The Career and Testing Center conducted four 1-hour Career Forums titled “Using Social Media for The Job Search” on October 26, 2010. The seminar was conducted by Matt McCallon, a career coordinator with the Career and Testing Center, and his presentation was centered on properly utilizing social media sites such as Facebook & Twitter in regards to the job search. Mr. McCallon began by showing a YouTube video entitled “Socialnomics” that outlined some interesting facts highlighting the effects social media has had on our society, such as:

- “1 out of 8 couples married in the U.S. last year met via social media”
- “If the Facebook & its users were a nation, it would be the 4th largest country in the world”
- “80% of recruiters admit to using social media sites like LinkedIn as a main recruiting tool”
- “Wikipedia is now more accurate than the Encyclopedia Britannica”
- “Over 70% of consumers trust recommendations from other consumers, while less than 15% trust advertisements”
- “1 out of 6 higher education students are enrolled in an online curriculum”
- “Years to reach 50 million users:
  - Radio → 38 years
  - TV → 13 years
  - Internet → 4 years
  - iPod → 3 years
  - Facebook → 100 million users in less than 9 months
  - iPod application downloads → 1 billion in 9 months”

The video was used to introduce the main point of Mr. McCallon’s presentation, that social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter changed how information is shared and transferred, which has had a profound and permanent effect on our society. As Mr. McCallon pointed out, the successful and savvy job seeker has to understand how to properly utilize social media to create their ‘social brand’ that will help a job seeker ‘stand out.’

So how does one create their own ‘social brand’? According to Mr. McCallon, the first step is to define your personal brand: who are you, what are your interests, what are your goals? Mr. McCallon outlined some simple tips to help define a personal brand on sites such as Facebook or LinkedIn, such as:

- A current, tasteful, professional photo
- An appropriate, professional username
- Accurate contact information
- Appropriate profile content, i.e. clean up profile information, pictures, tags, status updates, etc.
- Be careful who you are ‘connected with’ and which groups you belong to
• Always monitor your own brand

Another step is to perform a search of your name via Google or Twitter Search; as Mr. McCallon pointed out, this is one of the 1st things perspective employers and schools are doing in today’s marketplace, so everyone needs to understand what information is attached to our ‘brand.’

Mr. McCallon also emphasized that there are numerous social media sites that are specific to particular interests, such as Blogster and SciSpace, and suggested that a perspective jobseeker join one of these sites to network with others who have similar backgrounds and interests. However, Mr. McCallon also advised that if someone joins a social media site such as Facebook or LinkedIn and connects with a group, they should be active contributors to that group via posts and feedback; perspective employers are typically discouraged by users who belong to groups but do not participate in them. Mr. McCallon concluded the seminar by outlining the differences between popular social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter, as well as introducing lesser known but equally as impactful sites such as LinkedIn.com and Glassdoor.com. LinkedIn is a professional networking site that combines the best of Facebook and Twitter, and Glassdoor.com is a social media site that provides anonymous perspectives about companies and positions within companies.

“Using Social Media for The Job Search” was an interesting and insightful look into the impact of social media in our society; unfortunately, there were only 2 STAIRSTEP/Inspired participants to attend the seminar, and the seminar was not well attended overall. As echoed by the participant feedback forms, the most impactful part of the presentation was the concept of using social media to create a ‘personal brand’ that will help define and promote a person’s image. The STAIRSTEP/Inspired participants also found value in being introduced to LinkedIn and Glassdoor.com, as well as other uses for Twitter. One area for improvement is to further elaborate on how social media can be used in applying to colleges, particularly graduate school. The topic was briefly introduced, and prospective graduate school students would take great value in elaborating more on this topic.