

# Supporting Student-Parents in Transition to Career Success

Presented by Angela M. Lynch, MA  
March 7, 2014

# Preparing Students to “Launch”

- Start developing a relationship early – as early as your first interaction – all staff are a resource!
- Create conversations at every opportunity to encourage students to utilize on-campus resources for career preparation and success.
- Encourage students to utilize instruments such as MBTI and Strong Interest Inventory to help gather data for career decision making and success. Require completion, where possible.
- Recommend students complete an internship, even if it is not required for their major.

# The Resume

*- A mirror of the student experience: Not a static document!*

- Encourage students to become involved in all facets of campus life – they need it and so do their resumes!
- Employers want to see a variety of experiences and skills on the resume.
  - Academic
  - Leadership
  - Current Employment (if, possible)
  - Dovetailing of prior Employment, if relevant

# The Resume

*- A mirror of the student experience: Not a static document!*

- Employers take approximately 30 seconds per document to prescreen resumes.
- Unless they have extraordinary experience, one page is most appropriate.
- Cover letter is the opportunity to explain why they are the exceptional candidate.
- Resume and cover letter always travel as a team, even if a cover letter is not requested.
- References?

# *Communication Skills*

- Provide an environment open to conversations about transition, fear, and anxiety. Everyone can serve as an informal life coach in one way or another.
- Role play positive self-talk.
- Few students feel comfortable accepting a compliment. Teach them how to do so.
- Have intentional conversations with them on how to “blow their own horn” appropriately. Remind them it is often difficult for seasoned professionals.
- Discuss communication styles and how to avoid an appearance of arrogance.



## *Embracing Change – Just Roll with It!*

- Many students struggle with the transition to higher education and find that once they feel “settled” that it is time to move on again.
- Encourage students to employ healthy self-care.
- Market stress management and wellness activities, when possible.
- Provide an atmosphere of support and encouragement.

## *Navigating Family Relations after Graduation*

- Often students find that they have difficulty assimilating back into their family due to changes in educational attainment (“You’re too good!”)
- Changes in familial roles and expectations
- Socio-economic issues and sharing the “wealth”
- Boundaries are SO important! Reaffirm, reaffirm, reaffirm this point when you can.
- Remind them to find their voice and practice using it before they graduate!

## *Juggling Responsibilities: Work and Personal Life*

- What has made a student “special” on campus (single parent, returning adult, etc.) is not necessarily attractive to an employer
- Employers are not interested in learning about children, especially NOT in the interview.
- It is important to keep students accountable with regard to on-campus employment as it makes the transition less difficult (preparation, on-time and consistent attendance)
- Remind students that they need to have a solid childcare plan following graduation. This is VERY important!



## *Persistence, Persistence, Persistence!*

- We tend to see that the students who transition directly into their career most successfully have a natural tendency towards an attitude of persistence.
- Other commonalities:
  - They do not fear making a mistake.
  - They understand how to ask questions.
  - They recognize when they need to ask for help.
  - They are open to requesting – and giving – feedback.
  - They show a genuine interest in personal improvement.

# *Persistence, Persistence, Persistence!*

## *- HOW YOU CAN HELP*

- Foster an atmosphere where students are encouraged to take risks.
- Encourage students to utilize campus and alumni programs for mentorship and professional development.
- Recommend students take part in professional organizations, where appropriate.
- Be intentional about providing opportunities for – and encouragement to – network.
- Work with students to help them become comfortable with themselves in a variety of social settings.

# Professionalism in the Workplace

*- Leave the backpack and flip flops at home!*

- Employers expect a polished, professional image every day, not just for the interview.
- Necklines, skirt length, and “comfort-factor” need to be addressed if they are a current issue with the student.
- Talk to students about the condition of their clothing and their shoes and the message they send.
- Give an iron as a going away present. (Not kidding!)
- Provide an opportunity for learning the unspoken rules about professional dinners, “mixers” and the culture of their chosen profession.
- Remind students about the hidden power of the handwritten thank you note.

## Professionalism in the Workplace

*- Leave the backpack and flip flops at home!*

- Guide them now on how to handle future conflict in the workplace.
- Encourage them to foster a professional relationship with their supervisors.
- Remind them that co-workers are not necessarily friends.
- Personal business and dirty laundry are best left at home.
- Talk openly about the need to be courageous!

“Courage is the most important of all virtues because without courage, you can’t practice any other virtue consistently.”

Maya Angelou





QUESTIONS?

THANK YOU!