall graduate school, and once to your specific program of study. It is not unheard of to be admitted to the school but not the program. The requirements for admission to the actual graduate program are often more specific and rigorous than the requirements to be admitted to the overall graduate school. Depending on the program, conditional admission may be possible – if admitted conditionally you will then need to complete a set number of hours in the program with a specific GPA to be fully admitted. If you are interested in working in a teaching or research assistantship, an early application to both the graduate school and the program is a must, and you will need to fully admittance to both to be eligible for an assistantship. Most graduate programs seek diversity in their classes. Your level of work experience, undergraduate degree program, geographic location, and undergraduate institution may all be factors in admissions decisions.

### **Undergraduate Academic Record**

Graduate school can be intense. There is a great deal of reading, research, writing, discussion, and reflection (it is a lot like Wabash actually). Admissions officers want to make sure that you can excel in the classroom. In addition to your grades, the reputation of your undergraduate institution and the intensity of your undergraduate class work may be factor. Wabash generally is a plus for you with regard to those factors in this region of the country, but since we are a small school, it may behoove you to 'sell' Wabash in

your personal statement. In your application materials, emphasize your academic preparation and rigor and the fact that you must complete comprehensive exams to graduate. In particular, emphasize that Wabash courses require you to read original source materials, write extensively, conduct research with professors, and participate actively in small classroom discussions.

## References

You will normally need 3-5 references with each application. **You must start early in college to cultivate relationships with referees by, for instance, attending office hours and doing well in classes. This cannot wait until the last minute.** References may include professors, work supervisors, and sometimes even personal references. The application materials will usually specify the requirements. Make sure to choose your references carefully and ask in advance if the writer will act as a *positive* reference for you. These reference letters may be ‘closed’, meaning that you will have no access to what the letter writer says. Be sure to provide your references with a copy of your resume, a copy of your application, and any other supporting materials they may like. Schedule a meeting with each reference to talk with them concerning your interests, goals, and qualifications. The best reference letters are those that are personalized, highlighting actual examples of your successes, not cookie-cutter type references. Be respectful and give the reference writer plenty of notice – it may take them weeks to actually write the letter.

## Law School Preparation and Admittance

Law school is required for those seeking to practice law, and is excellent preparation for careers in politics, business and government. However, **you should only go to law school if you sincerely believe you want to practice law or if you believe it will help you in your career goal.** Law School is normally a 3 year commitment, if you go full-time, although a few schools are now starting to move to a 2 year format. Law schools are ranked nationally and this information is readily available. Your chances of admission vary based on the factors detailed below. Regarding overall admissions decisions, law schools are concerned with two major areas – their national ranking, and your ability to eventually pass the bar, should you choose to practice law.

### *The Application Process and Best Practices*

Law school admissions are extremely competitive, and your chances of getting into a school rest heavily on your GPA and your LSAT scores. It is normally acceptable to apply to and attend law school directly upon graduation from an undergraduate program; however, an increasing number of top law schools are showing preference in admissions to prospective students who have work or post-undergraduate experience. Northwestern University, for example, now requires candidates to have actual work experience. As many Wabash alumni will tell you – if you are not 100% sure you want to go to law school, don’t go right away. Wait a year or two after Wabash, and then apply. Law admissions committees are experts at figuring out if you truly want to go to law school or if you are applying because you feel you have nothing better to do. Like most graduate programs, law schools seek diversity in their classes. Your race, gender, level of work experience, undergraduate degree program, geographic location, and undergraduate institution may all be factors in admissions decisions. The more quantifiable admissions decisions are usually based on the following:

- Undergraduate academic record
- LSAT test scores
- Admissions essays, Application materials, Resume
- References
- Employment and criminal history

### Undergraduate Academic Record

Law school is intense. There is a great deal of reading, research, writing, discussion, and reflection. Law schools want to make sure that you can (1) excel in the classroom, and (2) contribute positively to their national ranking. A 3.5 or better undergraduate GPA is a big plus for admission. You need not have a particular degree or major – all disciplines are acceptable. However, the reputation of your undergraduate institution and the intensity of your coursework may be factor. Wabash generally is a plus for you with regard to those factors. Emphasize your academic preparation at Wabash in your application materials. In particular, emphasize that Wabash courses require you to read original source materials, write extensively, and participate in small classroom discussions.

