



The Center for Career Services, located in the Schine Student Center, provides students with resources and support for a successful job search.

# JOB HUNT

The University's career services professionals offer guidance as members of the Class of 2009 enter one of the roughest employment climates in decades

By Amy Speach



Ian McIntosh '00, G'03 (left) and Matt Rosenheim '92 visit at SUcess in the City, an alumni networking event in Washington, D.C., in June.

SOMEDAY, WHEN DAVE SCHATZ '09 LOOKS BACK AT THE SUMMER following his graduation from Syracuse University, his memories probably won't be about the fact that the United States was coping with the worst recession since the 1930s and the highest jobless rate in more than 25 years. Instead, Schatz is likely to smile fondly, recalling his first exciting months of living in Los Angeles and working at the job of his dreams—already well on his way to a multifaceted career in web design, programming, and project management. Two days after receiving a bachelor's degree from the iSchool in May, Schatz accepted a job offer from Disney Interactive Media Group as an entry-level software engineer. In fact, thanks to the guidance and support of SU Career Services, he had his pick of attractive West Coast offers, even though a few months earlier he was concerned about his prospects of getting any job at all in light of the tough job market. "I was pretty nervous for a while," says Schatz, a magna cum laude graduate from northern New Jersey. "I had a good track record coming up to my senior year at SU, and thought that would be enough to get me a job. In a normal economy, it might have been. But as the job situation got worse, I started to break my stride a little bit. It seemed as if everything I worked for wasn't going to be enough to help me out. The assistance I got from Career Services gave me the confidence boost I needed. Now I feel extremely fortunate. I love my job and couldn't be more ecstatic. I'm the happiest guy!"

Katelyn Hancock '09 is upbeat in the down cycle as well. One of 4,100 recent college graduates selected by Teach for America from a national pool of 35,000 applicants in 2009, she headed this summer for a five-week training institute in Atlanta to prepare for a two-year commitment as a high school reading teacher in Indianapolis. "It's a big challenge, but very exciting," says Hancock, a public relations and public policy major who hopes to eventually work on education reform in Washington, D.C. She credits Career Services with supporting her throughout the highly competitive Teach for America application

## NETWORK

### FINDING SUccess IN THE CITY

ONE OF THE MOST VALUABLE RESOURCES available to SU graduates conducting a job search is the University's network of loyal, well-placed, and generous alumni. Opportunities to connect are plentiful, whether through the Mentor@SU program (see page 34), on-campus recruiting sessions and career fairs, internships, or online communities. Regional career-related activities hosted by alumni clubs provide additional networking opportunities in cities across the nation. SUcess in the City events, sponsored jointly by the Center for Career Services and the Office of Regional Advancement, are held in the summer in such locations as Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, allowing recent graduates to meet with and receive career advice and guidance from alumni working in those cities.

At a June SUcess in the City event hosted by the Paul Greenberg House in Washington, D.C., more than 200 young alumni mingled with 45 mentors representing professions in communications, government and law, business, and arts and education. "The goal was to bring our experienced alumni together with newer alums, building networks and offering tips about how to start out, improving their chances of getting a job in this economic situation," says Diana DellaVilla '06, engagement manager for D.C.-based alumni. Each spring and fall, Greenberg House also hosts a discussion series featuring alumni panels and offering participants opportunities to pose questions. For New York City area alumni, Lubin House serves as home base for career and networking activities that range from SUcess in the City to career seminars for drama majors to specialized networking events for Whitman, Newhouse, and College of Law alumni. "We're seeing record turnouts at these events," says Kelly Lux, alumni programs coordinator in the Center for Career Services. "More people than ever are looking for these valuable opportunities to network and make connections."

Kelly Lux (right), alumni programs coordinator for SU's Career Services, talks with Michael Zgoda '98 at SUccess in the City.

