

# Beyond the Bubble

a look at life outside Illinois Wesleyan University

*Lindsey, can you talk a little about your background?*

I was always interested in career development. I think perhaps because both my parents own their own businesses I saw career building from a very young age. And my mother was a professional speaker so I knew that business quite well.

I went to graduate school in Australia and when I came back, I got a job at Working Woman Magazine and their new website division which was really kind of the perfect job for me working on career issues. I was in my early 20's at the time so I gravitated toward entry-level career issues. Unfortunately, that website went out of business in 2001 and I decided to try a freelance entrepreneurial career.

So, I finally started my own business when that happened. I worked as a freelance editor/ghostwriter/researcher, anything I could do to work on books. In 2005, I got my own book deal to write *Getting From College to Career*, and I think it was about that time that I admitted it was really a business I wanted to pursue full throttle.

*How would you describe what you do on a day-to-day basis?*

I call myself a Generation Y career and workplace expert and it manifests itself in three ways:

First of all, I run career advice workshops for college students. So, I do campus workshops, webinars, teleclasses, and I have a blog ([www.lindseypollak.com](http://www.lindseypollak.com)).

And then I run training programs for companies on how to recruit, retain and engage recent graduates, sort of [how to] get the best young talent and bring them

into their companies. So I have kind of a corporate arm.

The third side is really researching and teaching on the future of careers. Trying to figure out where this is all going. I teach the students and the companies how to deal with the world today and [at the same time] I'm looking at where all this is going and how I can help prepare people for careers maybe 20 years down the road.

*What are some typical questions and concerns that you hear from students?*

You know, I think that people feel really paralyzed right now because they just keep hearing how bad the job market is. And it is very bad. But my main message is, "You've got to take action, and you can't let the news get you down." There are definitely opportunities out there but you've got to be a little bit more creative.

The question I get a lot is "What's the secret to getting a job in a bad economy, or what's the magic bullet when things are bad?" And the answer is there's no special playbook that I can pull out of my back pocket and say, "Oh, in a bad economy, you should do this." Really, you have to do the same things you've always done. I just like to say you have to do them smarter, faster, and better than ever before. You've got to be quicker to jump at opportunities, you've got to be perfect in your interactions, your communications and your resume.

**LINDSEY POLLAK!  
AUTHOR AND CAREER EXPERT!  
ONE NIGHT ONLY!  
COMING To IWU SOON!!!**



Also, you've got to be more creative and smarter about the kinds of places you can look for work. You might have to think about small companies whereas in the past maybe you only wanted to work at a Fortune 500. Or if you're looking for jobs in the Chicago area, maybe you want to expand to other cities. You've just got to cast a wider net and think really broadly about what you can do. That's not comfortable for a lot of people. So that 'secret sauce' is really about being more flexible and smarter.

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[www2.iwu.edu/ccenter](http://www2.iwu.edu/ccenter)

# Career Connections

a newsletter from the hart career center

January 2009

## 2010: Job-seeking from the very bottom

As we enter the new year of 2010, everyone could use a little good news about the state of the job market. And according to Dr. Phil Gardner's presentation at the 16th Annual Midwest ACE Trends in Recruiting Conference this past November 20, the good news is this: "We hit bottom last year and now we're bouncing around on a ledge."

This is good news? In a way, yes. Last year the collective college graduates' consciousness was represented by a Wile E. Coyote who just stepped over a cliff's edge, looked up at the camera with wide-eyed terror, and held up a sign that said something like "%&\*\$." This year, college graduates are still represented by that same maligned Coyote, but now we are flattened out against the rock hard surface of the ground and slowly re-inflating our natural dimensions.

Indeed, in 2009, employers cut an average of 35% to 40% of their hiring targets, even though initial estimates predicted only an 8% to 10% decrease in hiring. This year total hiring will decrease by slightly less than 2%, indicating that the bleeding has been stopped for now.

Of course, even if hiring remains steady based on last year's results, it will represent a significant contraction in average hires. Only 27% of the 2,500 employers participating in the survey reported definite plans to hire college graduates

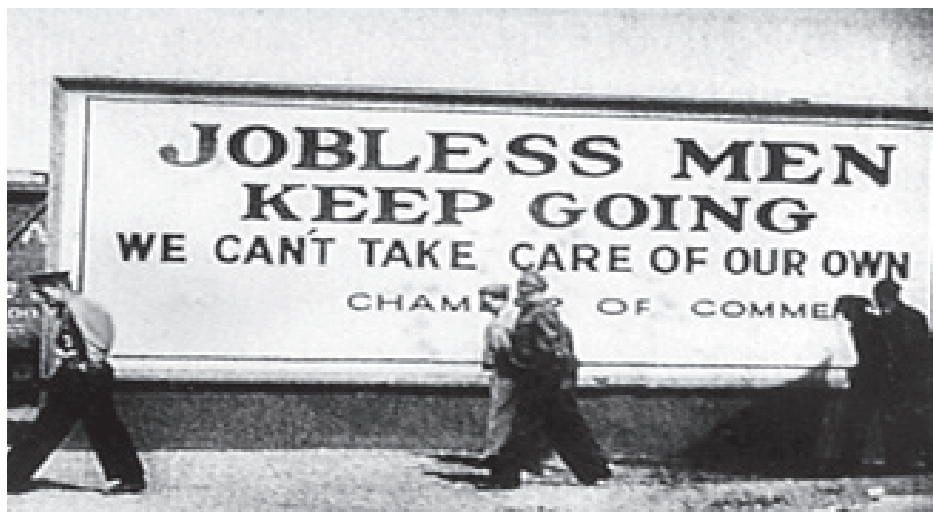


Photo Courtesy of [www.anunews.net](http://www.anunews.net)

