

CAREER PROFILE

a look at life outside Illinois Wesleyan University

Name: Kate Tombaugh

Class: 2007

Studied: Vocal Performance, English Literature

Current Position: Vocalist

On Nov. 17, alumna Kate Tombaugh presented a lecture titled “Heads Up! What’s Next: Life after IWU School of Music.” Her talk provided a wealth of information for more than just music majors. Here are a few excellent points she made about what to do before applying to graduate school.

1. Be open.

“When I started thinking about grad school, I really wasn’t sure what to do. I had some great jobs in Bloomington-Normal, had made some great contacts, and had wonderful students. I thought it was a really big risk. But sometimes, if you don’t risk big, you don’t gain big, and I had to learn that the hard way.”

2. Take your work seriously.

“I often found myself burnt out in school, wondering, ‘When is this going to apply to me?’ It all comes back. Things like that will always come up again, and you’ll be saying, ‘I wish I had been paying more attention at Illinois Wesleyan.’ There’s a reason they’ve created the curriculum they have.”

3. Practice being a good colleague.

“The people you’re sitting next to are just like who you’ll be working with later on, and you’ll keep meeting more and more people. There are balances. You have to know when to promote yourself, and you have to know when to close your mouth and not talk.”

4. Fill in the gaps.

“I knew I wasn’t a good piano player, so after I graduated, I spent time working on that. You’re an eternal student; you’re never done learning. And Illinois Wesleyan helped me by giving me that foundation by knowing how I keep growing from that.”

5. Gain as much experience as possible.

“You’re at a stage of your life where you’re much luckier than you think you are. Your faculty and staff are here to help you, push you, and challenge you. If you’re not singing in studio or taking every opportunity you have to learn new repertoire or perform, you’re not pushing yourself to that next level.”

6. Learn to be your own teacher and promoter.

“At grad school, there’s going to be a time when you may not have your teacher right across campus to ask questions to. Think about ways to network for yourself. When your teacher tells you things, think about it. Don’t just hear it.”

7. Set standards for yourself.

“When I left CCM, my teacher made me write a statement to myself that said, ‘I, Kate Tombaugh, promise to make a more beautiful sound each time I sing.’ And it sounds pretty simple, but when you’re doing a lot of different things or you’re busy, it’s easy to take a step back and get a little too comfortable.”

8. Be professional.

“So many times, I’ll hear murmurings of ‘Well, I’m just a student. I’ll do that when I’m really hitting it big.’ You’re not going to hit it big if you’re not doing it now.”

9. Learn to take care of yourself.

“It’s hard to do in college because you’re so busy, especially at IWU. You’re involved in tons of things. But take little baby steps. I learned, ‘Maybe I shouldn’t stay at the library until 1:00 a.m. when I have to be up at 7:00 a.m. This can wait until the next day.’ Learn how to balance that. If you can do that now, the happier you’ll be later.”



Kate Tombaugh graduated from Illinois Wesleyan University in 2007 with a Bachelor of Music degree in vocal performance and a Bachelor of Arts degree in English literature. She later received her Masters in vocal performance from the College-Conservatory of Music in Cincinnati. While attending CCM, she was honored as a Dietlerle Vocal Scholar for maintaining top grades and a high level of performance.

CAREER CONNECTIONS

a newsletter from the hart career center

January 2012

Is There Life after IWU? - The Class of 2011 Speaks

As graduation day looms closer every day, many seniors are torn between feeling excited and terrified to begin a new chapter of their lives. The good news is that practice and preparation eases that anxiety and turns that "Can I do this?" into "I can do this!"

Three graduates from the Illinois Wesleyan Class of 2011 shared their insight on what they did, or wish they had done, before they walked off the graduation platform and into the real world.

Adebola Olayinka is currently pursuing her Master of Arts in International Relations at the University of Chicago. While at IWU, she studied both international studies and economics and was the president of Economic Society, the vice president of fellowship with Alpha Phi Omega, and a part of the honor societies for both of her majors. Her advice to IWU students, especially those hoping to pursue an advanced degree, is as follows:

Do research both semesters of your senior year.

"In this Masters program, and even other similar programs, you are always working on your research. It doesn't matter if it's a program that's one year, two years, or more. From the very beginning, the research will be on your mind. It's good to get used to that."

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Make friends at IWU.

"I know this sounds silly, but it's true. Being in a grad program is a lot different than undergrad. You will become friends with people in your program, but it tends to be more of a colleague relationship. Having friends from IWU who are in grad school is good because they can commiserate."

Take more research methods classes.

"Again, grad school in the social sciences is highly research focused. Any amount of methods classes that you can take to prepare yourself is a good idea."

