APRIL SUCCESS STORY

Surprising Career Transitions in a Challenging Economy

Searching for a job can be difficult, even in a thriving economy. Trying to find something in a down economy can feel downright hopeless. But no matter how challenging it may be, CTC alum Michele Fero, learned you must find the will to persist.

In 2007, she was finishing her graduate program, settling into changes in her personal life and facing one of the worst economic outlooks in decades. She scoured classified ads, created online resumes in every major job database and tried desperately to find a full-time job. Through graduate school, she had some experience working in higher education, so she applied for positions in every college and university near her.

“After six months of frustration and dead ends, I started to panic,” Michele says. “Despite hundreds of applications (literally) I got almost no response.”

She realized that if she was going to make any progress, she needed help. That’s when Michele turned to the CTC and director Yolanda White. She registered for the complimentary On-Demand Career Intake Session. During the session, Yolanda encouraged her to take new steps to give new life to her search including talking to a UWM Professor and contacting M Magazine. This motivation got her out of a rut!

Using Yolanda’s advice, Michele used her new knowledge and confidence to update her application materials and job search approach. She re-worked her resume, narrowed her job search to be more efficient and began asking to meet with people for informational interviews.

“Whether a phone call, e-mail or in-person meeting, it gave me a chance to speak with people doing jobs I was interested in,” she says. “In some cases, there were no immediate job openings, but I put my name and face in a lot of offices and that made a difference.”

She got a referral to an advising office at a university, and met with the director. “Even though there were no openings, the in-person interview gave me a chance to explain why I was interested and how my background could be applied.”

A few months later, an advising position opened. Michele applied and was hired.

“A few months into the job, the director told me that she remembered meeting with me and that I had convinced her then that I was serious about the job and could do it,” says Michele. “It took nearly 18 months to secure something, but the work finally paid off.”

In Michele’s case, like many others, her degree made her qualified for positions, but it did not guarantee her jobs. Her search continued to stall until she changed how she searched and asked for help. Finally she says, “Don’t lose hope. Looking for a job can be draining and frustrating, but the only way to succeed is to keep working at working.”