We have been busy...

The year 2012 has been a productive year in the Office of Career Services. Here are just a few things that we accomplished:

**The 2012 Tiger Career Fair**: The 2012 Tiger Career Fair, which took place on Thursday, September 27th in the TSU Student Recreation Center, was a success with more than 600 students and 55 employers participating. The Tiger Career Fair is an annual event facilitated through the Office of Career Services under the leadership of Dr. Antoinette Roberson, Interim Executive Director of Career Services. Some companies in attendance were NASA, US Department of State, KHOU TV, Blue Cross Blue Shield and Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT).

**Blue Cross and Blue Shield Luncheon**: TSU’s Office of Career Services and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas have partnered to provide career opportunities for TSU students and alumni. Select TSU students, alumni, and Dr. Antoinette Roberson, were invited to a luncheon at the Downtown Grove Restaurant to meet with Mr. Milton Carroll, Chairman of the Board of Directors for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (not shown in photo) and Mr. Darren Rodgers, President of the Texas Division and Southwest Region for Blue Cross Blue Shield. Mr. Carroll and Mr. Rodgers conversed with students about the origins, brand, and future aspirations of Blue Cross Blue Shield. The students, Ms. Managerie Winston, Mr. Kevin Vernon Jr., and Mr. Mohamed Arafat were offered fulltime positions.

**FBI University Hire Program**: The FBI interviewed 17 students, in the Office of Career Services Office, for their University Hire Program. Iren Bethancourt, an Accounting Graduate of Jesse H. Jones School of Business, was offered a fulltime position. The FBI University Hire Program is in conjunction with the Office of Law Enforcement/Federal Air Marshal Service.

**FBI University Program**: FBI University Program Blue Cross and Blue Shield Program (not shown in photo). Mr. Mohamed Arafat was offered a fulltime position. The students, Ms. Managerie Winston, Mr. Kevin Vernon Jr., and Mr. Mohamed Arafat were offered fulltime positions.

**Office of Law Enforcement/Federal Air Marshal Service**: Deputy Director Allison, from the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) Office of Law Enforcement/Federal Air Marshal Service, spoke to TSU Students Monday, March 26, 2012 from 12pm – 1pm in the PAB room 114, about careers with (TSA) and the Federal Air Marshal Service.

**Bridging the Career Gap Forum**: The Office of Career Services hosted the Bridging the Career Gap Forum on March 30, 2012 from 12pm – 2pm in the New Science Center Atrium. Executive level professionals from the Astros, City of Houston, and Metro were in attendance.

**National Diversity Council STEM College Tour**: TSU’s Office of Career Services, in conjunction with the College of Science and Technology, hosted the Second Annual Texas Diversity Council STEM College Tour. Executive panelists from leading STEM companies converse with TSU students on leadership and development and enhancing student’s STEM opportunities. More than 100 students participated in this event, which took place in the New Science Center.

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Did You Know?

- Your dress will speak for you 90% in an interview.
- Accessories and hair style make up 30-50% of the total dress.
- Research shows that women who wear make-up earn 25% more than their counterparts who don’t because make-up enhances your key communication portals, your mouth and eyes.
- Employers plan to hire 9.5% more graduates from the class of 2012 than they did from the class of 2011.
- Engineering and accounting firms are among top employers of the class of 2012 college graduates.
- 65 to 70% of jobs are gained through personal referrals or networking connections.
- Having a mentor can also be another great way to network.
- Job seekers who obtain professional recognition through certification or licensure, a master’s degree, proficiency in accounting and auditing computer software, or specialized expertise will have an advantage in the job market.

Mercadi Crawford, the first in her family to graduate from high school and the first to go to college, admits she knew little about the intricacies of financial aid when she enrolled at Texas Southern University. However, Crawford, who was raised in a single-parent household, knew that getting to graduation day would require loans.

She could have been on the road to emerging from school saddled with debt. Instead, Crawford received some lessons in financial literacy from TSU’s financial aid department and kept her student loan down to a little more than $10,000.

‘I had to learn that you have to pay that money back,” said Crawford, now 24 and pursuing a master’s in public administration at TSU. ‘A lot of students borrow more than they actually need. It’s not free money.’

TSU is among a growing number of colleges and universities offering financial literacy courses. At the University of Texas-Austin, the non-credit course topics in ‘Bevonomics’ include ‘Budgeting and Building Credit as a College Student’ and ‘Managing Your Student Loan.’ At Rice University, the online ‘Cash Course’ offers lessons titled ‘Budgeting and Financial Planning’ and ‘Repaying Student Loans.’

The courses, increasingly included in freshmen orientation, are part of the schools’ response to the ballooning student debt crisis. Other schools, such as TSU and the University of Houston, are hiring default prevention coordinators tasked with getting delinquent graduates up to speed on payments.

$1 trillion debt

Student loan debt has passed the $1 trillion mark, more than total credit card debt. In 2010, two-thirds of college seniors graduated with loans and owed an average of $25,256, an increase of 5 percent from the previous year, according to the Project on Student Debt.

At the same time, the unemployment rate for 2010 college graduates reached 9.1 percent, its highest level in recent years. The economic downturn has left many graduates out of work and in danger of defaulting on their loans.

