

# FINDING DIRECTION IN A WORLD OF OPTIONS:

## A 4-YEAR GUIDE FOR LIFE PLANNING AND DECISION MAKING

- What direction should I take?
- What can I do with a major in.....?
- How do I learn about using the talents and gifts God has given me?
- What options are there for me in the world of work?

This handout will help to guide you toward making important life decisions in the next four years.

In this step-by-step guide, you will find suggested goals for each academic year along with activities that will assist you in exploring and clarifying options for your future.

Through these activities, you will build your knowledge and skills so that you will be confident and ready to implement your personal career and life decisions during your senior year and beyond.

### **Freshman Year - Self Assessment**

#### **Goals**

- Begin the process of assessing & growing in your skills, values, interests, and God's calling for your life.
- Develop positive study and work habits.
- Narrow down or define your choices for a major.

#### **Activities**

- Stop by Career Services (CC322) to look around and/or schedule an appointment with a career counselor.
- Meet with a career counselor to discuss majors, your calling/passions, past accomplishments, skills, abilities, interests, values and career ideas.
- Take an assessment inventory in Career Services.
- Build skills and explore your gifts through on- and off-campus activities.
- Talk with faculty, alumni, parents, and friends about different majors, work and life choices.
- Attend career talks and panel presentations by alumni for the majors you are considering.
- Take beginning courses in the majors you are considering.
- Take the course Pathway to Discovery: Calling, Vocation & Life Planning.

## Sophomore Year – Exploration

### Goals

- Choose an academic major.
- Narrow down and investigate what career options there are in the major you have chosen.
- Seek experiences that will build career & life skills.

### Activities

- Talk with a career counselor, your advisor and other faculty about your ideas regarding possible majors.
- Consider spending a semester, interim, or summer abroad or at another campus.
- Read about career/ life options in the Career Services Library.
- Begin to dream and journal/write about your short- and long-term life and career goals.
- Explore internship options in Career Services and within your department.
- Meet with a counselor to help write your resume for a summer internship or job.
- Begin to apply in March for summer internships or job related to your major.
- Evaluate your GPA for acceptance into your major, participation in a semester abroad, graduate school or into your career field.
- Attend career talks and alumni panels.
- Stay (or become) involved in co-curricular activities to continue to test and develop your skills.
- Consider attending the MN Private Colleges Internship Fair in the Spring.

## Junior Year – Decision Making

### Goals

- Evaluate and make career decisions based on knowledge about yourself, God's call on your life, and the world around you.
- Gain added experience to confirm or change your career choice.
- Consider graduate /professional school options.

### Activities

- List tentative life/ career goals & weigh options.
- Meet with a career counselor to discuss your plans, goals, and alternatives.
- Interview alumni or employers for information about your preferred field(s).
- Refine resume for internships and jobs.
- Have your resume reviewed by a career counselor.
- Apply for and complete an internship.
- Do a practice interview in Career Services.
- Attend information sessions offered by recruiting organizations through Career Services.
- Secure career-related summer employment &/or participate in relevant volunteer activities.
- Conduct preliminary research on graduate programs; talk to faculty, graduate school advisors, and utilize the web and resources
- Decide when to take the GRE or other exams; consider preparatory course.
- Utilize summer to begin job search and revise your resume for next fall recruitment.

## Senior Year – Embarking

### Goals

- Focus on chosen career field and begin job search, graduate school application process, or both.
- Establish contacts in career field or graduate school.
- Prepare for a successful transition from student to employee or graduate student.

### Activities

- Attend Career Services' Senior Registration and Open House in the fall.
- Read Developing Directions, the monthly senior newsletter from Career Services delivered directly to your PO.
- Take GRE or other necessary graduate school exam(s).
- Learn about the job search process from a career counselor.
- Refine your resume and cover letter, have reviewed by a career counselor.
- Consider attending the MN Private College Job Fair or the MN Education Job Fair.
- Attend on-campus employer info. sessions & participate in on-campus recruiting.
- Conduct in-depth employer research.
- Explore on-line job search resources; begin at [www.bethel.edu/career-services](http://www.bethel.edu/career-services)
- Ask individuals to be a reference and collect reference letters.
- Develop a budget for your first year out of school. Determine what salary you will need.

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