

# ...But What Can I **DO** With A Political Science Major?



Developed by  
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University of Central Florida  
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This guide is intended to assist you as you seek your first professional job. It is sometimes said that an undergraduate degree in a liberal arts discipline prepares you for your ultimate job rather than for your first job. While there is a kernel of truth in this statement, it is also true that the skills you develop in an undergraduate Political Science major are skills which are valued in the workplace, including an understanding of government and politics, the ability to write clearly and well, the capacity to think logically, and the ability to locate and evaluate information. But in this era of so-called "downsizing", finding your first professional job in which you can demonstrate those skills can be quite difficult. In other words, your skills will allow you to do a job well and to progress in your career, but first you must locate a position in which you can demonstrate the value of your skills. It is also widely assumed that you need a law degree to work in government or a government-related field; this is decidedly not true. A law degree is essential for the practice of law but is not essential for most of the wide range of jobs which involve government, politics and public policy. It is true that your first professional job will very likely be the hardest job to obtain, so **you need to treat getting that job as a job in itself**. That is, you need to begin early, think and plan carefully, make choices, have a strategy but be flexible, stay organized, follow through on your plans and commitments, and generally pursue your first job with all the energy, discipline and hard work that you will put into the job when you obtain it.



## Job Searching Schedule

Spring and Summer, Prior to graduation the following May:

You must make preliminary decisions as to what path you wish to pursue upon graduation. Are you going to law school? Then see the Pre-Law Advisor and register for the LSAT and LSDAS. The LSAT schedule is available from the prelaw advising office, or at [www.LSAT.org](http://www.LSAT.org). If you are going to graduate school, consult with faculty about graduate school opportunities and register for the GRE [www.ets.org/gre](http://www.ets.org/gre) or GMAT [www.mba.com](http://www.mba.com) as appropriate. If you decide that you will begin professional employment upon graduation, begin exploring the range of options, using the suggestions in this Guide. Think very broadly at first, do not allow yourself to miss options simply because you did not know about them. You must be flexible and persistent when seeking employment that begins your career. Register with UCF's Career Resources Center (<http://www.career.ucf.edu/>) and use their resources.

August and September

If you are seeking employment you must begin serious work on your resume. You must work toward a decision about what kinds of jobs to pursue by completing your wide survey of options and beginning to identify the specific kinds of jobs you wish to seek, researching specific job requirements, beginning to identify contact points, and obtaining application information (this Guide suggests ways to do these things). Prepare your resume and cover letter with extreme care. Your resume summarizes your education and experience. Be positive but honest; anything other than honesty is easily detected and will greatly damage your future opportunities. Follow through with the Career Resources Center.

October and November

Focus on the most interesting and most likely jobs that fit your skills and aptitudes. Be honest with yourself; otherwise you may aim too high and be disappointed or you may aim too low and be disappointed. Develop lists of contacts, build your network, ask for information interviews. Spend a lot of time with the web sites of the agencies or corporations in which you are most interested. Spend a lot of time on the web site of the Career Resources Center, and with their staff. Begin to contact potential employers.

December and January

Mail out inquiries, including your resume, cover letter and applications if appropriate. Make sure that you have others read your letter and resume. Understand that this letter is your first impression with a prospective employer. First impressions endure. Many possible interviews are lost due to sloppy letters or errors on resumes because these create the impression that the individual is sloppy and does not care about doing a good job. Be persistent in communicating with those in your network of contacts (and in enlarging that network).

February and March

Follow up your earlier mailings, try to schedule interviews, complete scheduled interviews. When you are interviewed, do your very best even if you suspect that this is not a job you will accept. You never know if there may be another position you will fit into rather than the specific one for which you are interviewing.

April and May

These are the months when decisions are likely to be made. Respond as quickly as possible to any offers, but consider carefully. Think about how the job you are offered fits into your career goals and about expectations on both sides. If you are not getting offers, do not be desperate, but persevere and rethink your strategy.

**Good Luck!**

## **PLANNING FOR YOUR CAREER**

### **BEGIN EARLY**

You should begin thinking about career options no later than when you begin college. Among the first things you should do is to undertake an honest self-appraisal, since aptitude, interests and temperament are crucial factors in career planning.

Here are some questions to ask yourself. Should you broaden your horizons and think more imaginatively? Or are you a dreamer who needs to think more realistically? Are you place bound, or do you hope to live somewhere other than in central Florida? (Obviously there are more government and government-related jobs in Washington and Tallahassee than there are in Orlando.) What categories of tasks can you realistically picture yourself doing? Given adequate substantive preparation, could you publicly defend a position taken by an interest group at a meeting of the Seminole County Commission, or would the idea of such a public presentation make you weak with anxiety? Could you assist in preparing a budget for the Metropolitan Transit Authority? Could you deal with constituent questions for a member of Congress? Teach a class of high school seniors? Write a grant proposal for an environmental action group? Run a campaign for the state legislature? Synthesize and evaluate information regarding economic developments in Costa Rica? Prepare a speech for a public official? What kinds of jobs would you consider ideal, what kinds would you consider impossible? How do you rank financial reward, job substance, job security, travel, and other factors in your career plans? What kinds of financial and family obligations will you have when you graduate? How much time can you afford to spend looking for the right job? You need to give yourself honest answers to these kinds of questions.

You can obtain help in this self-appraisal from UCF's Career Resources Center ([www.career.ucf.edu/](http://www.career.ucf.edu/)) and from UCF's Counseling Center ([www.counseling.sdes.ucf.edu/?id=services\\_career](http://www.counseling.sdes.ucf.edu/?id=services_career)). The Career Resources Center (407-823-2361) provides a Career Exploration Lab, computer-assisted career planning programs and several computer-based interest surveys, among many other services. You can make an appointment to meet with a career counselor at the Counseling Center (407-823-2811); this counselor will assist you in the self-assessment you need to undertake. There is no charge to UCF students for the assistance provided at the Career Resources Center or at the Counseling Center.

### **WRITE, WRITE, WRITE**

Your writing skills are central to your ability to get a job and to your ability to progress in your career. Nothing is more fundamental. Your written materials are an extension of yourself. Your writing skill reflects your ability to think and to organize. The way to improve your writing is to write, and to have your written work evaluated, and then to rewrite, and then to repeat the process. If you have doubts about your writing abilities, ask someone who has good skills to read and critique your writing. If your writing skills are deficient, take writing courses in the English Department. If your skills need polishing, take courses that require that you write. Go to the Writing Center ([www.uwc.ucf.edu/](http://www.uwc.ucf.edu/), 407-823-2197). Find work that requires you to write. Work with a

faculty member, become involved in a research project, take an independent study, and write!

## **SOME OPTIONS TO CONSIDER**

### **CONSIDER A MINOR**

You can select courses which may enhance your career options and help distinguish you from other job applicants. For example, if your aim is to work for a large corporation, a minor in business or in economics is worth your serious consideration. If your interests are international or comparative, you must have skill in speaking, reading and writing at least one language beyond English. If you are interested in policy analysis, you need research skills that go beyond the "scope and methods" requirement for the Political Science major; you should take courses in economics and statistics. If you want to work on campaigns, you need to know polling and statistical techniques, and might well want to take some courses in mass media as well. If you are passionate about social issues, a minor in sociology might be appropriate. It might also be possible to combine your Political Science major with appropriate courses in history, economics and education so as to achieve certification to teach in Florida's public schools without majoring in education. You can begin to explore this option at [www.firn.edu/dae](http://www.firn.edu/dae). Virtually all jobs require that you be skilled in the use of computers, and many require that you have some sophistication in data analysis. Writing skills are always in demand. Your choice of courses beyond your major can provide you additional substantive preparation, enhance your credentials and create options for you that otherwise might not exist.

### **CONSIDER AN INTERNSHIP**

An internship can give you practical experience, a great resume entry, academic credit and help you gather information and meet people. It can also lead to a job. It is perhaps the most important thing a student can do to prepare for employment. The vast majority of political science students who get jobs related to the field of political science directly after graduating with their BA degree do an internship. Put another way: not every student who interns gets a job, but almost every student who gets a job did an internship. An internship allows you to test your skills and to apply what you have learned. An internship can help you decide what kinds of career you do or do not desire to pursue. Internships can help you around the proverbial "catch 22"--employers want people with experience but how do you get experience if you initially can't get a job because you don't have experience? Internships provide you with on-the-job training and let you get a taste of the field in which you think you want to invest your working years. Most importantly internships provide you an opportunity to network, find a mentor, and make job contacts in your field and in some cases get a job offer from the internship site. The Political Science department offers an internship program and encourages internships at the local, state, national and international levels. Internships have prerequisites and require writing, so plan early if you wish to incorporate an internship into your undergraduate work.

