

CAREER PLANNING ACTION GUIDE - DON'T WAIT FOR YOUR LIFE TO HAPPEN TO YOU

FRESHMAN YEAR – ASK QUESTIONS – BEGIN TO RESEARCH

- Start a personal career information resource file that you can edit over time to adapt to changing personal interests.
- Collect career outcome information on majors, as well as on shadowing mentorships, internships, and summer jobs.
- Google “What Can I do With This Major”, an online resource that provides extensive career-related information on college majors. See lists of entry positions (example: CR.JUS.-58 entry jobs), types of employers, professional links.
- Discuss majors and career options with personal contacts, and with faculty, advisors, and upper-class students.
- Explore potential interest areas through courses. Undecided? Don't wait until you do declare to begin exploring.
- Keep an open mind on your choice of major and career options, but remember – graduating in 4 years is the goal!
- Research 4 skills that employers value. Then develop an intentional plan with a timeline for acquiring them.
- Attend on-campus informational career seminars and workshops sponsored by the career services office.
- Join campus organizations that interest you. They offer the additional pre-professional benefit of leadership offices.
- Volunteer – it's a fun way to build skills, experience, leadership and resumes. It's also a great way to meet new people.
- Consider taking the 1-credit quarter-long Career Planning course (COL 150), whether or not you have a major.

SOPHOMORE YEAR – MAKE A MAJOR DECISION

- Declare a major, submit a form in the registrar's office, get your new advisor's signature and get acquainted.
- Pick up a resume prep packet for your major from Career Services. Meet with CS staff to ensure a ready-to-mail resume.
- Already have a resume? Be sure to update it after summer jobs or internships, and ask a professional to critique it.
- Plan early for summer internships and jobs, and particularly for opportunities related to your major.
- Explore details on at least 3 career options available to you through your major. Use Christmas break for the next item.
- Complete 3 information interviews in careers you want to explore. Shadow at least 2 professionals in your field.
- Attend Career Services workshops for resume and cover letter writing, and for learning interview skills and strategies.
- Review your progress in learning 4 or more skills employers seek in new hires. Done that? Now try 4 new ones.
- Join your department's club or organization. There isn't one? Talk to faculty, and take responsibility for starting one.
- Identify national professional associations in your field. Research their reduced student membership rates and benefits.
- Ask your advisor if you are eligible to join an honorary, a valuable resource for networking with professionals.
- Begin to collect recommendations from previous and current employers, coaches, and internship supervisors.
- Read professional journals in your field. It's a way to keep current with what matters to your future interviewers.

JUNIOR YEAR – BECOME A PRO-ACTIVE MANAGER OF YOUR OWN FUTURE

- Narrow your major field career focus. This will only happen if you pursue new information on options.
- Review your cumulative experience. Identify gaps in relation to your goals, and develop a plan for filling those gaps.
- Strengthen your personal career development plan. Define and act upon short and long-term goals. Set timelines.
- Don't forget that spring & Christmas breaks - as well as summer - are great times for career- and relationship-building.
- Attend Career Services workshops for resume and cover letter writing, and interviewing skills and strategies.
- Review your progress in learning skills employers seek. Keep building on them to increase your competitiveness.
- Pursue leadership in clubs and organizations. Remember that employers view campus leaders as management material.
- Pick up a resume prep packet for your major from Career Services. Meet with staff to ensure a ready-to-mail resume.
- Is grad school in your future? Research requirements and timing for entrance exams, applications, and scholarships.
- Complete 3 information interviews for jobs you want to explore. Shadow several professionals working in your field.
- Research employers. Talk to recent graduates in your major about the job market and the realities of post-grad life.
- Purchase professional interview attire. Become aware of regional differences in salary scale and cost of living.

SENIOR YEAR – CRUNCH TIME FOR JOB SEARCH AND GRAD SCHOOL APPLICATIONS

- Develop an employer prospect list with contact information. Gather information on realistic salary expectations.
- Behind on the resume? Get a prep packet from Career Services. Meet with staff to ensure focus and correctness.
- Have a resume already? Be sure to refine and update the version you've been using after each significant change.
- Save your ready-to-mail resume in PDF format for email applications, but be sure to update your PDF regularly.
- Attend Career Services workshops for resume and cover letter writing, and for interviewing skills and strategies.
- Draft a cover letter that can be adapted for a variety of employers. Have a professional critique it for you.
- Grad School Create a timeline and stick to it. Include exams, letters, scholarships, TA / GA information, all deadlines.
- Follow up on all employment and grad school applications and keep a record of the status of each.
- Change answering machine message / Create a non-college email address appropriate for your professional image.
- Take a 1-credit quarter-long Job Search course (COL 405). Open a LinkedIn account. Review your social media presence.