



MAXIMIZING YOUR JOB SEARCH

DEALING WITH REJECTION

No one wants to face rejection - not from colleges, not from that cute kid in Chem class and not from job prospects. However, as is true in many things, difficult experiences are often the best teachers. If you are facing rejection in the job search process, take some time to evaluate how you've approached your job search and what, within that process, is in your power to change. First, let's right-size this beast: Rejection is as much a part of the job search process as researching organizations, preparing resumes and buying that first suit. For each position posted online, often 100 or more people submit resumes and of those, only about 10% will receive interviews. I know, you are thinking that those odds are not dissimilar to the application process to Swarthmore College, but the job search is a different animal altogether. You will be rejected – embrace it and know that with each rejection, you are closer to an offer.

For most graduating seniors, the experience of searching for a job is unlike anything else they have pursued. Comparatively, the process of seeking acceptance into college is fairly straightforward. If you achieved certain grades and certain scores and you've accumulated a number of activities, you know fairly well which schools are likely to accept you and which are not.

Not so with the job search. Sometimes grades matter in seeking a job at particularly prestigious organizations for which obtaining a position is highly competitive, but sometimes grades don't matter at all. In most cases, your summer experiences, combined with your field of study, will help to pave the way for obtaining an interview -- unless of course, you changed course late in your academic career.

For many, the job search process can feel amorphous and unsettling. How do you navigate and how do you succeed when there are many criteria out of your control?

IF YOU ARE SENDING OUT RESUMES AND RECEIVING *NO INTERVIEWS*:

Evaluate your materials. Have your resume and cover letter been reviewed by a trained career peer advisor or career counselor? Does your cover letter communicate your skills and abilities relative to the job you seek? Is your cover letter “generic” or does it specifically state why you are interested in working in this position with this organization? Does the resume demonstrate your accomplishments and ways you made an impact in your jobs, internships, community service and activities?

Review the positions for which you applied. Are you qualified for the job? Have you applied to enough positions? (Hint: more than three! Plan to apply to at least two dozen positions as you are getting momentum in your search.) Are you using all of the tools available to you? Applying to positions posted in databases accessible to all is less likely to result in interviews. Be sure that you are using eRecruiting to seek positions posted specifically for Swarthmore

students. Review the online alumni directory and LinkedIn to seek out alums doing the work you want to do. E-mail those alums and develop connections. Consider other contacts through Swarthmore or other aspects of your life (athletics, performing arts, identity groups, etc.).

IF YOU ARE INVITED TO INTERVIEWS, BUT RECEIVE ***NO OFFERS***:

Have you completed a mock interview with a trained counselor? Interviewing is a skill that can be learned. Many students do not have adequate experience in the skill of interviewing to communicate their abilities in a way that will interest the employer.

Are you applying exclusively to highly competitive organizations? Having high standards is part of being a Swarthmore student, but it naturally follows that if you apply only to organizations that accept a fraction of applicants, your chances of obtaining an offer are reduced.

Do you really want the job? I know, it sounds ridiculous because you applied for it, right? Many students apply for jobs that they think they should apply for and their credentials (good grades, strong experiences) get them in the door, but they cannot articulate their strengths and motivation well because they don't really want the job. Make an appointment with a counselor to talk about your skills, values, interests and post-grad plans. It's better to learn now what you do (or don't) want to do.

Is the organization truly a good fit for you? This is possibly the hardest area of rejection for a student to swallow. Sometimes, despite a candidate's fantastic grades and stellar summer experiences, there simply isn't a good fit between the candidate and the hiring manager or, more broadly, the organization. Research employer work cultures by visiting sites such as Vault Career Insider and Glass Door. Talk with alumni who work at the organization to learn more about their culture and what they are seeking in new hires.

Are there more significant issues preventing you from succeeding? If you are experiencing high levels of stress, trouble sleeping or an emotional reaction to the lack of progress in the job search, visiting CAPS can help you process your experience. If you are facing challenges related to a disability, speak to Leslie Hempling, who can walk you through your rights in terms of ADA requirements in the workplace.

The bottom line is that there are often simple steps that can help to correct any problems in the job search process. The counselors in the Career Services office are available for counseling appointments Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. In addition, trained Career Peer Advisors are in the office, ready to help every afternoon from 1:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. Feel free to drop by 135 Parrish Hall. We will be here, ready to help.



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CAREER SERVICES

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