

Parent's Handbook

Career Services

Mission statement

The mission of Career Services is to support Westchester Community College's academic programs by designing, implementing, and managing services, programs and systems that meet the career development and employment needs of students and alumni. Career Services also strives to meet the staffing needs of local, regional and national employers.

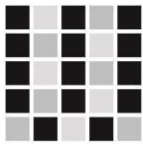


STC 290

914-606-6760

<http://www.sunywcc.edu/career>

careerservices@sunywcc.edu



Westchester
Community College

State University of New York

Dear Parents/Family of a New WCC Student:

Welcome to the Westchester Community College family!

This is an exciting time in the life of your family member as they begin their college years. We are confident that this is an experience they will never forget.

Career Services at Westchester Community College helps students connect their college experience to the world of work. We assist students in making informed career decisions and developing a success plan. In fact, we will be partners for life, since our services are available to students and alumni whenever they need us.

Most first-year college students are unclear about their career options. They enter college with a very limited knowledge of the variety of courses and majors available to them. As they begin this new experience, even those with a plan may be drawn to other options. Choosing a career or deciding where to continue their studies after Westchester Community College is a difficult process for each individual student.

The Career Services professional staff is here to help guide students through a successful exploration of who they are and where they see themselves going. This includes an assessment of their skills, interests, abilities, values and personal style, exploration of majors and career options, experimenting with potential career options (informational interviews, internships and PT jobs) and organizing and conducting a FT job search. Our mission is to empower students to make realistic career and educational decisions and to develop a plan to implement them. To that end, we offer a variety of programs and services which are described in this booklet.

We hope that you will listen to your “student” as they question and explore the many options available to them and be open to the new ideas they discover. Encourage them to visit us in the Student Center Building, Room 290, and utilize our services. As partners, we can positively impact their future.

If we can be of further assistance, please don’t hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

The Faculty and Staff of Career Services
Division of Student Affairs

Services/Programs for Students & Alumni

CAREER SERVICES/TOOLS

Individual counseling/assessment helps students identify interests, skills, values, personality preferences, work and transferable skills. This exploration helps students choose potential careers to research.

- Focus 2 Online Career Planning & Major Exploration System
- Strong Interest Inventory
- Myers-Briggs Type Indicator
- Career Coach
- Candid Careers
- What Can I do With This Major?

CAREER WORKSHOPS

- Resume/Cover Letter Prep
- Interview Training
- Using the Internet for job searches/Internet branding

CREDIT COURSE

SPS 105 Career Development course (1cr.)

RESUME CRITIQUE

Our expert Career Counselors will instruct and review resumes and cover letters.

APPLIED LEARNING/INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Gain professional work experience related to your career and academic goals.

- Earn \$\$\$ and/or academic credit.
- Apply classroom theory to practical experience

CAREER RESOURCES

- Resume Guidelines Handbook
- Interview Guidelines Handbook
- Career related books, videos (WCC library)

ONLINE JOB BOARD/CAREER MANAGEMENT TOOL

- Register and search for jobs/internships on *College Central Network*
www.collegecentral.com/sunywcc
- Post resumes in the database for employers to view
- Listen to podcasts for career information and job search articles
- Create a resume using the Resume Builder; Create a Portfolio
- Learn about events and programs sponsored by Career Services

SPECIAL EVENTS/PROGRAMS:

Annual Career Expo

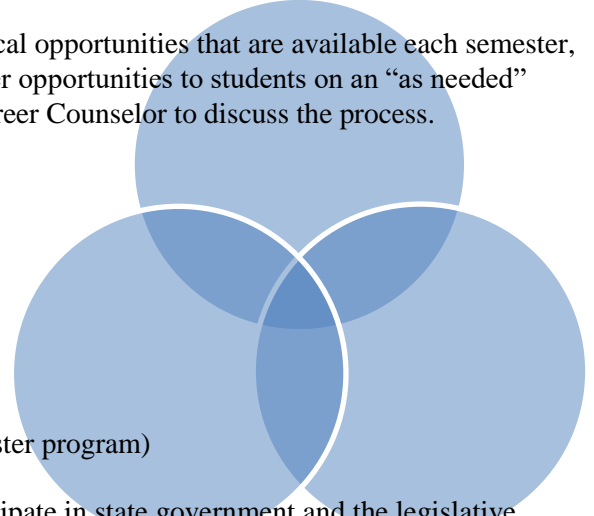
- Career Panels
- Visual Arts Portfolio Day
- Special Career Events

