

STUDENT FINDS INTERNSHIP, SEARCHES FOR LOVE by Becky Dewey

Six singles looking for love in Lincoln plus one matchmaking newspaper equaled one unforgettable internship for Brian Weed.

While scanning the classifieds in the *Lincoln Journal Star*, one opportunity at the newspaper had jumped out at Weed—weekly writing assignments, photography, Web updates and coordinating a promotional campaign. As a Union College senior communication major, Weed was immediately interested. The ad happened to omit “matchmaker” in the job description.

The *Journal Star* was looking for someone to coordinate a summer promotion called “Six in the City.” Six singles (three men and three women) were chosen to have makeovers before going on two dates—one picked by *Journal Star* readers and another the singles could choose for themselves.

The coordinator would manage a Web page about Six in the City, write Sunday editorials about the singles’ progress and organize the participants’ complete makeovers, from hair to new clothes to life coaching.

The right match

Though he had impressive credentials, including an editorial internship at Sandhills Publishing and a promotional internship at a California radio station, Weed said he couldn’t have shown off his skills without help from his communication professors. Not only did his course work give him experience writing creative and editorial pieces, it also required making a portfolio that showcased his strengths.

“A portfolio is important because it can speak for the student after the interview is done,” said Michelle Velázquez Mesnard, associate professor of communication and Weed’s advisor.

Weed credits Mesnard with helping him create a successful portfolio. “The professors at Union College are more than teachers,” he said. “They’re mentors.”

It’s the one-on-one approachability between faculty and stu-

dents that Weed appreciates. “That’s what Union brings to the table,” he said. “You don’t get that interaction at other colleges. It’s the personal atmosphere.”

That mentorship gave Weed the edge to sell his accomplishments successfully.

“Brian brought a unique set of skills to the internship that I would consider rare to find in a college student,” said Jessica Kennedy, Weed’s supervisor and *Journal Star* Marketing Manager. “Brian was perfect in that he had both writing and promotional internships, which was the ideal combination for Six in the City.”



Brian Weed, senior Communication major, during his internship at the Lincoln Journal Star.

Choosing Six in the City

The *Journal Star* wanted singles that had the ability to grow and wanted a personal change. Advertisements in the *Journal Star* and local radio stations brought more than 80 responses, each with a profile and photo. Finally six hopeful singles were selected.

“This summer internship was perfect because I was not just sitting at a desk doing a meaningless task,” Weed said. “I took ownership of the Six in the City project and had a great impact on the success of it. That freedom gave me a sense of pride and purpose that showed in my work.”

“As an employer, I look for flexibility and energy,” Kennedy said. “Brian was able to take feedback and improve his work, as well juggle the multiple demands thrown at him every day.”

By the end of the summer, none of the singles had found “true love,” but they had formed friendships, discovered more about themselves and had a fun time. Weed’s employers were impressed by his hard work and his internship continued into the school year.

“I grew up in the neighborhood near Union College, so I was pretty familiar with the school and have always been impressed with it,” Kennedy said. “I hope for more opportunities to work with the college and its students in the future.”

Communication Program Gets Makeover

Our program is directed to help our students get great internships,” said Michelle Mesnard, associate professor of communication. In the last 10 years, communication majors at Union College have increased by 300 percent.

This year the communication program has gotten even better by leading the way in the program review process and implementing changes. According to Mesnard, “Our students will be better prepared by both the breadth and depth of their knowledge.”

Highlights of the program review changes:

- Sophomore seminar requires job shadowing two professionals, two mock interviews (one from a communication professional), a graduation plan and a portfolio.
- Required minor or second major for journalists
- Multi-cultural communication class
- Research training