

SINCLAIR

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went through a period of financial difficulty and an employee-wide pay-cut was imposed. Unable to support my family on the lower salary, I resigned in order to seek better-paying employment.

A six-month period of unemployment and job seeking ended when I grew desperate and took a job at another day spa. I hated every minute of it. After six months, I quit and stayed at home for another three months. This time, I was determined not to accept another aimless job. I wanted a career. So, I changed my attitude, stayed positive and focused on my goal: to work for the University of California, San Diego (UCSD).

With a new-found purpose and direction to achieve my dream, I applied for several jobs there and was hired through the UCSD Temporary Agency and worked eight days as an administrative assistant in the payroll department. I was quickly offered a permanent position as front desk receptionist in the human resources

department. After a year in that position, I applied for and was promoted to administrative assistant II with Staff Education and Development, a unit of UCSD Human Resources. I was then reclassified to higher-level position within that unit and held that position until 2004. I then applied for and was promoted to a human resources specialist in the vice chancellor health sciences dean's office. A year later, I was reclassified as human resources analyst.

Throughout my career advancements at UCSD, I worked with some wonderful people who mentored me and provided wonderful opportunities for me to achieve my goals. I must also recognize the San Diego Urban League, for without their training and tutelage, none of this would be possible. I shall always be grateful to Barbara Webb and the wonderful staff of the San Diego Urban League for giving me my start and offering me the opportunity to give back by participating in various programs that facilitate the inspiring work the San Diego Urban League performs, along with the many services it provides for the community.

Carter touts careers in hospitality

By Joelyn Brickner



Clara Carter

Stretching out in the sun on a sandy beach, close to a great hotel, and in reasonable proximity to a cold drink and a really good meal...now that's the kind of relaxation most of us dream about.

On those occasions where you can live the dream, be it on vacation or during a break in business travel, there are thousands of people working behind the scenes, ensuring the stay and the meals are up to par. Hotel and food services makes up about 8.1 percent of all employment in this country and is predicted to grow 18 percent over the next five years, adding

more than 1.6 million new jobs (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics). San Diego lists hospitality as its third-largest industry, with over 500 properties including hotels, motels, and casinos, not to mention the area's major pull – our attractive, Mediterranean-like weather.

However, hospitality careers are often thought of as entry-level, low-wage jobs with limited prospects. Many people are unacquainted of the range of hospitality careers available, and there are many.

Clara Carter, president of MCCSN (Multi-Cultural Services Network), devotes part of her week educating people of color about the opportunities in the industry. She has developed curriculum for Mira Costa College and more recently for the Southeastern Economic Development Corporation. Internship programs are also part of what Carter focuses on, working with

SDSU, international students and community outreach programs. "We need to excite young people about this business. There are many career opportunities in the hospitality sector outside of the entry-level service type. Parents talking to their kids, more media exposure, everything helps," she said. "San Diego is one of the top five destinations that people like to travel to. In 2005, our tourist trade brought in \$6.9 billion, a good portion of it in the multi-cultural sector. For instance, last August, we booked 1,500

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LEADERSHIP

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days per week as an intern in the Urban League's local office and three days as an intern in the office of San Diego City Councilman Tony Young.

Both Harrison and Williams came to the Urban League via the Americorps Program initiated by the Clinton Administration, whereby students could work for an educational grant while still being in school and serving their country.

"Right now, we're (meeting with) all the presidents from the black student unions and the African student unions on college campuses across San Diego, which allows us to filter our information (about C3N) into the campus," said Harrison of her and Williams' role as co-presidents of C3N. "Also, we're trying to build an internship pool that will match-up African-Americans and underserved youth to the businesses or trades of their desire. What they do is post their résumés online and the person at the

companies that partner with us would then look at their résumé and match-up. We're also looking to bring in the Black Executive Exchange Program (BEEP), a national program the Urban League has where black executives take it upon themselves to come to help African-American youths do internships with them."

According to Williams, "The reason why we feel the C3N is so important is because we have to - I wouldn't say erase these statistics," he said, referring to a report featured in a recent article in *Jet* magazine ('Black Males' Rampant Joblessness, High Drop-Out Rate, Incarceration Dooming Black Community') "but we have to find some type of balance, some type of median because for our peers and our kids and our later generations, it's not looking too good."

Because he wants to effect change, Williams' ambitions include the political arena. "I want to influence policy-making and laws, and I want to be grass-rooted. I love America's Finest City and I know for me to help this Urban League

campaign, I'm going to have to grow eventually and go to other states. But, I plan to do the 360-degree circle, where I start in the community - which is San Diego, where I was born and raised - and I want to go out and get my degree and do other things, whatever my endeavors are across the world, but then I want to remember where I came from and invest it back into my community, which is the Fourth District San Diego."

Meanwhile, Harrison's career aspirations are in the accounting field, yet also with an eye on making a local contribution. "My goal is to become a CPA, of course, go into a firm, gain some experience and come back to my community and set up some financial services there," she said.

As it relates to their responsibilities with the Urban League, Williams explained, "We do office things, like filing and phone calls, but we're really about outreach... I'll say 'spreading the gospel,' as in letting everyone know about the reading gap and Brown vs. The Board of Education," he said. "But, we've also been working

with Corporate America, as well. Basically, we're in training for Corporate America" he said.

"We're involved in all the (Urban League's) arms, which is employment, education and housing," said Harrison.

When asked about "life after the Urban League," both Harrison and Williams had similar sentiments, which were expressed by Harrison when she said: "I don't really like to think about the Urban League as an internship program. It's a real lifelong goal and it's a movement that I think I will be forever involved in."

Tiffany Harrison and Roosevelt Williams III are currently the leaders of the Urban League's College Career Club Network, but it doesn't take a lot of imagination to envision them as future leaders of much larger constituencies at some point in the not-too-distant future.

Editor's note: College Career Club Network (C3N) meets at 7 p.m. every other Tuesday at the Urban League of San Diego County, 720 Gateway Center Drive; San Diego 92102.

CARTER

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attendees from Fortune 500's Black Enterprise at La Costa Resort. At present, MCCSN is working on San Diego's first FAM Tour (Familiarization Tour), which will bring in 20-25 diverse meeting and conventions planners into the city. We plan to showcase the best of the city in order to generate business. Southwest Airlines is one of the sponsors," she continued. The theme "Discovering San Diego's Hidden Treasure" will focus on Mission Valley as a meetings, vacation and conference destination.

MCCSN's partners include The Mission Valley Tourism Council, the Town and Country Resort and Convention Center, the San Diego Convention and Visitors Bureau, the National Coalition of Black Meeting Planners, Meeting Professionals International and the San Diego Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

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