Choosing a Major
So, has anyone asked you the question yet? You know the one. You tell someone that you are attending FGCU, and they innocently respond, “That’s great – what’s your major?” For some students, that question is easy enough to answer. For others, like those that haven’t selected a major yet, the answer usually goes something like “Well, I’m keeping my options open…” But don’t despair if you don’t have an answer to the “major” question. Students differ widely in their readiness to make this decision. In fact, close to one-third of freshman enter FGCU without declaring a major. However, the reality is that at some point you will have to make a choice. And for most students, the process of making this choice will be just that...a process. Sure, we all know people that knew exactly what they wanted to be since the third grade. But where’s the fun in that! Your freshman year is a great time to explore what you like, what you are good at, and what is important to you. For many students, their major choice emerges over time, as they have experiences that interest and intrigue them.

FGCU Career Development Services can also assist in this process. We have developed a guide called “Selecting a Major” which walks you through some of the approaches you can use when making this decision. To access this guide, go to the Career Development Services website (listed at the top of this newsletter) select students and Alumni, then select “Major/ Career Guidance” from the left navigation bar. Also be sure to attend the Majors Fair-- check out the details on page 4. Good luck!
**Time to Get Serious About Social Media**

From professional networking sites to personal blogs and online portfolios, managing your career and marketing yourself on the Internet has become a viable and important career development basic. More than ever, you can access low-cost (in many cases free!) platforms to help you network with professionals in your field, research jobs and connect with employers.

Remember before you start to market yourself online, be sure you have a solid resume and job search plan. Online services can be an excellent and important compliment to your job search but do not replace the essential and foundational career plan everyone needs to develop.

**Put Your Best Facebook Forward**

If you’ve become an avid Facebook user and created a big network…great! While you can certainly spread the word to your friends, friends of friends and everyone else about your job search, Facebook is NOT a substitute for the emerging professional networking site LinkedIn.com or, the even more powerful and old-fashioned, in-person approach. Though it can be a good way to keep people up to date on your status, remember to:

1) clean up any inappropriate or questionable content

2) review and edit your site content regularly

3) or, change your privacy settings to “only my friends”

It’s true. Some employers actively research candidates online. So perhaps, it’s time for a professional photo? Be sure to watch who you “fan” and be smart about using this social site to your advantage.

LinkedIn is more than a professional version of Facebook.

For students, it can be a productive research tool, a place to start building your “personal brand” and a means of connecting with potential companies. Get started by uploading your basic information. Be truthful and accurate. Use your resume for consistency. Remember recruiters and employers will visit your site and carefully review your content so don’t use “text msg speak” (LOL!!) . Here are a few “do’s”:

- **Get Some Good Words.** Ask current and/or previous employers for brief recommendations. While these do not replace pdf or hard copy letters, it will help start building your credentials.

- **Connect with Other Professionals as Appropriate:** Reminder: you are not in “Facebook land” so be polite. When you ask to “connect” with recruiters or anyone for that matter be professional e.g. “Ms. Jones, I am a Senior at Florida Gulf Coast University majoring in _______ and very interested in learning more about your…etc.”

- **Join the Club:** Employers use “professional groups” to search for potential candidates. This is a great way stay informed about trends in your field, find “Talent Acquisition Professionals” or other group members who work for companies you’ve targeted.

**Other Online Options**

In the past few years, online platforms like WordPress.com, Go Daddy.com, Yola.com and others have made it much easier and more affordable. For students to create an online professional presence in Advertising, Marketing, Art and other major where portfolio and multi-media examples are important, check out these services and consider building a mini-site to market yourself. Journalism students might consider a WordPress blog (FREE!) to showcase articles, essays and personal journaling.

In all cases, social media and online career management efforts need to be carefully thought through.

Resist the temptation to add a lot of fun graphics or cool functions. Better to keep it simple. As your career progresses, you can always add more content and refine your presentation.

Above all, be consistent and use your resume as the basis for all your efforts. Your resume remains your #1 career management tool. What’s tool #2? Your friendly, professional face. Networking through clubs, professional connections and personal referrals is still the very best way to build your career and land the job you want.

