

# Job centers 'a hidden gem' on SU campus

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Sitting outside the Career Development Center, Francesca Touma was approached by one of the office's counselors.

A Syracuse University alumnus from "Wife Swap," a popular reality television show, needed two production assistants as soon as possible. The counselor asked Touma if she would be interested. Touma, a senior television, radio and film major, had to decline because graduation is just around the corner.

According to Touma, who has worked at the CDC for the past year, this is a common occurrence, though it has not helped in her job hunt. Like many other seniors, Touma still doesn't have a definite plan for next year.

Alumni from across the country contact SU to fill internships and full-time jobs. Touma is waiting to hear back on a few positions, though she admits she could have taken more initiative.

"I haven't networked as much as I should," said Touma, though she works in the office that provides services to those specifically in her position.

Kelly Brown, assistant director of career development at the CDC, is an alumna of the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications. Brown used the networking services available to find her first job in Boston and then again when she wanted to return to SU.

"I was a student, I went through this, and I didn't need to go anywhere else," she said.

## CDC Services

The Newhouse Alumni Career Advisory Network (NACAN) is the networking tool offered through the CDC, Brown said. In order to use the service, students must first take a seminar to learn proper networking etiquette and how to use the server.

"Communications is its own world," she said.

NACAN is one of the only databases of more than 4,000 people in communications-specific jobs who are eager to help students in their job hunt. Once a student completes the seminar, he or she is able to access the names and contact information of alumni.

The CDC is just one branch of the campus-wide Career Services Network. It serves Newhouse students and alumni, providing them with the resources necessary to find internships and jobs. All offices within the Career Services Network offer students resume and cover letter critique, job and internship seminars, and the opportunity to network with alumni.

There are 14 branches within the network that tailor resources to students within most of the colleges. The CDC Services, located in the Schine Student Center, is the branch that services the entire campus.

They offer a service similar to NACAN called "Mentor @ SU." This program connects students with alumni who

have volunteered to act as career mentors. Like NACAN, it requires students to go through a brief orientation after which they are given the name and contact information of a potential mentor, said Susan Filkins, coordinator of alumni programs.

"It's all about relationship building," said Filkins, rather than job placement.

Brown, from the CDC, agreed, noting that students should be grateful for the invaluable advice and information that alumni are able to provide.

"People want to feel appreciated. Don't ever just send a resume and expect a job," said Brown, emphasizing that doing so will often put an end to communications with the alumnus.

"Once you establish a relationship, you'll be on their mind when something does open up," she said.

### Working with alumni

All alumni listed in the networks have volunteered their time and knowledge to students. Rob Yunich, a '98 Newhouse graduate and president of the National Small Business Association, has participated in the Mentor @ SU program for two years. The service was not available when he was a student, but he said he thinks it is a great opportunity for students.

"When I was at SU, basically you went into the career office, you looked at the job boards and you talked to your adviser, and tried to pick their brains and that was about it. A lot of it was trial by fire," Yunich said.

The new networking systems open up lines of communications between the job market and graduating seniors. Yunich decided to participate after reading about the program in an alumni magazine.

"Helping students figure out what they want to do is almost more important than helping them get a job," he said.

In his experience, students who leave school and get a job without knowing what they want to do are not happy. As a mentor, he helps students figure how to start on a career path they are interested in rather than what is easiest.

Though mentors may not offer a job, they can provide information that may lead in the right direction, as well as feedback, he said.

"It is always good to have a second, third, fourth, fifth opinion," Yunich said. "Students think they know everything, and they don't. I've been out of school for 10 years and I still don't."

### Getting a job

Yunich was a broadcast journalism major and said he realizes many students graduating in the field leave Newhouse without a job. Although this may be unsettling, hope is not lost, he said.

"TV stations, they do everything last minute and when there is an opening, they want to fill it as soon as possible," Yunich said. "They won't hold a job for you when you're in college."

Jay Bungay, a senior television, radio and film and art history major, was able to find a job as a digital production associate on the daytime soap opera "Guiding Light," against what Yunich said are tough odds.

Bungay began his relationship with the CDC during his sophomore year. He went to the office looking for summer internships and came across one with MTV. His boss at MTV was an SU alumnus and one of the recruiters.

"When she was at SU she lived in the same dorm as me, which is one of the reasons why we clicked," he said.

When he went in for an interview with Proctor & Gamble, the company that sponsors and produces "Guiding Light," it turned out that the interviewer was a '05 alumnus.

"I really lucked out big time," Bungay said.

According to information distributed by the CDC, 36 percent of Newhouse graduates found their jobs through personal contacts and networking. This includes seniors who may use personal connections rather than those fostered by SU.

Julian Murray, a senior political science and economics major, is interning at Schafer Cullen Capital Management in New York City this summer, a position he acquired through his father.

Murray, 25, needs to complete one more semester before he is able to graduate in spring 2008. Though he still has a year before he formally enters the job market, he has sent out his resume and applications to numerous employers. He has never used any of the offices within the Career Services Network.

"I don't need it, and I don't want to use it. What they offer isn't what I'm looking for," Murray said.

He was able to find resources that provide the same services made available by SU through the people that he knows.

"I had a grad student at Columbia look at my resume who works in the section that I'm looking into," said Murray. He also asked for feedback from some of his father's colleagues.

But not all students have the personal connections Murray has compiled. It is for this reason that offices like the CDC and the Center for Career Services have created networks of alumni for students to access. The system does not work if students do not use the resources available to them.

"The CDC is a hidden gem," Touma said. "Not a lot of people are aware of it, but it helps everyone."