

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, discussing 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, they 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 define their skills, interests, and abilities