



# WHAT TO EXPECT YEAR-BY-YEAR

## A Parent's Guide

### FIRST YEAR

Your student will be involved in assessing his/her interests and abilities. This is done through:

- ▶ Finding success (or failure) in courses they take,
- ▶ Logging in to their JOURNEY product to take assessments (values, interest, skills) and explore majors and careers.
- ▶ Getting involved in campus activities and groups, etc...
- ▶ Having opportunity for exposure to new ideas and experiences.

Here's what you can do to help:

- ▶ Support your student's interest in exploring new areas of study.
- ▶ Remind your student of the areas of ability that he or she has demonstrated consistently.
- ▶ Talk with your student about the courses and activities he or she is enjoying.
- ▶ Support your student's involvement in campus activities but urge them to balance them with his or her coursework.

### SOPHOMORE YEAR

As your student explores majors and career options more seriously, they will have questions and will need to explore more (unless already set in their path).

What's your role?

- ▶ Don't insist upon a decision about a major or possible career choice immediately. Urge your student to explore and seek assistance from the Career Services.
- ▶ Suggest that your student talk with faculty and career advisors about potential choices.
- ▶ Don't worry if your student chooses to major in something you consider "impractical." Liberal arts studies sharpen skills which are critical to the "package" employers are seeking: strong written/oral communication skills, problem-solving skills, and excellent research skills.
- ▶ Suggest your student learn a foreign language/develop computer skills. Both of these skills will be helpful in today's market, no matter what career field your student chooses.
- ▶ Direct your student to family, friends or colleagues who are in fields your student is interested in.
  - Informational interviewing is extremely helpful at this stage.
  - Job shadowing for a day/part of a day, provides an inside look.
- ▶ The development of a resume should be coming into focus.
- ▶ Students should pay attention to and attend events which focus on career development.

### JUNIOR YEAR

It is important for students to experiment with possible career options. This is a critical time for your support.

Here's what you can do:

- ▶ Encourage your student to use the resources available in Career Services and explore available career resources. Career Services can assist your student in finalizing a good resume and in finding opportunities to test his/her career choice.
- ▶ Emphasize to your student the importance of gaining exposure and experience in his/her field of interest.
- ▶ Internships in some very competitive fields may be nonpaying. Discuss your financial expectations with your student before an internship commitment is made.
- ▶ Don't conduct the internship or summer job search for your student. It's great to provide names of people who may be helpful, but making contact for your student deprives them of an important learning experience and makes a poor impression on the future employer.
- ▶ Students should make career programming a priority – take advantage and attend events that are made available.
- ▶ Encourage them to network with professionals regularly. NETWORKING is key!

### SENIOR YEAR

Your student will be heavily involved in more advanced courses, have more responsible roles in campus activities and begin to focus on his/her job search.

Here are some ways you can lend support:

- ▶ Suggest that your student participate in career related programs offered; they will find there are programs specifically for senior level students.
- ▶ If your student is interested in graduate or professional school beyond their undergraduate degree, fall semester of the senior year is the time to apply to these programs. Encourage them to work with their faculty advisors or Career Services on this front.
- ▶ Remind your student to use career resources which are available to them on the MyOttawa portal.
- ▶ Networking, again, is extremely important and critical during this time. The more people they are exposed to and spend time talking with, the greater the opportunity for a job connection to be available to them when they graduate.
- ▶ Don't call potential employers to intervene for your student. This is your student's responsibility.
- ▶ Be prepared for the ups and downs of the job and graduate school search. Not every desired job or acceptance will come through.