Speach: Job Hunt



## FOCUS

**"Right now, our line is in the windows of Bloomingdale's. ... It's an amazing job, and I'm very thankful."**

—Lindsay Katz '01,  
a fabric and color associate  
at Polo Ralph Lauren



## GUIDANCE FROM MENTORS

TO GET A HEAD START ON A STUNNING career in the fashion industry, there are a few things you should probably leave behind when you head for Manhattan: fantasies about fancy lunches and trendy wardrobes, hopes for a 9-to-5 job, and any tendency you have to take things personally. So advises Lindsay Katz '01, a fabric and color associate at Polo Ralph Lauren. "Everyone has this idea that working in fashion will be glamorous and exciting," Katz says. "And it is. But it can also be challenging and stressful. You're on your hands and knees, cutting fabric. You're running around like crazy, working 'til 10 some nights." Yet the rewards make it all worthwhile, says Katz, who studied textile and fashion design in the former College for Human Development. "Right now, our line is in the windows of Bloomingdale's," she says. "And that's exciting—to see the product you worked really hard for on display. So I love where I am and what I'm doing. It's an amazing job, and I'm very thankful."

As a participant in the Center for Career Services' Mentor@SU program, Katz shares her enthusiasm and expertise with students preparing to enter the workforce. "I had a wonderful experience at Syracuse, but there wasn't anyone to tell me exactly what to expect when I got into this industry," says Katz, who has been a mentor for eight years and works with one or two students a semester. "I give students an honest perspective and let them know what they can do to prepare themselves. I love talking to them and helping out as much as possible."

Founded on the belief that networking is the single most effective method of gathering career-related information, the Mentor@SU program links mentors with students and alumni who are interested in career exploration and

the job search process. "Research shows that 85 percent of jobs are gotten through knowing someone, through networking," says Kelly Lux, alumni programs coordinator in the Center for Career Services. "I firmly believe your alumni network is one of the most valuable connections you will have throughout your life."

The Mentor@SU program offers participants opportunities to learn about employment trends, job functions, salary expectations, effective job and internship searches, and the career paths of SU alumni, as well as a chance to gain professional contacts within specific industries. Mentors help students define career goals, understand growth potentials within industries, and become familiar with regions they are exploring. "It is very valuable to have young alumni who recently did a job search talk to current students about what works, what companies are like to work for as a young person, what the culture is like, and how to navigate their way in it," Lux says. "More experienced alumni offer a different perspective. They have a better idea of the big picture within an industry, a deeper institutional knowledge of the companies they work for, and more connections."

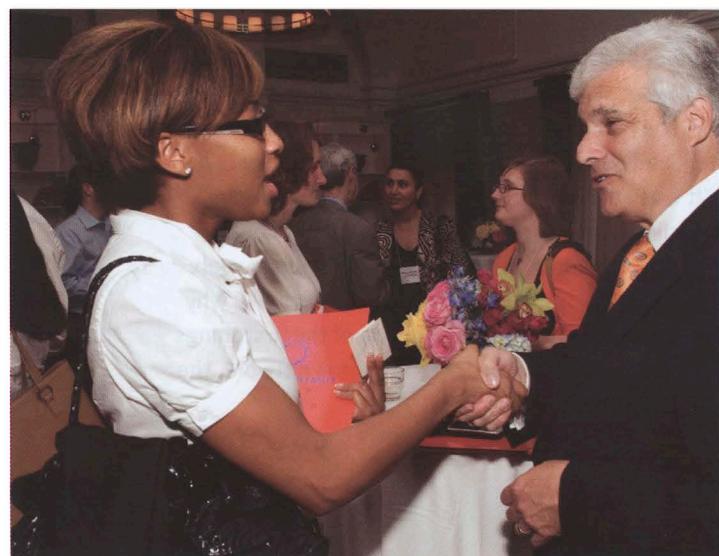
For students like Taryn Rosen '09, meeting one-on-one with an experienced and knowledgeable mentor is an invaluable part of the job search process. "There is no way you can have a bad experience with Mentor@SU, because the people who are involved in the program want to connect with you," says Rosen, who communicated with Katz and another mentor as part of her job search process. "The mentors I worked with were unbelievably helpful, and I recommend the program to anyone doing a job search. For me, it has yielded really positive results."

process, offering personal mentoring, resume and essay critiques, and mock interview opportunities. "They were extremely helpful, cheering me on at every step," Hancock says. "They will do anything they can to help us get jobs."

