

## **Coping with College Series**

### **Tips for Successful Career Planning for All Four Years of College**

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Career planning sounds like something that you might do during spring semester your senior year when you face the grim reality that college really is going to end. It somehow seems unfair that graduation looms, just when you've figured out where everything is located and how to negotiate "red tape" with the best of them. But the truth is, graduation will be here sooner than you think; so begin your career planning now.

I want to share with you some career activities you might pursue during each year in college. Let me point out that your questions about career planning may not match this timeline. Everyone develops their career focus in their own time. The following timeline is offered as a way to tell you about resources available through the Student Counseling Services and Student and Alumni Placement Services that can make your career planning more successful and satisfying.

Freshman year is often a time to consider options. Even students who begin college knowing what they want to major in may question their choice at some point. Student Counseling Services offers individual counseling appointments to help you explore your concerns. In addition, our center offers colorful and user-friendly computerized career exploration. For students wanting to go through the career journey with others, there are fun group activities including our 3 session Career Exploration workshops, and our 8 week IDS 105 Career Choice Class. Sometimes it's nice to talk with another student about career questions. Student Counseling Services has a very talented and dedicated group of Peer counselors who are there to assist you and answer questions, as well as a full professional staff.

Sophomore year may be a time when you feel a growing commitment to a major but aren't sure what you will do with it after you graduate. The Career Center (Student Services Building, Room 185) has a large library of career materials that can offer ideas about what fields people often pursue with different college majors. Within the Career Center is a Career Library which contains occupational information, information about college majors, and career related periodicals to give you job market trends and hot career issues. Sometimes talking with a person who works with your major can assist you in identifying or expanding the options available. Both first and second year students may be interested in attending the intern fair, to learn more about possible internship opportunities. These sorts of options can be explored by coming in to the Career Center or by giving them a call at 438-2200.

Junior year is a time for developing some career related experience to help bridge the gap between college and that first job. Staff of the [Student and Alumni Placement Services](#) can provide information about summer jobs and internship and co-op placements to offer practical skills and experience. Visit the spring internship and co-op Fair to learn more about gaining practical experience in a field of interest. This is a good time to learn about conducting informational interviews to assist you in networking with people in your desired career field. Finally, this is a good time to attend one of the resume writing workshops to draft your first resume.

Senior year is typically a time when students are involved in a job search. Entering the world of work can be intimidating. You can visit the Career Center to polish your interviewing skills by doing a video-taped mock interview. There are also resources that discuss how to behave in an interview situation to make your best impression and ideas about which questions to ask in an

interview . This is the time to put the final professional touches on your resume and to use the employer section in the Career Resources Library to read about employers before your interview. You may want to register with the credentialing service and data base maintained by the Student and Alumni Placement Services to help recruiters find you when seeking applicants with your qualifications. Throughout the year there are Career Fairs where you can talk about job possibilities and begin doing some networking. Each fall there is a graduate and professional school day to learn about advanced and specialized education. In the fall and spring semesters there is a Senior Day with opportunities to share your resume and make contact with employers. Teacher Placement Day is a special event specifically designed for Education majors. There is also a Workforce Diversity Career Fair to facilitate networking and information gathering for special populations on campus.

Career planning is not something you put off until your senior year. There are many resources that can assist you in mapping out your career destination, making and implementing good decisions, and working through some of the problems that sometimes emerge in plotting your career path. Stop in the Career Resources Center, Room 185 Student Services and see what's available. Let the staff of the Student Counseling Services and the Student and Alumni Placement Services help you get a head start on your career planning.