

CAREER
LINKS



Career Development
Center

Conversations about Career Success...with Faculty



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What was your college major?

B.S., Anthropology

M.S. and Ph.D. in Anthropology

Did this major lead you to your current career?

Yes, I am an anthropologist as a result of my major. The most common path to becoming an anthropologist is through the major. Anthropology is a diverse discipline and through the major, a student becomes aware of the different career opportunities for an anthropologist.

What are the characteristics that your most successful students possess?

My most successful students possess curiosity, an open mind, a willingness to engage with difficult or contradictory ideas from their own, and a dedication to scholarship.

Name three things a student should know when exploring this career.

First, a graduate degree at the Masters or Doctorate level is required for most positions. Second, there is no guarantee for employment even with a graduate degree. Third, the variety of research and career opportunities within the discipline is enormous. There are two career tracks for anthropology:

- a) Traditional track – research and teach at a university, laboratory, research projects or hospitals (there are fewer opportunities here).
- b) Non-traditional track – minor in Anthropology and major in something else (i.e. Business, Economics, Social Work, Engineering). The research skills and global view with cross cultural perspectives will be very attractive to various international businesses.

What skills will a student learn when pursuing this career?

Because of the scope of the discipline, there is no single skill set. With a degree in Anthropology, students will be able to conduct qualitative and quantitative research. Perhaps the skill most commonly shared by all anthropologists is critical thinking and the application of cultural relativism.

For a student needing part-time employment while in college, what types of jobs provide the best experiential learning opportunities?

Working with or around people with a different background from you is encouraged. Examples of environments that would be close by are: community outreach centers (for various ethnic groups), Service Learning opportunities, field schools (i.e. West Honduras – very controlled and highly supervised).

If a college student is unable to find related work experience in this career field, how do you suggest he/she prepare for the workplace?

A common practice is to participate in a field school. Many schools offer training and hands-on research. JCCC offers an international archaeological field school and opportunities for service learning with Native American organizations in and around Kansas City. Skills taught in a major in anthropology may be broadly applied to any work environment with a global economy or culture diversity.

Is there a selection process for entering this program?

Courses offered by the anthropology department are open to any JCCC student. There is a selection process to participate in the archaeological field school and for service learning. All courses offered at JCCC are introductory courses. Students will need a broad education to be successful with more complex coursework to be completed at the junior and senior level at a four-year university or college.