

JOB SEARCHING IN A GLOBAL CRISIS

The COVID-19 pandemic caused an immediate rise in unemployment as well as a reduction in job opportunities around the country. Our 2020 graduates entered the worst job market in decades. Some already had jobs, others went on to graduate school, and some are still searching.



Pursuing Higher Education

Chloe Francis graduated in May 2020 with a bachelor's degree in English. She had hoped to find a job after graduation, but soon realized that wasn't possible because of the COVID-19 pandemic. About midway through the spring semester, when everything was moved online, she realized how difficult it would be to find a job. She filled out a bunch of applications, but did not get a response from anyone. According to Chloe, "it was just difficult finding anything at that time."

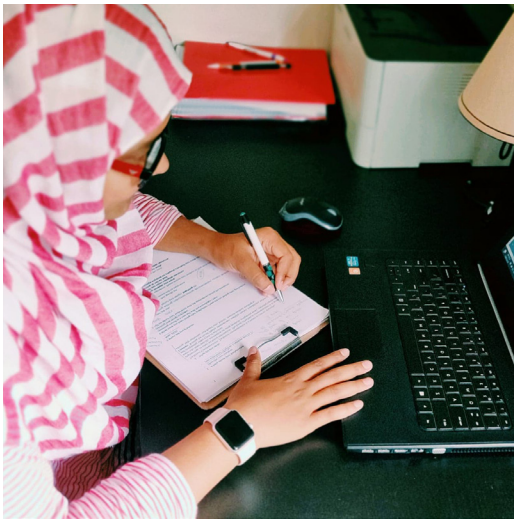
She made a choice to get her master's degree in technical communication and hope for a better job market in a year or two. After talking to her academic advisor, Dr. Reardon, about her interest in applying for the master's program in Technical Communication, she put in an application and was accepted. Chloe applied only to Missouri S&T because she was already familiar with our department and comfortable in Rolla, where she already had an apartment. For her, it was just easier to stay in Rolla than to go someplace else.



Taking Advantage of Student Work Experience

Jasmina Mehanovic graduated in May 2020 with a bachelor's degree in technical communication. She counted it a blessing that she had been hired by Missouri S&T's IT department in February before her graduation. Jasmina had been a student IT worker for about six years before she was hired full time. Currently, Jasmina works as a Business Support Specialist on campus. "I wear a lot of different hats, as it's a bit of a hybrid role," Jasmina said. "My IT role entails work on a knowledge base. In my technical communication role, I help create a lot of processes for documentation."

Jasmina admits that she applied for other jobs in Spring 2020, but the market was a lot more competitive as things started to close down and move online. "Because I was already in the IT family, I had an interest to stay."



Actively Seeking Job Opportunities

Sumina Nasrin, originally from Bangladesh, is a May 2020 graduate of our MS program in technical communication. She feels very proud to have completed her degree. “Technical communication is a relatively unusual major; many universities in the U.S. do not offer this major, and I am very happy I studied in this program.”

COVID-19 has not spared any industry, and like many other recent graduates, Sumina is actively searching for job opportunities. “Since graduating I have put out a lot of applications. I wake up in the morning, and my job now is to look for opportunities and make myself more fit for employment. I get really excited when my skill set matches the job, but it is also depressing when I get rejected.”

Sumina shares the same worries about COVID-19 and the current job outlook. Besides looking for jobs in technical communication, she is also considering teaching jobs, since she was a graduate teaching assistant for two years in our department. The current situation has taught Sumina that, whatever the decision is, you need to learn and cope with it. She has the following advice for students and graduates seeking job opportunities:

“Make good use of the online experience that the pandemic has presented. Seek internships to build your experience while in school. Finally, create professional networks, learn beyond the curriculum and engage in volunteering activities.”

Enhancing a Career

Amy McMillen is a Senior Academic Advisor in the Advising Center at Missouri S&T. She graduated in May 2020 with a master’s degree in technical communication. She worked full-time on campus while pursuing graduate studies, completing a graduate certificate before the MS. She aspires to stay at S&T and move up.

In her current position, Amy’s main goal is to be an advocate for students and keep them on that critical path towards degree completion. If she were to leave her current position and move somewhere else on campus, she would like to go to Career Opportunities and Employer Relations. “I get to work with students when they start their academic studies; that’s what I do now. Just as much, I would like to help them find their dream jobs when they are ready to leave S&T.”

