



Advising Undecided/Undeclared Students for Success

Webinar Handout

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Advising First Center for Exploratory Students

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Choosing A Major or Occupation: A Guide for College Students

<http://www.career.fsu.edu/education/majors/choosing-a-major-guide.html>

Center for Strategic Advising

<http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/csa>

Suggested Activities/Strategies for Your Campus to Utilize this Webinar to Its Full Potential

Pre-Webinar:

1. If you will be viewing the Webinar with a group, plan time for a discussion or take a poll of your viewers prior to the start of the broadcast to find out how your institution defines "undecided". Here are some possibilities:
 - students who have not chosen a major field of study
 - students who had difficulty in identifying a program at the time of entry to the institution
 - students who are not prepared to make educational and/or vocational choices
 - students who elect to start without a major, hoping to use their initial time to explore options
2. Discuss what you think some of the reasons are that students at your institution change majors. We will be talking about this during the broadcast and asking for your ideas.
3. Discuss what you think makes undecided students different from their undecided peers. Here are some possibilities to consider:
 - undecided students are at greater risk of dropping out of college
 - decided students are better able to make good decisions
 - undecided students earn lower grades than decided students
 - undecided students are more aware they need to take time to explore
 - undecided students are not really any different than decided students

Gordon's Exploration Process Model

- Available in the workbook *Selecting a College Major: Exploration and Decision Making*. (2003) by Gordon, Sears & Brookhart. Prentice Hall.
- Also described by Steele & McDonald in *Advising Students in Transition*. (2000). In V.N. Gordon & W.R. Habley (Eds.), *Academic advising: A comprehensive handbook* (pp. 144-161). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Comprehensive process involving the exploration of self, majors, careers, and an analysis of their own decision-making. Each phase is separate yet woven together by the students' commitment to learn more about themselves, and find an academic major that fits in with the vision they hold for their future.

1. **Self-Knowledge** – includes an understanding of one's values, interests, abilities and personality characteristics.
2. **Educational Knowledge** – connect self knowledge to institutional offerings; includes information about majors, minors, certificate programs, etc.
3. **Occupational Knowledge** – investigate how fields of study and marketability factors lead to engaging employment opportunities; includes information about resume writing, informational interviewing, job shadowing, etc, as well as career information.
4. **Decision-Making Knowledge** – includes an understanding of previous history and experience with decision-making as well as integrating the information collected about self, educational options, and occupational information.

Exemplary Practices Highlighted

Discovery Learning Community at Texas Tech University
<http://www.housing.ttu.edu/assets/files/DISCOVERY!.pdf>
Elizabeth Teagan
elizabeth.teagan@ttu.edu

University of Cincinnati
<http://www.uc.edu/explore/index0106.html>
Tara Stopfel
stopfetj@ucmail.uc.edu

University of Cincinnati Major Mentor Information sheet:
<http://www.uc.edu/explore/mentoring/majormentoring.pdf>

Wagner College
http://www.wagner.edu/wagner_plan/
Margaret Echanique
mechaniq@wagner.edu

University of Kentucky
Suanne Early
shearl2@email.uky.edu

VCU University College Discovery Advising
<http://www.vcu.edu/uc/major/>
Art Esposito
ajesposito@vcu.edu

Highly Recommended Resources for Exploratory Advisors

Gordon, V. N. (2006). *Career Advising: An Academic Advisor's Guide*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass A Wiley Imprint.

Fogg, N. P., Harrington, P. E., & Harrington, T. F. (2004). *College Majors Handbook*. 2nd Ed. Indianapolis, IN: JIST Works.

Gordon, V. N., & Sears, S. J. (2004). *Selecting a College Major Exploration and Decision Making*. 6th Ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

Machado, J. (2002). *Fishing for a major*. New York, NY: Natavi Guides.

Marriner, M., Gebhard, N., & Gordon, J. (2006). *Roadtrip Nation A Guide to Discovering your Path in Life*. New York: Ballantine Books.