Under normal circumstances you must be a junior or senior by credit hours (60 or more) to do an internship (exceptions may be granted for one-of-a-kind opportunities such as a presidential election campaign or other position that might not be available at a future date). Internships can be done in all semesters and are typically unpaid. Internships can earn variable amounts of credit although the standard local part time internship earns three credit hours and the standard full time Washington DC internship earns twelve credit hours. You may do multiple internships and some students have done as many as three or four over their junior and senior year. Political science majors can apply up to six internship hours towards their major requirements and political science minors can apply three internship hours towards their minor requirements. Additional internship hours count as upper division electives. Currently the department places over 100 interns a year and over the past decade over 200 students got paying jobs as a direct or indirect result of their internship.

There are basically three ways to arrange an internship. You may find a placement on your own, you may go through UCF Cooperative Education (CO-OP), or you may see the political science internship coordinator for a list of current options. If you find one on your own or go through CO-OP you will still need to consult with the department internship coordinator to arrange academic credit. Internships earn regular letter grades and show up on transcripts and academic audits. Your grade is based on several components: the number of hours you put in; an evaluation from your supervisor; a journal or portfolio documenting your experience; and a research paper or papers. Since you are earning credit and a grade you must pay for the credit hours like any other course.

The local internship program allows students to gain academic credit while interning in Central Florida. The standard local internship earns three credit hours and requires the student to average 15 hours a week at the site over the course of the term, keep a journal of hours and duties, and write a college level research paper (10 pages double spaced) on a topic related to the internship. Ideally you should see the department internship coordinator in the last couple months of the previous term to get a local internship (as an example, for a spring internship starting in January see the coordinator as early as November). Internship placements can be made as late as add/drop week (and even later under special circumstances), however since internship placements are first come first serve you are advised to start earlier.

Locally, internship opportunities exist with state and federal legislators, city and county commissioners and executives, law firms, lobbying organizations and governmental relations departments, local media and city and county governments. Opportunities also exist in the nonprofit sector and with various community groups. During election years, internships have been held with local, state and federal election campaigns--a useful opportunity for generating future employment and political contacts. The department internship coordinator is the best source for specific placement sites available in a given term.

The department also places interns in Tallahassee every spring during the legislative session. The UCF Office of University Relations funds a Legislative Scholars Internship Program. Students apply, are interviewed and selected in the fall for placement with a member of the central Florida legislative delegation in Tallahassee during session in the spring. This is a full time full semester internship that requires

students to move to Tallahassee. The Office of University Relations makes the placements, provides housing in Tallahassee, and pays a stipend to help cover expenses while working in the state Capitol.

The department also places and supervises interns in Washington DC. Many students go through the Washington Center for internships in the nation's capitol (found at [www.twc.edu](http://www.twc.edu)). The Washington Center (TWC) is a nonprofit organization with over 35 years experience placing and supervising interns in the nation's capitol. Students fill out an application packet in consultation with the department internship coordinator and the UCF TWC liaison (currently Ms. Ulla Isaac in the UCF CO-OP office) and submit it to TWC. TWC contacts potential sites in DC who then contact the students directly for interviews and hiring (although the majority of these placements do not pay a salary). Students work at their internship full time and take an academic course one night a week while in DC. They must also put together a portfolio to document their learning experience. Students normally receive 12 credit hours from the political science department at UCF for a TWC internship but may choose to earn less (although the workload in Washington is the same regardless of credit hours received). This has been a very popular program with over 100 UCF political science students interning through TWC over the last decade. UCF students have interned with the White House, the US House and Senate, State Department, Environmental Protection Agency, Washington law firms, interest groups and many others. A number of students have taken jobs in DC upon graduation as a direct result of their internships in DC (for instance on Capitol Hill with Florida Congressional Representatives).

TWC placements are made every semester with spring and fall internships lasting about 14 weeks and summer internship lasting about 10 weeks. TWC has housing available for students and also has a matching scholarship program with the Florida legislature (on a funding available basis) that helps reduce student costs significantly. The application deadline date for most TWC placements is about three months before a semester starts, but for planning purposes you should start much earlier if possible. Ideally, to get an internship with TWC you should begin reviewing the internship packet up to a year ahead to allow yourself time to plan (e.g. to adjust your lease so you don't end up paying rent in two different places while in DC). A few placements such as the US State Department or Justice Department actually require as much as a nine-month lead time for background checks.

Another good source for internships is the UCF Office of Experiential Learning [www.explearning.ucf.edu/](http://www.explearning.ucf.edu/) which houses the Cooperative Education Department (CO-OP). A CO-OP position is normally done for two semesters, part time. CO-OP positions are all paid and also allow you to earn academic credit through the political science department. Many students have found internships with law firms or government agencies through CO-OP and some of these turned in to full time jobs upon graduation. To get a CO-OP position, go online and fill out an application. Then make an appointment to talk with a counselor about placements available in areas that interest you. The potential internship site will then interview candidates. If you get a CO-OP position remember to get in touch with the political science internship coordinator to arrange for academic credit. Requirements for the typical 3 credit hour CO-OP internship are similar to those for other local internships: 15-20 hours a week on-site, recording hours and duties in a journal and a college level research paper.

Finally some students find their own internship positions. This may be in Central Florida, Washington, Tallahassee or elsewhere including overseas. For instance in the past several years students have found positions and received credit for internships with numerous elected officials and law firms in Central Florida, the Speaker of the Florida House in Tallahassee, Majority Leader of the US Congress, United Nations in New York, and overseas in Africa, Nepal, India, Ukraine, and Japan. The internship coordinator is thrilled when students find and get these opportunities and is happy to help arrange academic credit. The student should provide a letter from the organization verifying placement and including all contact information needed for evaluation. Credit hours and requirements vary for these kinds of internships.

For those interested in exploring options and/or finding a placement on their own, some suggestions follow.

You can learn about internship opportunities at the state level at [www.myflorida.com](http://www.myflorida.com) which lists internship opportunities and has a listing of state government agencies.

For students who are graduating, one of the most attractive internships at the state level is with the Florida House of Representatives. It is a year-long internship program in which interns provide staff assistance to the members and committees of the House. These interns are paid, and must be admitted to and enrolled in a graduate program at Florida State University. Competition for these positions is keen. Application deadlines are in early November. To be eligible for a fall internship you must complete undergraduate work by the preceding June, and be accepted into a graduate or law program at FSU. State legislators are always interested in student volunteers and interns, especially during campaigns and in the period leading up to the legislative session. It might be possible to arrange an internship with another unit of state government if you select a particular agency to approach.

It is also possible to arrange an internship in the Tallahassee office of interest groups. You can locate the names and addresses of such groups on the Web at the Florida state legislature's web site "OnLine Sunshine" ([www.leg.state.fl.us/Lobbyist](http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Lobbyist)).

Both of Florida's U.S. Senators ([www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov)) and all of Florida's members of the House of Representatives (<http://www.house.gov/>) offer internship opportunities in their district and DC offices (most of the central Florida members are in the department internship database). Senators and Representatives from other states also offer internships and might, under special circumstances, be willing to consider a Florida student for such a position. Many agencies of the federal government offer internships; some of these positions are paid summer positions. To explore these possibilities, go to [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov) and explore under "our government".

For those with international or comparative interests, a variety of internship opportunities are available through the federal government, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, think tanks, and private enterprise. Internships with the federal government are very competitive but they are worth pursuing since they provide experience, are excellent vehicles for networking and often lead to permanent positions. Elements of the federal government that have intern programs with an international emphasis include the following (some of these are paid and others for



academic credit only; some in Washington and others elsewhere in the U.S. and abroad):

Agency for International Development [www.usaid.gov/](http://www.usaid.gov/) ; Central Intelligence Agency [www.cia.gov](http://www.cia.gov) ; Department of Defense [www.defenselink.mil](http://www.defenselink.mil) ; Department of State [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov) ; National Security Agency [www.nsa.gov](http://www.nsa.gov).

International organizations are also a source of internship opportunities, although they are limited in number and highly competitive. Nevertheless, they can provide an edge for those seeking permanent employment in an international agency, as career positions are often staffed on a quota system and networking can be an advantage. Agencies that provide internship opportunities for those with international training include the United Nations, which has a highly developed internship program, including the UN Ad Hoc Internship Program, the Graduate Student Intern Program, the UN Headquarters Intern Program, and the Summer Internship Program. If you are interested in a United Nations internship, go to the web site [www.wafunif.org](http://www.wafunif.org). This site is provided by an organization of former U.N. interns and fellows (World Association of Former United Nations Interns and Fellows - the acronym is WAFUNIF), This web site has a very useful page called "ISTUNIF On-Line" which will guide you through the complex organization of the United Nations to the many internship programs run by the UN and its constituent organizations, including such UN agencies as the International Labor Organization and UNICEF. You might also be interested in the Organization of American States ([www.oas.org/EN/PINFO/HR/job.htm](http://www.oas.org/EN/PINFO/HR/job.htm)); the Inter-American Development Bank ([www.iadb.org](http://www.iadb.org)) or the Delegation of the Commission of the European Community ([www.eurunion.org](http://www.eurunion.org)).

