In a world that is wrought with problems, challenges, obstacles and difficulties it is comforting to know that the correct career choice can add to your happiness and satisfaction despite the chaos that surrounds you. Pursuing a career that captures your interest, ignites your passion, compliments your personality, plays to your strengths, and pairs you with like-minded people will add to your happiness and overall well-being. Like a virus, work infiltrates our life; it invades our mind, affects our physical being, and energizes or suppresses our spirit. How it plays out in your life depends largely on your career decision.

The Office of Career & Internship Services can help you sort through the myriad of career choices. We encourage you to make an appointment and meet with a career counselor to discuss your options. Take a career assessment, visit career websites, meet with employer mentors, and complete an internship to help you better decide on your career. Remember 40% of your adult waking hours are spend at work; you better enjoy what it is you decide to do. Stop by the Office of Career & Internship Services and let us help you discover a career that will bring you happiness, fulfillment, and joy.

Problem Solving & Analytical Skills
People who can think critically are valued by employers. Read the article and see what you can do to improve your critical thinking skills. P2

Featured Employer
Read the article and learn what it takes to find employment at a financial institution. This issue features the Hudson Valley Federal Credit Union. P3

Career Advice
Career Services’ staff provides tips for career success. P3

Events
Read about activities offered during the spring semester P4

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Ethan states “What I find most beneficial about my internship is the opportunity to learn to practically and professionally apply what I learned in college. My months at the Chamber have been a sort of continuing education.”

Over the years, the Chamber has worked closely with SUNY Orange, placing current students and recent graduates in internships. Student majors include Business, IT, Accounting and Engineering. Carol Smith VP for Government at the Chamber says that the internship experience is a positive one for both the Chamber and interns and thinks having interns “is the greatest thing in the world.” Smith points out the fact that interns are invited to all Chamber events which allows them networking opportunities and the ability to make business contacts.

Students placed at Orange County Chamber of Commerce have been provided opportunities for unpaid internships for college credit, paid internships, summer internships and even paid internships for college credit. No matter the compensation, students have described the experience as invaluable.

The connection between the classroom setting and the world of work is strengthened while providing the student with experience and connections to which they would not have otherwise had access.

Internships typically run during the school semesters (mid-January through early May and late-August through late-November). If you are interested in an internship, please contact Jeanine Borko, Internship Placement Specialist at jeanine.borko@sunyorange.edu.

Problem-Solving & Analytical Skills

Among the top competencies employers seek in college graduates, according to the 2013 NACE employer survey, are the ability to think analytically and to solve problems. Seventy-five percent of all employers surveyed noted that they look for people who can help them solve problems and acknowledge that businesses fail in large part due to the absence of new ideas and solutions to existing problems.

Problem solving requires both analytical and creative skills. Analytical skills emphasize a logical and methodical approach and are often associated with engineering, information technology, finance and research. Creative skills on the other hand are associated with lateral thinking and creativity and are often found in fields such as advertising, marketing, media, as well as art and design. Both analytical and creative problem solvers are highly valued for their ability to generate new ideas. As employers face challenges from competitors and customers, the employee who can demonstrate how they contribute to overcoming these challenges will be sought after. Students are well advised to seek out opportunities which will allow them to practice their problem solving and analytical skills. Course work that offers an opportunity to engage in self-directed, project-based and applied learning allows students to demonstrate their ability to solve difficult problems and arrive at possible solutions. Think about the course work you have taken, be able to relate a project where you encountered a problem situation, and discuss how you solved it. The ability to communicate these skills to an employer becomes critical when looking for employment upon graduation. Seek out internships, join profession-related organizations or clubs, participate in intramural sports, and consider volunteer work all of which will offer opportunities to demonstrate your problem solving skills.

Chamber of Commerce internships offer networking opportunities

Ethan Weber is a wonderful example of an internship success story. Ethan’s story is the story the Office of Career & Internship Services would like to replicate for all students placed in internships.

