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Dr. Daniels

Wra 210

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Module 3

Interview Questions:

- 1.) What extracurricular activities were you involved with and how do you represent them?
- 2.) How does your professional portfolio help you with your career today?
- 3.) Now that you have some distance from PW, how would you critique our own portfolio?
- 4.) Do you have any tips that you wish you would have known when you were starting? That I should know about?
- 5.) How was your portfolio used when/if you interviewed for jobs? What questions were you asked? Were there any surprises?
- 6.) What did you struggle with most when making your portfolio?

Alumni's Answers:

- 1.) I was very involved in the Spartan Marching Band and State of Art Winterguard, as well as Tau Beta Sigma, the national honorary band sorority (yup, I'm a band--well, colorguard--geek). I have been involved in colorguard since the beginning of high school and I now teach it. I had to do a writing exercise in a course once (possibly 355?) where I came to the realization that the writing process is very similar to the process of performing and perfecting a colorguard show. Using that idea, I came up with my self-given title of "writer, editor, designer, performer", and explained it--and how those elements work together--in my "About" section. As far as content in my portfolio, most of what you see within web and design was projects I did for those groups (although the winterguard has since moved on to a bigger and better web site).
- 2.) I wouldn't say my portfolio itself helps me out in my career, but the skills I gained that are expressed in my portfolio are used every day. I work as an editorial assistant for a trade/industry publication (www.concreteinternational.com), so a lot of what I do is writing/summarizing and editing. Having to know certain styles (especially Chicago) is important, and obviously being able to write--you'd be surprised at how many people don't, especially those who are in PR and communications!

3.) Other than being out-of-date (woops), I'd be looking for more real-world examples in my portfolio. Right now, it's a lot of stuff done in school. Some of that is ok, but some things need to be dropped. Who really cares about a news article from JRN 200 in my sophomore year? Especially given the amount of writing I've been doing over the past two years in my job. I'd also be looking for stronger examples of visual work (though I don't really have any to offer).

4 & 6.) I think the thing I struggled with most (other than code) was figuring out a focus and a way to tie it all together. The content on the front and "about" pages went through several iterations before I finally drew upon my previous realization. Building the site was a bit of a challenge, too, but I was a bit ambitious with my design compared to my skills--had I taken WRA 410, it would have been much easier; but working with my 210 knowledge meant I had to use a LOT of tutorials (I actually did my portfolio in 360, Visual Rhetoric, as my final project). So I guess my advice would be to figure out your strengths and highlight them, in both the content and construction of your portfolio. Especially if you have a passion that you hope carries in to your professional career (check out Ken Alleman's portfolio for a good example of this).

5.) I didn't have too many interviews where my portfolio came into play, actually. And, oddly enough, the most questions I received on it were asked at my portfolio presentation before I graduated. I know my current boss(es) saw it when I was in the interview process at my job, as one of them had it pulled up during the interview, but I think they mainly used it as examples of what I could do. I do know that it was those examples that helped get the job, though, as my boss later told me that I was one of the only applicants with some actual experience, thanks to my internship. What's kind of funny right now is that I've received a couple phone calls in the last couple months from people wanting to offer me jobs/interviews because they found my portfolio. I'm not sure how that happened!

Synthesis:

Interviewing a PW alumni and viewing an actual portfolio allowed me to really gain insight and knowledge about what a portfolio does and how I can begin to create an effective portfolio of my own. I think that some of the things that I learned will be very helpful and important to keep in mind now that it is my turn to begin this process. I learned that although a portfolio itself may not be used as frequently, the skills I will be learning while building it will be useful in everyday life. I also learned that it is good to include real-world examples in a portfolio other than stuff done while in school. Another important thing that I took away from the interview is that I should figure out my strengths and highlight them in both the content and construction of my portfolio. Lastly, I discovered how important it will be to keep in mind when building my portfolio that it will be a way of displaying my abilities and examples of what I can do.