**What Parents of Prospective College Students Should Know**

**1. Choosing a career/choosing a major**

Your child is the one who should ultimately make the choice of what career/major they want to pursue. Although, it is important that you, as the parent, mention factors to your child about the job-market demand, salary ranges, long-range opportunities, skills required, etc. Remember to keep in mind always: Just because an occupation is "hot" now does not mean it will be equally in demand in 10 years.

**2. Choosing to double major/choosing a major and minor**

Just because your child has a double majors does not mean that their marketability will become enhanced.

**3. Grade point average (GPA)**

* Just because your child gets off to a “rocky start” does not mean that their GPA cannot be raised back up.
* Encourage your son or daughter to make academics a high priority beginning with the freshman year.

**4. Obtaining marketable skills**

Skills are what most employers look at after academic standing. Push your child to develop strengths in at least two of the following areas:

* Quantitative skills (e.g., accounting, statistics, economics);
* Communication skills (e.g., written and oral);
* Marketing/selling skills (e.g., sales, publicity, fundraising);
* Scientific skills (e.g., lab skills, scientific research);
* Leadership skills (e.g., supervisory, extracurricular leadership roles, teamwork/team leader).

**5. Leadership activities**

It is often found that employers tend to rate leadership activities more important than GPA. Even if your child was active in high school, it is very important that they remain active in college because employers look at the most recent experience rather than the older experience.

**6. Experience**

It is SO very important that your child has real-world work experience within their desired field rather than just working at a local facility during the summer. Employers look for relative work-experience the most. Starting sophomore and junior summers, it is important to begin to gain experience within their desired field rather than at some local business.

**7. Graduating early, graduating late**

* The advantages of graduating early: lower tuition, and the opportunity to begin working or applying for graduate school earlier than their fellow classmates.
* The disadvantages of graduating early: sacrificing academic honors, experience within the field, and extracurricular/volunteer activities.
* Advantages to late graduation: the ability to raise grades, flexibility time wise to change majors, the ability to add extra classes that will help to improve marketability, and extra time for experience.
* Disadvantages to late graduation: increased tuition, and a possibility of experiencing disapproval of employers/graduate schools.

**8. Planning for graduate/professional school**

If your child is planning to attend graduate/professional school you should consider the following:

* Have a reason as to why they want to further their education
* Be familiar with the varying qualifications required for each school’s admissions and know the deadlines
* Create a back-up plan in case they do not get accepted.

\*\*It is very important that your child discusses their interest of graduate/professional school BEFORE their senior year.

**9. Taking time off**

If your child takes time off between undergraduate and graduate/professional school they need to be prepared to explain to future employers why they took time off and what they did within that time period. Having experience toward future jobs is important during this time gap.

**10. Using the college career center**

In order for things to go more smoothly, students should visit the career center located on their campus no later than during their sophomore year. Competition is fierce out there, but with the help of the career center, it is possible that your child can land their dream job.