during the 2009-2010 academic year. "I have never seen average hires this low in 25 years in the college job market," said Gardner, the director of the Collegiate Employment Research Institute at Michigan State University. The question remains, then, will the job market ever get back to normal?

Unfortunately, normal as we have come to know it is likely gone forever (Fortunately, the city of Normal is right where we left it). "Even after the economy pieces itself back together, we will not be returning to normal," said Gardner. "These jobs disappeared and they're not coming back in the same shape or form that they went out."

This does not mean there is no hope for the future, though. Far from it. Instead, Gardner simply sees "a transformation in the workforce," a shifting landscape with a new set of rules for job-seekers.

Interestingly for IWU students, the new job market is proving to be favorable to liberal arts graduates. Of the 2,500 employers participating in Gardner's study, 33% said they are looking for all majors in their hiring process, a higher percentage than in years past. Likewise, many

employers are prioritizing flexible critical thinking skills and adaptability over rigid technical know-how. Even the traditionally unwavering field of accounting is seeing a down year.

No matter your educational background, though, competition for jobs will be as fierce as it's ever been. A high percentage of 2009 graduates are still looking for the right employment and as Gardner points out, the globalization of many companies means "you're competing against people in classrooms around the world."

To cope, Gardner advocates patience and resolve to make it through what will be another bad year. As he predicts, "The appetite for new labor will reappear when Baby Boomers retire."

Because you are not simply going to be handed a job after graduating from IWU, there are a few strategic pointers you should know. Perhaps most importantly, "as a job-seeker, you need to create a need that a company needs to buy," said Gardner. By all estimates, the next few years of job searching will be tough, and [See Recruiting Continued on Pg.2]

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## What's your role with LinkedIn?

I am the global campus spokesperson for LinkedIn. So I'm essentially a consultant for them. What I help them do is develop training programs and deliver training programs to college students and college administrators on how LinkedIn can benefit students and universities. For example, I developed a webinar for career services professionals on how universities can help students get jobs through LinkedIn.

I think that in this day and age companies are so relying on sites like LinkedIn to help them find talent that it would be a big mistake not to be in that area where people are looking. It's this great opportunity that didn't exist five to ten years ago. If you're willing to take the time to figure out how to do it and to get a little bit out of your comfort zone and be on a professional online community as op-

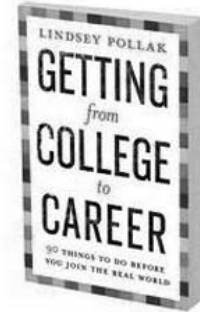
-posed to the personal world of Facebook, you can really stand out as a student because most students aren't on it. If most students aren't on it, and you look professional, of course you're going to be the one who stands out to an employer because you're one step ahead of your peers.

## So this is more than posting an online resume, yes?

Yeah, your profile is essentially an online resume with a lot more information. With LinkedIn, one of the main features of this site, is if you and I are connected, I can then see who you are connected to. Let's say my dream is to work at Nike and you were connected to somebody at Nike. I could say, "Hey, Dave, I noticed you're connected to this person," and it kind of opens your eyes to three degrees of separation away from you.

A lot of companies, too, really want students who are savvy enough to have a LinkedIn profile, particularly technology companies. Or, firms where having a knowledge of LinkedIn would be beneficial in your job. They're specifically looking for you on LinkedIn to see if you get what social media is and what it's capable of.

**Remember, the first 50 people to attend Lindsey's presentation get a FREE copy of her book!**



## Hot Jobs and Industries

Although it has been their tendency the past few years to only pursue candidates with specific concentrations, a large percentage of employers are now willing to seek talent across all majors. This is great news for a liberal arts institution like Illinois Wesleyan University, but it doesn't mean liberal arts graduates should get over-confident. There are still identifiable industries and sectors that are more promising in both the short and long term.

Here's a rundown of the 2009-2010 Recruiting Trends' hot majors/fields:

1. E-Commerce – The Trends report estimates graduates with a focus on web-based business will have a breakout year. Any academic training that can bolster a company's internet presence takes priority. Entrepreneurial efforts within the field will be even more appealing to employers.
2. Environment Sciences – Opportunities are expected to expand by 6%, a major growth spurt for this field. Increased funding and interest under the Obama administration promises to keep Environmental Sciences one of the hottest fields for several years.
3. Statistics – Over 300 companies indicated interest in statistically trained graduates. Opportunities in the field will increase 11%.
4. Web Design/Computer Science – Hiring will be up 4% to 6% and the general sense is that IT graduates will be in high demand.
5. Business – Expanding opportunities for all business majors, with the exception of accounting which is seeing a rare down year. The report indicates 29% of all employers are seeking business majors, a 3% to 4% increase from last year. Interest in business majors is shifting towards candidates with acumen in internet business.