Internships exist with a variety of international non-governmental organizations. Here are some examples.

### Emphasis: **Regional**

**Western Hemisphere:** Accion International (<http://www.accion.org>), Americas Society ([www.americas-society.org](http://www.americas-society.org)), Council on Hemispheric Affairs ([www.coha.org/about-internships/](http://www.coha.org/about-internships/)), the Institute for Central American Studies ([www.mesoamer.org](http://www.mesoamer.org)), Washington Office on Latin America ([www.wola.org](http://www.wola.org))

**Africa:** the Africa-American Institute (<http://www.aaionline.org/>), TransAfrica (<http://www.transafricaforum.org/>), Visions in Action (<http://www.visionsinaction.org/>), Africare ([www.africare.org](http://www.africare.org))

**Middle East:** Amideast ([www.amideast.org](http://www.amideast.org)), the Middle East Institute (<http://www.mei.edu/>)

**Asia:** The Asia Foundation ([www.asiafoundation.org](http://www.asiafoundation.org)), the Asia Society ([www.asiasociety.org](http://www.asiasociety.org))

**Europe:** the American-Scandinavian Foundation ([www.amscan.org](http://www.amscan.org)), the Atlantic Council of the United States ([www.acus.org](http://www.acus.org)), Joint Baltic American National Committee ([www.jbanc.org](http://www.jbanc.org)), CDS International (<http://www.cdsintl.org/>)

### Emphasis: **Policy Issues**

American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research ([www.aei.org/](http://www.aei.org/)), the Arms Control Association ([www.armscontrol.org](http://www.armscontrol.org)), the Brookings Institution ([www.brook.edu/](http://www.brook.edu/)), the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, ([www.ceip.org/](http://www.ceip.org/)), the Center for International Policy (<http://www.ciponline.org>), the Council on Foreign Relations (<http://www.cfr.org/>), the Heritage Foundation (<http://www.heritage.org/>), the Institute for Policy Studies ([www.ips-dc.org/](http://www.ips-dc.org/)), Zero Population Growth ([www.zpg.org/](http://www.zpg.org/)), Center for Strategic and International Studies ([www.csis.org/](http://www.csis.org/)), the World Federalists ([www.wfa.org/](http://www.wfa.org/)), Chicago Council on Foreign Relations ([www.c CFR.org/](http://www.c CFR.org/)), Common Cause ([www.commoncause.org/](http://www.commoncause.org/)), Ford Foundation ([www.fordfound.org/](http://www.fordfound.org/)), the Foreign Policy Association ([www.fpa.org/](http://www.fpa.org/)), Association to Unite the Democracies (<http://www.iaud.org/>)

### Emphasis: **Humanitarian**

American Red Cross ([www.redcross.org/](http://www.redcross.org/)), Amnesty International ([www.amnesty.org/](http://www.amnesty.org/)), Human Rights Watch ([www.hrw.org/](http://www.hrw.org/)), Habitat for Humanity International ([www.habitat.org/](http://www.habitat.org/)), Human Rights Internet (<http://www.hri.ca/>)

### Emphasis: **Economic**

Council on Economic Priorities (<http://www.knology.net/~bilrum/cep.htm>), Institute for International Economics ([www.iie.com/](http://www.iie.com/)), the World Bank Summer Internship Program (<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTHRJOBS/0,,contentMDK:20515785~menuPK:1477648~pagePK:64262408~piPK:64262191~theSitePK:1058433,00.html>), the U.S. Chamber of Commerce ([www.uschamber.org/](http://www.uschamber.org/))

### Emphasis: **Defense**

The Arms Control Association ([www.armscontrol.org](http://www.armscontrol.org)), American Association for the Advancement of Science Committee on Science, Arms Control, and National Security ([www.aaas.org](http://www.aaas.org)), the Center for Defense Information ([www.cdi.org](http://www.cdi.org)), the Center for National Security Studies (<http://www.gwu.edu/~nssp/>), Council for a Livable World ([www.clw.org](http://www.clw.org)), Physicians for Social Responsibility ([www.psr.org/](http://www.psr.org/)), the RAND Corporation ([www.rand.org](http://www.rand.org)), the Union of Concerned Scientists ([www.ucsusa.org](http://www.ucsusa.org))

### Emphasis: **International Organizations**

United Nations Association/USA ([www.unausa.org](http://www.unausa.org)), U.S. Committee for UNICEF ([www.unicefusa.org](http://www.unicefusa.org))

### Emphasis: **Gender**

Women's Research and Education Institute ([www.wrei.org](http://www.wrei.org)), Women Strike for Peace, Women's Action for New Directions ([www.wand.org](http://www.wand.org)), Women's International League for Peace and Freedom ([www.wilpf.org](http://www.wilpf.org))

### Emphasis: **Religious**

Church Women United ([www.churchwomen.org](http://www.churchwomen.org)), American Friends Service Committee ([www.afsc.org](http://www.afsc.org)), Brethren Volunteer Service

[http://cob.convio.net/site/PageServer?pagename=serve\\_brethren\\_volunteer\\_service](http://cob.convio.net/site/PageServer?pagename=serve_brethren_volunteer_service))

## **CONSIDER VOLUNTEERING**

If you do not undertake a formal internship (or in addition to your internship), consider gaining experience through volunteer activities. Many local organizations are concerned with community issues, government and politics; you should consider joining one or more. This is a means to contribute to your community while building contacts which may prove useful. These organizations always welcome new members and often include among their active membership people who make hiring decisions in local firms and organizations. Students who join these groups often find that they quickly move to positions of responsibility in the groups. The University encourages volunteer activities in a variety of ways. You can learn about some of these at "Volunteer UCF" (<http://vucf.getinvolveducf.com/news.php>). A more formal approach is to register for a "service learning" course ([http://www.explearning.ucf.edu/Overview/Options\\_and\\_Definitions/Service-Learning/About\\_Service-Learning\\_95\\_270.aspx](http://www.explearning.ucf.edu/Overview/Options_and_Definitions/Service-Learning/About_Service-Learning_95_270.aspx) OR <http://education.ucf.edu/es/learning.cfm>). UCF also sponsors a "volunteer fair" where you can learn about a variety of volunteer opportunities.

Volunteer opportunities are also listed in the Orlando *Sentinel* and in other local newspapers. You will also find a section listing networking groups in local business, government and nonprofit organizations in each Monday's Business Section of the Orlando *Sentinel*, but be aware that some of these groups charge a fee.

During election periods, many campaign organizations contact the Political Science department, seeking volunteers. While the department never selects a candidate to whom a student is assigned, we do encourage students to become involved in campaigns, both as a matter of citizenship and as a means to gain practical experience. Volunteer activities can provide help when you are looking for jobs, as well as providing you an opportunity to become involved in your community. Alternatives like the Peace Corps or AmeriCorps obviously involve a much larger commitment on your part but might be worth considered.

## **CONSIDER GRADUATE SCHOOL**

An advanced professional degree is of help when seeking some jobs and is essential for others. The Ph.D. degree is basically a research degree, necessary for teaching and research positions at the university level but also appropriate for positions in government and the private sector which involve advanced policy analysis and implementation. A complete listing of Political Science Ph.D. graduate programs can be found in the Political Science office in HPH 302. You can also find information about specific graduate programs on the Web; the general format for a university's home page is [www.universityname.edu](http://www.universityname.edu); if this doesn't get you to the school you are seeking, use a search engine. If you are considering seeking a Ph.D. you should work very closely with your academic advisor.

A Master's degree in Political Science is the credential for community college teaching and is useful for secondary teaching, as well as increasing your qualifications for jobs in government and business. One recommended pattern is for a student to obtain an undergraduate degree in a liberal arts field and to follow that with a Master's degree in a specialized, applied area. A large number of options exist. For example, journalists often combine an undergraduate major in Political Science with a Master's degree in journalism. As another example, many universities offer specialized graduate training in environmental, urban and regional planning. In Florida, Florida State University ([www.fsu.edu/~durp](http://www.fsu.edu/~durp)) and Florida Atlantic University ([www.fau.edu/divdept/caupa/durp](http://www.fau.edu/divdept/caupa/durp)) offer such programs. A complete listing of planning programs accredited by the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning can be found at <http://www.planningaccreditationboard.org/index.php?id=30>. As a third example, some universities now offer professional Master's programs in campaign or political management. The University of Florida has such a program ([www.polisci.ufl.edu/campaign](http://www.polisci.ufl.edu/campaign)) as does George Washington University (<http://www.gwu.edu/learn/graduateprofessional/masterscertificateprograms/mastersprograms>),

For some jobs in city or county government, the Master's of Political Science or of Public Administration is the entry-level credential. One or two-year Master's programs offer training in various aspects of public administration, international affairs, environmental planning, criminal justice, judicial administration, and in other policy areas. A Master's degree in a cognate field (e.g. applied economics, applied sociology, applied statistics, or journalism) is also worth considering.