Jack Hanlon, a K-5 music teacher at Waterbury Elementary School in Roselle, Ill., studied music education during his time at IWU. He also was involved with a large number of music ensembles, was honored as a featured soloist in IWU's Concerto-Aria competition, and was a member of both Delta Omicron and music honor society, Pi Kappa Lambda. For education majors, especially those studying music, he had this to say:

Do more elementary school training.

"It's such a different style of classroom, and many music education majors shy away from it. But every job I interviewed for this last summer was at an elementary school. Now I have one of those jobs, and I'm fighting every day to keep my head above water. That said, it's a good fight to be had, and I'm getting better at it, but trial by fire is not the ideal learning method in the professional world."

Collaborate within your major.

"I caught on too late to the value of great collaborations. Now I get to do some, but with a bit more planning

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Adebola Olayinka - graduate student



Jack Hanlon - music teacher



Brandon Dorn - advertising strategist

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and conversations early on, perhaps I would have fallen in love with chamber music sooner. But - and this is perhaps the more important part to this point - I wasn't taking the initiative to form my own ensembles until quite late. When I finally started delving into it in greater force, it proved immensely rewarding, but now that I'm out of college, it's difficult to generate those opportunities."

Get involved in other fields of study.

"Don't be shy about walking into 'another major's building' to just hang out for a day now and again. Forming friendships and relationships across disciplines is both personally and professionally rewarding. All too often, science majors stick with science majors, music majors with music majors, and so on because our respective schedules overlap so little. Go out and break a few of those imaginary barriers we construct in front of other majors' buildings."

Don't forget to do things for yourself.

"It sounds like a platitude, but it's one worth remembering. It's too easy to get caught up with classes, especially when you're taking ones you really enjoy, or ones where you're convinced the professor is a sadist. Before you know it, you've stopped going to the gym, reading for fun, and you never manage to make that coffee date with that friend from freshman year you lost touch with. Ten pounds and a few dozen antisocial evenings later, you may realize your independent study is going great, and your sanity is tied together with a fine piece of twine."

Brandon Dorn, a junior strategist with advertising firm, Leo Burnett, studied English and economics, including a year abroad at the University of Oxford. At IWU, he was a member of three honor societies: Phi Eta Sigma, Sigma Tau Delta, and Omicron Delta Epsilon. He also wrote for *The Argus*, had a radio show with WESN, and was a member of C.S. Lewis Society. For those who have as eclectic a background as he does, Dorn had a few pieces of advice:

Talk to people about their work.

"It isn't enough to read about jobs,

even less to read job descriptions. Unless you work as a bank teller, which I have, positions tend to be malleable and defined by individuals' personalities, talents, and interests. When I wanted to learn about account planning and advertising, I emailed an IWU alum who works at an agency in Chicago, who graciously agreed to talk over the phone. Months later, he mentioned that no other internship candidates did so. People respect respectful initiative. Even if you aren't wholly interested in a certain line of work, it only helps to talk to people in the workforce. You'll learn how they talk about things, and at the very least, you'll learn what you don't want to do."

Practice interviewing.

"Practice interviews are beneficial because they help students become comfortable talking about themselves - their strengths, experience, plans, etc. However, people in HR don't want to be fed a script. They have your resume and may ask about it, yet they also want to learn about people as unique individuals. My interview was more like a conversation than a question-and-answer session, and had I been too prepared with answers, there's a good chance I'd have tried to work facts about my accomplishments or my skills into the conversation, rather than discussing views on literature or the time I spent studying abroad. Have the expected answers in mind, yet approach interviews knowing that the best impression you can give is of yourself as you truly are."

Research industries.

"Ames Library has a fantastic assortment of journals and periodicals that can give deep glimpses into various industries across the job market, from academia to Wall Street. If you think you might be interested in finance, read the *Financial Times* for a few weeks. If advertising, check out *Communication Arts*. The same goes for books. As with conversations with people, even if you don't end up working in the areas that you've learned about, you'll have learned about them, and your awareness of how the world outside the IWU bubble works will have expanded."

Have a plan.

"This past summer, I interned at the advertising agency where I now work, yet toward the end of the internship, I hadn't looked for any other opportunities. Those in HR who managed the interns told us that we weren't guaranteed positions, and even recommended that we continue to apply elsewhere. But I was tired and didn't feel like putting in the extra effort. In hindsight, I wish I would have. Had I not been offered a position, I'd have already started the sometimes-lengthy work-finding process that is the subject of this article and could have avoided time at home not earning money to pay off student loans."

With whatever you choose to do, be sure to put your full energy, enthusiasm, and education into it. Although the "real world" sometimes looks scary, billions of people have found their way into it just fine. And you will, too!

Get a head start with these upcoming events!

