

# Parent's Handbook

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## Career Services

### Mission Statement

The mission of Career Services is to support SUNY Westchester Community College's academic programs by designing, implementing, and managing services, programs and systems that meet the career development and employment needs of students and alumni. Career Services also strives to meet the staffing needs of local, regional and national employer partners.



STC 290

914-606-6760

<http://www.sunywcc.edu/career>

[careerservices@sunywcc.edu](mailto:careerservices@sunywcc.edu)



Greetings Parents/Family of a New SUNY WCC Student:

Welcome to the SUNY Westchester Community College family!

This is an exciting time in the life of your family member as they begin their college years. We are confident that this is an experience they will never forget.

Career Services at SUNY Westchester Community College helps students connect their college experience to the world of work. We assist students in making informed career decisions and developing a success plan. In fact, we will be partners for life, since our services are available to students and alumni whenever they need us.

Most first-year college students are unclear about their career options. They enter college with a very limited knowledge of the variety of courses and majors available to them. As they begin this new experience, even those with a plan may be drawn to other options. Choosing a career or deciding where to continue their studies after SUNY Westchester Community College is a difficult process for each individual student.

The Career Services professional staff is here to help guide students through a successful exploration of who they are and where they see themselves going. This includes an assessment of their skills, interests, abilities, values and personal style, exploration of majors and career options, experimenting with potential career options (informational interviews, internships and Part-Time jobs) and organizing and conducting a Full-Time job search. Our mission is to empower students to make realistic career and educational decisions and to develop a plan to implement them. To that end, we offer a variety of programs and services which are described in this booklet.

We hope that you will listen to your “student” as they question and explore the many options available to them and be open to the new ideas they discover. Encourage them to visit us in the Student Center Building, Room 290, and utilize our services and resources. As partners, we can positively impact their future. Additionally, if needed, you are welcome to utilize our comprehensive career resources on the Career Services website to enhance your career development.

If we can be of further assistance, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

The Faculty and Staff of Career Services  
Division of Student Affairs

# Services/Programs for Students & Alumni

## CAREER SERVICES/TOOLS

Individual counseling/assessment helps students identify interests, skills, values, personality preferences, work and transferable skills. This exploration helps students choose potential careers to research.

- Career Coach
- Candid Careers
- What Can I do With This Major?
- Focus 2 Online Career Planning & Major Exploration System
- Strengths Finder
- Myers-Briggs Type Indicator/MBTI-16 Personality Test

## CAREER WORKSHOPS

- Resume/Cover Letter Prep
- Interview Training
- Using the Internet for job searches/Internet branding and LinkedIn

## FIRST YEAR SEMINAR COURSE/COLSC 100

- This course provides a great introduction to college and career exploration for a new student.

## RESUME CRITIQUE

- Our expert Career Counselors will instruct and review resumes and cover letters.

## APPLIED LEARNING/INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Gain professional work experience related to your career and academic goals.

- Earn \$\$\$ and/or academic credit.
- Apply classroom theory to practical experience

## CAREER RESOURCES

- Resume Guidelines Handbook
- Interview Guidelines Handbook
- Career related resources, videos (SUNY WCC Library Career Page)

## ONLINE JOB BOARD/CAREER MANAGEMENT TOOL

- Register and search for jobs/internships on *College Central Network*  
[www.collegecentral.com/sunywcc](http://www.collegecentral.com/sunywcc)
- Post resumes in the database for employers to view
- Listen to podcasts for career information and job search articles
- Create a resume using the Resume Builder; Create a Portfolio
- Learn about events and programs sponsored by Career Services

Check out the [CAREER SERVICES 4-Semester Planning Checklist](#)

