

Contest rules:

Challenges (below) may be completed in any order. For every two new challenges completed, you earn one lottery entry ticket.

Obtain lottery entry tickets in ELC office. Print your UMW username (the part before @mail.umw.edu) and new challenge numbers completed on each ticket.

Drawing will be held the first Monday of each month. Winners must be majors in English, English: Creative Writing, Communication and Digital Studies, or a Special Major supervised by an ELC faculty member, and may be asked to confirm which new challenges were completed.

Getting started:

1. Try one of the online career assessment programs offered through the Career Center: PrincetonReview, Humanmetrics, MyNextMove. Then try a second and compare the results.
2. Spend a total of at least 30 minutes writing about Big Questions. What do you enjoy doing now that might become part of a worthwhile career? What ideals do you want to live for? What kind of work would give meaning to your life? How could you help make the world a better place? (Any format is fine: private diary, blog, series of tweets . . .)
3. Write out a list of all your successes and achievements to date. Include things from college, work, volunteering, activities, family life, and everything else you can think of. Then look for patterns. Where have you been most successful? What have you most enjoyed? What skills can you prove you've acquired? Keep adding to this list as you think of examples.
4. Talk for at least 30 minutes to various friends and family members about career options. What can they imagine you doing?
5. Spend at least 30 minutes listing products and services you value and causes you care about. What companies and organizations do a good job now, making them good to work for? Who could do a better job with your help?

Getting informed:

6. Get acquainted with the careers portion of the *UMW Career Center* web site (www.umw.edu/careercenter), including the drop-down menus, and sign up to follow @UMW_CCPD on Instagram and on Twitter. New jobs and internships weekly!
7. Talk about career plans and internships with your academic advisor.
8. Visit the Center for Career and Professional Development (CCPD) in the UC, or speak with a career advisor there.
9. Attend at least one career preparation workshop at the CCPD: Center for Career and Professional Development.
10. Learn to use major job-search web sites like www.usajobs.gov (Federal Government jobs).

Getting experienced:

11. Match yourself against online lists of the skills/attributes most employers are looking for. List those you have, with examples that might demonstrate them to an employer. Make a second list of those you want to acquire before leaving college plus how you could acquire them.
12. Enhance your resume by serving as an officer or leader in a campus organization.
13. Enhance your speaking, listening, and writing skills by attending a relevant Speaking Center or Writing Center workshop.
14. Volunteer at least five hours at something that interests you or is related to careers you'd like

to investigate. (Volunteering is a great way to get experience, references, and contacts, as well as make a difference.)

15. Arrange to shadow someone for a day in a career field that interests you.
16. Sign up for a spring course that fills some gap in your knowledge (spreadsheets, coding, budgets, marketing, design?).

Getting ready:

17. Professionalize your social media presence following standard online advice. (Don't forget to Google yourself on an unfamiliar computer.)
18. Start preparing for interviews. Review your wardrobe, your vocal mannerisms, your table manners, your stash of thank you cards. Read a book or watch online videos on interviewing. Note upcoming CCPD interview workshops in your calendar.
19. Select and speak with potential references. Consider professors, employers, volunteer or internship supervisors, and others who know you or your work well.
20. Learn about careers that interest you—and make valuable contacts—by conducting information interviews with at least two UMW alums. (See the ELC website for advice on information interviewing and locate interviewees via EagleConnections.)

Getting serious:

21. Draft a resume and get it critiqued. (You will adapt this to specific jobs later.)
22. Draft a basic cover letter. (You will adapt this to specific jobs later.)
23. Research spring semester or post-graduate internships, and communicate with at least one potential sponsoring organization.
24. Create a professional LinkedIn profile. Ask several people to review it for you.
25. Join the EagleConnections group.
26. Create your profile on Employ-An-Eagle, UMW's job and internship database (instructions are on the Career Center website)
27. Create your own domain and professional web portfolio with help from the Digital Knowledge Center.
28. Create and practice a one-minute "elevator pitch" in which you tell employers who you are and what you could bring to them.
29. Do at least one mock interview through the CCPD. (If possible, get taped and critiqued.)

Getting out there:

30. Interview at the October Job and Internship Fair. Follow the tips for success and research employers with whom you hope to speak.
31. Network. Ask all your acquaintances if they know anyone in the field that interests you, and whether this contact might be open to an information interview. Keep notes from interviews. (Most jobs are found through personal connections: someone knows someone who knows someone with a job opening.)
32. Attend a UMW alumni networking event.
33. Send a targeted resume and cover letter to the hiring managers of at least five potential employers. (You'll send a lot more, but if you've made it this far you're well on your way to getting a great job!)
34. Do some online reading about negotiating the job offer so you'll be prepared to discuss details when that lovely offer comes your way.

YOUR ULTIMATE CHALLENGE GOAL: move from UMW into a satisfying first job!