Surviving a Tight Job Market – Advice for new Graduates

The economic news sounds grim: "Economy in Worst Fall Since '82,"
“Unemployment rate could go up to 10%”.

What should students do?

Dr. Teresa Gillespie, Dean of the School of Business and Management, offers this advice.

1. **First, don't panic.** Periods of economic growth and retreat come in cycles. Slow times are actually normal and they can also be healthy. Our economic system needs to purge the toxic debt and out of control spending. Economic cycles are a bit like breathing. We've been breathing in -- expanding at a frantic pace -- for years. Now our economy needs to exhale. This contraction may be steeper and longer than in previous cycles, but eventually it will bottom out and re-energizing times will come back.

2. **Use your time well.** School is probably the best place to be during slow economic times. Take classes that will help you develop marketable skills. Hone your writing, speaking and critical thinking abilities. Take a business course that will help you understand the market economy, such as Macroeconomics, which will be offered next fall. If you need help in managing your own finances and setting a realistic budget, take Personal Finance, also offered next fall. For some of you, this might be a good time to consider graduate school. The Northwest Graduate Enrollment office would be glad to help you consider this option.

3. **Find an internship, even if it's unpaid.** An internship is a valuable learning experience because you have an opportunity to apply your skills to a real life experience. Interns are more likely to get hired as they can demonstrate their value to an organization. An internship will also help you develop confidence and contacts so that you can land a job when the hiring starts.

4. **Develop and use your personal networks.** Target a field you'd like to work in. Conduct informational interviews. Volunteer. Ask about student rates to join professional associations. If you need help with these, talk to the counseling center or your academic advisor.

5. **Know that Age and time are on your side.** When the turnaround begins, most businesses will likely hire entry level managers at a lower salary than a more senior person. Those aging baby boomers will eventually retire. When that happens, businesses will be competing to hire the very best of an ever smaller pool of qualified applicants. Make sure you're in that top group.

6. **Pray and trust God to Guide You.** God brought you to Northwest for a purpose: to train you for effective service and leadership. He isn’t going to waste this time. He cares about your future. You can trust him to provide for your needs now and then lead you to a position of service and opportunity. This doesn’t mean that you’ll automatically find your dream career right away. But this is a great opportunity to deepen your faith. Eventually, we will all look back on this time with grateful hearts for God’s provision.

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