

## Edison State College Career Services Partners with Southwest Florida Works

The Career Services Department at Edison State College's Lee campus has joined forces with Southwest Florida Works. The collaborative effort brings even greater career possibilities to students at every stage of the career path.

"We can act as a personal reference for students entering the business community," explained Beth Barger, the Southwest Florida Works career Development Representative working on the Lee campus. "We have immense contacts in the business community and directly connect students to employer needs. That is far beyond what most colleges and universities can offer."

Those business connections are a natural progression of Career Services' role in helping students to determine a career goal and then developing the skills to secure a job in a chosen field. Assessment tests are available to determine which careers would be a good fit for a student, and possible majors are identified as paths of study. Students are also able to access the JobNet database, and clinics are available to learn important job-search skills such as resume writing and interview techniques.

"Our partnership with SW Florida Works pulls in the business community and marries the employment piece to our strong academic basis in Career Services," explained Kevin Kennedy, Director of Career Services on Lee campus. "Our first collaboration was in the Edison State College Spring Job Fair and we've been providing terrific opportunities for students ever since."

Melissa Little, 42, has benefited from the partnership. Little returned to school after a diverse career which included military service and several years working in the field of construction and design. The Edison State College student graduated with honors in May with an Associate in Science degree in Computer Programming. While attending school full time, Little got a job at Wal-Mart, working nights and weekends to earn money. She approached Career Services in hopes of securing a better position.

"SW Florida Works immediately identified the opportunity for internal advancement," explained Little. "Beth contacted the Regional Recourse Manager at Wal-Mart and arranged for me to meet with him at the Job Fair. Career Services helped me refine my resume and they were coaching me with interview skills. Because of my AS degree, it looks like sometime in the next month I'll be able to move up within Wal-Mart and eventually get into executive level management when I complete my bachelor's degree."

Melissa Little is will begin the Supervision and Management bachelor degree program at Edison State College this fall. Last month, she was honored as the "Employee of the Month" at Wal-Mart.

Through "Dress for Success", SW Florida Works also provided Little with appropriate attire for her initial meeting and subsequent interviews. The Southwest Florida Works and Edison State College Career Services partnership supplies an enormous amount of resources for students approaching the job market.

To learn more about Edison State College's Career Services, please contact Dr. Kevin Kennedy at 239-489-9394 or [kkennedy@edison.edu](mailto:kkennedy@edison.edu). Beth Barger of Southwest Florida Works can be contacted at 931-8200 extension 11125.