Freshman Year: Charting their course for the Career Journey

Questions: How do I choose a major? What is a college all about? How do I find out what I want to do with my life? What can I do with a major in ____?

Consider this:
As new students, their concerns about majors and careers may be just beginning. By planning how they will involve themselves in different courses and experiences and by exploring career ideas with an academic advisor and a career counselor, they will begin to be responsible for their own future.

Recommendations for Family Members:
- Although it may seem helpful and appropriate, refrain from suggesting or selecting your son or daughter’s major for him or her. Instead, ask about likes, dislikes, strengths, and goals.
- Let your son or daughter know that they should consider college as a preparation for life. The decisions they make in college will influence their future. Support those decisions.
- Remind them that they don’t have to decide on a major right away, however, encourage them to make a tentative career choice. Know that change is possible.
- Encourage them to visit Career Services, KT 109 and take a career assessment (FOCUS)
- Recommend that they start their personal development by joining at least one student organization (Student Life Office / Over 100 Clubs), helping them develop skills employers’ value.
- Share with them that IPFW offers a “Career Planning” Course – EDUC x210 / IDIS 115 – 2 Credits
- Remind them to read the college catalog to become familiar with available majors.
- Show them the “What Can I Do With a Major In _____?” website
- During summer vacation, encourage them to get a job with opportunities to gain work experience and improve interpersonal communication skills.

Sophomore Year: Getting Ready for the Expedition

Questions: Is this the best major for me? Do I need a minor? How do I plan a meaningful and marketable education? How can I develop my work related skills?

Consider this:
Your son or daughter may want to declare his or her major at this time. By meeting with his/her advisors to discuss available options, your student may be prepared to make a decision.

Recommendations for Family Members:
- Suggest that they talk with a career professional and take career assessment to help confirm their choice of major.
- Ask them to explore ways to gain on-target work experience through internships, part-time, and volunteer work.
- Encourage them to participate in the Externship Program / Job Shadow Program
- Persuade them to sign up for the INdorsed Career Ready Program
- Help them choose electives that will give them additional desirable skills.
Persuade them to participate in resume writing and mock interviewing activities through the career services center while beginning to develop a resume.

Make sure that their “Net-Rep” is professional – have them google themselves and then create a LinkedIn profile.

During summer vacation, encourage them to get a job with opportunities to gain work experience and improve interpersonal communication skills = related work experience!

**Junior Year: Evaluating Progress on the Career Journey**

**Questions:** When should I start thinking about my job search? How do I identify specific job possibilities to go with my major? Is graduate/professional school for me?

**Consider this:**
Graduation may not be as far off as they think. The junior year is not too early to identify and gather information about companies and/or graduate/professionals school. Students need to know the steps necessary for gaining meaningful employment or for gaining admission to graduate/professional school.

**Recommendations for Family Members:**
- Support them in joining student and professional organizations related to their majors or careers.
- Encourage them to read job descriptions send in our “Job Blasts” to evaluate their gaps in skills
- Help them polish their resume and stress that they have it critiqued by a career professional.
- Encourage them to meet with our Employer Relations team and join the Train-A-Don Internship Program
- During summer vacation, encourage them to get a job, internship or Co-Op with opportunities to gain work experience and improve interpersonal communication skills.
- Encourage them to start networking and attend our annual Fall Job Fair and our NICE Job Fair in the Spring (largest job fair in northeast Indiana)
- Explore Graduate School options if necessary to achieve career goal

**Senior Year: Deciding and Committing to the Career Journey**

**Questions:** What exactly is the job search process? How do I identify my employable skills? Is interview preparation really necessary? What am I going to do after graduation?

**Consider this:**
It’s time to decide and commit to a career decision (if they haven’t already!). Students should stay in touch with the Career Services for both information about job openings and assistance with interviewing.

**Recommendations for Family Members:**
- Insist that they develop a job search plan complete with strategies that will work for them.
- Encourage them to attend networking events – Networking is the #1 way to find a job!
- Assist them in purchasing a professional suit complete with shoes that will be used when attending career fairs, interviews, and graduate/professional schools.
- Encourage them to participate in a taped practice interview (we offer skype mock interviews!)