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Metro Interns Pick Up Job Hunting Tips, Get Public Speaking Lesson at Recent In-Service

By Laura Kloth
Staff Writer

(Dec. 10, 2009) Metro's interns not only recently received helpful job hunting tips from graduates of the Metro Internship Program (MIP) who were able to secure full time jobs with the agency, they also got a mini-lesson on public speaking from Metro's own Toastmasters Association.

The interns were treated to a motivational speech titled: "Listen, Be Heard and Network" presented by Toastmaster and Assistant Board Secretary Raynard Price.

"Being an intern is a wonderful thing. . ." Price said during the Dec. 4 in-service training session hosted by the Organizational Development and Training Department (OD&T), reminiscing back to his days as a college student and entrepreneur.

Advising the interns to jot down some quick facts on the back of a person's business card soon after meeting them, Price said that, "Later on when I would call those people... I'd take their card call them up . . . I would say things like 'how's the wife? And the kids?' They thought I had a great memory, but I assure you, I couldn't remember anything."

Price told interns to be cautious when using social networking sites like Facebook and MySpace. "Be careful what you write and what you put out into the world because you can't get it back."

Toastmaster President and Metro



Interns (from left) Courtney Safer, Carina Lieu and Ena Macias learned a lot about one another during an icebreaker exercise.



Toastmasters President and Metro Buyer Frank Clarke helps Systems Maintenance Manager Norman Ward pick his table topic question: "Do you think it's a good idea for a young person to have a job?"

Buyer Frank Clarke entertained the interns by peppering his discussion with gentle humor, inviting them to join the organization at its weekly Tuesday noon meetings in the Board Overflow room directly across from the cafeteria.

Clarke posed a question asking them what they would say, if they were greeted by the CEO in an elevator. "You've got a minute or two to make an impact. So that's one of the things that as you practice, you get better," Clarke said.

Clarke dubbed the interns honorary Toastmasters and managed to recruit some to give impromptu speeches, awarding each a ribbon afterward.

The interns were ready with questions when they sat through a panel discussion made up of former MIP interns who've been hired as Metro employees.

"It's important to ask questions...to build a relationship with a supervisor... This is a learning experience so you'll make mistakes. If you know you've made a mistake, acknowledge it and move on," said Dianne Sirisut, who was hired on as a planner to work on the Westside Area Team. A USC graduate, Sirisut said researching companies thoroughly, and checking job postings frequently were good ideas for job hunting.

Transportation Planner Reinland Jones, who was hired to work on the San Gabriel Valley Team, encouraged interns to take risks,



Former Metro interns (from left) Reinland Jones, Dianne Sirisut and Dana Jones offered interns some helpful job hunting tips during the Dec. 4 in-service.



Ward was graded on timing by Timer and Senior Accountant Cynthia Jimerson and passed with flying colors.



Interns (from left) Shane Dini, Andrew Gutierrez, and Jiawei (Gary) Xiao were given only a few minutes to learn all they could about each other's backgrounds.

advising them to take a business class.

"Your employers don't really expect you to know that much. You're an intern. You're there to learn from them," said Jones. "They don't expect you to know how to write a scope of work, or write a whole project out. They know you don't know anything, so ask a lot of questions. They expect you to."



Toastmaster and Asst. Board Secretary Raynard Price encouraged interns to study their work environment and learn how to network.

Southbay Area Team Transportation Planner Dana Jones said a job hunt should include both private and public sectors.

Jones, a former bus operator, noted that when she switched careers, she ended up taking a class on the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to benefit her new role.

Among the interns participating were Administrative Intern William Bolanos, who joined Metro in 2004, after graduating from Franklin HS.

Bolanos said his Metro 15-hour-a-week work schedule played a big role in helping him complete his bachelor's at CSU-Los Angeles. "It's been really helpful for school since they work around your hours. They just made it way easy. I didn't want to get something so demanding when I was going to school," he said.

With a goal to land a job in Environmental Sciences, Bolanos says he has begun his job search by taking the necessary city and county exams, but the tough economy has made the effort somewhat daunting.

"Whenever I show up its like 150 people showing up for the same exam," he said, "I'm a little worried after I leave, hopefully I can find something quickly."

Intern Shane Dini, a soon-to-be March graduate of CalPoly Pomona said he landed a job at Northrop Grumman.

Noting that he interned in the Metro Executive Office for Construction, Dini said, "My schooling gave me the knowledge to come here, and then through here, I networked pretty hard, and I met the right people and then I got a job out of it."