1/18 - Spring Teacher Recruitment Day @ 12:00 - 5:30
in the Main Lounge

1/20 - Resumania! @ 2:00 - 4:30
in the Career Center

1/23 - Internships 101 @ 4:00 in the Welcome Center Auditorium

1/25 - Bring It On: Standing Out in an Interview @ 4:00 in the Welcome Center Aud.

1/31 - Interviewing for Introverts @ 4:00 in the Welcome Center Auditorium

2/13 - Drop-In Resume Review @ 2:00 - 4:30 in the Career Center

2/14 - IWU/ISU Spring Internship Fair @ 10:00 - 2:00 in the Bone Student Center, ISU

2/15 - IWU/ISU Spring Job Fair @ 10:00 - 2:00 in the Bone Student Center, ISU

“Recruiting Trends” Shows Hope for the Job Market

Several months ago, Michigan State University, in conjunction with the Collegiate Employment Research Institute, released its 41st edition of “Recruiting Trends,” an annual report detailing the employment tendencies for post-baccalaureate graduates. With the uncertain economic outlook, this report holds much weight for many people, both college-educated and not. However, in contrast to the dismal years before, this study believes that employers will be more likely to hire recent graduates in 2012.

The Overall Trend

Dr. Phil Gardner, director of the Collegiate Employment Research Institute, said, “Total hiring across all degrees with expand by 4 percent this year. The expansion is coming from a strong push at the Bachelor’s degree level, which will increase by approximately 7 percent, according to the 4,200 [responding] employers seeking full-time talent.”

According to Gardner, while last year’s market was swayed by employers who stepped out ahead of more cautious companies, this year’s is broader and deeper, showing growth across sectors and by company size. For most organizations, employers emphasize a good fit rather than a specific field of study.

“Slightly more than one-third of employers remain committed to selecting talent from all academic majors for open positions,” the study said. “Competition will remain strong, however, because available positions for many majors fall short of the supply of graduates leaving college.”

For all liberal arts majors, this is a 4 percent increase from the hiring trends reported last year. Majors with the highest growth in employment include psychology, advertising, information systems, food safety, chemical and civil engineering, biology, statistics, and international relations.

“Several forces are motivating employers to hire college students,” the report said. “Among the smaller group, a core segment actually creates new positions

as business expands. For larger companies, the reasonable explanation continues to be that most positions these employers are attempting to fill have been unfilled for some time. With baby boomers finally beginning to retire, employers can no longer delay hiring if they expect to maintain a seamless workforce.”

Hiring by Industry

As a whole, several industries stand out above others in their employment opportunities. The greatest percentage of open positions are found in accounting, computer services, business services, marketing, sales, and administrative services. Media relations, engineering design, human resources, and information management are also showing many opportunities. As for those industries suffering the most, legal services, design services (graphic, interior, industrial), education, government, and construction all seem to be losing opportunities.

Methods of Hiring

As for how they are hiring, most companies are finding their new employees through (in order) campus-oriented internships, career fairs, national job aggregators, alumni who work for the company, campus information visits, employee referrals, faculty members, and interviews. Social media is also seeing a large growth as a recruiting strategy, experiencing a 36 percent increase from last year.

Expected Experience

Certain college activities are also influencing employment. The most important of these is, as expected, internships with over 60 percent of employers listing it as a “great importance.” Following this are leadership in a professional organization, consulting project with company, international internships, and scholarly research with faculty. Leadership in a nonprofessional organization, supervised

The Most Requested Majors for Bachelor’s Degree Holders

- Accounting
- Finance
- Marketing
- Computer Science
- Electrical Engineering
- Economics
- Human Resources
- Information Systems

civic engagement, and study abroad experiences are listed as being either of “moderate” or “limited importance.”

“These results are not surprising,” the study said. “Students have not been able to adequately demonstrate the significant skills they have gained in study abroad and in other co-curricular activities. Unlike internships that employers know a lot about, employers are generally unfamiliar with study abroad. It is not enough just to have the experience; students must be able to intelligently discuss how the experience has helped them develop skills they can bring to bear in a professional setting.”

Timing of Hiring

One final crucial factor is when these employers will be hiring. Industries such as manufacturing, machinery, financing, accounting, and computer design will complete hiring by fall term with fast-growth companies hiring by the end of spring 2012. Education, agricultural production, and scientific research will look at hiring over the summer with midsize companies, government, and nonprofit organizations following afterward. Overall, the mentality still exists that starting early is better.

“The college labor market can run upstream against the prevailing sluggish economy,” Gardner said. “As Manpower stated: demand trumps uncertainty. Companies simply have to hire. The current workforce is exhausted, and this is showing up in productivity figures. Plus, employers need to revitalize their skill base. All these factors are nudging the college labor market out of the doldrums.”

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