how guide: Career Planning for Parents

Here are some suggestions that may help you in supporting your student through the career development process.

Familiarize yourself with our services
The easiest way to do this is through our website – studentservices.fgcu.edu/careers. In fact, while you’re there, feel free to sample our web-based career planning resources, MyPlan.com, which has four free assessments and a Career Match program. This may make for an interesting discussion with your student!

Understand the career decision-making process
Keep in mind that students differ widely in their readiness to make these decisions. This can be an anxious and confusing time for them, but it can be an exciting and enjoyable experience as well.

• Be patient by giving them the time and space to better understand themselves. Typically, students can use their entire first year to explore majors and careers.
• Be supportive by encouraging open discussion. Ask questions to help them think through their decision, but don’t be too judgmental.
• But be practical. It can be helpful to have them set goals and create a timeline. Students need to be proactive and should be ready to invest careful thought and attention to this process.

Encourage your student to participate in an “Informational Interview” or “Job Shadowing” experience.
Students gather information about careers from a variety of sources, and television can be particularly influential in shaping perceptions. Before committing to a career field, a student should talk to professionals in the field to gain a more well-rounded view of the profession, and perhaps more realistic expectations. Students can also use their Service Learning experience as a way to learn more about careers or fields of interest.

Encourage your student to attend our events.
• Each Fall, we help host a “Majors Fair” where students can speak to advisors and faculty from all the different academic programs. This will help them better understand the curriculum (and prerequisites), as well as hear about the kinds of jobs their graduates have taken.
• Each month we host a guest speaker in our “Life as...” series. In the past, we have hosted professionals from the fields of public relations, resort management, retail merchandising, and book publishing/marketing. We even hosted a New York Times bestselling author as well as the GM of the Boston Red Sox!
• For those students considering careers in the medical or legal field, it’s never too early to start preparing. Our Law School Fair and Medical School Expo are great opportunities to learn about school options and the applications process.
• Gaining work experience (in moderation), even if it is not in their field, is beneficial. We host our Part-Time Job Fair on Wednesday September 3rd. Last year, over 80 employers participated and 650 students attended.

Encourage your student to immerse themselves in the FGCU experience
For example, students may want to consider joining a club. Or participating in intramurals or theater productions. Or writing for the campus newspaper. Or volunteering at a local elementary school. Or studying abroad. Many of these activities give them the opportunity to refine their skill sets, explore their interests, enhance their marketability to employers and graduate schools, and enrich their college experience.

For information on our job search assistance services, visit the “Parents” page on our website.