

## ON JOB SEARCHING

By Kerry McQuiston

Graduation hits you like a brick wall. A cleverly masked feeling of accomplishment, relief and maybe even elation comes over you. Then reality sets in, followed by panic, fear, and insecurity. A million questions start running through your mind. What am I going to do now? How do I finally become a contributing member of society? Does this mean my financial aid is going to stop? Wait...actually, it means that I've got to start *paying back* my loans!

When one decides to major in a liberal arts program such as political science or international studies, one entertains vague notions of what one would like to do with this degree and where one might like to end up. The question soon becomes "how do I get there?" While searching for that ever-elusive perfect job, you might feel like you will never get there. But with the aid of the Career Center, your professors, and the Internet a job hunt methodology can be established. The first bit of advice I can give you is start looking for and applying for jobs a semester before you graduate. This way you will not find yourself with too much time on your hands after graduation (I speak from experience!). The hiring process with the government can be exceptionally slow. I mean, the *entire process*, the processing of applications, the setting up interviews, the job offers and job start dates.

So now that you have a rough idea of *when* to start, let's continue with how to begin. Before you begin sending out your resumes, you have to find the job openings. This is not an easy task. During one day of searching you could find twenty or thirty openings, but maybe you should not send resumes out to all of those prospective employers. People get stuck on the idea that you must send out a great quantity of resumes a week. If you are looking for something specific, this is a waste of time. You have to ask yourself, "is it beneficial to send out twenty resumes?" Of those twenty there might be ten that you are not qualified for, five that you are over-qualified for, three you don't even want, and only two that might actually work. If you did this each week you would waste precious time and energy on eighteen useless resumes. Identify the opportunities that sound good to you and that you may qualify for, and put your energy into preparing resumes and cover letters that will prompt the prospective employer to give you a call. Take the job search very seriously, almost as if it were a job itself.

You also should take your resume by the career center and have someone critique it, and then pass it along to someone else to do the same thing. What amounts to one or two pages could be the most important pages of your life. Remember, your resume can always be revised, updated, and improved. You also might want to set up two or three different types of resumes. I found that what would be most important for government jobs often differed from jobs in the private industry. Keep the resume

simple and be more specific in your cover letter. Plenty of good books can be found on resumes, cover letters, and interviewing.

What I have listed below are some resources I used, and some bits of information that might ease the often painful, sometimes exciting, and more times than not, post-graduation, self-deflating job search. During your search, you will find additional resources, and if they are particularly useful, pass them on to someone you know or to the Department of Government at UWF to add to the list. We are all in this together. Good luck!

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**USOPM (USA Jobs):** <http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/>

This site is excellent for jobs that might fit the Political Science or International Studies major. Once at the site, look under the category "Social Science and Welfare." The jobs I found most relevant were Foreign Service officers or intelligence officers. Since all of these jobs are with the government, they will have GS ratings. For those with a B.A. degree and no experience, you will probably be categorized under GS-07. For those with an M.A. and no experience, you will have a GS-09 rating. If you do have experience then your rating increases. The jobs I found on this website were often between a GS-04 and a GS-13. To fill out an application package, you can use a resume, but follow directions closely and you will often have to include transcripts. You ALWAYS have to answer the Knowledge, Skills and Ability questions (KSA's). Do not leave any of these questions unanswered, even if you do not have experience in what they are looking for. Show how you have used that knowledge, skill or ability during school (research project, presentation, paper, thesis, etc.). If you do not have the experience, note that you have the capacity to perform the task or skill.

Other job sites that can be helpful include:

**Jobs Library:** <ftp://ftp.fedworld.gov/pub/jobs/jobs.htm>

This is a federal database listed by state from the Office of Personnel Management

**Federal Jobs Opportunity Board:** <ftp://ftp.fjob.mail.opm.gov>

**Department of Justice:** <http://www.usdoj.gov>

**Career Path:** <http://www.careerpath.com>

This site shows online want ads from seven major newspapers (Washington Post, Boston Globe, Chicago Tribune, NYT, San Jose Mercury News, Los Angeles Times, and the Florida Sun)

I also found the Washington Post to be particularly helpful: <http://www.washingtonpost.com>