## **USE UCF'S CAREER RESOURCE CENTER**

No later than the beginning of your senior year, you need to begin serious, systematic work toward finding your first professional job. Begin by contacting the University of Central Florida's Career Resource Center (<http://www.career.ucf.edu/>, 407-823-2361). This office will help you with career advising, resume preparation and interview skills. Career Resources also maintains an employer job data bank, holds job fairs, and schedules interviews with those employers who come onto campus to interview. The Career Resource Center will provide more useful specific interview possibilities to those who wish to work in the private sector than for those who seek employment in the public sector, although some governmental agencies do occasionally conduct interviews through the Career Resource Center.

## **JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES**

If you passively wait for something to “turn up”, it is likely that nothing will “turn up”. You need to begin early (at least a year before you hope to begin your first professional position), search widely, network and make connections, make plans which you follow systematically, and remain flexible.

## **FIRST, CAST YOUR NET WIDELY**

Some people have always known what career path they want to pursue, but most people do not, and most people change directions more than once. Even if you are sure of the direction you wish to follow, you should begin by looking very widely. The specific career options suggested in later pages will help you do this, but early in your job search you need to spend some time exploring and thinking, so that you avoid making choices without being aware of the wide range of options that exist. In the public sector, governments at all levels hire persons with all kinds of skills into all kinds of occupations. Small towns, big cities, counties and special governing districts, along with executive, judicial and legislative branches of state and federal governments all fill staff positions. Large corporations have government affairs divisions while small corporations tend to rely on their trade associations for governmental affairs services. Nongovernmental organizations, interest and lobby groups, trade unions and think tanks hire staff. Magazines, newspapers, television and other media firms hire people to analyze government and public policy. You do yourself a disservice unless you begin by making yourself aware of the wide range of options that exist. Early in this broad survey, you should design a systematic means of keeping records of interesting possibilities and then keep careful records of organizations, names, titles, addresses, and so on.

The Web can be very useful for this initial exploration. For example, several popular websites are job search engines such as <http://www.careerbuilder.com/> and <http://www.monster.com/>. Federal government job search engines include <http://federaljobs.net/employe.htm> and <http://www.usajobs.gov/studentjobs/>. For jobs in the state of Florida try <https://www.employflorida.com/>.

To begin looking at more political science - related possibilities check out the White House ([www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov)), where you can quickly link to all of the major agencies of the executive branch of the federal government; from the web site for the U.S. Congress ([www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov) and [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov)) you can see the staff structure of Congress; from "MyFlorida" ([www.myflorida.com](http://www.myflorida.com)) you can survey the structure of Florida's government. Many web sites list job opportunities in the private and non-profit sectors: <http://www.heritage.org/search?query=job+opportunities> ?? , <http://www.idealists.org/>, [www.accessjob.org](http://www.accessjob.org), [www.sustainablebusiness.com](http://www.sustainablebusiness.com) and [www.envirocitizen.org](http://www.envirocitizen.org) will give you an overview. Read the ads in the Sentinel (<http://www.orlandosentinel.com/>) in the Washington Post ([www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)), remembering that your purpose at this early point is to gain a sense of possibilities. Some time on the various job search sites listed by the UCF Career Resources Center (<http://www.career.ucf.edu/>), will help you begin to get an idea of the kinds of jobs which might be available. And don't overlook the University itself as a potential employer ([www.ucf.edu/jobs](http://www.ucf.edu/jobs)). While most university positions require a graduate degree, UCF is growing rapidly and does hire people into positions with titles like program assistant, coordinator or specialist for which the Bachelor's degree is the required credential.

## **REGISTER AT UCF'S CAREER RESOURCES CENTER**

No later than the beginning of your senior year, register at UCF's Career Resources Center. The Center provides help in writing your resume, in practicing interview skills, and in job search strategies. It holds job fairs—you should attend these (wearing professional attire and with resumes in hand). The Center can match you with potential

employers and schedule interviews. Use the resources provided to you by the university (<http://www.career.ucf.edu/>).

## **YOUR RESUME**

You will get a great deal of advice on preparing your resume; the best advice comes from the university's Career Resources Center. Our advice is that you highlight your achievements but never overstate or distort information on your resume. Keep your resume professional (no fancy fonts, purple ink, pink paper or smiley faces). Have several people proofread and critique your resume and then have several more people do the same: typographical, spelling or grammatical errors on a resume will surely erase any possibility of your obtaining a job. The resume must be perfect in its presentation. Omit the "career objectives" and "salary history" sections; they may unduly limit consideration of your resume. You need to prepare your resume early, and you may need to revise your resume each time you target a specific position.

## **NETWORK, NETWORK, NETWORK**

After a broad survey of job possibilities, you need to begin to narrow your focus as to job categories, location, and other factors. As you focus your job search, you should consider everyone you know a potential contact; tell everyone that you are looking for a job. This includes family, friends and neighbors, roommates, colleagues, your minister or rabbi, the person who cuts your hair, everyone. Develop as long a list of potential contacts as you can, and keep very careful records of your contacts. Use the people you worked with in your internship and in your volunteer positions. Don't know anyone in Washington? Sure you do—does your cousin belong to a trade association with an office in Washington? Don't know anyone who has worked in Europe? Sure you do—does your neighbor have a cousin whose company sent her to France? Think imaginatively to develop contacts. The UCF Alumni Association (<http://www.ucfalumni.com>) has a career development service and has a program whereby currently-enrolled students work with alumni mentors. Even if you don't use this program, consider whether you know any UCF alums and use your shared university identification as a context for contacting these people about potential jobs. You might ask a UCF alum or two if they would agree to an "information interview", that is, to a short interview in which you ask them about how they began in their field, job possibilities, job-seeking tactics, and so on.

## **NARROW YOUR SEARCH**

After you have surveyed widely, you must narrow your focus and begin to target specific categories of jobs, based on your interests and skills. Visit the web site of every possible employer you include on your list of targeted employers. Search specific job listings, identify the names of persons to whom to write (the web is essential to this), and begin to send out your resume with a cover letter. Your cover letter is as important as your resume, so construct it with the same care that you used for your resume. When you are writing about a particular job opening, customize your letter to that position, indicating your familiarity with the organization (which you will have gained from the organization's web site) and connect your skills to the organization's mission. Ask for an interview.

Many positions are never advertised. For these you need to write a general letter of inquiry (again, this letter must not contain any errors or exaggerations) which gains the reader's attention. You need a specific name and title in a specific organization; see the suggestions in the sections below and visit the web site of each organization in which you are interested. Your letter should reflect your skills and should ask about job possibilities. Say that you will follow up with a phone call; then do so about a week after your letter will have been received. **Always** answer any responses you receive. You may send out dozens, even hundreds of letters of inquiry. Keep meticulous records, and always follow through.

When you are invited for an interview, be prepared. That is, research the company or agency which has granted you an interview, and be sure that you have developed your interview skills (the Career Resources Center will help you with interview skills). Do not turn down an interview; you may find that even though the specific position for which you are being interviewed is not what you want, there may be another position in the same organization which does interest you. Take a short sample of your writing and a list of references (with telephone numbers) with you to the interview. Always follow up the interview with a written letter to the person with whom you had the interview.

If you were to accept a position in the executive branch of the federal government, your salary in 2010 would depend on your degree, GPA, and type of position. Entry-level jobs on congressional staffs average about 20% lower, while entry level jobs with nongovernmental organizations average about 30% lower. Jobs in the private sector should have slightly higher salaries. As a rule of thumb, if the job content is particularly attractive or if the job offers lots of potential for advancement, the entry salary will be lower rather than higher. Be sure to consider benefits.

## **SPECIFIC JOB OPTIONS**

### **FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

The Federal Government is one of the largest employers in the country, hiring people for several thousand civilian positions each month, in a wide variety of fields and in numerous locations. The legislative, executive and judicial branches of the federal government use different hiring procedures.

#### **Executive Branch**

If you have visited the web sites for the various executive offices of the federal government as suggested above ([www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov)), you know that from the Agriculture Department to Veteran's Affairs, from the Agency for International Development to the Voice of America, a very large number of executive agencies hire persons into a very wide range of positions. These jobs carry salaries competitive with the private section and bring good benefits and good opportunity for advancement. After you have made yourself aware of the structure of the executive and of the range of job options available, you are ready to seek particular job openings. Each agency does its own hiring, but all executive branch positions covered by civil service are listed at <http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/>. Your search should start here, and at the web sites of

the specific agencies. The appendix to this career guide has several good books on federal government jobs and careers that you may want to check out.

