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Information Interviewing Paper
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For my two interviews I choose two people who currently work at the Federal Correctional Institute (FCI) in Morgantown. I choose contacts from this organization because I am interested in obtaining a position there once I graduate. I interviewed the Warden and a case manager. Both of my interviews took place on site at the institution in the offices of the individuals. I will describe both interviews and discuss the information provided to me and how I intend to utilize the information I received.

My first interview took place on Thursday November 8th with Anne Mary Carter who is the new warden at FCI Morgantown. Ms. Carter transferred to the institution at the end of September, which is about a month after I finished my internship so I never had the chance to meet her. I had a good first impression of Ms. Carter as she was speaking to a fellow staff member as I walked in. From what I overheard in their conversation it is clear to see that she is serious about her work and the running of the institution. She then had me follow her back into her office where she had plaques and other memorabilia of her accomplishments throughout her career with the Bureau of Prisons.

To start off the interview I told her about me and the reason for the interview. I then began asking her questions related to the field. I asked her what she found most satisfying in the position in which she discussed how she likes making contributions in the lives of everyone she is in contact with staff, inmates and even the outside public. I had a chance to see her speak to a staff member and saw that they already had respect for her, and also she was making an effort to hear what the staff member had to say and in the end they came up with a solution to the problem

they were discussing. By being this type of leader in the organization I feel she will accomplish her goals of making contributions, and mainly positive contributions, to all those she comes in contact with. I followed up that question with what she found most challenging working in the field. She talked about some things I witnessed during my internship. The balance of professionalism in the interactions with the inmates, she said she has witnessed staff becoming too close to the inmates and that is a line one just should not cross. She discussed how the inmates have a way of pushing that line and that some staff fall into that and then end up doing things that they never thought they would do when they started their position. For example giving inmates special privileges, bring in contraband and so on. She has never crossed that line but said she had some inmates push the issue with her. I believe her willingness to make positive contributions prevented her from crossing that line.

I next asked her about qualities and skills she would look for in new hires. As for what she looks for in new hires she likes to see work related to the correctional field, from previous federal institutions to state prisons, "Experience is a highly desirable skill." Some other qualities she wishes new employees had more of are truthfulness and integrity. She discussed the hiring process with all of the background checks that go on and said, "If someone is hiding something it will be found out. It is best to be honest in every step of the process and avoid it being caught in the investigation." The hiring process is pretty intense to get hired on at the prison. There are background checks in many aspects including personal and even financial. All new applicants who are deemed eligible for the position and are in the running for the job will have these checks ran on them. Ms. Carter also said if there is something that may be hurtful in the application to know how to handle discussing the matter and to have a plan to resolve it. For example extreme

debt, if a person has a plan to combat the debt it looks better than someone who has no idea what they are going to do to erase it.

I also asked for her advice on how I should update my resume on USA Jobs.com to make myself stand out and she gave me extremely helpful insight. In fact she even pulled up her own resume and let me take a look at it. She also viewed my resume and gave me ideas on location of certain aspects and how to word certain things to make them more prominent. All in all I learned a great deal from Ms. Carter. She is a woman who is in a position mostly dominated by men, which in itself is commendable, but it is her attitude about work and how she presents herself that I find most admirable.

My next interview was with Fredrick Caromano on Friday November 9th. Mr. Caromano has been at the institution for many years and I was recommended to speak with him through my internship supervisor Ms. Starr. During my internship I did not get the chance to meet Mr. Caromano and thought this would be a great chance to speak with him. Mr. Caromano had a great presence, he was firm and in control when I saw him deal with an inmate, but during our conversation he was laid back and professional. He was extremely knowledgeable about the organization and had a clear love for what he does.

I began asking him the same question I asked Ms. Carter as to what he finds most satisfying in this field. His response was, "The ability to help people and make changes in their lives for the positive." Very similar to Ms. Carters answer, it is clear to see that helping people and influencing them is very important in the organization. As for what was challenging he said having to deal with negative attitudes from the inmates. This again is something I saw while I did my internship this summer; the inmates seem to forget sometimes that they are there because

they did something bad and not because they were invited. This is something I think would be challenging to deal with because one has to deal with the negative attitudes but also have to remain professional in dealing with them.

I then asked him what is some advice he would give to someone entering this field, his response, “Develop your communication skills. You are dealing with a variety of people from all backgrounds, and you need to be able to talk and listen to them all.” Very good advice and something that I am prepared for based on the knowledge that I gained from course through my communication studies degree. In relation I asked what skills he wished more employees had more of, in his opinion he wished they had more common sense as well as good work ethic. I can see both of these skill being very valuable in the prison environment, and lack of them being able to hinder performance.

I them asked what problems he sees in the future in working in this field. He discussed the issue of government spending and how the constant budget cuts decreases lack of services and support. As with any organization the recent economic crisis had been an issue for the Bureau of Prisons, and other government agencies. This is something to think about when getting ready to embark on the career search. In relation to this question I asked how he sees jobs in the future, he responded, “Increase in demand for jobs due to increase in inmate population. However, Budget cuts will put a strain on job opportunities.” Again a good thing to think about, I know that once I graduate I will probably have to wait until the beginning of the year to even really have a chance at a job, however that does not mean I will not be actively looking.

In conclusion I learned a great deal from both Ms. Carter and Mr. Caromano. They both gave me great insights into the field of correctional work and also for the job search in general. I asked

them both if they had any general advice for undergraduates about to embark on the job search. Ms. Carter said be sure to research the companies that one is applying to, this is something that makes a person really stand out during the interview process and also “Don’t Give Up!” Mr. Caromano said, explore many career paths and options, and “Pick a profession that you will enjoy doing day in and day out, don’t just look at the pay check.” Great advice from them both. I am thankful to have gotten the opportunity to speak with each of them and I know I will continue to keep in contact with them as my career begins and progresses.

Information Interview Contacts

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