

**AN OPEN LETTER TO ELLIOTT SCHOOL GRADUATES:  
“SOFT SKILLS” EXPECTATIONS IN THE COMMUNICATION  
WORKFORCE  
FROM THE ESC ADVISORY BOARD 2007-2008\***

*“It is our obligation as employer to provide you a comprehensive understanding of your role in our organization; establish with you a measurable set of expectations regarding your performance; provide an environment enabling you to succeed and enjoy your experience with us; offer you ongoing, positive and supportive critiques of your work; with fair and competitive compensation and benefits.*

**It is our expectation of you, joining our organization as an Elliott School of Communication graduate, that beyond the “hard skills” proficiencies in writing, speaking, production, and visual communication:**

1. That you will have taken every advantage of your time in the Elliott School, from maximum achievement in the classroom to participation in school-related professional activities of interest to you, to completing at least one quality internship in the communication field.
2. That you have previously learned and adopted unquestionable integrity, an impeccable work ethic, including proper business dress and etiquette, and the importance of timeliness and punctuality.
3. That you grasp the significance of understanding your employer’s need for you to contribute to the organization’s role, mission, goals and objectives, and that you demonstrate a commitment to fulfill that expectation.
4. That you understand and embrace the concept of humility, as well as teamwork in the work environment, including accountability for your own performance while showing respect for those around you.
5. That you have learned to be a self-starter, seeking out assignments and going about them at a pace that brings effective, successful closure.
6. That thinking strategically is rare intellectual capital and your most valuable asset. This includes a full-canvas look at what’s ahead, how to chart the critical path to success, with an eye to potential problems along the way, and well-thought-out advance solutions to each.
7. That change must be embraced not just tolerated in a communication industry that is constantly evolving and that your ability to adapt effortlessly in what you say and how you perform will be scrutinized carefully.
8. That striving to be a well-rounded communication professional goes well beyond mastering a set of industry skills; it requires a life-long quest to learn, ask lots of questions, read voraciously, scan multiple media daily; and be curious about the world and your place in it.
9. That the quickest way to be shown the door is carrying an entitlement attitude about your self-worth; remind yourself that regardless of position, title, longevity, or salary, you are always replaceable.
10. That an important element of your career success is to take advantage of networking, mentoring, and other professional development opportunities both inside and outside your organization and then give back by offering yourself as a resource to others learning the business and in the wider community.”

\*The ESC Advisory Board is comprised of 20 industry leaders in media and communication fields in Wichita (general managers, publishers, editors, CEOs of creative agencies, public affairs directors, etc.) who provide counsel to the director of the school on matters related to industry trends, employment needs, and academic-professional partnerships.