Other web sites which will lead you to federal jobs are <http://www.memphis.edu/internships/federalgov.php> and [www.jobsfed.com](http://www.jobsfed.com). Be very wary of advertisements that offer information about federal jobs but which charge a fee for the information; these are often a scam. There is no reason to pay for information which is available without charge at various web sites.

Be aware that a number of federal executive agencies are “excepted” from the civil service and have their own hiring and pay systems. This includes the FBI, the CIA, the Foreign Service and the National Security Agency. You should note that an organization like the CIA hires persons for clandestine work but also hires persons for analytical work—positions like foreign area specialist and open sources analyst as well as the more ordinary positions of auditor and administrative assistant. Even the National Security Administration hires “intelligence analysts” for whom a highly technical background is not essential. If you are seriously interested in one of these agencies, you will need to work with the details of its application process, which you will find at the relevant web site. Also consult closely with the Political Science faculty if you wish to pursue such options as the Foreign Service Examination.

## **Congress**

The United States Congress and its support agencies employ about 10,000 people in staff positions, which are not civil service positions. Congressional offices hire legislative assistants, case workers and communications managers along with clerical personnel. Hiring for personal and committee staff positions is generally done through the offices of individual members of Congress; the best place to start a Capitol Hill job search is at the office of the Senators and Representative who represent you in Congress. It is nearly essential to be in Washington to obtain one of these positions, which is one reason why an internship can be very valuable for finding this kind of job. For employment information for the House of Representatives go to <http://www.house.gov/cao-hr/> and for the US Senate go to [http://www.senate.gov/visiting/common/generic/placement\\_office.htm](http://www.senate.gov/visiting/common/generic/placement_office.htm).

In addition to personal and committee staffs, the committees of the political parties in congress (House and Senate Republican and Democratic Policy Committees, for example) also hire staff. To identify specific openings on the hill, refer to two publications: *Roll Call* ([www.rollcall.com](http://www.rollcall.com)) and *The Hill* (<http://thehill.com/>). Both list job openings for lobby groups, the private sector and non-profit organizations as well as for positions on Congressional staffs.

This is definitely an area in which you are expected to “pay your dues”, so people often take a very routine entry position just to support themselves in Washington while searching for a better position (and even then, entry level Congressional staff salaries may not support the cost of living in Washington). Political philosophy, partisan identification and political activity are definitely taken into account for most Hill positions.



Finally, Congressional support agencies hire staff. These include the Congressional Budget Office ([www.cbo.gov](http://www.cbo.gov)) the General Accounting Office ([www.gao.gov](http://www.gao.gov)), and Congressional Research Service (<http://www.loc.gov/crsinfo/>). While these organizations generally hire persons with advanced degrees, since these offices engage in very interesting and important work you might nonetheless want to check them out for job possibilities.

## **The Courts**

Individuals interested in entering the federal judiciary in an administrative capacity have several routes to follow, each of which has advantages and disadvantages. Some come to the field through law school but a law degree is not mandatory for employment since practical experience can substitute when it is combined with a specialized education. Master's degrees in judicial administration are now offered in a number of institutions; this can prove a very useful alternative for those who are interested in the courts but not in the practice of law, or for those who began as prelaw students but who changed their mind about attending law school. The oldest and best known is the Institute for Court Management of the National Center for State Courts ([www.ncsconline.org](http://www.ncsconline.org)) which was founded at the behest of former Chief Justice Warren Burger as part of his crusade to improve the state of judicial administration at all levels. The flagship program of the Institute is the Court Executive Development Program, but the Institute offers many other educational programs. At other institutions you may find court administration programs as an area of specialization within master's programs in criminal justice or public administration.

Participation in a judicial administration program opens opportunities both at the state and local level and at the federal level. Federal judicial administrative openings are listed at [www.uscourts.gov](http://www.uscourts.gov), the web site of the federal judiciary. Be aware that not all positions are listed under the employment opportunities section of this web site; many are listed only by the specific court which has the opening. You can access these by using the "links" section of the [uscourts.gov](http://www.uscourts.gov) home page, which will guide you to the different regions of the country.

To find out about administrative positions in Florida's courts, you can check the Court's website at [www.flcourts.org](http://www.flcourts.org), but you should also contact the local judicial administrator regarding possible openings within the court. In Florida, the County Clerk dominates the recruitment process so one should begin by contacting their personnel office (for Orange County, <http://www.myorangeclerk.com/>, for Seminole County, [www.seminoleclerk.org](http://www.seminoleclerk.org), and so on; you can find the web address for all of the County Clerks offices in Florida at <http://www.stateofflorida.com/Portal/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabid=51>).

## **CITY, COUNTY AND STATE GOVERNMENT**

With the devolution of programs to city and state levels, the numbers of government and government-related jobs at these levels are likely to grow over the short term. To make yourself familiar with the governmental structures of the state of Florida (and thus of potential job options), go to the Florida governmental information locator at <http://dlis.dos.state.fl.us/fgils/>. You can find specific job openings at <http://www.myflorida.com/>; but do not assume that all available positions are listed

here. Some state agencies including the universities have separate listings on their individual web sites.

State legislators hire staff, and the increased turnover in membership growing from term limits will mean increased turnover in legislative staff positions. Follow the state legislative elections (perhaps by an internship or through volunteer participation); most legislators tend to hire staff from among those they already know. The state legislature's Human Resources office is at [http://www.leg.state.fl.us/cgi-bin/View\\_Page.pl?File=index.cfm&Directory=Info\\_Center/employment/&Location=app](http://www.leg.state.fl.us/cgi-bin/View_Page.pl?File=index.cfm&Directory=Info_Center/employment/&Location=app).

You can find legislative staff job openings listed at "Legislative Employment Link" on the legislature's home page [www.leg.state.fl.us](http://www.leg.state.fl.us). The Florida legislature operates an Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability, with positions which require policy analysis skills. You can find the job listings for this agency at <http://www.oppaga.state.fl.us/shell.aspx?pagepath=careers/careers.htm>; the office also has summer internship positions. A job with a non-permanent commission, committee or similar organization might be a relatively-easy-to-obtain first job in Tallahassee.

Florida's city and county governments have web pages which include job listings and, usually, the opportunity to apply for positions on-line. A gateway link to Florida counties can be found at <http://www.stateofflorida.com/Portal/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabid=35> and to most Florida cities at <http://www.stateofflorida.com/Portal/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabid=34>. Local governments in other states have comparable web directories. A quick way to find counties in the US is [http://www.naco.org/Counties/Pages/NACo\\_FindACounty.aspx](http://www.naco.org/Counties/Pages/NACo_FindACounty.aspx). If you have decided to target jobs with a city or county, you should contact the personnel office and ask for an information interview about possible future jobs, the skills needed, promotion opportunities, and so on. An internship can be very useful in learning how to find jobs with local governments. Do not overlook small towns in your job search. While they hire only a few employees, they do hire people. What you have to do is identify the vacancies by an attentive search and seek an interview.

## **THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA**

Seeking a career in the global "new world order" is an exciting adventure, as the international job market has expanded, diversified, and privatized. Although the federal government remains a major employer of those with international training, state and local governments are growing markets for such talents (Florida, for example, has a tourism agency--Office of Tourism, Trade and Economic Development--which promotes the state in many regions of the world, particularly western Europe), and there are growing international career opportunities in the private sector, particularly for those whose training includes international economics, computer and statistical skills, international banking and finance, international business, and/or international marketing.

Preparation for international careers includes cross-cultural awareness, political and economic knowledge, and practical experience. The first two can be obtained through travel and a liberal arts education which will help provide the requisite skills deemed as the ideal combination by a leading career guide in the field:

knowledge of history and an awareness of patterns in international relations  
grasp of what determines foreign policy priorities and realities  
grounding in economics and an understanding of international business  
familiarity with basic business and accounting skills  
well-developed computer skills and a high comfort level with technology  
understanding of policy development and implementation  
clarity and accuracy in speaking and writing  
self-awareness: comprehension of leadership and teamwork skills  
awareness of and commitment to ethical standards and personal values  
logic and objectivity in thinking  
ability to project possible future consequences of present decisions  
talent for time management  
poise, humor, imagination, compassion, and intellectual curiosity, judgment, openness to  
new ideas.  
(Carland and Trucano, Careers in International Affairs: 4)

Job opportunities for those with international affairs backgrounds exist in the U.S. federal government and, increasingly, with state and local government; international organizations; think tanks; professional associations and societies; the business, banking, and communications sectors; volunteer, nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs); and educational institutions.

### **Federal Government:**

Agency for International Development: [www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov). Interested in those with backgrounds and training in public policy analysis, economics, health studies, development theory, resource allocation policy, and demographics. While some of their staff is drawn from the career Foreign Service of the Department of State, about half of the positions are filled from the civil service.

