

Fall 2012

The Independent

A Newsletter for Liberal Studies



Why We're Here

Maggie Noffke, AC, Sr.

I started working in higher education in 1987. I understand the value of higher education and can articulate these values with sincerity. When my daughter began visiting colleges I was surprised how quickly reason became apprehension (reason returned, but it definitely went AWOL). Professors and Deans of schools we visited weren't saying anything I didn't already know, but now it had to apply to my child who, after graduation, is going to require meaningful, remunerative employment. I wanted guarantees, reassurance that a degree is still advantageous and that 4+ years of university will culminate in some gain in the job market and satisfaction in employment.

I want to take a minute to tell you that completion of your degree is a significant milestone. In the most basic way, many employment opportunities require a degree; consider yours a ticket to commence. What I cannot foresee for my daughter or my students is how you will navigate what a colleague describes as the "murky middle," that landscape you must navigate between entry level work and the work you aim to do – the dream job. This middle ground depends on many factors, some of which are variable and outside our control (the economy and job market) and others which are more within our control (are you open to work that might seem undesirable but is a necessary stepping stone to something better? are you open to further training and education? are you willing to step outside your comfort zone and network, innovate, risk, volunteer, do more than is required, etc.,? are you willing to relocate? are you able to maintain the focus essential to accomplishment [many step off their path, for perfectly good reasons, and decide to do work which bears little or no relation to earlier plans])).

Here's another one: are you patient? Because the evolution of a life's work means things unfold in real time. We cannot anticipate the people we will meet, the opportunities we will take (or let go by), the experiences we will have and how those experiences will shape what we want/need. You know why you're here. You have a plan that helps you see what is necessary to achieve your goals. As you progress through your degree take the time to assess where you stand with these critical learning goals:

- Think critically and reason analytically
- Write and speak well
- Work well with others
- Become more creative and innovative with an enhanced ability to solve complex problems

Those skills, regardless of circumstance, will help you better navigate work, family, and life.

For a reference re further reading, please see page 4....

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If you plan to graduate this fall, be sure to complete ULINK's application for degree by **November 6th**. **Attention degree applicants for FALL!** If you anticipate a change of address, please let Maggie know. We want your program certificate to reach you.

Working Students



Including a quick review of a session from the regional advising conference in Asheville, North Carolina. One of my favorite sessions addressed working students.

Sarah Lennon (from EKU) began with a quiz which got everyone's assumptions on paper and got the conversational ball rolling. I had grossly overestimated the % of full time students working full time (my guess/60% correct response is 25%); did better with *what percent of employed students work off campus* (my guess 82%/correct response is 91%); nailed *What is the average number of hours worked for all students* (30 hours); *What % of students who work admit that their job limits the number of classes they take* (49%) and */or their course schedule* (48%) and 31% say *work limits their access to campus facilities and services* (which is correlated to decreased academic persistence); last question was *What range of number of hours working per week actually has a positive effect on academics and persistence?* **15 or fewer hours has a positive effect/more than 15 hours has a negative effect.** (Source: ACE paper/Working Their Way Through College: Student Employment and Its Impact on the College Experience/2006)

It seems that, though students are still working for living and school expenses, many students are working or working longer hours for luxuries – cell phone, ipod, computer, car, etc. Of students

working 35 or more hours per week, 35% of those students **felt** their workload had “no effect” on academic performance. (Learning and Earning: Working in College/Orszag, Orszag, and Whitmore). For any of you working minimum wage jobs, the current rate is \$7.25 per hour. If you break down full-time tuition it costs \$26.29 to skip a single class and it is unlikely the wages-earned compensate. It is also very likely that missing classes or otherwise shorting academic assignments will increase the likelihood that the student will withdraw from one or more courses, which increases financial loss in both the short (current tuition) and long (extra semesters or drop out) term.

Sarah's recommendation for working students include:

- **Work on-campus jobs**
- **Find a job related to your intended field.**
- **Look for jobs where you can do homework on the job.**
- **Work where you spend your money.**
- **Work weekends only.**
- **Consider an RA job.**

Sarah also had recommendations regarding time management, income and expenses worksheets, and resumes. If any of you would be interested in these topics, both REACH and the Career Center are excellent resources.



Degree Checks

Most of our majors are very good about staying in touch and contacting me to request routine degree checks at least once a year. Requesting a degree check is as simple as calling me and scheduling an appointment. It doesn't take long, and it assures the student that he or she is still on track to graduate when expected.

Its especially important to meet if:

- You have not had a degree check since January of this year
- You've strayed from your approved academic plan
- You expect to graduate in Spring or Summer 2013.