# Career Services 4-Semester Plan and Beyond



## First Semester

- Get an early start on your career planning by visiting Career Services to learn about potential programs and services designed specifically for first year students.
  - Visit the Career Services website regularly [www.sunywcc.edu/career](http://www.sunywcc.edu/career)
  - Look for extracurricular opportunities and activities. The best way to make a smooth transition to college life is to get involved. This can also enhance your resume.
  - Think about the types of activities and classes you have enjoyed so far to begin to get an idea about the topics and skills you are most passionate about
  - Schedule a career assessment through Career Services to understand how your interests, values, skills and personality may relate to potential majors and careers.
- We offer the following options:

[Career Coach](#)

[FOCUS 2](#)

[MBTI-16 Personality Test](#)

[StrengthsFinder](#)



## Second Semester

- As you explore majors and career options, talk to professionals on campus that have knowledge about the fields you are considering.
- Use our [Candid Career](#) tool to listen to professionals in your fields of interest
- Work with Career Services to develop a professional [resume/cover letter](#)
- Create a portfolio of academic and extracurricular projects and achievements that can be shared with potential employers
- Attend workshops and programs offered by Career Services to expand your knowledge of career and job related issues
- Go to the [WCC library page](#) for additional career resources
- Create an account on our [online job board-CCN](#) to look for summer jobs, FT/PT opportunities related to your career interests as well as register for workshops and programs sponsored by Career Services
- Find a [mentor](#)
- Conduct an informational interview



## Third Semester

- Develop a professional online image; clean up any "digital dirt" on your current profiles
- Create a [LinkedIn profile](#) & E-portfolio documenting your involvement and accomplishments on campus and in your community
- Seek [internship, applied learning](#) and/or volunteer options to begin to gain experience in your field of interest and help affirm your career choice
- Learn about effective [interviewing skills](#); review your accomplishments to develop your "one second commercial/Elevator Pitch"
- [Practice your interviewing skills](#) to increase your self-confidence
- Expand your network of professionals and keep them informed of your academic/career progress
- Apply for [scholarships](#)
- Connect with [Transfer Services](#) to learn about degree and major transfer options at 4 year SUNY Schools.
- Attend Transfer Fair.



## Final Semester & beyond

- Review [Career Readiness Skills](#)
- Polish/refine your resume and career portfolio
- Look for opportunities on the [CCN job board & other sites](#)
- Attend workshops specifically geared towards preparing for interviews and job fairs
- Complete a practice interview that is reviewed by a Career Counselor
- Attend the annual Career Fair/Expo
- Work directly with a Career Counselor to secure a FT or Summer opportunity; further enhancing your employability
- Evaluate your professional interview and work clothes
- Seek out professional organizations related to your field, especially those with student chapters; learn more about your future career
- Remember that [Career Services](#) is yours for life! Alumni are always welcome to meet with us and use our services

## **TOP 10 FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CAREERS & JOBS**

1. Making a career decision is a process of learning about you, the world of work and how your interests, skills, values and style “fit in” to that world.
2. SUNY WCC Career Counselors help students explore their interests, skills, values and personal style in order to make an appropriate career decision.
3. Most people change careers/jobs a number of times over their lifetime.
4. We can learn about “best fit” careers in many different ways- talk to professors, read, set up an “informational” interview with an industry professional, attend campus career events, and by participating in other campus activities and student clubs.
5. Internships are a crucial part of a “smart” student’s college experience. It’s a way to get experience to help you clarify your career goals.
6. An internship enhances your resume and helps to build your network. Internships can be paid and/or for college credit. In NACE surveys of employer members’ hiring intentions—respondents said that internship and co-op programs were the top two places they find new hires.
7. It is very important to have a well written and targeted résumé to be successful in a job/internship search. We will help you create and/or enhance yours!
8. Successful job seekers use many methods to look for a job and understand the power of social media in a job search.
9. By finishing a college degree you are more likely to get a job at a higher salary. College graduates, over the course of their working career, earn substantially more and have more job choices available to them than some without a degree.
10. SUNY WCC Career Services is your partner for life! We are available to help you with your career questions and job search; even after you graduate. Take advantage of our expertise!

