

THURSDAY CAREERS CHATS

Date of Session: 3/24/2011 Title of Session: Careers in Non-Profits/Culture & Language Education

Alumni Presenter: Joanna Castro Class Year: 1998

Title: Program Specialist Employer: Cervantes Institute

Notes from Session:

Academic background and brief career summary:

- Double major in International Studies and Spanish
- Studied abroad in Malaga, Spain for a year.
- LOVED living in and moved back after graduation. Lived in Spain for 7 years (first Malaga and then Madrid)
- First job in Spain was with a law firm. Joanna helped with legal translations. Although it was the most glamorous or ideal job, she was able to secure her visa.
- Completed a Master's degree in Spain
- Today, Joanna absolutely loves that she is helping people, teaching in a way, and helping others find what they love.

NETWORK, NETWORK, NETWORK!

- Biggest piece of advice to students. All of Joanna's jobs have come through connections she's made with friends and acquaintances.
- When going back to Spain, she contacted "everyone [she] knew" to say that she loved the country and wanted to come back....this led to her first job and visa in Spain.
- She keeps a running Excel spreadsheet to keep track of names, phone numbers/contact info, and how she met people.
- "I love the Career Center and the resources available. I wish I would have used it when I was a student. Using DickinsonWorks was extremely helpful as I moved back to the US and networked with people in NYC."

Skills non-profit employers seek:

- People skills – it is all about relationships
- Tech Savvy with a strong knowledge of social media
- Ability to "click" with others
- Open, respectful, and understanding of cultural differences.

Advice:

- Read "What Color Is Your Parachute"
- Do a mix of application submissions and networking.
- Networking:
 - JOIN LINKEDIN and conduct INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS (Informational Interviews can lead to so many potential opportunities.)
 - Always approach someone through email in the first contact – phone can be too aggressive.
 - Wait a few days without pestering – we want to help, but we're very busy.
 - Be upfront and polite. Always thank someone for their time.
 - NEVER approach someone with "will you give me an internship/job"....always approach them graciously and request an informational interview to learn more about them.
 - Join a professional organization related to your field of interest.
- Graduate School:
 - Consider exploring an international graduate school (much cheaper) or a program in the US that allows for an immersion experience abroad – colleague recently completed a program with NYU that involves a year in NY and a year abroad.
- Internship/Job Search and General Career Advice:
 - If you're interested in working internationally (or with global issues) find companies that have domestic (US) offices or American companies that have local offices in your region of interest.
 - Be willing to start at the bottom and open to possibilities – find as many internships and volunteer experiences you can