Central Intelligence Agency: [www.cia.gov](http://www.cia.gov) While one may think first of clandestine responsibilities, the CIA also hires people for analytical and professional work not unlike that undertaken at other government agencies with an international focus. While the CIA looks primarily for those with advanced degrees (particularly Ph.D.'s) in area studies, foreign languages, economics, mathematics and statistics, and computer science, the Agency does list some entry-level positions for those with a Bachelor's degree.

Defense Intelligence Agency: [www.dia.mil](http://www.dia.mil) Less well-known to the public than the CIA but seeks those with similar skills as its civilian sister agency. Does hire civilian employees, occasionally has entry-level positions. Has an internship program.

Department of Agriculture: [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov) You might not think of Agriculture as a source of career opportunity for those with international training, but the department is concerned with generating foreign markets for American agricultural products and with trade and economic issues.

Department of Commerce, International Trade Administration: <http://trade.gov> is charged with fostering a favorable position for the U.S. in the international market place. Career opportunities exist in its Office of International Economic Policy, Office of Trade Development, Office of Trade Administration, and Foreign Commercial Service.

There is also the Travel Service, which is responsible for attracting foreign tourism to the U.S.

Department of Defense, International Security Affairs Division

[www.defenselink.mil/policy/isa](http://www.defenselink.mil/policy/isa) Hires people with training in foreign and defense policy and in economics as well as area studies. Has paid and unpaid intern positions.

Department of State: [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov) Has positions both in the career Foreign Service (political officers, economic and commercial officers, administration officers, and consular officers [www.state.gov/www/careers/rfscontents.html](http://www.state.gov/www/careers/rfscontents.html)) and non-FSO positions (technical specialists, such as lawyers, media specialists, interpreters, clerical and secretarial staff, communications and security specialists, general services and office management personnel). The State Department's internship program includes opportunities to work in embassies abroad:

[www.state.gov/www/careers/rstudprogindex.html](http://www.state.gov/www/careers/rstudprogindex.html)

National Security Agency: [www.nsa.gov](http://www.nsa.gov) In addition to those with computer, technological, and mathematical skills, needs persons with extensive area studies and language training (particularly in unusual languages) and hires "intelligence analysts" for whom a highly technical background is not essential.

Peace Corps: [www.peacecorps.gov](http://www.peacecorps.gov) Interested in those with liberal arts backgrounds and specialized training in various fields, but the competition is very keen, with some 12,000 applications each year for a tenth of that number of positions. There is a Peace Corps recruiter at the University of Florida who can be contacted at 351.392.6783 or at [peacecorps@ufic.ufl.edu](mailto:peacecorps@ufic.ufl.edu). You can read interviews with UF students who have been in the Peace Corps at [www.ufic.ufl.edu](http://www.ufic.ufl.edu).

State Department International Information Programs: <http://www.state.gov/r/iip/> OR <http://www.state.gov/r/iip/programs/>. Interested not only in those with journalism backgrounds but also those schooled in cultural and area studies, languages, and foreign/international affairs.

These are only the most obvious places employing those with international training and backgrounds; since most domestic policies have international components, it is possible to find a subunit in most executive agencies with an international focus. Others to investigate include the International Development Cooperation Agency, the Export-Import Bank, the Defense Security Assistance Agency, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, the U.S. International Trade Commission, the Inter-American Foundation, the Office of Management and Budget (which has both national security and international affairs units), and the Environmental Protection Agency.

The legislative branch also has units with strong international focus, notably the House and Senate Committees on International Relations and on Armed Services, and their Select Committees on Intelligence. Also consider the Appropriations and Budget committees, along with the personal staffs of elected members (all can be found at [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov) and [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov)) Additional job possibility in the legislative branch might be found at the Congressional Budget Office (<http://www.cbo.gov/>) and the General Accounting Office ([www.gao.gov](http://www.gao.gov)). Both of these congressional support

agencies hire analysts in the areas of national security and international affairs. These positions are almost never entry level, however, so please refer to the section on congressional staff positions, above.

## **INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

Career opportunities with international organizations are somewhat limited, often governed by national quotas (less than ten percent of those employed by the United Nations in its various bureaucracies are American nationals) and usually requiring specialized training, but the effort put forth in preparing and searching for such jobs can be rewarding. Each agency does its own hiring, so you must be prepared to contact every agency in which you have an interest. One shortcut, however, is the U.S. Department of State's Office of U.N. Employment Information and Assistance in its Bureau of International Organization Affairs, which links qualified applicants with United Nations agencies ([www.state.gov/p/io/empl](http://www.state.gov/p/io/empl))

One obvious place to begin a job search for those seeking to use their international training is the United Nations Secretariat, with its needs in the areas of communications, translators and interpreters, international economics, area studies, and international and security policy. The United Nation's main web page is [www.un.org/english](http://www.un.org/english), but remember that the UN is a very large and complex organization and so is its web site. The main administrative staff in New York is the Secretariat, which employs about 8,500 persons, but the UN also has significant administrative presence in Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi. Further, you should check out the constituent agencies of the UN, including such agencies as the Food and Agricultural Organization (<http://www.fao.org>), UNICEF ([www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)), Conference on Trade and Development ([www.unctad.org](http://www.unctad.org)) the United National Development Fund for Women ([www.undp.org/unifem](http://www.undp.org/unifem)) , the UN Fund for Population Activities ([www.unfpa.org](http://www.unfpa.org)) , and the UN Industrial Development Organization ([www.unido.org](http://www.unido.org)) . Other international agencies to consider include the International Fund for Agricultural Development ([www.ifad.org](http://www.ifad.org)) , the World Bank ([www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)) , the International Monetary Fund ([www.imf.org](http://www.imf.org)) , International Labor Organization ([www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org)) , There are others; use a search engine.

Don't limit your sights to global organizations and activities, as regional organizations are also a job source for those with international backgrounds. See, for example:

Asian Development Bank: [www.adb.org](http://www.adb.org); Inter-American Development Bank: [www.iadb.org](http://www.iadb.org); Organization of American States: [www.oas.org](http://www.oas.org) ; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development: [www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org) .

## **THINK TANKS**

Think tanks are another source of career opportunities, but the positions are not plentiful and most require advanced degrees - many the Ph.D. Examples include the American Enterprise Institute ([www.aei.org](http://www.aei.org)) the Arms Control Association (<http://www.armscontrol.org>), the Aspen Institute ([www.aspeninst.org](http://www.aspeninst.org)), the Atlantic Council of the United States ([www.acus.org](http://www.acus.org)) , the Brookings Institution ([www.brook.edu](http://www.brook.edu)) , the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (<http://carnegieendowment.org>), the CATO Institute ([www.cato.org](http://www.cato.org)), the Center for

Defense Information ([www.cdi.org/](http://www.cdi.org/)), the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations ([www.c CFR.org/](http://www.c CFR.org/)), the Council on Foreign Relations (<http://www.cfr.org/>), the East-West Center ([www.ewc.hawaii.edu/](http://www.ewc.hawaii.edu/)), the Foreign Policy Association ([www.fpa.org/](http://www.fpa.org/)), the Foreign Policy Research Institute ([www.fpri.org/](http://www.fpri.org/)), the Heritage Foundation ([www.heritage.org/](http://www.heritage.org/)), the Hoover Institution ([www.hoover.org/](http://www.hoover.org/)), the Hudson Institute ([www.hudson.org/](http://www.hudson.org/)), the Institute for Defense and Disarmament Studies ([www.idds.org/](http://www.idds.org/)), the Institute for Policy Studies (<http://www.ips-dc.org/>), the United States Institute of Peace ([www.usip.org/](http://www.usip.org/)) the Institute of War and Peace Studies (<http://www.siwps.com/>), the International Institute for Environment and Development ([www.iied.org/](http://www.iied.org/)), the International Republican Institute ([www.iri.org/](http://www.iri.org/)), the Middle East Institute ([www.mideasti.org/](http://www.mideasti.org/)), the National Democratic Institute ([www.ndi.org/](http://www.ndi.org/)), the Center for Law and Social Policy ([www.clasp.org/](http://www.clasp.org/)), the Trilateral Commission ([www.trilateral.org/](http://www.trilateral.org/)), the Overseas Development Council (<http://www.nndb.com/org/961/000161478/>), the RAND Corporation ([www.rand.org/](http://www.rand.org/)), the Population Council ([www.popcouncil.org/](http://www.popcouncil.org/)), the Eisenhower World Affairs Institute (<http://www.eisenhowerinstitute.org/>), and the Worldwatch Institute ([www.worldwatch.org/](http://www.worldwatch.org/)), (Many of these centers and institutes have internship opportunities, which are an excellent means of getting a foot in the door to a potential permanent position).