Special Applied Learning/Internship Programs

Students gain “real world” experience in the career area of their choice. Paid and unpaid positions are available; academic credit is available in many curricula. Students work as Marketing Assistants, Junior Accountants, Computer Interns, Sales Associates, Graphics interns and various additional entry level positions. Students earning academic credit are mentored by faculty in their discipline. All students gain valuable experience to assist them in determining their career goals and to enhance their resume.

The organizations listed below are just a sample of on-going local opportunities that are available each semester, including the summer. Additionally, many local employers offer opportunities to students on an “as needed” basis. Students interested in internships should meet with a Career Counselor to discuss the process.

MTA NYC Transit
Northwestern Mutual Financial Network
NYS Department of Transportation
Student Conservation Association
Weill Cornell Medical Center Westchester



NYS Assembly Internship Program, Albany, NY (Spring semester program)

The session internship offers college students a chance to participate in state government and the legislative process through a well-structured practical learning experience. The Assembly Intern Committee awards a \$5,025 stipend to each Session Intern in the January to May Internship.

The Assembly offers up to 150 college students an opportunity to get involved in state government and gain firsthand knowledge of the legislative process. Interns complete a comprehensive Orientation and a course taught by the Intern Committee's faculty. Interns are assigned research and administrative responsibilities in an Assembly office. They receive a practical educational experience and the Assembly benefits from their ideas and energy. For additional information visit their website-<http://assembly.state.ny.us/internship/>

Walt Disney World College Program, Orlando, FL

(Fall or Spring program)

The Disney College Program at the Walt Disney World® Resort is a one-of-a-kind, Disney-designed combination of education and work experience. Disney College Program Cast Members have the opportunity to build transferable skills, explore networking opportunities, tap into educational opportunities and earn real-world experience. An hourly salary is offered. For additional information visit their website: www.disneycollegeprogram.com

The Cloisters Summer Internship Program

This nine-week internship is for undergraduate college students, particularly first- and second-year students who are interested in art and museum careers, enjoy working with children, and have an interest in medieval art. Participants join the Education Office of The Cloisters, the branch museum of The Metropolitan Museum of Art devoted to the art of medieval Europe. Intensive training prepares interns to conduct gallery workshops for New York City day campers and to develop a public gallery talk.

June –August program, Full time: 5 days, 35 hours per week Stipend: \$3,150

Applications must be postmarked by mid-January

For additional information about internships, contact Career Services for an appointment.

STC 290 914-606-6760 careerservices@sunywcc.edu

Career Services 4-Semester Plan and Beyond



First Semester

- Get an early start on your career planning by visiting Career Services to learn about potential programs and services designed specifically for first year students.
- Visit the Career Services website www.surrywcc.edu/career regularly
- Look for extracurricular opportunities and activities. The best way to make a smooth transition to college life is to get involved. This can also enhance your resume.
- Think about the types of activities and classes you have enjoyed so far to begin to get an idea about the topics and skills you are most passionate about.
- Schedule a career assessment through Career Services to understand how your interests, values, skills and personality may relate to potential majors and careers. We offer the following options:
Career Coach
FOCUS 2
Myers-Briggs Type Indicator
Strong Interest Inventory

Second Semester

- As you explore major and career options, talk to professionals on campus that have knowledge about the fields you are considering.
- Use our *Candid* Career tool to listen to professionals in your fields of interest
- Work with Career Services to develop a professional resume/cover letter
- Create a portfolio of academic and extracurricular projects and achievements that can be shared with potential employers
- Attend workshops and programs offered by Career Services to expand your knowledge of career and job related issues
- Go to the WCC library and find the career resource section
- Create an account on our online job board – CCN to look for summer jobs, FT/PT opportunities related to your career interests as well as register for workshops and programs sponsored by Career Services
- Find a mentor
- Conduct an informational interview