Please call me at 852-2249 to schedule an appointment. Some students request a preliminary degree check through on online form to A&S; **it is much less circuitous** to contact me directly.

A Recommendation

For those of you who are considering applying to graduate programs, a quick recommendation re application essays:

Graduate Admission Essays: Write Your Way Into the Graduate School of Your Choice by Donald Asher.

Ekstrom has several of Mr. Asher's books but not this one. The Louisville Free Public Library does carry this one but you might need to get in line to borrow it.

Health and Wellness

Counseling and Support

The UofL Counseling Center has posted its fall calendar of Wellness Options. These include: A.A. and Al-Anon, and special interest groups for women, men, students who are parents, students who are especially stressed...the list goes on. The Center offers also individual counseling and psychiatric care. The range of options suggest that if you have any

issue at all, the Center either has a program or service in place to help you, or will be able to refer you.

<http://louisville.edu/counseling/community-resources.html>

Exercise and Intramurals

Student Affairs is offering personal fitness assessments, group fitness courses, and intramural sports for all interested students. For more information please go to



<http://louisville.edu/intramurals/>

The Crow's Nest

John R. Hale, Director

This month has been a busy time for Liberal Studies at UofL, as we continue to bring important visiting scholars to our campus. Presentations by speakers who exemplify the ideals of interdisciplinary research and living are an essential component of our Liberal Studies initiative here in the College of Arts and Sciences. This September, within the space of less than a week, we featured three remarkable speakers: John Mueller of Ohio State University's Political Science Department; Maurice Ashley of Jamaica, an international Grand Master of chess; and Nikos Xanthoulis of Athens, the first person in modern times to reconstruct and perform the music of the ancient Greeks. Each of these speakers showed the importance of reaching beyond single disciplines to create new ideas and approaches to life.

John Mueller was a keynote speaker at the Peace Studies seminar that our Liberal Studies project sponsored on "PeaceDay 2012", September 20. We supported this seminar in conjunction with UofL's Peace Studies Program because it approached the issue of Peace in a truly interdisciplinary way. Professor John Mueller is Woody Hayes Chair of National Se-

curity Policy, and treats "Peace" as a subject for interdisciplinary study that integrates History, Military Science, Sociology, Economics, Statistics, and Religious Studies. Mueller believes that while traditional warfare is becoming less common in our world, a new kind of conflict is emerging, which may be summarized as "opportunistic predation waged by packs - often remarkably small ones - of criminals and bullies."

Maurice Ashley discovered a gift for playing chess when he was 14 years old and living in New York City. That's an advanced age to start playing chess, but Maurice's brilliance and hard work soon made him the world's first African-American grand master. Having reached the highest level of international chess, Ashley has turned from his original focus on winning tournaments to a new mission: showing the world that the kind of thinking used in chess can help any decision-maker in almost any field. During his riveting presentation, he described his own tough childhood, the special approach to life and character-analysis that is required for success in the world of chess, and involved his audience of students and community members in a game that

showed how most of us fall into irrational decision-making.

Finally, Nikos Xanthoulis held an audience of 200 spellbound as he took us through the history of ancient Greek musical instruments, from trumpets to lyres, and then demonstrated each instrument by playing original ancient melodies, some of them more than 2,000 years old, and reconstructed by Professor Xanthoulis himself. It was an opportunity for all of us to think about the importance of music in human culture, from religious ceremonies to parties and sports, and see how many different disciplines must be brought together in order to reconstruct a lost musical tradition.

Three speakers; three different fields of study; but one message: interdisciplinary approaches are the wave of the future.





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Reference: A wonderfully written article on the goals of liberal education and personal qualities of those liberally educated can be found online at http://www.williamcronon.net/writing/Cronon_Only_Connect.pdf

Take Note

Maggie will be out of the office the week of October 22. If you need an appointment before pre-registration, call soon, please.

Our majors have indicated an interest in planning an event that both highlights the presence of LBST on campus and will serve as a get-together for our majors. What ideas do you have? We'd like to hear from you, agree on a plan, and get started making it happen. Please send your ideas to maggie.noffke@louisville.edu



Ril Sams climbed Hanlon with his
hounds last night,
But when they wined something
below the top,
And wouldn't go beyond the lantern
light,
And trembled on the lead, then he
came home.
I trust the hounds; they know what
made them stop,
What waits there in the mist on
Hanlon's top.

Jim Wayne Miller,
Hanlon Mountain Mist

Mr. Miller is a 1958 Berea College graduate. He taught German language and literature at WKU for 33 years.