## **INTERNATIONAL NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS**

Career opportunities exist with a variety of nonprofit organizations in which one could utilize area studies training, language skills, policy and research skills, and economics, international or comparative training. Examples include:

Western Hemisphere (You can link to many of these, and other possible jobs, at [www.joblatino.com/inter.htm/](http://www.joblatino.com/inter.htm/)): Accion International (<http://www.accion.org/>), Amigos de las Americas ([www.amigoslink.org/](http://www.amigoslink.org/)); The Council on Hemispheric Affairs ([www.coha.org/](http://www.coha.org/)); The North American Congress on Latin America ([www.nacla.org/](http://www.nacla.org/)).

Africa: The African-American Institute (<http://www.aaionline.org/> OR <http://www.northeastern.edu/aai/>); Operation Crossroads Africa (<http://www.operationcrossroadsafrica.org/>); Technoserve (<http://www.technoserve.org/>); Africa News (<http://allafrica.com/>); The American Committee on Africa (<http://www.aluka.org/action/showCompilationPage?doi=10.5555/AL.SFF.COMPILATI ON.COLLECTION-MAJOR.ACOA&>); The African Fund for Endangered Wildlife ([www.gcci.org/afew/afew.html](http://www.gcci.org/afew/afew.html)).

The Middle East: The Foundation for Middle East Peace ([www.fmep.org/](http://www.fmep.org/)); Amideast ([www.amideast.org/](http://www.amideast.org/))

Europe: The German Marshall Fund of the United States ([www.gmfus.org/](http://www.gmfus.org/)); The Atlantic Council ([www.acus.org/](http://www.acus.org/)); The American Council on Germany ([www.acgusa.org/](http://www.acgusa.org/)); The American-Scandinavian Foundation (<http://www.amscan.org/>)

Asia: The Asia Society ([www.asiasociety.org/](http://www.asiasociety.org/)) ; The Asian Cultural Council ([www.asianculturalcouncil.org/](http://www.asianculturalcouncil.org/));The Asia Foundation ([www.asiafoundation.org/](http://www.asiafoundation.org/)); The China Institute in America ([www.chinainstitute.org/](http://www.chinainstitute.org/)).

Again, many of these organizations have small numbers of internships (mostly unpaid) which provide opportunities for a lateral move to a permanent position, since these positions are limited and having an inside track is a definite advantage.

## **TEACHING AT HOME AND ABROAD**

Teach for America <http://www.teachforamerica.org/> is a nonprofit that recruits recent college graduates and professionals to teach for two years in low-income communities throughout the US. Several UCF students have been selected for the program over the past few years.

Teaching outside the United States is an often-overlooked job possibility. The Department of Defense runs a school system for its overseas bases (<http://www.dodea.edu/home/>) around the world and part of the traditional high school curriculum includes social studies (you will need at least one course each in American history, world history, and geography, to complement your Political Science major). Students who did not major in Education must have gone through the University of Central Florida's College of Education's alternate certification program, hold a valid Florida teaching certificate, and have at least one year of full-time teaching experience.

The Department of State also runs its own schools for dependents of its embassy personnel, with similar requirements as those for teaching in the Defense Department school system ([www.state.gov/www/about\\_state/schools](http://www.state.gov/www/about_state/schools)). Other teaching opportunities, albeit on a much more limited scale, are with large multinational corporations with extensive overseas operations (such as oil companies and mining companies) that operate their own schools.

Finally, English is the language of choice throughout much of the developed and developing world and teaching English (English as a second language, ESL) is an excellent short-term job opportunity with exciting international travel options (for example, now that the United States has normalized relations with Vietnam, everyone wants to speak English and entrepreneurs are opening storefront English training institutes all over the country. Japan remains a major employer of ESL teachers, many of whom are young college graduates seeking travel abroad for several years before settling down to a more permanent job). UCF offers training in teaching English as a second language (<http://www.cmms.ucf.edu/iep.php>). A useful source for such opportunities is Susan Griffith's *Teaching English Abroad*.

## **NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND LOBBYISTS**

This is a job source often overlooked but which in fact hires thousands and thousands of people. There are dozens of such organizations in Orlando, hundreds in Tallahassee, and thousands in Washington. One directory, *Who's Who in Washington NonProfit Groups* (Congressional Quarterly Press) lists more than 2,000 groups which hire professional staff, including groups with interests in economics, business,

education, arts, media, employment, labor, energy, consumer affairs, minority affairs, health, housing, veterans concerns, foreign policy, immigration, national security, agriculture, environment, space and transportation. Or, if you look at the list of registered lobbyists in the state of Florida you will find hundreds and hundreds of people and organizations listed ([www.leg.state.fl.us/Lobbyist](http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Lobbyist)).

Two things tend to distinguish this sector of employment. First, it is an area in which credentialing is not well-established. There is no lock-step path to gaining a job here; credentials can be quite varied for the beginner. Second, this is an area in which you can gain knowledge, experience and contacts fast. Third, on the downside, these jobs tend to pay less than those with government or corporations. Fourth, this an arena which tends to attract those who want their jobs to "make a difference". If you fall into this category, you'll want to read Devon Smith, editor, *Great Careers: The Fourth of July Guide to Careers, Internships and Volunteer Opportunities in the NonProfit Sector* and Bruce Maxwell, *Finding a Job in Washington*. There are many relevant web sites: <http://communitywork.org/>, [www.feminist.org](http://www.feminist.org), <http://www.heritage.org/about/jobs>, (a site for positions with conservative organizations), [http://www.idealists.org/search?search\\_keywords=jobs&search\\_type=](http://www.idealists.org/search?search_keywords=jobs&search_type=), <http://www.opportunityknocks.org/>, and/or [www.nonprofitcareer.com](http://www.nonprofitcareer.com). Positions in these categories tend to be listed in the Washington Post ([www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)) and in *Roll Call* ([www.rollcall.com](http://www.rollcall.com)).

If you are interested in a position with an association on its lobbying ("governmental affairs") staff locally or at the state level, you'll very likely need to begin with an internship or a volunteer position. In Orlando, look under "Associations" in the yellow pages. Here you'll find the Chambers of Commerce, the Realtors, the Hotel-Motel Association, the Home Builders and several other organizations which hire staff for their state and local associations. Write them a letter of inquiry, or begin with an internship. If you are considering going to Washington, these are the positions you are most likely to be able to obtain as a newcomer; you can "get your foot in the door" by this route if you can spend some weeks in Washington searching for these jobs.

## THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Many large corporations have governmental affairs divisions or offices; smaller companies often rely on their professional associations for the kinds of work that a governmental affairs division performs in a larger corporation. (Thus these professional associations are worth your consideration as a possible source of employment.) Many firms hire persons from liberal arts backgrounds for management, sales, or other entry-level positions, often with in-house training programs as the first order of business. It is true that when corporate personnel officers talk about what they look for in new employees, they often say that they are looking for persons with broad training in the liberal arts. However, it is also true that when interviewers from private companies come onto campus they often specify that they will interview only accountants, or only computer engineers, or other specific, often applied or technical majors. Nonetheless, the University of Central Florida Career Resources Center lists several dozen corporations which have interviewed on campus with students from "all majors" in recent years, so private sector employment is possible with an undergraduate political science degree. In fact, with globalization of the economy, students with international



and comparative expertise (especially if they combine their Political Science with some courses in economics, or in business, and/or have foreign language capacity) may have a growing advantage in finding employment in the private sector.

If this is the arena in which you seek employment, you can use all of the tactics and approaches suggested above (using the Web, telling everyone you know that you are ready for your first professional job, considering an internship, and so on), but you will also find that University of Central Florida's Career Resource Center perhaps has more specific help to offer you. The Center sponsors job fairs; you should certainly attend these. You should use the Center's resume referral service, and work to schedule interviews through the Center.

## **ADVICE FROM ALUMNI**

Finally, here are some words of advice from former UCF Political Science majors who are now at work in the field. Not long ago, these people were all where you are. Now they are well on their way in the profession (without a law degree), and have agreed to tell you what approaches worked for them.

### Case 1

UCF Alumnus, Max Stewart  
Executive Director, International Council of Central Florida  
Orlando, Florida  
Telephone: (407) 321-1136  
Fax: (407) 321-1138

#### Background

Graduated 2005 with BA in Political Science. Main interests were in politics and international relations. While at UCF I spent time researching issues related to Russia and oil politics. During my junior year I interned at the International Council. After my internship I spent 6 months as an assistant programmer during my junior and senior year.

#### Job Search after Graduation

I did not have the search very far. I was offered a part-time position as a program manager.

#### Conclusion

Internships are very important; in the current job market employers are looking for people with experience and also looking more and more to hiring from within the organization. Even if you do not get a permanent job at that particular organization, they have contacts at others in the field. Most of the interns that come through our office now have jobs in DC, New York, and Europe.

#### Career Progression

I was hired as a program manager dealing with small programs. During the start of my senior year I was promoted to Director of Programs. On a series of events I was

promoted to Executive Director at the time of my graduation. I spent the first 4 years as the youngest executive officer in the network of organizations that we belong to.