## Career Center Events

Date: 1/26  
Event: Lindsey Pollak Q & A Reception Presentation  
Time: 4:00 p.m.  
Location: Welcome Center Auditorium

Date: 1/26  
Event: Getting from College to Career: How to Get a Good Job in a Bad Economy  
Time: 7 p.m.  
Location: Hansen Student Center  
Description: Author and Gen Y expert Lindsey Pollak will share her advice

Date: 1/28 and 2/9  
Event: Job Fair Jitters  
Time: 4 p.m.  
Location: Welcome Center Auditorium

Date: 2/4  
Event: Resumania!  
Time: 2:00 to 4:30 p.m.  
Location: Hart Career Center

# Upcoming Job Fairs Offer Great Chance to Start 2010 Off Right

Well, it's officially the new year, 2010, but that doesn't mean your chances to find a summer job or internship have vanished along with 2009. Even if you missed out on all the Fall Job and Internship Fairs, this upcoming February offers plenty of opportunities to make good on those New Year's resolutions and land the perfect work experience for you.

For starters, on February 5, the ISCPA (Illinois Small College Placement Association) will host CareerFest. According to the ISCPA website ([www.iscpa.org](http://www.iscpa.org)), "The purpose of CareerFest is to connect quality student and alumni candidates from ISCPA member schools with Illinois employers who want to hire for their job and internship positions."

The event is open to all majors and with such a wide variety of employers there are likely to be wonderful opportunities for everyone. Some of the employers attending this year include American Girl, Imagination Publishing, Northrop Grumman, and Wells Fargo Financial.

To those interested, CareerFest will run from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. (with an hour long

break for lunch in between in which employers will not be available). CareerFest is held at Drury Lane Theatre in Oak-



brook, Illinois.

Students can pre-register for CareerFest with \$10 cash or check made payable to the Hart Career Center. Just bring the fee to the Hart Career Center's front desk on the second floor of the Minor Myers, jr. Welcome Center. Pre-register by January 29 to avoid a \$20 on-site fee.

If you are seeking a teaching position, the ISCPA also hosts TeacherFest on February 18 from 12:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

The event will again take place at Drury Lane Theatre in Oakbrook and the same pre-registration fees apply. Representatives from approximately 90 school districts are expected to attend, so be sure to bring plenty of copies of your resume.

In addition to these ISCPA events, IWU and ISU offer both Spring Internship and Job Fairs at the ISU Bone Student Center.

The Internship Fair will take place February 16 from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m., while the Job Fair will occur on February 17 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

This IWU/ISU Spring Job fair in particular is a great chance for seniors to try and secure post-graduate employment this year. That said, this certainly is not a senior only event. All students and all majors are more than welcome!

If you have any questions, or would like some excellent tips on how to successfully stand out at a job fair, be sure to visit the Hart Career Center or call for an appointment at extension 3071. Or, look at the calendar on page 2 for events that can greatly improve your chances.

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## Recruiting Trends {Continued from page 1}

this is why differentiation will be key.

Gardner gave the example of a student employee at the Michigan State University Career Center who became such an expert connecting students to various employers using social media tools such as Twitter and Facebook that he's now decided to start his own company. The student's skillsets were so desired that he actually found himself *turning down* jobs.

In the same way, networking gives a job-seeker a major advantage today. It's important to make contacts wherever possible and then to see how those contacts can help you in your job search. A good source of potential help can be found in the Hart Career Center's alumni mentoring database, accessible from [Titancareerlink.experience.com](http://Titancareerlink.experience.com).

The database allows students to get in touch with alumni who have volunteered

to help and are more than willing to provide assistance where they can (keep in mind this does not mean they will give you a job).

If you're reading all this and thinking that graduation and job-seeking sound like a long way off, you should know that all of this information still affects you. Employers are expecting one and often even two internships from the candidates they interview today. Every ounce of experience you can nab while at IWU will be of utmost importance once you do graduate.

Even internships are less likely to come to you these days, though. On campus interviewing is down 60%, meaning that the absurdly convenient luxury of walking five minutes from your dorm room to the Hart Career Center for an interview is going to be more coveted by more students than ever before.

For those graduating seniors looking at the economic horizon and feeling a bit hopeless, it might be a good idea to change your expectations a bit. Instead of looking only at the established, big-name employers, perhaps look to the non-profit sector which is expecting to increase hiring by 20%. Likewise, small, up and coming businesses are poised to hire and could be a great fit.

Ultimately, Gardner reports that today's best talent needs to have a deep understanding of their skill sets, a variety of skill sets available to them, and an infectious excitement about their work. "It's not about the degree you have, it's about the skills you have," said Gardner. If you can identify these skills to an employer, and explain why they fulfill a specific need within that organization, there's a good chance you will succeed.