## LSAT Test Scores

The LSAT is required for admission to almost every law school, and is offered 4 times a year. **It is in no way an easy test.** The September, December and February tests are held at Wabash. The June test is not, but you can take it in Lafayette, Indianapolis, or any number of sites nationwide. **Never take the LSAT without first preparing for the test – poor scores will haunt you.** Most schools, if you decide to take the LAST more than once, will average your scores. You will need to check with the specific admissions office at you school(s) of choice before you decide if you'd like to retake the test. Scores can be as high as 180 and most schools admit students from a range of scores, however, the higher your score, the better chance you have for admission. There are a number of different books and prep courses available, as well as sample tests at the LSAT website, [www.lsac.org](http://www.lsac.org). If you have prepared for it, you are encouraged to take the exam in June, after your junior year. Take it by September at the latest. Studies have shown that scores tend to be higher for those test dates, and you can also then begin finalizing your application materials earlier. Law schools like early applications and your chances for admission may be increased if you apply early-decision.

## Admissions Essays, Application Materials, Resume

To apply to all law schools, you'll need to go to [www.lsac.org](http://www.lsac.org) and register for LSDAS, the Law School Data Assembly Service. **You are required to register with the LSDAS service, which requires a fee.** For those students with a financial hardship, there is a fee waiver program detailed on the website. The LSDAS service allows you to manage your application materials online. Your actual application and essay will make a huge impact on admissions decisions, especially if you are a borderline candidate with regard to your grades and LSAT. Your admissions essays should be well-planned, written perfectly, and be interesting and creative. Admissions counselors read literally hundreds of essays, and you can bore them to tears with "I want to be a lawyer because I love the legal TV show ...." See [www.gradschooltips.com](http://www.gradschooltips.com) for good examples as well. Your application should be filled out completely and neatly and your answers must be completely honest. The reader will make assumptions about you based on your application 'presentation'. Make sure those assumptions are positive. You will need a resume as well. To get started on a resume, see our Resume Guide in this booklet and have yours critiqued by Career Services.

## References

You will normally need 3-5 written references with each application. References may include professors, work supervisors, and sometimes even personal references. The application materials will usually specify the requirements. Make sure to choose your references carefully and ask in advance if the writer will act as a **positive** reference for you. These reference letters may be 'closed', meaning that you will have no access to what the letter writer says. Be sure to provide your references with a copy of your resume, a copy of your application, and any other supporting materials they may like. Schedule a meeting with each reference to talk with them concerning your interests, goals, and qualifications. The best reference letters are those that are personalized, highlighting actual examples of your successes, not cookie-cutter type references. **Be respectful and give the reference writer plenty of notice – it may take them weeks to actually write the letter.**

## Clean Employment and Criminal Record

To be admitted to law school, you must be eligible to pass the bar. The American Bar Association has strict rules regarding criminal records and is also concerned about your employment history. You will be asked on your law school application if you have any misdemeanors or felonies. Be completely honest and leave nothing out (regardless of what your lawyer says). If you have one minor infraction, you may be fine. More than one misdemeanor (that is not explainable) and any felonies will keep you out of law school, but it is better to address this situation before you are admitted, since you won't be able to pass the bar anyway. Note that when you apply to take the bar, you will be asked the same questions as you were on your application for admission to the law school you attend. If the answers are not exactly the same you will be subject to a lengthy investigation and may not be allowed to take the bar exam.