On July 1, interest rates on subsidized Stafford loans were set to double, reaching 6.8 percent, unless Congress breaks a partisan stalemate.

For colleges and universities, growing student debt has been cause for alarm and action.

‘Loans are necessary to get an education, but we must tell students to borrow wisely,’ said Delisa Falks, Executive Director of scholarships and financial aid at Texas A&M University.

At A&M, where about 48 percent of students take loans and the average debt is $22,000, students receive a financial aid tutorial during entrance conferences, as well as in mandatory exit counseling, Falks said.

Before students accept loans, they must complete an online calculator that estimates future monthly payments. In addition, A&M has started tracking students in danger of becoming delinquent on loans and contacting them about repayment options, Falks said.

At UT-Austin, officials are incorporating the ‘Bevonomics’ course, which began about six years ago, into Freshman Orientation.

‘It’s going to be a requirement for every student,’ said Jamie Brown, Communications Coordinator and Financial Aid Counselor at UT-Austin. About 44 percent of its students take out loans, and student debt averages $24,582.

Financing a lifestyle

A multitude of loans are available, each with different requirements and interest rates. Repayment options are just as varied and just as confusing. Many students borrow more than is necessary, financial aid counselors say.

Too many students are borrowing to finance a lifestyle. I’ve seen it over and over again,” said Anne Walker, Director of Student Financial services at Rice University. ‘If you live like a professional while a student, you’ll live like a student while a professional.’

Rice tries to limit students to borrowing no more than $10,000 over four years. Rice also promises to cover the gap between what a family can pay and the costs of attending the school, Walker said. In addition, for families with incomes under $80,000, the financial aid package does not include loans.

Although the average debt for Rice graduates relatively low at $12,000, financial literacy classes, such as those offered through ‘CashCourse,’ are still needed, said Walker.

‘Borrowing for college is a symptom of students not understanding their finances,’ Walker said. ‘Students often borrow too much because they don’t understand that it needs to be paid back. They don’t understand interest rates.’

UI starting program

At the University of Houston, officials are starting a financial literacy program in the fall, encouraging students to graduate in four years to keep costs down, and hiring a default prevention counselor, said Salvador Loria, Executive Director of Scholarships and Financial aid.

The default counselor would work with students before they accept financial aid packages, while they are in school, and after they graduate, Loria said.

‘We want students to explore all options before they take out loans,’ he added.
When you think of internships, most often you think of working excessive amounts of hours for no pay and oftentimes no more experience gained than you had when you first walked in the door. Yes, some employers do exploit gullible, wide-eyed college students who just want to work in their prospective fields of study. However, they are not the majority. Internships offer students practical experience in an atmosphere that holds less accountability than that of a full-time, 8am - 5pm employee. Additionally, students who participate in an internship increase their chances of being offered a full-time career opportunity after graduation. If students knew how critical internships were to their overall career success, they would be beating down the doors of companies. Right now is a historical time in our society with the "baby boomers" retiring and thereby relaxing positions in virtually every area of industry. We may never see this type of shift again. Now is the time to take advantage of this "career eclipse."

Students who truly want to succeed in this global economy should set their sights on industries such as health care, business (financial management), science & technology (engineering), law, and education. Since the top 25 fastest growing careers in the US are all pulled from these industries, career success is highly inevitable. The federal government is currently accepting internship applications. The highlight of working with the federal government is that not only are you developing a sustainable skill set, but you are paid upwards of $30,000 as an intern, working about 640 hours over the duration of the internship.

1. Meeting with your academic advisor to develop an academic plan and with your campus career counselor to develop a career plan.
2. Dedicate your freshman year to acclimating yourself to college life and getting your GPA to, at least, a 2.8 (required of most internships). Of course, if you want to set yourself apart from the average student, strive for a 3.0 or better.
3. During your freshman year, start researching areas of industries that may be a good fit for you, because that research will assist you in choosing your major while positioning you for an internship.
4. Interface with as many professional people as you can i.e. career services personnel, professors, department heads, recruiters, faculty, staff, employers who visit your campus even if they are not related to your field of study, etc.). The idea is to enhance your networking skills, broaden your career scope and develop a list of contacts. You never know who may place you in that dream job or internship.
5. Visit departments that represent the industry for which you are interested and pick their brains. You don’t want to leave anything to chance. After all you want this process to be as painless and effective as possible.
6. It is a good strategy to participate in an internship starting your sophomore year. This will give you three years of practical experience or training in your chosen field. By utilizing this strategy you place yourself in a “win-win” situation. You will have gained extensive operational knowledge while becoming an extremely valuable asset to the company. Who do you think the company is most likely to invite to come on board, the student with the business degree and no developed skills, or you? It’s a no brainer. Internships rock!

This article was published in HBCU Career Magazine 2012
1. How did the Career Services office aid you in your career journey?

First, I'd like to say that Career Services is perhaps the most under-utilized resource for Texas Southern University's students. Career Services served as an important tool in determining the efficacy of my resume as well as my approach to gaining employment. Dr. Roberson is an energetic, helpful, and proud representative of TSU who strives to connect students to available opportunities out there, and she was instrumental in my professional development.