Institutions Registered for this Webinar

Adelphi University
Albany State University
Algonquin College
Amarillo College
American Intercontinental University
Ancilla College
Anne Arundel Community College
Arcadia University
Arizona State University
Ashland University
Bay de Noc Community College
Benedictine University
Bergen Community College
Brevard Community College
Broward College
Buena Vista University
California Baptist University
California State University East Bay
Carteret Community College
Cascadia Community College
CCC-Wilbur Wright College
Cedar Crest College
Central Washington University
Clarkson University
Coastal Bend College
Coe College
Colby Community College
College of DuPage
Collin County Community College
Columbia University
Columbus State Community College
Culver-Stockton College
Danville Community College
DePaul University
Dillard University
Dominican University of California
Eastern Michigan University
Eastern Wyoming College
Elizabethtown College
Excelsior College
Feather River College
Florida State University
Fort Lewis College
Gainesville State College
Genesee Community College
George Brown College
Georgia College & State University
Georgia Institute of Technology
Georgia Perimeter College
Gonzaga University
Grand Valley State University
Gwynedd-Mercy College
Hope College
Immaculata University
Indiana State University
Indiana Univ Purdue Univ-Ft Wayne
Indiana Univ Purdue Univ-Indianapolis
Indiana University Kokomo
Ivy Tech Community College-Lafayette
Johnson C. Smith University
Kankakee Community College
Kansas State University
Kent State University
Kent State University Stark Campus
Knox College
La Salle University
Lake Superior College
Lamar University
Lane Community College
Lehigh Carbon Community College
Lewis-Clark State College
Long Island University-CW Post Campus
Louisiana State University-Alexandria
Loyola University Maryland
Madison Area Technical College
Madisonville Community College
Marian College
Mercyhurst College
Mesa State College
Metropolitan State University
Midlands Technical College
Mid-South Community College
Minnesota State University-Mankato
Molloy College
Montana State University
Moraine Park Technical College
Motlow State Community College
Mount Aloysius College
Mt. Olive College
New Mexico Highlands University
New Mexico State University
New York University
Northeastern Illinois University
Northern Kentucky University
Northland College
Northland Community and Technical College
Oakland University
Oklahoma Christian University
Old Dominion University
Onondaga Community College
Penn State-Altoona
Penn State-Erie
Penn State-University Park
Principia College
Pueblo Community College
Purchase College, SUNY
Purdue University-Calumet
Quinsigamond Community College
Redeemer University College
Rochester Institute of Technology
Rocky Mountain College
Saint Joseph's College
Saint Joseph's College of Maine
Saint Louis University
Salt Lake Community College
Savannah College of Art and Design
Simon Fraser University
Skagit Valley College
South Louisiana Community College
Southern State Community College
Springfield College
St. Edward's University
St. John Fisher College
SUNY-Cortland
SUNY-New Paltz
Tacoma Community College
Tarleton State University
Temple University
Texas A&M University
Texas A&M University-Commerce
Texas Tech University
The University of Alabama
Towson University
Tulane University
University of Alaska Southeast
University of Alaska-Fairbanks
University of Arizona
University of British Columbia
University of California-Berkeley
University of California-Santa Cruz
University of Cincinnati
University of Colorado-Boulder
University of Dayton
University of Delaware
University of Hartford
University of Hawaii-Manoa
University of Idaho
University of Iowa
University of Kentucky
University of Louisville
University of Manitoba
University of Memphis
University of Minnesota-Twin Cities
University of Montana- College of Technology Missoula
University of Nebraska-Omaha
University of Nevada-Reno
University of New Mexico
University of Pittsburgh-Bradford
University of Pittsburgh-Johnstown
University of Regina
University of Rhode Island
University of Southern Indiana
University of St. Francis
University of Texas-Austin
University of Texas-El Paso
University of Texas-Brownsville
University of Texas-Pan American
University of Texas-San Antonio
University of the Fraser Valley
University of the Free State
University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh
University of Wisconsin-Parkside
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
University of Wyoming
Vermont Student Assistance Corp
Wayne State College
West Chester University
Western Kentucky University
Western New England College
Western State College
Western Technical College
Westminster College
Winona State University
York Technical College

Commission for Undecided and Exploratory Students Resource List

SELF-KNOWLEDGE

- 1) Recommend a free **on-line assessment** to help your students better understand their values, interests, skills and personality traits. Here are a few of our favorites:

www.bridges.com/cpflorida **Choices Planner** is a career planning program that offers questionnaires to connect personal interests to possible careers.

www.humanmetrics.com/cgi-win/JTypes2.asp The **Myers-Briggs personality inventory** helps to identify preferences and generates a four-letter personality profile. There are additional websites that provide detailed information and suggest careers for each personality type. Have students visit these sites to gather more information.

<http://www.keirsey.com/sorter/register.aspx> The **Keirsey Temperament Sorter** reveals innate characteristics that portray one's personality type.
- 2) **Reflective Questions** reveal critical information regarding students' values, interests and skills. Administer these as exploration assignments. Examples include:
 - a. Would you rather have more free time and earn less money or earn more money and have less free time?
 - b. What activities leave you energized?
 - c. What topics of conversation grab your attention?
 - d. Where have you received awards or recognitions?
 - e. What comes naturally to you but is difficult for others?
- 3) **Mirroring Exercise:** Some of the best advice regarding majors and careers is given by students' friends, mentors and former teachers. Encourage your advisees to seek out feedback from important people in their lives. This exercise can be completed on-line or face-to-face, and works best when students develop questions prior to the interview.
- 4) Ask students to describe in a journal, or illustrate a vision, of who they are, what they hope to accomplish, their ideal work environment or their "dream job." Occupational daydreaming utilizes right brain activity and can be a powerful tool in harnessing students' goals.