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# Effective Use of Career Services @ SUNY WCC and Beyond



## A Parents' Guide to Career Development

The most valuable things parents can do to help a student with career planning are:

**Listen      Be open to ideas      Help your student find information**

Here are eight more things you can do to help:

### **1. Encourage your child to visit the career center (and you go too!)**

Next time you visit campus, drop into the career services office and check out resources. When your student is feeling anxious about their future, remind them to connect with Career Services for guidance.

Many students use their first semester to "settle into" college life, and so the spring semester of the freshman year is the optimal time to start using career center services. Ask your student, "Have you visited the career center?" If you hear, "You only go there when you are a senior," then it's time to reassure them that meeting with a career counselor can take place at any point—and should take place frequently—throughout a college career.

Many centers offer a full range of career development and job-search help, including:

- A network of alumni willing to talk about their jobs and careers
- A library of resources (including an online library of information) on a wide range of careers
- Workshops on writing resumes, cover letters, interviewing, and workplace professionalism
- Individual career counseling

### **2. Advise your student to write a resume**

Writing a resume can be a "reality test" and can help a student identify weak areas that require improvement. Suggest that your student get sample resumes from the career center.

You can review resume drafts for grammar, spelling, and content, but recommend that the final product be critiqued by a career center professional.

### **3. Challenge your student to become "occupationally literate."**

Ask: "Do you have any ideas about what you might want to do when you graduate?"

If your student seems unsure, you can talk about personal qualities you see as talents and strengths. You can also recommend:

- Taking a "self-assessment inventory," such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator
- Talking to favorite faculty members
- Researching a variety of interesting career fields and employers

A career decision should be a process and not a one-time, last-minute event.

#### **4. Emphasize the importance of internships**

The career center will not "place" your child in a job at graduation. Colleges grant degrees, but not job guarantees, so having relevant experience in this competitive job market is critical.

Your child can sample career options by completing internships and experimenting with summer employment opportunities or volunteer work. They may also participate in job simulation opportunities or micro-internships to obtain "real world" experiences.

Why an internship?

- Employers are interested in communication, problem-solving, and administrative skills, which can be developed through internships.
- Employers look for experience on a student's resume and often hire from within their own internship programs.
- Having a high GPA is not enough.
- A strong letter of recommendation from an internship supervisor may tip the scale of an important interview in their favor.

#### **5. Encourage extracurricular involvement**

Part of experiencing college life is to be involved and active outside the classroom. Interpersonal and leadership skills—qualities valued by future employers—are often developed in extracurricular activities.

#### **6. Help your student to stay up-to-date with current events**

Employers will expect students to know what is happening around them. The New York Times Learning Network site is a great resource along with many others found on campus library page.

#### **7. Teach the value of networking**

Introduce your student to people who have the careers/jobs that are of interest. Suggest your college student contact people in your personal and professional networks for information on summer jobs. Encourage your child to "shadow" someone in the workplace to increase awareness of interesting career fields.

#### **8. Help the career center**

Contact your campus career center when your business or employer has a summer, part-time, or full-time job opening. The staff will help you find a hard-working student. If your company hires interns, have the internships listed in the career center.

*By Thomas J. Denham. Courtesy of the National Association of Colleges and Employers, copyright holder*



## A Career Planning Course for Parents

Your college student just started college but doesn't seem to have a clue as to what they want to major in, let alone choose as a career. Don't worry, this is not unusual, although you might wish your child had a little more sense of direction.

**Choosing a career is a process** students need to go through—and they go through the stages of this process at different rates of speed. The steps include:

1. assessing skills, interests, and abilities (an important first step to choosing an appropriate career);
2. exploring majors and career options;
3. experimenting with possible career options; and
4. organizing and conducting a job or 4 yr. school search.

You can assist and support your child in each of these stages. But what can—or should—you do?

Here's your own career planning timetable.

### Careers 101—For parents of first-year students

During their first year or so of college, students will be involved (formally or informally) in assessing their skills, interests, abilities and through the First Year Seminar course. They can also do this through finding success (or failure) in other courses they take, involvement in campus activities, discussions with their friends and faculty, and by being exposed to and trying out different ideas and experiences.