Even in today's extraordinarily rugged job market, such success stories come as no surprise to Michael Cahill, director of the Center for Career Services. Typically, about 78 percent of SU alumni find full-time employment within six months of graduating, and approximately 18 percent pursue graduate studies full time. He and his staff don't as yet have a comprehensive picture of how 2009 graduates are faring in finding employment, but Cahill believes students and alumni have reason to remain optimistic about fulfilling their career goals in the face of the current situation if they take advantage of the resources available through the University's Career Services Network. "It isn't so much that you do different things as a job seeker when economic times are tough," Cahill says. "But you need to do more of it and you need to do it better. Become a better job seeker, so that if only one job is available, you're the one to get it."

Still, members of the Class of 2009 had their work cut out for them when it came to finding a job, as evidenced by the decrease in company activity at the University. The number of employers participating in on-campus recruiting this spring dropped by 17 percent as compared with a year ago. There was also a fall-off in the number of employers attending career fairs on campus, although those numbers appear to be picking up again for this fall. "Our experience mirrors the national numbers being reported by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, which is the leading source of information about the college job market," says Chuck Reutlinger, associate director for information resources and services in the Center for Career Services. "We are in an interesting situation in that looking at the survey results from last year's graduates gives us no indication of what this year's results will be. We are really in a waiting game, as most people are, in terms of how much difference a few months will make as far as employee optimism and increased company activity."

One way the Center for Career Services helped students meet the employment challenges the tough job market presented was to offer



Candice Seabrooks '09 introduces herself to Ed Belkin '72, a mentor at the SUcess in the City alumni networking event in Washington, D.C.



Career counselor Neal Powless discusses internships with Connie Que '11.

## SUPPORT

### JUMP-STARTING A CAREER

THE CENTER FOR CAREER SERVICES OFFERS a range of services to assist SU undergraduate and graduate students in making the transition from classroom to career—as well as to Syracuse alumni throughout their work lives. Collaborating and coordinating with employers, alumni, parents, and college-based career service offices across campus, the center gives clients a competitive edge in the job and internship markets through a combination of guidance, information, events, and networking contacts. Services and resources include the following:

- Personalized career counseling and assessment
- Assistance with securing local and national internships, for credit and noncredit
- Job search coaching, including resume and cover letter reviews, practice interviews, and overall search tactics and resources
- Help with choosing majors and preparation for further education
- On- and off-campus recruitment opportunities and job fairs
- Alumni network connections through the Mentor@SU program
- Specialized career information panels and presentations
- OrangeLink online career management system
- Virtual career fair for international students
- An extensive web site at [careerservices.syr.edu](http://careerservices.syr.edu)
- *Explore and Experience* video series, covering such topics as dining etiquette, business correspondence, interviewing, and personal branding.


**PERSISTENCE**

## A NETWORK THAT WORKS

AT SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY, CAREER SERVICE IS ABOUT MORE THAN LANDING that first job: It is about providing graduates with the tools, resources, and support that will enhance their professional success and satisfaction throughout their lives. "We teach our constituents a four-step process for conducting a proactive job search," says Bridget Lichtinger, senior administrator of the Newhouse School's Career Development Center, which is part of SU's Career Services Network. "These steps—focus, target, research, and network—are skills students can draw on from the time they graduate until they are ready to retire." These time-tested strategies remain the bedrock of a successful job search, even during today's challenging economic climate. "I tell students they have to be patient and they have to be persistent," Lichtinger says. "I can't predict when they will get a job, but I promise that if they follow these strategies and take the active steps we advise them to take, the payoff will be huge."