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**The New Professional Standard: LinkedIn.com**

According to a recent article in Fortune Magazine, “If you’re serious about managing your career the only social site that really matters is LinkedIn.” (Fortune, April 12, 2010).
The Secret to Success: One FGCU Graduate Shares Her Story

Tiffany Esposito
Major: Communication, Concentration in PR
Year: Graduate, Spring 2009
Occupation: Communications Manager, Bonita Springs Chamber of Commerce

Her Story: “I heard about Career Development Services through my PR classes and was looking for someone to review my resume so I stopped in and met with Alison who gave me a lot of great tips. While meeting with her she suggested the other services offered at the Career Center such as College Central, mock interviews, etc. She made a lot of suggestions regarding other things I needed to consider. Reid, (the Director of the Career Center) and Alison assisted me with my resume, portfolio, proper attire, phone interviewing skills and pointed me in the right direction on College Central. I am one of the few (that I know of) that actually got a job after graduation and I largely credit that to the help that Career Services provided. I found the job listing on College Central and prepared my resume and cover letter with Reid’s help.”

*Hot Tip from Tiffany:* I think the most important thing a student can do to jump start their career is internships. The classroom teaches theory but it doesn’t give you the real world experience needed before entering the work force. I feel that my internship experience prepared me for my first job and gave me additional knowledge on top of my degree. It also made for a great resume. A resume is the first thing an employer sees so it is important that it makes a good impression.

What You Need to Know About Internships

- Meet with academic advisor
- Apply for internships
- Gain Approval
- Register for credit in Gulfline
- Gain experience and make connections
- Complete requirements to earn academic credit

When can an employer offer an unpaid internship?
1. The training, even though it includes actual operation of the facilities of the employer, is similar to that which would be given in a vocational school;
2. The training is for the benefit of the student;
3. The student does not displace regular employees and works under the close observation of a regular employee or supervisor;
4. The employer provides the training and derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the student. Occasionally, employer operations may actually be impeded by the training;
5. The student is not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the training period; and
6. The employer and the student understand that the student is not entitled to wages for the time spent training.
Graduate School

“To Go or Not to Go...That is the Question!”

So you’re thinking of applying to graduate school? Pursuing an advanced degree is a significant investment of time, energy, and money, and you should give careful thought to this decision.

Some students pursue an advanced degree because it is a requirement for their chosen occupation. For example, if you want to pursue a career as a lawyer, doctor, CPA, professor, public school guidance counselor, or physical therapist, you must first complete the advanced degree requirements for that field. For these specialized occupations, going to graduate/professional school straight from their undergrad degree often makes sense.

If this is NOT the case in your situation, ask yourself the following two questions:

“Why am I pursuing this degree?”
and

“Specifically how does this degree fit into my overall career goals?”

If you answered these questions with following responses, we need to talk!
“l’m just not sure what I want to do, and I’m hoping I get it figured out while in grad school.” (Yikes.)

“The job market is lousy, so getting a Masters will surely help me get a better job when I graduate.” (Yikes!) 

“It seems like all my friends are going, so it must be the right thing to do.” (YIKES!)

The reality is that there is no “one size fits all” approach to determining whether going to grad school right now, or at all, is the right decision for you. It depends heavily on your own personal circumstance and a variety of other factors.

To gather information as to whether this is the right decision for you, talk to your professors and anyone you know in the career field you want to pursue. You can also speak with an advisor from Career Development Services – perhaps we can help!

Career Center Events

September 9th- Eagle Lawyers Networking 
Sudgen Welcome Center 6pm- 8pm
Current alumni attorneys, alumni, students and friends interested in the legal profession are invited to enjoy an evening of networking and education. A panel of FGCU alumni who are practicing attorneys in the area will discuss the law school process and career expectations. Guests will enjoy complimentary refreshments.

September 13th- Law School Fair 
Student Union Ballroom 11am-2pm
Don’t miss this opportunity to meet face-to-face with law school recruiters. If you are interested in attending law school, this is the best way to check out over 30 different law schools in one place. There will be a wide array of programs present including in and out-of-state schools.

September 22nd- Part Time Job & Internship Fair 
Student Union Ballroom 11am-3pm
Looking for a part time job while attending FGCU? This fair is your chance to meet area employers looking for students like you! Past employers have included: Best Buy, Target, Jason’s Deli, Airmark at FGCU, and many more. Check our website in September for a complete list of participating employers.

October 6th- Majors Fair 
Student Union Ballroom 11am- 3pm
Major selection is the first big decision that many students make when they arrive at FGCU. Don’t make this choice without doing some research! The office of Freshman Year Experience and Career Development Services will present the Majors Fair. Representatives from all six colleges at FGCU will be ready to answer your questions and help you gather information.

Visit our webpage to get up to date information and view photos from recent events: studentservices.fgcu.edu/careers/events