#### What I Look for in Hiring for Entry Level Positions

I look for detail oriented people. The tasks we are asked to perform for our client (US State Department) are very precise. It also takes a very strong writing and phone skill to deal with people from other countries. The majority of people working for our organization are dealing with delegations of people on a daily and weekly basis so diplomacy (tact) plays a large part in our organization.

## Case 2

UCF Alumnus Jessica Graham

District Senior Executive Secretary to Representative Scott Randolph

Spring 2010 Graduate

In my junior year, I was uncertain of the career opportunities available to political science graduates. After reading a publication from the American Political Science Association entitled *Careers and the Study of Political Science: A Guide for Undergraduates*, I began to research internships. My first stop was the Political Science Department as they keep listings of available internships. Through the listings I found an internship with Central Florida Jobs for Justice (JWJ). JWJ is coalition of groups that promote workers rights. Although this was an unpaid internship, my hard work and dedication led to an all expenses paid trip to their national conference and a paid summer internship at a local union. After JWJ, I was chosen from a national search to work with Unite Here Local 362 on their Hotel Workers Rising Campaign. Unite Here 362 represents the Hotel and Food Service Workers at Walt Disney World and throughout Central Florida. Participating in those internships provided me with experience working in stressful situation while juggling several projects at once. The skills acquired from JWJ and Unite Here Local 362 made me a competitive applicant for the University of Central Florida's Legislative Scholars program. I was one of the seven students chosen to intern with legislators from the Central Florida delegation. I split my time between Representatives Geraldine Thompson and Scott Randolph. My internship provided a once in a lifetime opportunity to experience the legislative process up close, from committee weeks to the legislative session.

After my internship I was offered the position of District Secretary with Representative Randolph. My primary job is assisting constituents with problems/concerns regarding state agencies. Sometimes my constituent cases require me to work closely with federal and city/county agencies. As a result my casework can vary greatly. For example, I have worked on cases involving International Adoptions, Social Security, Medicaid, and even Unemployment compensation. My other duties include meeting with lobbyist, and representatives from organizations in our district or the Central Florida region when the Representative is unavailable. I also attend events, and meeting on his behalf. My last job function is to ensure the office has everything it needs to function properly. Although this is not my ideal job, it is an entry level position that has allowed me to continue gaining real world experience while I pursue my Masters degree. I accepted the position to continue learning about the processes and procedures of the Florida Legislature.

My advice to current students is to participate in several internships. A political Science degree holds several possibilities, and it is in your best interest to try out several jobs to determine your career path upon graduation. While in schools I participated in three internships. Two of those allowed me to determine I preferred working with federal and state agencies, and the last internship led to employment. Internships are a great way to build relationships and network. If you maintain those relationships, you will have several colleagues within your desired field. Those colleagues will be able to provide useful references and provide information on job openings. Lastly, take the initiative to search out openings within organizations that interest you. Don't wait for a job opportunity or an internship to fall into your lap.

### Case 3

UCF Alumnus, Sean D. Beaudet  
2006 Graduate, BA Political Science  
U.S. Senator Bill Nelson  
Intern & Mailroom Coordinator  
Orlando, FL 32801

I graduated from UCF in the fall of 2006 with a BA in Political Science. Unlike many of my peers, my schedule would not allow me to be involved in extracurricular activities or political organizations. I did however work various full time jobs throughout college. This gave me an edge over my peers in that I obtained real world working experience while still in school. Yet, one of the single most important things I accomplished in college was interning with a Congressional office. The experience I gained from the internship proved to be invaluable, as I was able to witness government in action. I was also able to network with many individuals in government.

After graduating from UCF, I continued to work in the private sector. My big break came roughly a year after graduation. An entry level position opened for one of the U.S. Senators state offices from Florida; the same office in which I had completed my internship. I answered phones as a receptionist and assisted the constituent advocates with casework for constituents for close to a year. Working in a congressional state office allows you to see how laws both positively and negatively affect people lives. Another opening within the year would allow me to move into my current position of Intern and Mailroom Coordinator. I now have the pleasure of presenting to interns the relationship between Congress, the executive agencies, and the residents of Florida. It is very rewarding to witness students take a similar path as the one I took years ago.

Every political science student follows a different approach in finding success within the political realm. College social clubs, political organizations, internships, and volunteering for campaigns are fantastic ways to get a start in politics. Networking and making point-of-contacts in the political arena cannot be emphasized enough. I have personally found that the key to success is standing out among your peers through hard work, dedication, and perseverance. You will surely be rewarded.

## Case 4

UCF Alumnus Yaimabis Gomez  
Legal Secretary  
The Florida Bar  
Orlando Branch  
Phone: 407-515-3238  
Fax: 407-841-5403

I graduated the summer of 2008 with BA in Political Science. I came from Cuba when I was eighteen years old. After facing the challenge of learning how to properly speak and write English, I made my way to UCF. I was a part time student because I maintained a full time job as a manager at McDonald's. I always knew I wanted to become an attorney, but I was not sure if I was being realistic about it. After I educated myself about all the different fields I could work after getting my BA, I decided to experience what it would be like to work at a place that could be my future and permanent job like an attorney's office. Subsequently, I got enrolled for an academic Internship under the supervision of Professor Aubrey Jewett.

Originally, I was an unpaid intern at the Orange County Public Defender's office, Juvenile Division. I was very lucky, after a few weeks, I was hired as a part-time receptionist. Shortly thereafter, I was promoted to a full time legal secretary. Even though this was not my goal or my dream job, it was the beginning of a terrific and important journey in my life. First of all, it gave me the opportunity to face the real world and to prove to myself that I was ready to move on with my career. In addition, it gave me the opportunity to meet fantastic people, both attorneys and non-attorneys. Moreover, I had the chance to see what an attorney's real work day is like, to learn about their good and not so good experiences. Additionally, I had the pleasure to become friends with a couple of them who honestly explained to me about what being an attorney really means, what to expect once I get into law school and even after law school. After a couple of years working at the Public Defender's Office, I was then offered a position at The Florida Bar to become the legal assistant for a former attorney I previously worked for at the Public Defender's Office.

I know there are so many different ways students can achieve the job of their dreams, especially students majoring in Political Science, a career with an extended work field. In my case, an internship made the difference. However, in my opinion, students need to be able to take advantage of the opportunities given to them. In other words, no matter how you get to enter into the work field of your dreams, either by internship, volunteering, or as a temporary part timer, make sure you give the best of yourself. As I mentioned above, the internship was the main key to get me a job in the law field. Nonetheless, the internship did not guarantee me the job. In other words, I was responsible for succeeding at that job. My advice to you based on my personal experience would be to prove to your supervisor how valuable you can be to the organization and to demonstrate integrity, creativity, initiative, and willingness to take on new challenges. Most of all, you have to be professional and friendly. All these qualities allowed me to move on with my career. I am pursuing my legal studies to become an attorney, and I am working as a legal secretary, learning about law and acquiring useful legal experiences I will be able to use in my future job as an attorney. Lastly, but not least, never give up and be persistent.

## Case 5

UCF Alumnus Amanda Conochalla  
Director, Government Relations  
McDonald's USA LLC  
*Bachelors of Arts- Political Science 2003 – UCF*  
*Masters of Arts – Communication 2009 – UCF*

As a student of political science, I exposed myself to a variety of courses in International Relations, Pre-Law, and Politics and Policy tracks. The class work provided a strong foundation for skills needed to secure a career in the field including critically thinking, strong write and verbal communication and understanding of political history and processes. The most valuable aspect of my degree in political science was guidance and support provided by the professors and Department staff. Leveraging the opportunities to acquire internships and volunteer work was essential to determining my career path and eventually securing a position in that field following graduation.

I received my first position at Darden Restaurants as an Assistant of Government and Community Relations immediately following graduation. This position was a permanent extension of an internship that I gained in my senior year at the UCF. It was an entry level position with many administrative responsibilities, but I took every opportunity to watch and learn from the people around me. In addition to my regular job duties, I attended internal and external meetings, volunteered in the community and on political campaigns and took on a variety of projects outside my regular scope of work – big and small. My duties eventually evolved to include legislative tracking and monitoring in 25 states, direct and indirect lobbying and assisting in the development of business/issue strategies. The internship and position at Darden Restaurants gave me experience and skills necessary to obtain positions as the Manager of Government Relations for Orlando Health, Manager of Government Relations for Walt Disney World and the Director of Government Relations for McDonald's USA.

As the Director of Government Relations for McDonald's USA, I develop and implement company strategies related direct and indirect lobbying and lead advocacy and government outreach on the state and local levels in the 16 states. I am tasked with engaging and educating local elected and appointed officials, identifying and implementing strategies to protect our brand and minimize government barriers on our business. This includes building and enhancing relationships with legislative elected and appointed officials and staff and assisting Owner/Operators of the more than 4500 restaurants in my Division build and enhance their involvement in the political process.

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