

Focus on Career

The “bottom line” of going to college is to get the education that will help you to develop the necessary skills and maturity that are needed to find a job/career that is satisfying financially and which produces energy, vitality and enthusiasm in your life.

Discover

The location and nature of your job, and the power of your intention to have what you want, will have a major impact on the quality of your life. What do you really want the next stage of your life to be about? What arena(s) do you want to explore and spend time in, who do you want to become, how do you want to spend time? These are some of the “soul searching” questions you need to ask yourself.

Just as important, you need to assess your interests and skills. What things are you particularly interested in? What are your strengths? Include hobbies and recreational pursuits as well as the more usual career related interests. Certain skills are needed in a specific occupation, such as a foreign language you’ve mastered, or drafting skills you’ve developed. There are also skills such as writing or public speaking that can be used in a variety of work places. Then there are your personality traits that may point you to jobs requiring more team skills than those requiring you to work more independently. Consider what skills you want to develop. Finally, distinguish your own interests and skills from those your family want you to have or think you have. This is your life that you are creating.

After coming up with your list of interests and skills, explore what fields require your strengths. Talk — to peers, advisors, professors, family, friends, and people already working in the areas in which you are most interested. And read — newspapers, trade journals, economic outlooks. Spend time on the Internet, checking out newsgroups, newsletters from trade organizations and anything else that is going to help you refine your area of interest. Gather as much information about your areas of interest as you can. Go on informational interviews — many alumni/alumnae of your

school are probably willing to meet with you to explore different career directions. Does the long-term outlook indicate this field is growing? Are there related fields that you might be interested in? How can your skill areas transfer into other fields, and is that of interest to you? (For example if you want to be a journalist, would you be interested in being a writer in a marketing firm?)

Prepare

Write a resume. This will be an important introduction of you to your potential employer, so make sure it represents you well. There are numerous books and web sites focused on writing resumes, offering ideas and even templates. Your school’s career office can also help you. Consider it a project that will take numerous re-workings as it becomes more clear what type of job you are looking for and what skills and experiences you can bring to that job.

Execute

The interviewing process is a critical piece of your job search. It is one of your best opportunities to both sell yourself AND determine if the job you are interviewing for has the potential of being a good fit for you. Research beforehand as much as you can about the job and the company. Think about how your skills could make you a very effective employee. Your job in the interview is to convince them that you are their best choice for the position and determine if they are the best place for you to work. Try to anticipate what some of their questions might be. Prepare questions that you want answered and that show that you’ve spent some time learning about their company. Use all the resources available to you as you prepare for the interviewing process. For example, ask someone in the career office to role-play with you or read a book on the interviewing process.

