PROFESSIONALISM 03/29/2017 L. ERICKSON

Recent college graduates struggle with basic professionalism skills, but universities are working hard to help fill in the gaps. Recent studies have shown that many students are grounded in skills that involve science and technology, but they lack what will help them move up into leadership or management positions. Lisa Erickson has the story.

MP3 RUNS 1:15 O/C: ...I’M LISA ERICKSON.

LISA ERICKSON: ONE STUDY REVEALED THAT WHILE 87 PERCENT OF RECENT GRADUATES FEEL WELL PREPARED FOR THEIR FIRST JOB AFTER EARNING THEIR DIPLOMAS, ONLY HALF OF THE HIRING MANAGERS INTERVIEWED AGREED. AT MOST COLLEGES, IT’S UP TO STUDENTS TO ATTEND WORKSHOPS OR ATTEND JOB FAIRS THAT ADDRESS PROFESSIONALISM. MELISSA WILSON, THE DIRECTOR OF CAREER SERVICES AT U-W-RIVER FALLS, SAYS IT’S NOT USUALLY PART OF THE CURRICULUM.

MELISSA WILSON: “ALL OF THIS IS OPTIONAL FOR THE STUDENT.”

LISA ERICKSON: WILSON HAS BEEN WORKING HARD WITH STUDENTS AND OTHERS ON THE U-W-RIVER FALLS CAMPUS TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO HELP STUDENTS OBTAIN THESE SKILLS BEFORE THEY GRADUATE. SOME STUDENTS ARE NOT EVEN PREPARED TO ATTEND A JOB FAIR.

MELISSA WILSON: “LIKE AT OUR CAREER FAIR YOU’RE NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO BE ABLE TO WALK THROUGH THE GATE TO GET INTO THAT EVENT, IF YOU HAVE FLIP FLOPS OR HAVE RIPS IN YOUR JEANS. WE SEND YOU HOME AND YOU COME BACK. WE WON’T LET THAT STUDENT GO, BECAUSE IT’S NOT ACCEPTABLE."

LISA ERICKSON: SOME STUDENTS ARE WORKING HARD TO TO FIGURE IT OUT FOR THEMSELVES. JAMES VANDENBERGH (VAN-den-berg), WHO IS THE STUDENT BODY VICE PRESIDENT AT UW-RIVER FALLS, IS ONE OF THEM. HE HAS FOUND A MENTOR AND ATTENDS THINGS LIKE THE ETIQUETTE DINNER THE UNIVERSITY HOSTS EVERY SEMESTER TO HELP HIM HOME IN ON THOSE IMPORTANT PROFESSIONAL SKILLS. FOR THE FALCON NEWS SERVICE, I’M LISA ERICKSON.

Need help figuring out “what” professionalism is? Wilson says there are lots of resources and opportunities for students and alumni to help sharpen up their professional skills in the career services office at UW-River Falls. She encourages people to stop by.

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