Third Semester

- Develop a professional online image; clean up any "digital dirt" on your current profiles
- Create a LinkedIn profile & E-portfolio documenting your involvement and accomplishments on campus and in your community
- Look at internship, applied learning and/or volunteer options to begin to gain experience in your field of interest and help affirm your career choice
- Learn about effective interviewing skills; review your accomplishments to develop your "one second commercial/Elevator Pitch"
- Practice your interviewing skills to increase your self-confidence
- Expand your network of professionals and keep them informed of your academic/career progress
- Apply for scholarships
- Create a profile on Collegefish.com (the completion and transfer tool for community college students)
- Review Career Readiness Competencies through Career Services

Final Semester & beyond

- Polish/refine your resume and career portfolio
- Look for opportunities on the CCN job board
- Attend workshops specifically geared towards preparing for interviews and job fairs
- Complete a practice interview that is reviewed by a Career Counselor
- Attend the annual Career Expo
- Work directly with a Career Counselor to secure a FT or Summer opportunity; further enhancing your employability
- Evaluate your professional interview and work clothes
- Seek out professional organizations related to your field, especially those with student chapters; learn more about your future career
- Remember that Career Services is your's for life! Alumni are always welcome to meet with us and use our services





TOP 10 FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CAREERS & JOBS

1. Making a career decision is a process of learning about you, the world of work and how your interests, skills, values and style “fit in” to that world.
2. WCC Career Counselors help students explore their interests, skills, values and personal style in order to make an appropriate career decision.
3. Most people change careers/jobs a number of times over their lifetime.
4. We can learn about “best fit” careers in many different ways- talk to professors, read, set up an “informational” interview with an industry professional, attend campus career events, take a Career Development course (SPS 105) and by participating in other campus activities and clubs.
5. Internships are a crucial part of a “smart” student’s college experience. It’s a way to get experience to help you clarify your career goals.
6. An internship enhances your resume and helps to build your network. Internships can be paid and/or for college credit. In NACE surveys of employer members’ hiring intentions—respondents said that internship and co-op programs were the top two places they find new hires.
7. It is very important to have a well written and targeted resume to be successful in a job/internship search. We will help you create and/or enhance yours!
8. Successful job seekers use many methods to look for a job and understand the power of social media in a job search.
9. By finishing a college degree you are more likely to get a job at a higher salary. College graduates, over the course of their working career, earn substantially (\$1 million) more and have more job choices available to them than those without a degree. In fact, for all but 1 of the 50 highest paying occupations, a college degree or higher is the most significant source of education or training.
10. WCC Career Services is your partner for life! We are available to help you with your career questions and job search; even after you graduate. Take advantage of our expertise!

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Effective Use of Career Services @ WCC and Beyond



A Parents' Guide to Career Development

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

Listen Be open to ideas Help your student find information

Here are eight more things you can do to help:

1. Encourage your child to visit the career center (and you go too!)

Next time you visit campus, drop into the career services office and pick up a business card. When your son or daughter is feeling anxious about his/her future, offer the card and say, "Please call this person. He (or she) can help you."

Many students use their first semester to "settle into" college life, and so the spring semester of the freshman year is the optimal time to start using career center services. Ask your student (in an offhanded 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 him/her that meeting with a career counselor can take place at any point—and should take place frequently—throughout a college career.

Many centers offer a full range of career development and job-search help, including:

- A network of alumni willing to talk about their jobs and careers
- A library of books (including an online library of information) on a wide range of careers
- Workshops on writing resumes and cover letters
- Individual advising

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 career center.

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.

4. Emphasize the importance of internships

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

Your son or daughter 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 administrative 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. Help your student to stay up-to-date with current events

Employers will expect students to know what is happening around them. Buy your student a subscription to the *New York Times* or the *Wall Street Journal*.

7. Teach the value of networking

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

8. Help the career center

Call your campus career center 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 career center. Join the campus career center's job shadow network and use your "real world" experience to advise students of their career options.

By Thomas J. Denham. Courtesy of the National Association of Colleges and Employers, copyright holder



A Career Planning Course for Parents

Your son or daughter just started college but doesn't seem to have a clue as to what he or she wants to major in, let alone choose as a career. Don't worry, this is not unusual, although you might wish your child had a little more sense of direction.