EDUCATIONAL KNOWLEDGE

- 1) Practice **intentional advising**. Beginning with their very first course schedule, encourage students to identify exploration areas and begin 'testing the waters' in courses of interest. Discourage students from using their general education curriculum to "get classes out of the way."
- 2) Provide a **centralized website** where students can research academic information, including up-to-date lists of majors, degree requirements, access information and course descriptions. Students have told us that they judge the quality of an advising program based on the quality of the program's web resources.
- 3) Offer a **Major's Fair**, a **Workshop**, or **Special Event** to deliver important educational information to students. These can take place in the residence halls, the dining halls, or even outside under a tent. Free refreshments help attract the crowds.
- 4) Refer students to the array of **Web resources** available to help them better understand academic and career information. Some favorites are:

<http://mymajors.com/> is an on-line assessment that matches interests and strengths and suggests majors that may be a good fit.

<http://MyRoad.com> is College Board's college and career planning website.

<http://www.Princetonreview.com/majors.aspx> is The Princeton Review's website and offers access to wide variety of educational information.

<http://www.worldwidelearn.com/online-education-guide/index.html> is a site that allows students to explore their college major, research areas of study that are of interest, and discover online degree programs and career paths.

- 5) Assist your students with liking majors to potential careers by visiting these websites:

<http://www.career.fsu.edu/occupations/matchmajor/>

<http://www.udel.edu/CSC/mrk.html>

http://www.wvcc.edu/student_services/online_adv/planning/what_can_i_do.cfm

<http://www.k-state.edu/acic/majorin/>

<http://6steps.monster.com/step1/careerconverter/>

- 6) Assign your students the responsibility of reviewing the list of majors offered at your school. Have them identify programs of interest, cross off the majors they know they do not want, and further explore news areas for consideration. This is simple, but very effective!
- 7) The University Bookstore can be a great way for students to explore what the coursework in a particular major is about without having to register for lots of courses. Consider suggesting that your students go and review the textbooks affiliated with a particular major.
- 8) Create a "Class Visit" program, where students can obtain a "pass" to sit in for a day on an upper-division course in a particular major, and then set-up a follow-up conversation with the instructor.

OCCUPATIONAL KNOWLEDGE

- 1) Partner with the **Career Services** office at your institution and directly connect students to all of the resources offered to help build their resumes and secure a professional position upon graduation.
- 2) Refer students to the **Road Trip Nation** website when they are searching for inspiration from others who have set out on a quest to find their passion and purpose at: www.roadtripnation.com.
- 3) Have students conduct their own **informational interviews** with alumni of the university or individuals who are working in a field of interest. Coach the student on developing interview questions, proper attire, and interview behavior.
- 4) Have students narrow options by viewing the **16 Career Clusters** located at <http://www.careerclusters.org/16clusters.cfm>.
- 5) Encourage activities that help students "**define their focus.**" These include internships, part-time jobs in potential interest areas, and job shadowing experiences.
- 6) Review the **Occupational Outlook Handbook** website www.bls.gov/oco/ for the latest career information including: training and education requirements, earnings, working conditions and projected job openings for literally hundreds of occupations.
- 7) Visit <http://online.onetcenter.org/>. The **O*NET system** serves as the nation's primary source of occupational information, providing comprehensive information on key attributes and characteristics of workers and occupations.
- 8) **Resume writing** and **interviewing skills** are an important component of students' occupational knowledge. Offer to review these and provide honest feedback.
- 9) Provide information on **directed individual study** or **undergraduate research** activities where students work side-by-side with faculty members.
- 10) Explore **graduate and professional schools** at www.petersons.com/gradchannel/ and start investigating future educational options. Offer to critique your students' essays when applying for internships or graduate schools.

AWARD WINNING EXPLORATORY PROGRAMS

Kent State University, Student Advising Center

<http://www.kent.edu/success/firstyearflashes/index.cfm>

Indiana University, University Division

<http://ud.iub.edu/index.php>

Millersville University of Pennsylvania, Exploratory Program

<http://www.millersville.edu/~undprgm/>

Niagara University, Academic Exploration Program

<http://www.niagara.edu/aep/>

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Division of General Studies

<http://ucommxsr1.unl.edu/dgs/>

The Ohio State Exploration Program

<http://exploration.osu.edu/>

Oregon State University, University Exploratory Studies Program

<http://oregonstate.edu/uesp/>

Washburn University, Center for Undergraduate Studies and Programs

<http://www.washburn.edu/services/cusp/>

Waynesburg University, Academic Advising

<http://www.waynesburg.edu/index.php?q=node/360>

University of Wisconsin/River Falls, Pre-Major Advising Center

<http://www.uwrf.edu/academic-success/>

Additional Resources and References

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