

A Faculty Guide to the Career Development Process

1. Self-Assessment

A good career decision can only be made when students take inventory and become aware of their personal style, identify their interests, skill areas, work values, and lifestyle preferences. Without these pieces of the puzzle, a career decision is not grounded or based on criteria, which matters to students. What to do –

- Encourage students to take a self-assessment instrument to identify the following:
 - Past accomplishments, skills, and abilities
 - Career-related hobbies and interests
 - Personality style
 - Work and life values
- Talk with advisees about your own career path
- Assist students in building skills and leadership through curricular, co-curricular, and volunteer activities

2. Academic Information

Gathering academic information is important when making decisions regarding major. Remember, the average American college student changes majors eight times. This means that it is okay to take time when considering a major. What to do –

- Create assignments or experiences that allow for the exploration of a field of study
- Research papers on what careers result from a particular major
- Encourage students to facilitate an Information interview
- Encourage students to participate in Job shadowing

The Career Services Department can assist students with all of the above. We can also assist you with creating a career-related assignment for students to complete.

3. Exploring Career Fields

What are occupations and career fields that provide the best blend of students' unique styles, interests, skills, values, and preferences? The goal in this step is to identify possible career options, which match students' criteria for job satisfaction and those which offer no fit. In this step, books, web sites, and computer programs can provide knowledge about career fields, so comparisons between occupation characteristics and personal characteristics can be made. What to do –

- In advising appointments, talk with students about career ideas.
- Assign informational interviews or job shadowing experiences, students can connect with professionals in their fields of interest
- Talk about the value of summer jobs and internships relating to particular fields of study
- Allow students to attend career fairs and internship fairs
- Announce internship position openings found on the McDaniel College Career Services homepage [www.mcdaniel.edu/5402.htm]

4. Gaining Experience

Test-drive the career fields of interest to see if they fit. Talk with people in the field, observe them working, or work in the field as an intern, part-time, or summer worker or take classes to learn more about the field. Add the third dimension to the career decision. How is the fit? This may be a time to recycle. As possible career choices are eliminated, others may need to be identified, requiring a step back. What to do –

- Encourage students to seek out a summer job or internship in their career field of interest, announcements are posted in the McDaniel College Career Services job and internship database called GT Job Connection.
- Talk about the Washington Internship and/or the Washington Internship Institute program which provides opportunities for students to acquire professional work experience related to their academic majors or areas of career interest in Washington, DC.
- Encourage students to use the three internship databases that McDaniel College Career Services department subscribes to… Internships.com, Internships-USA and Current Jobs for Graduates.

5. Looking at Options

By test driving possible career choices, students have identified options which meet selection criteria from Self-Assessment. Now is the time to evaluate and select options which best meet the majority of criteria. Develop a map or plan, which will help reach career goals. Work this plan. What to do –

- Allow students to attend career fairs and internship fairs sponsored by Career Services
- Encourage the connection with alumni through the Alumni Career Network online database to learn about a chosen career field
- Assign the development of a resume and cover letter to help students clarify career goals
- At this point, if students have couple of occupations in mind but are having trouble deciding on which one to focus, encourage them to make an appointment with a career professional
- If graduate/professional school fits into a student's plan, encourage them to check out the resources available on the Career Services website [www.mcdaniel.edu/5402.htm] and in our office.

6. Putting It All Together

Studies show that it takes an average of six months of active involvement in the job search to find satisfactory employment. Therefore, obtaining enjoyable employment requires a commitment. The process need not be overwhelming. Students who plan their efforts and wisely manage their time can make the entire process a smooth one. The real key is understanding the need to carefully budget one's time and to take full advantage of the available resources.

7. Trust the Process

Throughout life and oftentimes before reaching their first goals, students are presented with a series of crossroads. They must determine if they want to make changes in their roadmaps and set different goals or if the original plan still fits. They may find information that had not uncovered before that causes them to question their original choice. If they decide that this is the time to make a change, they will need to recycle back to a previous step and do some more research.