Patience and persistence paid off in the best of ways for Maria Sinopoli '09, an advertising, marketing, and finance major who recently landed a position with Digitas, a leading advertising agency in Boston. She began networking through the Newhouse alumni database in March, when she scheduled a personal consultation with Lichtinger. "She told me I was doing everything right, and that it was just a matter of timing," says Sinopoli, who set her sights on Boston after falling in love

with the city while doing an internship there two summers ago. "At one point, to help calm my nerves, she held a folder up to her forehead, closed her eyes, and said, 'I predict that in a few weeks you will be back here with multiple job offers, freaking out about which one to choose.' And it turns out she was right!"

At Lichtinger's suggestion, Sinopoli scheduled a visit to Boston to gather information by arranging informal coffee dates with willing alumni. "One of the people I connected with was incredibly helpful," Sinopoli says. "She not only met me for coffee, she also set up chats with people in two departments I was interested in, and actually recommended a third department—strategy and analysis—that I had never heard of, and totally loved. It was perfect!"

When Sinopoli returned home, she received an e-mail request for a telephone interview. She returned to Boston a few days later for an in-person interview, and was offered the job days later. "It was absolutely the networking that made this possible," she says. "It sounds so cliché, because that's what the career center always tells you: 'Networking is so important.' And you're like, 'Yeah, yeah, yeah, whatever.' But of course, that's exactly how it worked out. That is essentially why I have this job, and why I'm exactly where I wanted to be. So one of the first things I did was contact the career center and ask how I can join the alumni network, the same network I got my job through, so I can give back that way."



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—Maria Sinopoli '09,  
an advertising, marketing,  
and finance major

"Job Search Strategies for a Tough Economy," a new workshop that took an honest look at the current job market, offered strategies for self-marketing and expanded networking, and emphasized the importance of remaining focused and optimistic and being flexible, patient, and resilient.

The Center for Career Services, in conjunction with the 12 college-based career offices, offers a comprehensive range of career exploration and job search support services to Syracuse students and alumni (see "Jump-Starting a Career," page 35). According to Cahill, the goal is not simply to help students and alumni find jobs, but to teach them the process of successful job hunting—a set of skills that will serve them throughout their lives. "We try to arm a person with everything needed to be successful," he says. "I hope every student who leaves here has the necessary tools to determine a good fit for themselves and engage in the process of building a well-rounded life—one filled with success, purpose, and meaning."

Placing strong emphasis on personal attention, the center engages students in the career development process from their earliest days at the University. "Our philosophy is that a career is really the story that we create for ourselves in our work lives," Cahill says. "With that as our foundation, we want to help individuals understand the stories they've written, and help them construct what they will write in the future." The center concentrates on helping students understand themselves so they can better determine and fulfill their academic and career goals. "If you are able to make those connections between what you love to do, what you are good at, your values, and the possibilities you've discovered out there in the job market, then the world is open to you," Cahill says. "Syracuse University graduates are extremely talented and make wonderful employees, and opportunities are out there for them. Our role is to encourage students and alumni to build bridges to those opportunities, and to give them the tools and skills they need to do so."



## UNIVERSITY CONNECTIONS

The University holds numerous networking events and other special gatherings for alumni around the country. If you're interested in being invited to events in your area, register with the SU Online Community at <https://www.alumniconnections.com/olc/pub/SYR/register.html>. Once you're registered, log in, click on "Member Services," and set your "E-mail Preferences" for the information you're interested in receiving.

**Top photo:** Cyre Quinones '09 reviews information at the SUccess in the City event. **Bottom photo:** At the Center for Career Services, Kelly Lux, alumni programs coordinator, and Nicholas Vanikiotis '11 (seated in the foreground) discuss career opportunities, while career counselor Neal Powless offers job-search advice to Agatha Lutoborski '09.