Most students enter college with a very limited knowledge of the vast array of courses and majors available to them. When they begin to delve into studies that are new to them, even those who entered with a plan may be drawn to different options. This is an exciting time for students.

### What you can do to help

- Support your child's exploration of new areas of study and interests. This, after all, is what education is all about.
- Affirm what you know to be areas of skill and ability he or she has consistently demonstrated. Sometimes students overlook these and need to be reminded.
- Talk with your college student about the courses and activities they are enjoying. Students discover new things about themselves throughout the college experience. Your willingness to listen and be a sounding board will keep you in the loop.
- Don't panic if your child is excited about majoring in something like English, history, or art. These can be excellent choices, particularly if they are a good match for a student's interests and skills.
- Support your child's responsible involvement in campus activities but urge this to be balanced with maintaining achievement in the classroom.



- Urge your child to seek assistance in the campus career center. Most institutions have assessment instruments and career counselors to help students to define their skills, interests, and abilities.

## **Careers 201—For parents of second-year students**

Generally, during the second year of college, a student begins to explore majors and career options more seriously. Many colleges and universities require that new students take a broad range of subjects to promote this exploration.

### **What you can do to help**

- Don't insist upon a decision about a major or possible career choice immediately. If you sense that your child's indecision is a barrier to positive progress, urge that he or she look for assistance in the career center. Students often have difficulty making a "final" choice because they fear they may close off options and make a wrong choice.
- Suggest that your college student talk with faculty and career advisers about potential choices.
- Direct your child to family, friends, or colleagues who are in fields in which they have an interest. "Informational interviewing" with people can be extremely helpful at this stage.
- Steer your child toward a source of information. Many campuses have a career consultant or mentoring network of alumni in various career fields who are willing to share information with students about their careers. These resources are invaluable both in this exploratory stage and later as students are seeking internships and jobs.

## **Careers 301—For parents of "mid-career" students**

During the sophomore year and throughout the junior year, it is important for students to experiment with possible career options. They can do this in a variety of ways: internships, cooperative education programs, summer jobs, campus jobs, and responsible volunteer experiences both on campus and in the local community. This is a critical time for your support and understanding.

### **What you can do to help**

- Encourage your child to use the resources available at the campus career center. Experts there can assist your child in preparing a good resume and finding opportunities to test career choices. Most career centers are in direct contact with employers.
- Tell your child that you understand the importance of gaining exposure to and experience in his or her field of career interest. Broadening experience through involvement outside the classroom is a valuable use of time.
- Internships or summer experiences may be non-paying. Also, a good opportunity may be in a distant location. Discuss your financial expectations with your child before a commitment is made.
- Don't conduct the internship or summer job search for your child. It's a great help to provide networking contacts or names of people who may be helpful; however, making the contact and speaking for your child deprives him or her of an important learning experience—and may make a poor impression on the future employer.

## Careers 401—For parents of graduating seniors

The senior year is when organizing and conducting a job search, transfer, or graduate school search begins in earnest. It is also a time when students are heavily involved in more advanced courses and often have more responsible roles in campus and/or volunteer activities. Balancing these important pursuits and setting priorities is a constant challenge for seniors.

You are probably anxious for this young adult to make a decision—and yet, he or she may be moving toward closure more slowly than you would wish.

### What you can do to help

- Suggest that he or she use the campus career center throughout the senior year. These offices provide assistance in preparation for the job search. Offerings may include:
  - Workshops and individual help with resume and cover letter writing, interviewing, and other job-search skills,
  - Individual and group career advising,
  - Job-search resources,
  - On-campus interviewing opportunities, and,
  - Alumni career consultant or mentor programs.
- Don't nag your child about not having a job yet. This will often have the reverse effect. Use positive reinforcement.
- Offer to assist by sending information you may have found about your child's target career field and/or job listings that may be of interest. Listen for indications from your child that you are getting carried away—and back off.
- Don't call potential employers to intervene for your child. Contact with potential employers is the candidate's responsibility.
- Be prepared to support your child through the ups and downs of the job and graduate school search. It can be a bumpy road—not every desired job or graduate school acceptance will come through. Your student will need reassurance that for every door that closes, another opens.