## The Admittance Process

Your application will be complete and reviewed once all of the above materials are submitted to the law school. Once your application is submitted, one of three things will happen. You will be admitted, you will be wait-listed, or you will be denied. Many law schools have early-decision programs (you must apply by December), giving preference to those who apply and commit early, and we would encourage to apply this way, especially if you are convinced it is the right school for you and your LSAT/grades are not amazing. Regardless of whether you plan to participate in early-decision, you should apply early (in the fall of your senior year).



Most students apply to more than one law school, using a combination of reach schools (I sure wish I could get in...), realistic schools (I meet the qualifications just fine and will probably be admitted...), and safety schools (if all else fails...). **Do not wait until spring of your senior year to apply, as your chances of acceptance diminish.** Admission slots are already being filled by that point and again, this is a very competitive process. If you are admitted via early-decision, you will need to decide very quickly whether to accept. If you are accepted via regular admission, you will usually have more time to make a decision. If you are wait-listed, you will probably not know of the final decision until late spring or early summer, or even as late as just prior to the start of class in the fall. You can lessen the chances of that situation by applying early.

## Choosing the Right Law School

Your choice of school depends a great deal on what you would like to do with your law degree. If you plan to practice law with a national firm, you should choose a nationally recognized, highly-ranked law school. If you plan to practice with a regional, well-regarded firm, a nationally recognized school may give you the edge you need as well. If you would prefer a local firm, it may be desirable to choose a law school in the same state as the firm. You may have a particular emphasis area of the law you would like to practice, such as sports law or criminal law. If so, choose a school which offers a niche or a well-respected program in that discipline. As an example, let's say you want to practice in international patent law in Washington DC. You should choose a law school that offers that specialty, and you may want to consider a DC-area law school as well. You will tend to make more local contacts, have greater access to summer or internship positions in DC, and you will be readily available for local networking and recruiting events. If you don't necessarily want to practice law, but are using the degree as preparation for other career fields, your choices may depend more on the overall reputation of the school, location, and potentially, the type of joint degree programs they offer. Most law schools offer joint JD/MBA's and/or other specialized programs, combining law studies with business, healthcare, public policy, the sciences, and a host of other disciplines. These joint programs usually take longer to complete, and the application requirements may be even more stringent, but you will graduate with degrees in both academic disciplines. It is of utmost importance that you know specifically how you plan to utilize a joint degree before you enter that specific program.

## The Importance of Having a "Plan B"

Probably the most common mistake students considering law school make is not having a Plan B (and C, D, etc...). Many students start their law school search focused on only this option, and change their mind once they start researching and applying, having realized that their original goal of attending law school is (a) no longer of interest, or (b) unrealistic considering their grades, preparation, etc. We see a number of students do this each year, who decide to either apply to different types of graduate programs, decide to postpone law school, or decide to enter the job market instead. They have often missed many valuable opportunities by the time they make this decision. Therefore, it is extremely important to have a Plan B. We strongly encourage you to look at a number of different options as you go through this process. Your research plays a vital role in making sure you have these options, and are ready to refocus your search if you need to. If your Plan B is going into the job market, it is vital that you determine the 'generally accepted' norms as far as job search timing are for your different industries/career fields of interest. For example, if you decide you want to work in a corporate role, management consulting, or high finance, your search needs to be in full gear by late August in your senior year, and completed by early December. If you want to work in the arts industry however, positions are often posted more on a "just-in-time" basis throughout the year. Knowing the expectations and timing required in other career fields of interest in advance will save you significant heartache, and increase your chances of success in many ways.

## Medical School Preparation and Admittance

Making the decision to become a physician involves maturity, commitment, and perseverance. Individuals accepted into medical school demonstrate a calling to serve others and an aptitude in the medical sciences. Nationally, about 40% of applicants are accepted in medical school each year (Wabash's acceptance rate is significantly higher). The application process itself is quite involved and begins nearly two years before matriculation. SO... what are some issues you should be focusing on now, as an undergraduate, if you are considering medical school?

- Do I have what it takes to gain admission and succeed at medical school?
- What co-curricular and extra-curricular activities should I become involved in?
- What does the application process consist of, and when should I start?
- Why do I want to be a doctor?
- What if I don't get in?