Choosing a career is a process students need to go through—and they go through the stages of this process at different rates of speed. The steps include:

1. assessing skills, interests, and abilities (an important first step to choosing an appropriate career);
2. exploring majors and career options;
3. experimenting with possible career options; and
4. organizing and conducting a job or 4 yr. school search.

You can assist and support your child in each of these stages. But what can—or should—you do?

Here's your own career planning timetable.

Careers 101—For parents of first-year students

During their first year or so of college, students will be involved (formally or informally) in assessing their skills, interests, and abilities. They will do this through finding success (or failure) in courses they take, involvement in campus activities, discussions with their friends and faculty, and by being exposed to and trying out different ideas and experiences.

Most students enter college with a very limited knowledge of the vast array of courses and majors available to them. When they begin to delve into studies that are new to them, even those who entered with a plan may be drawn to different options. This is an exciting time for students.

What you can do to help

- Support your child's exploration of new areas of study and interests. This, after all, is what education is all about.
- Affirm what you know to be areas of skill and ability he or she has consistently demonstrated. Sometimes students overlook these and need to be reminded.
- Talk with your son or daughter about the courses and activities he or she is enjoying. Students discover new things about themselves throughout the college experience. Your willingness to listen and be a sounding board will keep you in the loop.
- Don't panic if your child is excited about majoring in something like English, history, or art. These can be excellent choices, particularly if they are a good match for a student's interests and skills.
- Support your son or daughter's responsible involvement in campus activities but urge this to be balanced with maintaining achievement in the classroom.

- Urge your child to seek assistance in the campus career center. Most institutions have assessment instruments and counselors to help students to define their skills, interests, and abilities.

Careers 201—For parents of second-year students

Generally, during the second year of college, a student begins to explore majors and career options more seriously. Many colleges and universities require that new students take a broad range of subjects to promote this exploration.

What you can do to help

- Don't insist upon a decision about a major or possible career choice immediately. If you sense that your child's indecision is a barrier to positive progress, urge that he or she look for assistance in the career center. Students often have difficulty making a "final" choice because they fear they may close off options and make a wrong choice.
- Suggest that your son or daughter talk with faculty and career advisers about potential choices.
- Direct your child to family, friends, or colleagues who are in fields in which he or she has an interest. "Informational interviewing" with people can be extremely helpful at this stage.
- Steer your child toward a source of information. Many campuses have a career consultant or mentoring network of alumni in various career fields who are willing to share information with students about their careers. These resources are invaluable both in this exploratory stage and later as students are seeking internships and jobs.

Careers 301—For parents of "mid-career" students

During the sophomore year and throughout the junior year, it is important for students to experiment with possible career options. They can do this in a variety of ways: internships, cooperative education programs, summer jobs, campus jobs, and responsible volunteer experiences both on campus and in the local community. This is a critical time for your support and understanding.

What you can do to help

- Encourage your child to use the resources available at the campus career center. Experts there can assist your child in preparing a good resume and finding opportunities to test career choices. Most career centers are in direct contact with employers.
- Tell your child that you understand the importance of gaining exposure to and experience in his or her field of career interest. Broadening experience through involvement outside the classroom is a valuable use of time.
- Internships or summer experiences may be non-paying. Also, a good opportunity may be in a distant location. Discuss your financial expectations with your child before a commitment is made.
- Don't conduct the internship or summer job search for your child. It's a great help to provide networking contacts or names of people who may be helpful; however, making the contact and speaking for your child deprives him or her of an important learning experience—and may make a poor impression on the future employer.

Careers 401—For parents of graduating seniors

The senior year is when organizing and conducting a job search or graduate school search begins in earnest. It is also a time when students are heavily involved in more advanced courses and often have more responsible roles in campus and/or volunteer activities. Balancing these important pursuits and setting priorities is a constant challenge for seniors.

You are probably anxious for this young adult to make a decision—and yet, he or she may be moving toward closure more slowly than you would wish.