### Final Thoughts

The college years are a time of exploration, experimentation, and learning on many levels for students and their parents! Some student challenges may seem more positive than others, but all contribute to the educational outcomes of the college or university experience.

Throughout these years, students are developing a "record of achievement" that will be evaluated by employers and graduate schools as they move beyond college. There are several pieces of this record:

- **Academic achievement.** The grade point average (GPA) is one factor considered by competitive employers, transfer schools, and graduate schools. It is one of the few tangible indications of a student's ability to learn and perform effectively, at least in the academic environment. Therefore, students need to do as well as possible in the classroom, especially in courses in their majors.
- **Responsible work experience.** In today's competitive employment market, many employers seek students who have related internship, summer, cooperative education, or

part-time job or volunteer experiences. In fact, employers often look to their own such programs as primary sources for their new hires. These experiences are particularly critical for liberal arts students whose majors may not appear to be directly related to their areas of career interest.

- **Responsible involvement outside the classroom.** Extracurricular activities provide the opportunity for students to gain many valuable and career-related skills, such as the ability to work effectively with others in a team environment; leadership; planning and organizational skills; and priority-setting and time management. These are part of the package of skills employers seek in their new hires.

Best of luck to you in navigating the challenging waters of parenting a college or university student.

*By Sally Kearsley. Courtesy of the National Association of Colleges and Employers, copyright holder. [www.nacweb.org](http://www.nacweb.org).*

## What Current/Former Students are Saying About SUNY WCC Career Services

“I had a great time at the Journal News yesterday. Spent a few hours there. I toured the news room, had a reporter and a multimedia expert show me what they do and how they do it. I was able to ask a lot of questions and got a really good idea of what it is like to work as a journalist at a major local publication. Gave me a lot of food for thought. Thank you so much for this opportunity, it was a positive one!” ~ JS

“Thank you very much. I still talk about you to my family and friends. If it wasn't for you, I don't think I would be where I'm right now.” ~ SZ

“Thank you for your help with my resume last week, despite such short notice you still went over and beyond to accommodate me, I really appreciate that.”

“Due to you and Professor C's help I was successful with the interview on Friday and I'm awaiting my start date for next week with a small firm in Hawthorne.”

“I just received a job offer today from the medical group. My job title is payment poster in the billing department. I have to take a drug test tomorrow. They will officially ask me when my drug test comes back clean. Thank you for all your hard work.” ~NG

“I just wanted to say thank you for all of your help! (And I am sorry that I haven't written sooner.) A spot opened up at XX over the summer and I actually started working here this past September. It wouldn't have happened without your help and guidance. I really appreciate all that you did in assisting me to change up my resume to highlight my specific skills. I never would have thought of presenting my resume that way, but I know that it made a huge difference in making my resume way more dynamic and setting me apart when I applied for this job.” ~ JK

“Thank you so much for meeting with me. I really appreciate your advice. It has helped me make a better decision about school.” ~RM

“What a creative brainstorming session we had! Thank you for your wisdom, your patience and your kindness in extending your time to meet with me today to discuss my “next move”.... Your resume edits and recommendations were invaluable. Thanks again for a very worthwhile meeting it was really appreciated.” ~LB

## Helpful Career Websites

**US Department of Labor-**

Bureau of Labor Statistics

<http://www.bls.gov/ooh>

<https://www.mynextmove.org>

<https://www.mynextmove.org/vets>

<https://www.miproximopaso.org/> (Spanish version)

<http://www.onetonline.org/>

**NYS Department of Labor-**

<http://www.careeronestop.org/>

<https://www.careerzone.ny.gov/jz/views/careerzone/index.jsf>

<http://explorehealthcareers.org>

<https://www.mymajors.com>

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