

# CAREER PLANNING GUIDE

*Always plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the ark.*

**- Richard Cushing, novelist**

## Freshman Year

- See a Career Counselor or participate in a Career Planning Group to understand yourself and your:
  - Skills - what you're good at
  - Interests - what you enjoy doing
  - Personality - what matches you and brings out your best
  - Values - what's important to you
  - Goals - what your plans are for the future
- Come up with a list of occupations that match you.
- Begin researching occupations of interest.
- Read about occupations that are of interest to you.
- Talk with other students about their plans; ask upperclassmen about their career aspirations and programs of study.
- Get to know your professors: Your professors are tremendous resources.
- Assess your study skills and get help if needed: If you are having any problems in a class, ask for help from your professor. If you need more assistance, go to the Student Engagement and Success Office. Tutoring and writing help are free!
- Aim for a 3.0 or higher GPA.
- Get involved in campus activities. Meet new people and develop your skills.
- Join an organization; take a job on campus, volunteer for a community service project, or get involved in activities in your residence hall.
- Look for a summer job or volunteer in a career area that interests you.

## Sophomore Year

- Continue with self-exploration and self-knowledge through career counseling - Individually or in a group, this helps to narrow your options; talk with your peers!
- Continue researching careers - read about occupations that interest you.
- Field Survey: Conduct informational interviews with at least three people in each of the occupations in which you are interested. This should help to reinforce your ideal career choice.
- Research and apply early for summer jobs or volunteer opportunities to find something in one of your areas of interest.
- Start researching internships at the Career Center and within your major and minor departments. Ask a company you are interested in if you can intern there.
- Get to know your professors and seek their advice.
- Assess your study skills and get help if you need it: If you are having any problems in a class, ask for help from your professor. If you need more assistance, sign up for free tutoring and use the Writing Center.

- Aim for a 3.0 or higher GPA - higher if planning to attend graduate school.
- Continue involvement with student organizations and seek to increase your responsibilities within these organizations. Think of a club/program/activity to start!
- Participate in leadership training (Hill Climbers, RA, SGA, Student Organizations, etc.).

### Junior Year

- Complete career research and narrow your options to your 3 ideal career areas.
  - Plan A
  - Plan B
  - Plan C
- Research graduate schools and their requirements for admission: Is graduate school needed for your career; is it feasible after college; how can you plan for it now?
- Find out about required entrance exams and take them at the appropriate time.
- Begin to research employers related to your ideal career areas.
- Visit the Career Center to get help with this process – graduate and job research.
- Aim for 3.0 or higher GPA, especially if going to graduate school.
- Increase responsibilities in your co-curricular involvements and become an officer of a campus organization.
- Sign up for the SDV 4000 Career Professionalism class.
- Work to develop a professional relationship with your professors in your major field of study; Ask to do work study in your academic department or volunteer.

### Senior Year

- Continue to research employers to find the best matches.
- Apply to graduate schools before deadlines.
- Seek and take on high-level responsibilities in activities and organizations.
- Maintain a strong GPA.
- Discuss your career plans with your professors and ask them to serve as references, before you begin your job hunt or apply to graduate school – give professors and administrators plenty of time for recommendation letters.
- Sign up for the SDV 4000 Career Professionalism class offered to juniors and seniors.
- Do Internship(s) – paid or unpaid; volunteer in your field if you do not do an internship.
- Attend Job Fairs and visit prospective employers' HR offices – ask about prospective employment and requirements.
- Polish your portfolio, resume, and cover letters for job applications and interviews.
- Network – professors, staff, students, working professionals, family members, etc.