

Meet the Professionals: How to Get Your First Job
A Summary of the Session

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The following is a summary of the presentations given by Cynthia Fletcher, Iowa State Extension Service, Lonnie Carver, Louisiana Power and Light, Robert Weagley, University of Missouri, Pam Norum, University of Missouri, and Yan Wang, The World Bank.

JOBS IN EXTENSION

- I. What is Cooperative Extension?
 - A. Land Grant Universities have 3 functions
 - 1. course and curriculum
 - 2. research
 - 3. extension/outreach
 - B. The Family and Consumer Economics Extension Component of Extension
 - 1. Bachelor Degree--county level
 - 2. Master's Degree--regional offices
 - 3. Ph.D. State/University level
- II. Preparation for a Career in Extension
 - A. Moving toward requiring masters degree at all levels
 - B. Coursework
 - 1. basic economics
 - 2. finance
 - 3. family economics
 - 4. consumer studies
 - 5. feel for research
 - a. both analysis and interpretation
 - b. thesis option for masters
 - 6. written and oral skills
 - a. journalism courses
 - b. need to work with varied audiences
 - c. interpersonal communication skills
 - d. teaching skills
 - C. Previous experience is important
 - 1. summer employment
 - 2. Practicum/internship
 - D. Job Seeking
 - 1. Available at Land Grant Institutions
 - a. centralized personnel office
 - b. job openings circulated throughout the system
 - c. local college placement office
 - d. NETWORK WITH SOMEONE IN SYSTEM
 - 2. Jobs are available year round

BUSINESS SECTOR--PUBLIC UTILITIES

- I. Working in the business sector
 - A. Background working with people
 - B. Experience in the consumer area important
 - C. May have to start at the bottom and move up

- D. Good to combine knowledge of consumer and producer side of the market
 - 1. design and develop information brochures
 - 2. writing and presentation skills imp't.
 - 3. be active in a professional organization
- E. Business may pay for higher degree--can start with bachelor's degree
- F. Be flexible when taking your first job
 - 1. consumer affairs
 - 2. public relations
 - 3. consumer liaison
 - 4. marketing
 - 5. consumer outreach
- G. Benefits of working in business
 - 1. salary
 - 2. Don't forget to check out the benefits plan
- H. Long hours are a drawback
- I. Resumes
 - 1. don't put down a specific job
 - 2. Include a cover letter
 - 3. KEEP CALLING

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

- I. Necessary skills
 - A. Ability to communicate
 - B. self confidence
 - C. Ability to accept responsibility
 - 1. should show on resume
 - 2. Do more than just coursework
 - a. involvement in organizations
 - b. student activities
 - c. part time work
 - D. flexibility
- II. Planning
 - A. Where do you want to spend 75,000 hours of your life?
 - 1. List what you have done--good and bad
 - a. better at research or teaching?
 - b. look at positions splits
 - c. match skills to position
 - 2. Consider broadening scope with choice of minors
 - a. don't put all eggs in one basket
 - B. Start job search process at least 12 months before graduation--before that with networking
 - 1. Meet appropriate professionals
 - 2. Go to professional meetings
 - 3. Identify a mentor for support
 - C. Invest in the Job Process--clothing and resume (but don't spend too much on resume)

III. The Job Interview

- A. Record information about job during interview

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1. be an active participant
 2. Take some control over the process
- B. Rejection--don't sell yourself short
1. ask why you didn't get the job

ACADEMICS--THE DUAL CAREER PROBLEM

- I. If you are looking for a job with another person, you might have to look for one outside your major area.
- A. Strategies
1. Decide on one person getting a job and let them look.
 2. Both look--whoever gets the best job takes it and the other keeps looking
 3. Have both persons take the best job--may have to live apart.
 4. Some combination of the above
- B. The key factor is FLEXIBILITY
1. Cross training--choose minors carefully. Which will make you flexible?

- II. Job markets
- A. Economics--Allied Social Science Meetings in December
- B. Marketing AMA Educator's Conference--Aug.
- C. Agricultural Economics--AGEA--August
- D. Human Development--NCFR
- E. Merchandising/Retailing AFPTC October
- F. Consumer Issues--ACCI Spring

III. Marketing a Flexible Package

- A. Remember the 4 P's
1. Price
 2. Package
 3. Promotion
 4. Place
- What is your product? What do you have to offer? What makes your package different from all the others? Why should they hire you if you do not have a major in the area?
- B. Identify your general skills that are transferable to any job
1. critical thinking ability
 2. communication skills
 3. decision making
 4. leadership
 5. management and organization
 6. facility with numbers
- C. Identify specific skills
- D. Identify areas related to your major area

IV. Minors and Electives

- A. These play an important role
1. personal finance
 2. marketing
 3. Consumer policy
 4. nutrition
 5. retailing
 6. accounting
 - a. These are adaptable to consumer goods companies and major retailers

- V. Opportunities outside the classroom
- A. Organizations
1. Join the organizations most closely aligned with your major and minor
- B. Networking
1. Speakers in your department
 2. Professional organizations
 3. advisory board members
 - a. BE SURE TO INTERACT!!
 - b. These can:
 - 1/ increase field of knowledge
 - 2/ improve communication skills
 3. provide useful contacts

ACADEMICS--POST DOCTORAL OPPORTUNITIES

- I. Fellowships
- A. Broaden your field of interest--minors
- B. Try to have some publications before graduation
- C. Pros and Cons
1. gives time for research
 2. lose contact with support system
- D. Possibilities
1. Rockefeller fund
 2. Ford Foundation
 - #. World Bank
- E. Proposal is the key to any fellowship
1. Learn writing skills