2. What has this experience been like for you? What was the process?

The process can be daunting and it certainly isn't an assuring one. There are no guarantees out there, and it can be difficult to persevere through the rejections that are sure to come, but it is vital to do just that, persevere. For myself, I was recruited to several interviews with different corporations, and I was flown to an interview in another city, picked up in a limo, and had a wonderful interview, only to be told NO when I least expected it. I spent countless days and nights in pursuit, and after much hard work, I received an offer with Memorial Hermann in Houston. However, 3 weeks into my new position, I received an offer from BCBSTX, an offer that provided greater pay, benefits, as well as great opportunities for growth. I accepted the offer, and the rest was history.

3. How did you prepare for the interview with the Blue Cross Blue Shield?

Once you receive an interview, it's important to quickly recognize that, on paper, the company is impressed. Now, the challenge is to represent yourself, your experiences, and your drive to succeed to a set of individuals. What I did was simply to review my skills (highlight the best), discuss my job relevant experiences, come up with a question to ask the panel, and, last but not least, study the organization for which I was a prospect and became familiar with their history and accomplishments.

4. What are the benefits of working for this company?

BCBSTX offers great benefits, and they truly take care of their employees in terms of compensation, health benefits, retirement savings, and Paid Time Off. They believe in maintaining a work/life balance, all of which are positive factors that made my decision to accept the offer easier.

5. Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

This is definitely an interview question you should be prepared for. I always say that I, professionally, aim to grow into a leader and innovator, and continuously provide a positive impact to the organization with which I am associated. To do so, I am furthering my education with a Masters of Biomedical Informatics (with a focus on Cognitive Informatics) from the University of Texas, with hopes of completing a PhD in Public Health afterwards. Secondly, I am focused on honing my craft and building relationships.

6. Have you had many personal challenges to face on this journey?

Without a doubt, if you don't face adversity, chances are you're not fighting hard enough for your dreams. I have had many obstacles, professionally and personally, throughout this process, but those are essential fuels to the fire. They are not deterrents. They are experiences that teach me and allow me to overcome obstacles.

7. What advice do you have for other students who are pursuing career opportunities with Fortune 500 companies?

Represent yourself professionally at all times, and build a professional personal network, as those relationships are key to your opportunities of advancement. I would advise current students to utilize Career Services, attend career fairs, work on your resume, and enjoy your education and professors, because in the real world, the expectation is to be punctual, available, reliable, and excellent.
On Wednesday, September 19, 2012 the Office of Career Services hosted a "Résumé and Cover Letter Boot Camp." The Boot Camp allowed students to interface with career professionals from various industries who provided the necessary tools for creating effective résumés and cover letters. More than 300 students participated in this 4-hour event. This event takes place each Fall and Spring semester. The next Résumé Boot Camp will take place on Wednesday, March 27, 2013 in the Student Center room 207 from 10am - 2pm.

The 4 year Action Plan

**Freshmen:**
- Identify interests, skills, personality, and values.
- Explore different career options related to your major.
- Work or volunteer part time to help define your career interests.
- Create a resume and cover letter.
- Join TigerConnect and upload your resume.
- Attend career fairs and other workshops.

**Sophomores:**
- Join organizations related to your major and career interests.
- Begin narrowing down career choices.
- Update resume and TigerConnect profile.
- Start searching for internships and co-ops.
- Attend career fairs and workshops.

**Juniors:**
- If graduate or professional school is required for career, start planning and applying for desired school.
- Come to the Career Center to have your resume and interviewing skills fine tuned.
- Continue your internship or co-op.
- Attend career fairs and workshops.

**Seniors:**
- Locate professionals willing to write references and letters of recommendation.
- Create a portfolio of resume, cover letter, transcripts, and recommendations.
- Identify full time job opportunities.
- Continue attending career fairs.

TSU Career Services has the major objective of assisting students and alumni with all their employment related needs. Employers such as Blue Cross Blue Shield, BP and NASA interview graduating seniors, from all majors, on campus every Fall and Spring semester. You must be active in the Tiger Connect system to participate in campus recruitment activities. Additionally, each fall semester Career Services presents the Tiger Career Fair and is a sponsor of the Texas Job Fair each spring.

Students can increase their chances of securing that perfect career by taking advantage of the following Career Services workshops:

- Resume Writing
- Networking
- Interview Techniques
- Dressing for Success
- Career Assessments
- Business Etiquette

The Career Center also facilitates mock interviews to help candidates prepare for employment and graduate/professional school interviews.

**Upcoming Events**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resume Boot Camp</td>
<td>Wednesday, March 27, 2013</td>
<td>Sterling Student Life Center Room 207</td>
<td>10am - 2pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Texas Job Fair</td>
<td>Tuesday, April 2, 2013</td>
<td>HP&amp;E Arena</td>
<td>10am - 3pm</td>
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TSU CAREER SERVICES

The Career Center is located in the Thornton M. Fairchild building, Suite 152. Our phone number is 713-313-7541. e-mail address is placementservices@tsu.edu. Visit our website www.tsu.edu/careercenter.