

## Understanding Career Counseling: How Can We Help You?

*Here at Husson University we believe career exploration is an essential component to any student's education, whether or not you happen to be starting as a freshman or graduating as a senior. The art of career decision making is an extensive process that requires personal reflection and assessment. Our career services center offers a comprehensive four year plan that is focused on your professional career development as a student. By using this format you develop effective job searching skills and progressively establish your job interests within a specific field. This tip sheet will review career counseling expectations and discuss the wide variety of services we provide to students.*

### What Can a Career Counselor Do for Me?

A career counselor can assist you with:

- Networking and making connections with working professionals
- Help you research career interests and employment opportunities
- Locating internships and related part-time jobs
- Performing personality and career interest assessments
- Developing, editing and improving resumes and cover letters
- Interviewing strategies and mastering professional etiquette skills
- Graduate school advising

### A Career Counselor Can NOT:

- Make career related decision for you
- Research your designated career path
- Write your resume and cover letter
- Advise students on mental health issues

## Personality Assessments

In addition to career counseling, we offer several personality assessments and informational job-specific websites. Such personality assessments include:

- **Sigi3-** is an online career assessment tool that is easy to use. You can do one or all of the assessments that include interests,

skills, values, and personality to see what careers might be best fits for you. This is free for all Husson and NESCom students

- **Personality Mosaic-** is a free assessment based on John Holland's theory of career development. He divided the world of work into six personality themes called the RIASEC Code (Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional). People generally are strongest in one of these areas and have two other themes that become their three letter code (i.e., SIA). This is a self-scoring assessment that you can print out and take. Come in and review the results with us, as this can be very helpful.
- **The Art of Career Decision Making-** Is a paper and pencil assessment developed by James Westhoff, Director of Career Services. It takes you through several exercises to learn about your interests, values, skills and abilities.
- **16 Personalities-**A free personality test that explores individual strengths and weaknesses and suggests suitable careers depending on your personality. The site allows you to purchase a full report, but the free report is extensive enough in our opinion. This is based on the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator.

## The Career Decision Making Process

Job searching skills are required in order to identify skills and values that are important in your work life. Our career services center will help you develop and build on to these skills to choose the best career that suits your needs. Such job searching skills will include job shadowing, internships, volunteer work, developing efficient job materials, practice interviews and mastery of strong professional etiquette.

## Tips on Making Effective Career Decisions

- 1.) **Examine the Possibilities-** Consider all your options before making a decision.
- 2.) **Self-Reflect-** What are your values and how important are they in your life?
- 3.) **Favor Alternatives-** Create a back-up plan in case your first career attempt is unsuccessful.

**4.) Research the Field-** Are there any gaps in your area of interest? How might these occurrences have an impact on your career?

**5.) Appraise Your Options-** Brainstorm the advantages and disadvantages for each choice. Remember to compare these findings with your personal values.

**6.) Form an Action Plan-** Determine the option that is most suitable for your lifestyle and values. Establish a working plan that outlines your goals; include possible deadlines and any shortcomings that are foreseen to impact your success.

## **START Your Action Plan Now**

**S Select-** Prioritize your values and make a plan to obtain the most important goals for both short term and long term.

**T Target-** Stay focused on your area of interest when making decisions.

**A Advice-** Are there areas in your career path or plan that are lacking knowledge? Do additional research or seek advice from an experienced professional to eliminate these voids.

**R Realistic-** Are your expectations reasonable? Consider the factors in your control and out of your control when forming an action plan.

**T Time-** Remember possible deadlines and time duration needed to achieve your goals.

## **Common Career Myths**

### **Myth 1: My major will determine the correct career path for me**

Some college majors are job specific and require certain licensure or certification upon graduating from the program. These majors directly prepare students for a particular job such as physical therapy, nursing or clinical counseling. However, other majors prepare students for a job within a certain field and do not focus solely on one role. Your major may have little influence with your chosen career path or even be completely unrelated to the career path you choose. Ultimately, you decide which direction to take in the working world, consider both the restrictions and possibilities of your major.

### **Myth 2: My career will last my entire lifetime**

Statistically the average American student is believed to have a total of 9 to 11 jobs within their lifetime; rarely will one career actually last an entire

lifetime. Your first professional job may simply be a platform for other more advanced positions or jobs. As life naturally changes, so might your career aspirations and preferences; keep your mind open to new ideas and opportunities.

### **Myth 3: Career assessments will determine the appropriate career path for me to take**

Assessment tests are not designed to be deciding factors on whether or not you should pursue a specific career. Instead their purpose is to provide you with additional information that may contribute to a better understanding of your work preferences and personality traits. These assessments are not inclusive, meaning that you don't have to agree with the results. If you are interested in a field that is not listed as a suitable career match, feel free to pursue it anyway.

### **Myth 4: My dream job will eventually find me; I just need to be patient**

An old adage says patience is a virtue but in our current competitive society such opportunities are like sunrises, if you wait too long you might miss them. Finding the ultimate job will require dedication, research, good communication and exploring new opportunities when they arise. The perfect job may come along by accident or when least expected. These occurrences are known as Happenstance and can often have a great deal of impact on a person's career choice, read the section below to learn more about this topic.

### **A Lesson in Planned Happenstance**

Planned Happenstance occurs when an individual allows for chance events to unfold in their lives by being open-minded and willing to engage in new opportunities. Happenstance may arise whether we are prepared for it or not; life can be unpredictable. These "chance" events can result from such factors as economical changes, evolving workplaces, the global market and personal trials. Generate Happenstance within your career through a series of steps:

- Take advantage of unexpected communication such as phone calls and unanticipated meetings with professionals.
- Consider the chance events that have already occurred in your own life today. How did these events impact you positively? How would your life be different if they had not happened?

- Remember to keep your options open, the most fitting job may be located in the least expected places.
- Continue to build a solid network of professionals from your field of interest when the chance presents itself.

**Contact Career Services**

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(Check out this video on how to use a career counselor)