

The Parents' Role in Career Planning

While not every student is at the same place at the same time, most *Freshmen* will be at the stage of *self-assessment*. They are beginning to learn more about themselves. As a parent, you can help them to identify their unique talents, nurture their skills, and understand their motivations and personality. Encourage them to get involved in community service, activities and clubs as a way to explore interests and develop or enhance skills.



As students approach their *Sophomore* year, they begin to prepare themselves for the future by gaining further information on career goals that might be similar to their potential major. One of the easiest and most effective ways parents can assist students with *career exploration* is to help them meet people in a professional field in which they are interested. Information is critical and experimentation through internships, volunteering, etc., are all important pieces. Encourage your son/daughter to explore several fields during their first two years.

During the *Junior* year, the focus should be on *decision-making and goal setting* as students learn more about career opportunities in their major, acquire skills in their chosen field, and begin to think about options after graduation. Experience in a chosen field is now more important than ever. Your role is to challenge them to understand the importance of goals and plans. Discuss career options and how job choices affect their future.

It's time to take action during the *Senior* year and begin *implementing a career choice*. Whether applying to graduate school or identifying potential employers and beginning the job search, this can be an anxious time. Your role as a motivator can help your son/daughter to continue moving forward.

Be a *Listener* . . .

- Provide non-judgmental listening and honest feedback.
- Initiate conversations on career plans, listen, respond, and ask questions.
- Help your son or daughter clarify ideas, priorities, and concerns.
- See the situation from son or daughter's perspective.
- Encourage your son or daughter to be true to self, values, interests, and talents.
- Give feedback on specific abilities you see in your son or daughter to help develop a solid sense of self.
- Help to develop independent decision-making skills and increase motivation. (Check "What Can I Do With This Major?", www.lhup.edu/career/majors/majors/default.html, which helps to connect majors with careers.)

Be a *Network Resource* . . .

- Help your son or daughter develop contacts for information, advice, and assistance in career planning and job search issues. Refer your son or daughter to colleagues, friends, neighbors, parishioners, family, and community members with experience related to his or her interests. Offer encouragement to approach people and ask this kind of information
- Suggest your son or daughter make connections with faculty. The first year in college is the time to develop the habit of getting to know instructors. All faculty post and host open office hours to help

students with questions about course materials or academic progress. Students ultimately need professors to write letters of recommendation for such things as internships, scholarships, and graduate school applications. The greatest success in course work and the most substantive recommendations are often proportionate to the level of communication students have with faculty.

Suggest an internship or part-time job to your son or daughter. An internship will

- (1) provide an opportunity to apply what's being learned in the classroom;
- (2) help determine if his/her career choice is a good fit; and
- (3) provide valuable on-the-job experience.

As an Advocate, you can

- Encourage your son or daughter to avoid procrastination and begin the career planning process early.
- Encourage your son or daughter to take advantage of all resources available to them. Resources and programs provided by Career Services include:
 - Individualized career counseling and FOCUS, an online interactive career planning program
 - Workshops, job fairs, and other career related programs
 - Career Library
 - Career Services web site: www.lhup.edu/career

Checklist for Successful Career Development

- ◆ Recognize the importance of your positive attitude on your student's view of the future.
- ◆ Really listen to your student to learn what's important to him or her . . . and then get in touch with your own motives. Learn to separate what you'd like to see him/her do from what he/she wants to do.
- ◆ Be patient. Realize that every young person has his/her own time table. Some may be ready to make career decisions sophomore year, others may not be ready until a later time.
- ◆ Keep in mind that career decision-making is a process, not an event.
- ◆ Education opens doors and windows, and a change of major and/or career goal is not necessarily a bad thing. Such changes are often the result of gaining more information about different fields of study as well as career options.
- ◆ "Major" does not necessarily equal "career" and if the student has been educated for flexibility, he/she may very well end up doing something very different than originally planned. In today's job market, this is an asset!
- ◆ Emphasize the importance of grades, hands-on experience, marketable skills, relevant coursework and extra-curricular activities.
- ◆ The earlier a student seeks us out, the better prepared he/she will be to proceed through the career decision-making process.

Career Services

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