After three months of fruitless job searching, Ethan spoke with Donald Green, Assistant Director of Career & Internship Services. Don was able to secure an internship interview for Ethan at the Orange County Chamber of Commerce and Ethan’s tenure at the Chamber began.

At the Chamber, Ethan assists in writing copy, works on social media and performs phone surveys. Over the past few months at the Chamber, Ethan has been afforded the opportunity to gain valuable work experience while networking with professionals, organizations and fellow interns. As a result of his Chamber internship, Ethan was hired for a second internship through Niki Jones Agency, a Port Jervis-based marketing firm and Chamber member.

Ethan states “What I find most beneficial about my internship is the opportunity to learn to practically and professionally apply what I learned in college. My months at the Chamber have been a sort of continuing education.”

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Hudson Valley Federal Credit Union (HVFCU) is a rarity in today’s world of financial services organizations. While they are one of the region’s larger employers – employing 870 individuals in four counties and operating 19 locations – they are driven to maintain the hometown touch. In fact providing first-rate personalized customer service is central to their mission.

As a financial cooperative, the customers of the credit union are all members of HVFCU. Lisa Morris, Director of Marketing says, “Member service is our primary focus. Whether they have a simple deposit or a complex financial issue, members can rely on the fact that each of us in the organization wants to ensure their satisfaction. We pride ourselves that for over 10 years, 95% or more of our members have said they’re highly satisfied or satisfied with our service.”

Thus it’s no surprise that when they need to make a hire, they look for friendly, pleasant and professional-looking people. Ms. Morris continues: “We look for people who like people. Only someone like that is going to be able to do the job the way it needs to be done.” They want people who will be customer-driven and professional, but who are also great communicators, capable of explaining the sometimes complex financial services in an easy-to-understand manner.

HVFCU hires for positions from entry level to executive level. In addition to the “front end” customer service type positions, they also hire a significant number of support staff positions, including jobs in IT, accounting, marketing, human resources and other jobs related to back-office support.

Their job openings are always posted on their web site. They also post on area employment sites such as Hudson Valley Help Wanted, and sometimes utilize national sites such as Career Builder and LinkedIn. They also post on local college job boards, including the SUNY Orange job bank.

All applications are submitted electronically, through the web site—hvfcu.org. Sean Brix, Manager of Talent Acquisition and Diversity, says that their process is extremely user friendly, but if anyone needs help, “they can call our HR department, and someone there will be happy to provide support and walk them through the process.”

From there, members of the in-house team of recruiters screen the applications and try to narrow the field down to several applicants who are phone screened. Usually a maximum of three are selected to interview in person for a position.

Mr. Brix offers a number of tips for prospective applicants. He says that HVFCU believes in what is called Behavioral Interviewing, which is situation-based interviewing focused on real world situations. “Our questions are often along the lines of, ‘What happened? What did you do, and what was the outcome?’” he says. The initial phone interview generally runs between 30 and 45 minutes. He says that while the following may seem obvious, remember that it’s important to be there on time and to dress and handle yourself in a professional manner.

He and Ms. Morris also remind applicants to take care of your “digital brand.” the information that you post and share on social media. Ms. Morris says, “My rule of thumb is: ‘Don’t put anything on Facebook or any other form of social media that you wouldn’t want your mother to see.’” They also stress the importance of sending a brief thank-you note. “Handwritten is always nice, but remember that email is speedier,” said Mr. Brix. “It can help keep you at the top of someone’s mind.”

Anyone interested in applying at HVFCU is welcome to do so by going to their web site, or by contacting us in the Career Services Office at SUNY Orange at 341-4444.
Everyone makes mistakes and an employer looks for an employee who will admit their errors and view them as opportunities to learn. It is much more admirable to own up to the mistake. Then, explain your plan for correcting it and avoiding a reoccurrence in the future. It will demonstrate your maturity and your credibility will be higher if you’re honest about your errors and strive to correct them.