What you can do to help

- Suggest that he or she use the campus career center throughout the senior year. These offices provide assistance in preparation for the job search. Offerings may include:
 - Workshops and individual help with resume and cover letter writing, interviewing, and other job-search skills,
 - Individual and group career advising,
 - Job-search resources,
 - On-campus interviewing opportunities, and,
 - Alumni career consultant or mentor programs.
- Don't nag your child about not having a job yet. This will often have the reverse effect. Use positive reinforcement.
- Offer to assist by sending information you may have found about your child's target career field and/or job listings that may be of interest. Listen for indications from your child that you are getting carried away—and back off.
- Don't call potential employers to intervene for your child. Contact with potential employers is the candidate's responsibility.
- Be prepared to support your child through the ups and downs of the job and graduate school search. It can be a bumpy road—not every desired job or graduate school acceptance will come through. Your student will need reassurance that for every door that closes, another opens.

Final Thoughts

The college years are a time of exploration, experimentation, and learning on many levels for students and their parents! Some student challenges may seem more positive than others, but all contribute to the educational outcomes of the college or university experience.

Throughout these years, students are developing a "record of achievement" that will be evaluated by employers and graduate schools as they move beyond college. There are several pieces of this record:

- **Academic achievement.** The grade point average (GPA) is one factor considered by competitive employers and graduate schools. It is one of the few tangible indications of a student's ability to learn and perform effectively, at least in the academic environment. Therefore, students need to do as well as possible in the classroom, especially in courses in their majors.
- **Responsible work experience.** In today's competitive employment market, many employers seek students who have related internship, summer, cooperative education, or

part-time job or volunteer experiences. In fact, employers often look to their own such programs as primary sources for their new hires. These experiences are particularly critical for liberal arts students whose majors may not appear to be directly related to their areas of career interest.

- **Responsible involvement outside the classroom.** Extracurricular activities provide the opportunity for students to gain many valuable and career-related skills, such as the ability to work effectively with others in a team environment; leadership; planning and organizational skills; and priority-setting and time management. These are part of the package of skills employers seek in their new hires.

Best of luck to you in navigating the challenging waters of parenting a college or university student.

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What Current/Former Students are Saying About WCC Career Services

“I had a great time at the Journal News yesterday. Spent a few hours there. I toured the news room, had a reporter and a multimedia expert show me what they do and how they do it. I was able to ask a lot of questions and got a really good idea of what it is like to work as a journalist at a major local publication. Gave me a lot of food for thought. Thank you so much for this opportunity, it was a positive one!” ~ JS

“Thank you very much. I still talk about you to my family and friends. If it wasn't for you, I don't think I would be where I'm right now.” ~ SZ

“Thank you for your help with my resume last week, despite such short notice you still went over and beyond to accommodate me, I really appreciate that.”

“Due to you and Professor C's help I was successful with the interview on Friday and I'm awaiting my start date for next week with a small firm in Hawthorne.”

“I just received a job offer today from the medical group. My job title is payment poster in the billing department. I have to take a drug test tomorrow. They will officially ask me when my drug test comes back clean. Thank you for all your hard work.” ~NG

“I just wanted to say thank you for all of your help! (And I am sorry that I haven't written sooner.) A spot opened up at XX over the summer and I actually started working here this past September. It wouldn't have happened without your help and guidance. I really appreciate all that you did in assisting me to change up my resume to highlight my specific skills. I never would have thought of presenting my resume that way, but I know that it made a huge difference in making my resume way more dynamic and setting me apart when I applied for this job.” ~ JK

“Thank you so much for meeting with me. I really appreciate your advice. It has helped me make a better decision about school.” ~RM

“What a creative brainstorming session we had! Thank you for your wisdom, your patience and your kindness in extending your time to meet with me today to discuss my “next move”.... Your resume edits and recommendations were invaluable. Thanks again for a very worthwhile meeting it was really appreciated.” ~LB

Helpful Career Websites

US Department of Labor-

Bureau of Labor Statistics

<http://www.bls.gov/ooh>

<http://www.bls.gov/opub/ooq/home.htm>

<https://www.mynextmove.org>

<https://www.mynextmove.org/vets>

<http://www.onetonline.org/>

NYS Department of Labor-

<http://www.careeronestop.org/>

<https://www.careerzone.ny.gov/views/careerzone/index.jsf>

<http://explorehealthcareers.org>

<https://www.mymajors.com>

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