## ***Do I Have What It Takes To Gain Admission And Succeed At Medical School?***

Admission to medical school is competitive, and medical schools have become very good at selecting students who will succeed. A competitive candidate for medical school needs to demonstrate excellence in 4 areas:

- Academic performance (minimum undergraduate GPA of 3.5)
- Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) performance (minimum combined score in the upper 20s, with no one individual score below an 8)
- Community involvement and a commitment to service
- Professional exposure

In short, medical schools want their students to be well-rounded. With this in mind, it is important that undergraduates begin thinking about their college career early on in the process. This doesn't mean you have to decide every class you'll need to take over your 4 years of study in your first semester. In fact, you don't even need to declare a major until the end of your sophomore year. But you need to commit to performing your best when you arrive at college. Certainly medical schools have accepted students who have started out slow in college (and they definitely acknowledge those students who underachieve early on, but later demonstrate academic excellence), but it is challenging to bring your cumulative GPA up above a 3.5 when your first several semesters hover around a 3.0.

In the same way, use your undergraduate years, including summers, to become involved in your school and greater community (see below), along with growing your understanding of the medical profession (again, see below). Don't expect to cram activities and internships in at the end of your college career. Not only will this be obvious to the admissions committees of medical schools, but it might keep you from developing your 'humanitarian' side.

## ***What Co-Curricular And Extra-Curricular Activities Should I Become Involved In?***

When you're not studying you should carefully consider how you're spending your time. We want our future doctors to understand the world around them, right? Medical schools like to see candidates who are involved in their communities:

- Wabash community (sports, newspaper, clubs of interest, research, etc.)
- Crawfordsville community (volunteering, working with local schools, Red Cross, health clinics, etc.)
- home town (service projects and volunteerism)
- world/global community (service abroad, study abroad)

Consider your interests when choosing how you want to spend your "free" time. Doing something you're personally invested in will demonstrate maturity and commitment, and it will make you a more appealing candidate. If you're lucky, your volunteerism and service will somehow involve medicine and healthcare, or research. If not, that's alright too, but **be sure that you obtain some professional exposure along the way**. At the very least, you must have some shadowing opportunities with physicians or other healthcare providers. Internships or service projects in a medical setting are even better, as they allow you to develop a deeper understanding of what it means to be a doctor and help those in need of medical care. Having exposure to the practice of medicine is an unwritten prerequisite to getting in to most medical schools, and if you need assistance in finding professionals to work with, Jill Rogers can get you started.

## ***What Does The Application Process Consist Of And When Should I Start?***

First, the **short answer**..... Applying to allopathic (MD) and osteopathic (DO) medical schools begins at the end of your junior year (for those hoping to matriculate the summer after graduation). To learn more about these two professions visit [www.aamc.org](http://www.aamc.org) (MD) and [www.aacom.org](http://www.aacom.org) (DO). In both cases, a centralized application service exists so that you only apply one time, regardless of how many medical or osteopathic schools you choose to apply to. For MDs, the application is called AMCAS, for DOs it is called AACOMAS.

The application has multiple sections where you:

- list your grades and request transcripts from all colleges you've attended
- list your undergraduate activities, organizations, awards, services, internships, shadowing
- compose a personal statement

Additionally, the Wabash Pre-Health Committee writes a Letter of Recommendation for you. This letter is generated after you solicit a minimum of 5 faculty members who can evaluate your academic performance. Make sure to get to know your faculty. Professors generally appreciate working with students and getting to know you in and out of class. The better they understand your character and strengths, the more meaningful their evaluation letter will be. Once your letter is complete, we will send it directly to the

medical schools you choose to apply to (you will never see the letter). The process of soliciting faculty input begins in the spring of your junior year. Finally, you must take the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT) before your application to medical school is considered complete. **We recommend you take the MCAT the second semester of your junior year.** The MCAT has 4 sections: Physical Sciences; Biological Sciences; Verbal Reasoning; and a Writing Sample. Your pre-health advisor will discuss with you different options for preparation along the way.

