

Alumni Association provides Career Speaker Series as professional development tool

By Kayla Gaffney

The Southeast Missouri State University Alumni Association has announced an online Career Speaker Series that is now available for alumni and students.

The Career Speaker Series began this fall and is a series of free, one-hour webinars with the purpose of helping alumni be successful in their careers, skills and job search techniques. The series includes information on career development when seeking a job or advancement in a current job. The speakers in these webinars are some of the nation's top career authors and experts in their fields whether it is career management, social media or networking.

"We want our alums to be successful in their careers, and this is another way we can help them with not only finding a first job but advancing in their careers as well," Jay Wolz, director of Alumni Relations, said. "This webinar series includes information about various aspects of career development, whether it's getting that first job or seeking a promotion or using social media to your best advantage in a job hunt."

Part of the reason the Alumni Association felt the need to help alumni with career development had to do with the unemployment rates doubling for degree holders in recent years and uncertainty in the employment market and economy.

"One thing we learned through the economic downturn was that a lot of our alums lost their positions, and that they needed help in career transitions," said Bill Holland, vice president for university advancement and executive director of the University Foundation. "We're just trying to reach out and provide as many resources to our alumni as possible so they can remember Southeast and continue to use it as an asset."

The first webinar of the series was held on Oct. 2. It was on career management, titled "Build Career Fitness to Achieve Job Search & Career Success" and presented by Peter Weddle, author of more than two dozen books about careers. Weddle shares tips and strategies he has developed that will help his audience stay focused on improving their "career health."

The next webinar will be at 7 p.m. Nov. 6. The topic will be social media and the webinar is titled "Create Your Online Brand with Social Media." It will be presented by Melissa Giovagnoli, who is an author and coach to business executives. Giovagnoli shares her knowledge on how to use social media to build networks and personal online brands.

"They have some form of expertise that we feel our alums could benefit from, especially those who are interested in pursuing a new career or advancing in their current career," Wolz said.

The webinars are held live on the first Wednesday of every month from October through June, except in January it will be held on the second Wednesday. If users tune in live, they have the option of asking questions to the speaker. The webinars are also archived for those who cannot watch them live.

"It's another way that we want our alumni to realize that their relationship with the university doesn't have to end when they graduate," Wolz said. "We want this to be a benefit for them and another way that we can continue to work with our alumni throughout their careers."

To access the Career Speaker Series, students and alumni should register at expertwebinarseries.com/semoalumni. Webinars can be viewed on a computer, smartphone or tablet anywhere there is an internet connection.