

## **The Four-Year Career Development Plan**

*Career planning is more than just finding a job; it's a lifelong series of decisions that require specific skills. It is important that you begin your own life planning process early and continue throughout your college years. The following are suggested guidelines to assist you in your career planning while at Wheaton. The guidelines will assist you with principles you will be using in the years to come.*

### **FIRST YEAR STUDENTS**

*Identify your interests, values and abilities.  
Be aware of what is happening in the world around you.*

- ◆ Focus on general education classes.
- ◆ Consider various majors.
- ◆ Explore career options for your major.
- ◆ Involve yourself in campus organizations.
- ◆ Learn about your community; go to concerts and plays, talk with people who are different from you, ask lots of questions, discover answers.
- ◆ Read textbooks, newspapers, books, and journals in career areas that you are interested in.
- ◆ Make an appointment with a Career Counselor in Career Services to develop a career plan
- ◆ Use the computerized self-assessment, Career Direct.
- ◆ Talk to professionals in the field you want to work.
- ◆ Volunteer!
- ◆ Choose a summer job related to your career interest.

### **SOPHOMORES**

*Re-assess your career interests, abilities and values.  
Narrow your educational vision.*

- ◆ Decide your major and finalize class schedules for the rest of your time at Wheaton.
- ◆ Meet with a faculty or staff member on a regular basis to discuss your academic progress.
- ◆ Involve yourself in campus committees and organizations.
- ◆ Read articles and journals related to your major.
- ◆ Keep up with current issues by reading the newspaper; watching TV news.
- ◆ Consider graduate education for the future.
- ◆ Use a career planning computer program in Career Services to assess your interests and skills. Then meet with a Career Counselor for consultation.
- ◆ Attend Career Services workshops or programs that give information on career opportunities.
- ◆ Spend time with a professional in the career you are pursuing.
- ◆ Attend CAREER CONVERSATIONS to learn about career areas and talk with professionals in specific fields.
- ◆ Use the WHEATON CAREER CONSULTANT NETWORK (WCCN). This is a network of alumni who will answer questions concerning the world of work and career options.
- ◆ Choose a summer job that will give you experience in your career interest area.

## **JUNIORS**

*Establish career direction.*

*Gain experience through internships, part-time and/or summer work.*

- ◆ Begin identifying preferred work settings (i.e. Christian, secular, industrial, small business, non-profit) as well as geographic options.
- ◆ Join appropriate professional associations related to your field.
- ◆ Explore graduate and professional school options. Learn of application deadlines and exam dates.
- ◆ Visit Career Services for internship information or career counseling.
- ◆ Establish an employer network.
- ◆ Attend an Internship information Seminar to learn the process of applying for an internship.
- ◆ Do an internship!
- ◆ Attend Career Conversations to speak with professionals in specific fields as well as to make networking contacts.
- ◆ Use the WCCN (Wheaton Career Consultant Network) to conduct informational interviews and network.
- ◆ Spend one on one time with a professional at his/her occupation.
- ◆ Use the Career Services Library to discover career options and research employer prospects.
- ◆ Develop a resume and cover letter that markets career-related qualifications. Have Career Services critique it.
- ◆ Choose a summer job that will give you experience in your career interest.

## **SENIORS**

*Develop and fine-tune your skills in designing a job hunting strategy. Secure a position. Apply to graduate/professional schools and finalize the process.*

- ◆ Confirm your remaining degree requirements –Avoid surprises.
- ◆ Develop short-term and long-term goals (what do you hope to accomplish?) Consider both personal and career goals.
- ◆ Target job search efforts to two or three career areas.
- ◆ Consider finances needed after graduation; housing, utilities, transportation, clothing, food, school loan repayment.
- ◆ Attend workshops on resume writing, job search strategies, interviewing, and graduate school opportunities.
- ◆ Come in and do a mock interview on video with one of our staff.
- ◆ Update your resume and cover letter being certain that it markets your career-related qualifications.
- ◆ Secure references from faculty, staff or former employers who can attest to your qualifications. Select individuals who know you best and contact them for written references 4 to 6 weeks in advance.
- ◆ Develop lists of potential employers related to your occupational field. Utilize “Job Choices” Directory, Chamber of Commerce, library references, employer directories, The Internet, etc.
- ◆ Prepare lists of friends, faculty, and family you can contact regarding available openings, possible employers and additional referrals. (about 75% of jobs are filled through personal contacts)
- ◆ Attend career and job fairs.
- ◆ Meet with Career Services staff regularly.
- ◆ Pursue related leads aggressively through Career Services job listings, and job fairs.
- ◆ Obtain a subscription to the J.O.B. from Career Services to keep up with current jobs nationally.
- ◆ Follow-up on leads and send thank-you letters after interviews.
- ◆ Take necessary graduate school exams. Select and apply to graduate/professional schools of your choice.
- ◆ Celebrate your new job with a note to all your networking contacts regarding your new position