Once your AMCAS/AACOMAS application is complete, your letter of recommendation submitted, and your MCATs taken, you will be asked to submit “secondary” applications to many of the medical schools you applied to. Qualified applicants will be invited for an interview in the fall of your senior year. Almost all medical schools have rolling admissions, meaning you will be informed of your acceptance anytime following your interview up until August after your senior year.

Now, for the **long answer**...in order to (1) fulfill the prerequisites for medical school, (2) be prepared to take the MCATs, and (3) have the extracurricular activities to be competitive for medical school, you really need to start working to become qualified early on.

**Most medical schools will require the following coursework:**

- 1 Year Biology
- 1 Year Inorganic Chemistry
- 1 Year Organic Chemistry
- 1 Year Physics
- 1 or 2 Semesters of Calculus
- 1 or 2 Semesters English Composition

(See the Health Professions Handbook for the Wabash courses that meet these requirements. Also, each medical school determines their own prerequisites, so you will need to visit the websites of medical schools you are interested in to determine exactly what you will need to take as an undergraduate).

WHEN should you take these courses? This is where the careful planning comes into the picture. In order to sit for the MCATs, you should have taken (or be taking) all of the above courses (except for Composition). We recommend you take your MCATs in the spring of your junior year, so plan accordingly. Finally, you will be filling out your application for medical school the summer between your junior and senior years. Therefore, you will need to have enough service and professional experiences to demonstrate your commitment to medicine. Internships, research experiences, service projects, and the like will all be part of your application, so you will need to invest your time into community and professional activities early on.

WHERE should you apply? During the 2006-2007 application cycles, candidates submitted applications to an average of 12 schools. Where you should apply depends on many factors and Jill Rogers can discuss these with you when the time comes. There is one hard and fast rule, though: **you should absolutely apply to your state school!** And if your state of residence is not Indiana, you should also consider applying to the University of Indiana School of Medicine (as a Wabash student, you will have “Indiana ties,” which gives you a slight edge).

## ***Why Do You Want To Be A Doctor (Or Other Healthcare Professional)?***

This is really the most difficult question of all, and it’s one that you need to be prepared to answer. For one, you will undoubtedly be asked this when you interview. And you will certainly need to speak to your motivation in your personal statement on the application. Even more, who wants to put their health in the hands of somebody who is ambivalent about their professional calling? Becoming a physician is one of the biggest decisions you will make in your life so we want you to be thoughtful and mature in the process.

Here are some questions to ponder to help you answer this question:

- What have I done to serve people over the past few years and how has it affected me?
- Who have I observed or worked with whom I admire and why?
- What have been the most gratifying experiences of my college career, and my life?
- In my academic and co-curricular achievements, what personal qualities have helped me to be successful?
- Who do I want to be in 10 years?

It’s clear, after reflecting on these questions, why medical schools ask you to be well-rounded. The experiences, activities, achievements and professional exposure you should have when you apply will help grow and define your character and clarify your vocational calling.

## ***And Now the Question We Know You're Thinking:***

### **What If I Don't Get In?**

Of course there will be those of you disappointed. And there are *many* opinions and options out there (some better than others). But before getting to those, this is probably a good time for some honest self-examination:

- Do you feel you have the academic ability and curiosity to be a competitive candidate?
  - If you performed in the mediocre range on your MCATs, struggled to get Bs and Cs in your science classes and feel lucky to graduate with a 3.2, you may want to think about other career options.
  - On the other hand, if you were a slow starter and didn't invest your mind or your time fully on medical school, but your MCATs were competitive and you're ready to give it your all, consider reapplying after strengthening your application (see below).
- What is your "plan B?" Everyone should have one, and now is the time to look at your other career choice(s). If you still feel that medical school is where you want to be, consider re-applying after a year (see below). If not, look at this experience as a time for reflection and move ahead in other directions. Career Services is a great place to start.

