

**Dear Pam, Ryan and Ashley:**

We keep reading and hearing that organizations and businesses are interested in people with the creative thinking, communications and interpersonal skills that are the result of a liberal-arts education. How can we best sell the merits of our liberal education to potential employers who do not necessarily relate what we have studied to what we are capable of doing?  
~Class of 2010

**Dear Class of 2010:**

Given the increasing complexities of the workplace, the globalization of the economy and the dynamics of employee and customer relations, a liberal education provides a solid foundation from which to launch a career in a multitude of work settings. *Getting a foot in the door* is often the most challenging aspect in a liberal-arts career. Once inside an organization, *liberal-arts grads generally advance admirably* as they gain experience and apply their learning to the workplace challenges.

Although employers *say they are looking* for people with creative thinking, communications and interpersonal skills, *they don't always see the bridge* between a liberal-arts education and their specific openings.

**You have to build that bridge for them!**

Howard Figler, author of Keys to Liberal Arts Success (2001, Prentice-Hall) states, "liberal education is not designed to relate to the needs of an employer. It is designed to educate the mind and the heart." Figler, however, maintains that *a liberal education certainly does transfer to the work environment* and suggests highlighting the following key areas of interest when communicating with potential employers:

- **universal skills** that employers need: writing, speaking, critical thinking, problem-solving, research, synthesizing;
- **willingness to learn** a new body of information, absorb it, synthesize it and understand what experts in this field are talking about;
- **ability to work effectively as a member of a team** having many different personality styles;
- **adaptability** -- the **ability to move from one project to another** fluidly, to adjust to different problems and new working conditions;
- **globally-minded**: Understanding and showing an interest in other cultures and getting along with diverse groups of people.

**Demonstrate** the relevance of your skills to employers! Figler emphasizes the importance of pulling examples of skills that you've used during college experiences (in and out of class) and highlighting these experiences on your resume and in your cover letters. If you have previous work/volunteer experience, *point to specific accomplishments and demonstrated successes* to make a case for your candidacy.

**Effective networking** plays a major role in the searches of even the most sought-after job candidates. Be sure you are connecting with people (Denison alumni, friends of your parents, neighbors, professors, etc.), who are employed in the fields/organizations you are considering. *Select a professional association to join* to make contacts, gain inside information and incorporate business terminology into your vocabulary.

Avail yourself of the **resources in Career Services** described in this packet and during the Senior Orientation Session. We are here to help you whether you already know that you want to work for a non-profit art center in Chicago, are looking at graduate schools or have no idea where to start and need advice how to do so.

**Career Services**  
**306 Burton D. Morgan Center**  
**Appointments: M-F 8:30am to 4:30pm**  
**Drop-In Hours Daily 2:00pm-4:00pm**  
**Phone: 740-587-6656**  
**[www.denison.edu/offices/career](http://www.denison.edu/offices/career)**

## THE GOLDEN AGE OF GENERALISTS

"The American job market is undergoing a major transformation. Liberal arts majors have more opportunities. People need to keep refining their skills to keep up with a rapidly changing marketplace."

-- Jonathan N. Grayer, President & CEO, Kaplan, and Richard M. Smith, Chairman & Editor-in-Chief, *Newsweek, A Guide to Careers 2000*; *Careers 2000*.

"The United States is entering a new golden age of generalists: integrators of information, motivators of people, communicators of ideas. A world in which "even philosophy majors can get a job," says Mitchell Fromstein, CEO of Manpower Inc. ("provided," he adds quickly, "they have some kind of exposure to [computer] technology"). This trend has been gathering force ever since the 1970s, when evidence began to accumulate of the mess that narrowly trained specialists had made of the American economy.

In today's job market, there is a premium on intangible qualities such as leadership, flexibility, and the capacity for abstract thought. The other stuff can be taught by employers.

Generalists have core skills that you can leverage throughout the organization, innate qualities of problem solving, leadership, adaptability for change."

-- Jerry Adler & Seema Nayyar, *Help! I Majored in Beer*; *Careers 2000*.

Gregory Giangrande, author of *The Liberal Arts Advantage*, says, "While we have experienced breathtaking technological and industrial developments, corporations are now competing in a global marketplace. Corporations require employees who are generalists rather than specialists, who can cultivate complex relationships that will help them to compete. According to *Fortune*, nearly 38% of all CEOs majored in Liberal Arts."

-- Barbra Lewis, *Living in La-La Land? What to do with that Liberal Arts degree*; <http://www.careerbuilder.com>.

"More than any other curriculum, the liberal arts train people to think critically about concepts and society, look at the big picture, and analyze cause and effect relationships, break an idea or situation into component parts and put it back together again."

-- Robert Goodward, *Why Hire Humanities Graduates?*

"As a generalist, a liberal arts major is well suited for a variety of jobs. Some of the many accessible fields of work available to liberal arts grads are banking, retailing, insurance, real estate, computer programming, systems analysis, radio-TV journalism, film production, travel, public relations, personnel work, human services, fund-raising, politics, government at all levels, advertising, and marketing research."

-- *The Liberal Arts Job Search*; <http://riceinfo.rice.edu/projects>.

"American Management Systems Inc. (AMS), a Fairfax, VA- based consulting firm, is planning to hire more than 800 graduates to work in information-technology consulting positions. AMS is more likely to consider students whose majors are "liberal arts-like" and who want to be involved in the technical arena, says Allan Jones, the firm's manager of college recruiting.

Computer-related professions are expected to be the fastest-growing job group through 2006, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Further, technology increasingly is the backbone of many of business processes. Recruiters seeking technical hires are now courting business and liberal arts majors."

Valerie Patterson, associate editor of the *National Business Employment Weekly*, *New Grads Enjoy Record Job Market*; <http://careers.wsj.com>.

