

# SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY EDWARDSVILLE

## A PARENT'S GUIDE TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT

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

1. Listen
2. Be open to ideas
3. Help your student find information

Here are seven more things you can do to help:

1. *Encourage your student to visit SIUE's Career Development Center (CDC).*

Next time you visit campus, drop into the CDC office and pick up a business card from one of the career counselors. When your student is feeling anxious about their future, offer the card and say, "Please call this person. They can help you."

Students should start using the CDC as soon as possible after arriving on campus. Ask your student (in an off-handed way), "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 college. SIUE's CDC offers a full range of career development and job-search help, including:

- Mock interviews
- A network of alumni willing to talk about their jobs and careers
- Online resources on a wide range of careers
- Workshops on writing resumes and cover letters
- A recruiting program
- 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 CDC. 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.

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## *4. Emphasize the importance of internships*

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

Your student can sample career options by completing internships and experimenting with summer employment opportunities or volunteer work.

### Why an internship?

- Employers are interested in communication, problem-solving, and career readiness 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. Teach the value of networking*

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

## *7. Help SIUE's CDC*

Call SIUE's CDC when you have 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 CDC. Join the CDC's volunteer network and use your "real world" experience to advise students of their career options.