### **How Do You Go About Re-Applying The Next Year?**

Generally speaking, medical schools don't like to see the same application twice, so if you don't get in the first time around, you'll need to do something after graduation that enhances your candidacy. Consider meeting with your pre-health advisor as well as a member of a medical school admissions committee. You'll want to have a frank conversation about the weak points of your application.

- The most standard route to take is entering a "*Post Bacc Program.*" These are one or two year curricula designed to enhance your GPA (or help you meet the prerequisites of med schools). You will take rigorous science courses, allowing you to demonstrate to medical school admission committees your ability to handle challenging coursework. There are many post-bacc programs out there, so be wary! It is important to consult with Jill and do your homework before applying to these programs.
- If your MCAT was the weak link, you should consider additional preparation and a re-take.
- Students who lack experience and volunteerism may choose to spend a year doing research, working in a medical setting, or performing service work.

If you are competitive and have the desire to be a doctor, don't give up. Medical schools like to see perseverance and commitment, and reapplying certainly demonstrates this!

If you have questions about pursuing medical school or other health professions, please contact Jill Rogers, the Wabash Pre-Health Professions advisor, at [Rogersji@wabash.edu](mailto:Rogersji@wabash.edu).

## **A Wabash Man's Guide to Professional Expectations**

### *Schroeder Center for Career Development*

**A Wabash Man** follows the Gentleman's Rule at all times when interacting with employers, presenters, graduate schools and alumni. He is mindful that he is representing Wabash College.

**A Wabash Man** RSVP's for events and programs when an RSVP is requested. He then shows up for the event, on time, ready to actively participate.

**A Wabash Man** dresses appropriately for all events involving employers, alumni and graduate schools, both on and off campus.

**A Wabash Man** treats employers, alumni, and graduate school representatives with respect. He does not swear, is not overconfident or aggressive, and would never participate in an event or interview under the influence of the previous evening's indiscretions.

**A Wabash Man** does not misrepresent his accomplishments, work history or academic record in the search process.

**A Wabash Man**, when corresponding with an employer, graduate school, or alumnus by email, treats the email as a business letter, using professional language and proper grammar, capitalization, spelling, salutation and closing.

**A Wabash Man** ensures that his online presence is professional when in the midst of a job, internship or graduate school search.

**A Wabash Man** uses a professional voice mail message when in the search process.

**A Wabash Man** puts as much effort into his postgraduate success as he does his academics and campus involvement.

**A Wabash Man** takes personal responsibility for his level of success and for his failures.

**A Wabash Man** conducts proper research throughout the search process. He only applies for opportunities in which he is truly interested, and he is well-prepared with organizational knowledge.

**A Wabash Man** does not schedule an interview with an employer 'for practice'. He instead utilizes the practice opportunities provided by the College.

**A Wabash Man** follows up properly. He writes thank-you notes for interviews and networking opportunities. He sends these notes promptly by mail or email, taking into account the preferences of the receiver.

**A Wabash Man** does not 'play' employers and graduate schools against each other with regard to compensation, benefits and other offer factors. Once he accepts, he follows through with his commitment since that is the ethically proper course of action. He declines an offer gracefully.

**A Wabash Man** keeps track of deadlines and generally accepted practices. He asks questions when he does not know. He takes advantages of opportunities. He creates his own luck.

## **How to Dress For Events, Interviews, and Info Sessions**

**Professional:** Suit, or dress pants and sports coat, complementary shirt, tie. Dress shoes (shined), colored socks.

**Business Casual:** Button up collared shirt with white t-shirt underneath, khaki-type pants (any color), colored socks and good shoes. No tennis shoes, polo-style shirts or jeans.

**Casual:** Polo-style casual shirt, tucked in, jeans are OK. Good tennis shoes are OK. Clothes should be clean and in good condition. Keep in mind that you are representing Wabash.

**Dress Comfortably:** For very casual events or those that involve no outside visitors. Wear whatever you like.