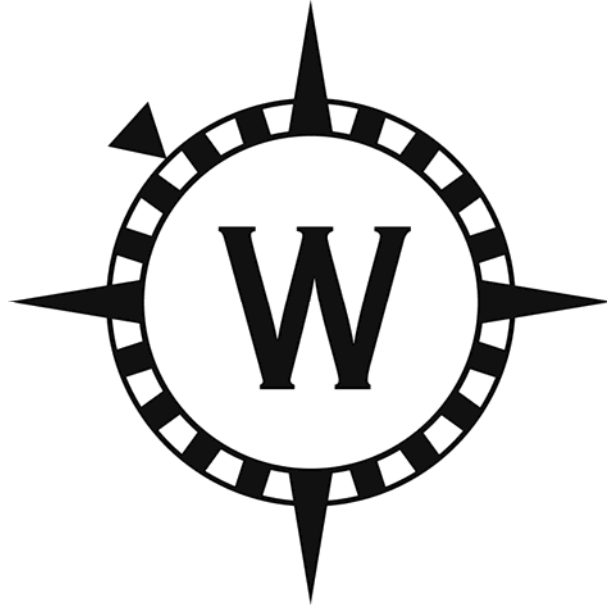


WILLAMETTE UNIVERSITY

Career Services



Information for Parents

WILLAMETTE UNIVERSITY

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Career Planning Course for Parents

The college years are a time of exploration, experimentation, and learning on many levels for students and their parents! Today your son or daughter may not have any idea what he/she wants to major in or which career to choose. Don't worry! Attending and being successful at Willamette starts with students going through stages of discovery at different rates of speed. Steps include:

Assessing skills, interests and abilities
Exploring majors and career options
Experimenting with possible career options
Organizing and conducting a job or graduate school search

How can you help your student?*

Don't insist upon a decision about a major or career choice immediately. Suggest that your student talk with faculty and career advisors in the Willamette Career Center. Steer your student to become involved, whether it's volunteer opportunities, internships, summer jobs or on campus participation in their area of interest. They can begin to network, gain work experience and begin the journey of discovering themselves.

Don't do the homework for them. Let the students gain the skills that they will need later in life to use their resources to seek out opportunities.

Your student will need reassurance that for every door that closes, another one will open.

Researchers have studied the relationship between various family factors and career development for over 50 years. The most recent studies indicate that parents who want to enhance the career development of university students should try to do the following:

- Provide emotional support and communicate warmth
- Express confidence in students' abilities and offer encouragement
- Allow students to have and express their own opinions and desires
- Support students as they make their own decisions

Maintain appropriate boundaries by not being too controlling or too detached.

**Source: Whiston, S.C., & Keller, B.K. (2004)*



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

Academic achievement. Although it is not (and should not be) the primary factor in determining a candidate's success, 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.

What employers tell us

Two internships are better than one!

You may want your son or daughter to work in his or her hometown every summer. However, the experience gained from an internship (paid or unpaid) in the career field that he or she aspires to enter is invaluable. Future employers will seek graduates with relevant, real-world work experience. Some students have little to write about on a resume if their summers were only spent in school, traveling, or working at low-level jobs. We strongly suggest that students seek career-related experience for their sophomore and junior summers even if they must live away from home or accept an unpaid internship. Students needing financial support can combine an unpaid internship with a paid job such as waiter/waitress, etc. Students can also apply for Carson and Lilly summer research grants to gain valuable (and funded) career related experience.

How Career Services can help

One-on-one advisement and career counseling. There is nothing better than a good heart-to-heart talk with a qualified career counselor, and we have the best. Encourage your son or daughter to schedule an appointment. We are friendly and supportive.

The Virtual Career Center (VCC) is a unique program at Willamette University. The VCC offers five of the nation's best online resources available to students 24-7. These include: *Optimal Resume* - a tutorial for resume writing and interviewing; *CareerBeam* - a career testing/assessment program matching student interests with possible careers and a tool for employer and industry search; *JobCat* - job postings for internships, campus jobs, part-time and full-time opportunities; and *What can I do with this Major?* - a web page for career exploration.

Willamette University Offers Opportunity!

- On Campus Employment, work study and non-work study
- Community network for part-time and summer jobs
- Alumni and community network resources
- Internship opportunities
- Study Abroad information

When should students start using the Willamette Career Center?

It is never too early to start thinking about career development. The earlier students start addressing career issues, the more successful they will be. We encourage students to start using our services as soon as they can. We offer programs and services which they can take advantage of all four years.

What can you do to help the Willamette Career Center?

Help us develop internships, part-time, full-time and summer job opportunities. Provide us with contact information for decision-makers where you work.

Encourage your student to visit the Willamette Career Center early to take advantage of all we have to offer. We want to be an integral part of their life while they are at Willamette.



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

What does the Willamette Career Center offer?

The services are endless. Our office provides assistance in life and career preparation. We offer many services to help your student become a strong candidate. Some of these services are:

- Info sessions and individual help with resumes and cover letter writing, interviewing, job-search skills
- Individual vocational discernment and career advising
- A library of books, industry specific guides and career related periodicals
- Testing preparation
- Internship opportunities
- Peace Corps & Teach for America information
- JET & overseas program literature
- On campus recruiter visits
- *CareerTalk* e-newsletter

- Government & Non-Profit opportunities
- Alumni networking resources
- Internship and Volunteer Fair
- First Avenue Career & Grad School Fair
- Etiquette guidance
- Online services:
 - Skills assessments
 - Career & job search databases
 - What can I do with this Major?
 - Virtual Career Center:
 - JobCat
 - Optimal Resume
 - Career Beam
 - Alumni Networking - Compass

Visit our web site for more information about the Willamette Career Center.

www.willamette.edu/dept/career