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WEDNESDAY'S WOMAN

Making a career of career readiness

ANDREW CRITCHELOW The News-Enterprise Feb 14, 2018 Updated 3 hrs ago



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Jerisia Lamons is career services director at Elizabethtown Community and Technical College. Much of her day is spent talking with students and people about choosing a career or counseling about their education and career goals.

NEAL CARDIN/The News-Enterprise

For Jerisia Lamons, career services director at Elizabethtown Community and Technical College, helping others find a career pathway is about more than making sure they receive a steady paycheck. Lamons said her role in helping a person's professional life is about finding a fulfilling passion.

"If you're doing what you're meant to be doing, it gets in your soul," she said. "You connect with it. I want to drive people toward finding what's in their soul to do with their life."

Though Lamons has made a career of helping others find meaningful work, she said pursuing a career in the realm of social work wasn't her initial plan when attending Western Kentucky University. She switched majors a couple of times before trying social work because many members of her family were involved in the field and because of the lack of math requirements in the degree.

"I went into social work and it just so happened that I enjoyed the content of the classes," she said. "It's kind of like that's how God pushed me and moved me into that role."

Lamons said she became interested in studying the sociological factors that can affect a person's life and in working to make lives better.

"It was something about that cause and effect and how you can be instrumental in that effect on the other end that was really, really just monumental to me," she said. "That's one of the reasons I'm so passionate about my job now because I'm on the effect end."

Following graduation, Lamons worked with the Kentucky Career Center-Lincoln Trail. She spent 15 years with the organization, using her role as client service manager to help unemployed and underemployed individuals return to a sustainable career path.

"I really realized how foundational work is for people," she said. "It is at the base of everything."

Carter Dyson, director of the Kentucky Career Center-Lincoln Trail said Lamons' departure from the organization was bittersweet. He said it misses her leadership and commitment, but he said he's happy she can further pursue her talent for education.

"Although I actually recognized her potential to do big things in the educational field upon my first meeting her, nevertheless, it was not easy to see such a valuable member of our team move on, although the timing was right for her," he said. "A team cannot lose such an outstanding member as Jerisia and not be changed."

Lamons started working with the Career Services Center at the college in July 2017. She said she pursued the job because she wanted to be involved in higher education.

“The community college to me is almost the pivot point,” she said. “We have so much to offer somebody. It doesn’t matter what level of learning that you’re at.”

The Career Services Center provides assistance with resume building and job interview training, and provides resources for students and alumni to find part-time and full-time employment. The program also helps students declare a major and decide on a career pathway. Workshops and public events often are hosted by the program.

Community outreach is nothing new for Lamons. She serves as secretary of the United Way of Central Kentucky Board of Directors and serves on the advisory committee for its Way to Work program. She also is the diversity chair for the Elizabethtown Society for Human Resources.

Lamons said she strives to bring a unique perspective to her community engagements and values her ability to contribute to these organizations.

“I probably didn’t grow up like everybody on those boards grew up and I think it’s important to have diversity on boards,” she said. “Diversity breeds wonderful ideas and wonderful innovation. And then also, being able to give my opinion about what moves and shakes in our community is very, very impactful and important to me.”

Looking forward with her current role at the college, Lamons said she enjoys working with those who will one day shape the future.

“I love the connection with the students. That is my absolute favorite thing,” she said. “They keep you young, if you let them.”

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Jerisia Lamons Wednesday's Woman

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