**The International Trade Administration:** <http://www.ia.ITA.com.gov>

**Defense Intelligence Agency:** <http://www.dia.mil/pers/html/int.htm>

**CIA:** <http://www.cia.gov>

**The Federal Times:** <http://www.federaltimes.com>

**The Department of Defense:** <http://www.dtic.mil/defenselink>

Usually intelligence positions are for higher GS ratings

**Navy:** <http://www.navy.mil>

**Air Force** <http://www.af.mil>

**Army:** <http://www.army.mil>

**FBI:** <http://www.fbi.gov>

**DEA:** <http://www.usdoj.gov/dea>

**US Department of State:** <http://www.state.gov>

**NSA:** <http://www.nsa.gov:8080/>

**Department of Energy:** <http://www.doe.org>

**DOS Foreign Affairs Network:**<http://www.dosfan.lib.uic.edu>  
**U.S. Secret Service:**<http://www.ustreas.gov/treasury/bureaus/usss/usss.html>  
**U.S. Office of Personnel Management:**<http://www.usajobs.opm.gov>  
**USIS:** <http://www.usia.gov>  
**U.S. Agency for International Development:**<http://www.usaid.gov>

## **THE PRIVATE SECTOR**

This area can be pretty surprising. Mistakenly, I thought that I would only be qualified for government or not-for-profit organizations. While there is not necessarily a huge demand for social scientists in the private sector, they are still needed. There will be some companies that just want to know that you have quantitative and qualitative research abilities. Here is a list of a few companies that might work. Keep in mind, though, that I was looking for something in the national security area, so most of these companies would be considered tech, R&D, and computer companies. Just look at ANYTHING that does not specify engineering, computer science, or physics. Also consider yourself warned that by the end of looking at this list you will wish you had put your computer and math skills to use and majored in one of those technical or science degrees! But remember that the run-of-the-mill physicist or IT man or woman probably cannot discuss political theory or world politics. Don't forget that while you might not be making \$90 grand after graduation, you can carry on really good conversation at cocktail parties!

**America's Job Bank:** <http://www.ajb.dni.us/>

This is the number one-rated private employer job bank. Options to search by Job Code, Job Title, Military Occupational Code, etc.

**Lockheed Martin:** <http://www.lmco.com/careers/index.htm>

**GRC International Inc.** <http://www.grci.com/>

**Research Planning, Inc. (RPI):** <http://www.rpihq.com>

Special Operations and Defense Programs

**Systems Planning and Analysis, Inc.** <http://www.spa-inc.net>

**D. Appleton Company:**<http://www.dacom.com>

**Booz, Allen, & Hamilton, Inc.** <http://www.bah.com>

Don't let the name fool you into thinking this might just be another Pensacola law firm. There are tons of jobs on this site.

**BAE Systems:**<http://www.baesystems.com>

**BDM International, Inc.** <http://www.bdm.com>

**CAS, Inc.** <http://www.cas-inc.com>

**Dynamics Research Corporation** <http://www.drc.com>

**Intellibridge Corporation:** <http://www.intellibridge.com>

**GRC International Inc.:** <http://www.grci.com>

**Profiles Threat Counter Measures:**<http://www.profiles-threat.com/>

**SAIC:** <http://www.saic.com>

## **INSTITUTES-RESEARCH ORGANIZATIONS-NOT FOR PROFITS**

**RAND Corporation:** <http://www.rang.org>

A think-tank located in Santa Monica, California, but it has other locations throughout the US.

Created initially to examine national security issues, it has branched out to many domestic issues, such as welfare reform, health care, etc. They have a demand for researchers who have both qualitative and quantitative skills, but this would probably be something you might want to consider a little later in your career.

**The Heritage Foundation:**<http://www.heritage.org>

**The Brookings Institution:**<http://www.brookings.org>

**The Urban Institute:**<http://www.urban.org>

A non-partisan economic and social policy research organization.

**The Economy Information Service:**<http://newecon.org>

**Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments:**<http://www.csbaonline.org>

**Institute for Democracy in Eastern Europe:**<http://www.idea.org>

**Instituted for Defense Analysis:** <http://www.ida.org>

**International Crisis Group:**<http://www.crisisweb.org>

**US Institute of Peace:** <http://www.usip.org>

**Center on Policy Attitudes:**<http://www.policyattitudes.org>

**World Affairs Councils of America:**<http://www.worldaffairsCouncils.org>

**American Institutes for Research:**<http://www.air.org>

**Additional Sources:**

These additional websites, listed in the Aug. 20<sup>th</sup>, 2000 edition of the Pensacola News Journal might prove helpful.

[www.quintcareers.com](http://www.quintcareers.com) – This is a useful site for job hunting, cover letters, interviewing, and salary negotiation.

[www.jobinterview.net](http://www.jobinterview.net) – A data-base of interview questions.

[www.homefare.com/calc/salcalc.html](http://www.homefare.com/calc/salcalc.html)—This provides useful information for relocation.If this link does not work try [www2.homefare.com/calc/salcalc.html](http://www2.homefare.com/calc/salcalc.html).