STAR Ambassadors:
MyCareerPlan Guidelines

Your STAR Students and Their Career Development Path --
How You Can Help!

From: The Career Advising Council
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I. Purpose of these Guidelines

Thanks for taking the time to help your fellow Boilermakers on their STAR day and for reading this packet of information. Your effort is very much appreciated!

The Career Advising Council, made up of academic advisors and career professionals from across Purdue’s campus, wrote this information to give you some ideas of how to talk to your STAR group about their career development path here at Purdue. We hope you will be able to find some time during this day to discuss careers as it relates to the career exploration activity they completed prior to STAR, their major choice/exploration, gaining experience during college, potential major changes, and career resources available at Purdue.

One of our main goals as a Council is to encourage our incoming students to begin thinking about career development from the first day they come here and beyond. Thus, making students immediately aware of the vast resources designed to help them on their career path is critical. To address this goal, each incoming freshman will now be asked to complete the Career Exploration Activity on pages 2-3 before coming to STAR. They will upload this document to their co-curricular transcript. Some academic advisors will cover this during their advising meetings, some will not. Overall, we hope that as a STAR leader, you will mention this activity and use it as a spring board to cover some career-related issues throughout the day. We also hope this information can be shared beyond STAR, for example, during BGR.

We included different types of information so you can customize your career discussion to what works best for you and your personal style. Maybe you like question/answer interactions or maybe you like to use examples/tell stories. We encourage you to use the style/information you most enjoy!

Career planning and major choice/change can be a high anxiety issue for many college students. We hope that by arming you with some questions, talking points, and career resources you can help our incoming freshman think productively and critically about their chosen paths.

Thanks again for all you do 😊!

Sincerely – The Career Advising Council
II. MyCareerPlan

Visit [www.cco.purdue.edu/mycareerplan](http://www.cco.purdue.edu/mycareerplan) to access the career exploration exercises that STAR participants are asked to complete prior to their STAR date.

III. REACTION Discussion

Each student should have completed one option of their choice from the activities posted at [www.cco.purdue.edu/mycareerplan](http://www.cco.purdue.edu/mycareerplan) before coming to their STAR day. Below are the REACTION discussion questions you can ask the members of your group to engage them in a meaningful career discussion.

**MyCareerPlan**

**Discussion:**

1. Which activity did you complete in MyCareerPlan? What did you learn from the activity? What surprised you?
   a. Be sure to review each of the MyCareerPlan options so that you can share in the STAR students’ experience. This will also give you a frame of reference so that you can genuinely lead the discussion.
   b. What impact/impression did the exercises have on you?

2. How did you choose your current plan of study (Exploratory Studies, Computer Science, Biology Pre-Med)? What excites you about this option? What are you nervous or unsure about?
   a. Think about your own experiences from life, classes, and mentors. How did these interactions help shape your academic choice(s)?
   b. Remember that some of the students in your groups may be in Exploratory Studies or Undecided in a particular college.
      - Remind the students that they don’t have to know all the answers now. The purpose of these activities is to help them get started and there are resources they can access to assist them in making decisions.
      - Ask the students to describe the classes, activities, jobs, etc. they enjoyed during high school to help them identify common themes.
3. **What career(s) interests you? What do you like about these careers?**
   a. Share how you decided on your prospective career.
   b. Share 1 or 2 resources that were useful to you or that you know will aid the student in identifying and exploring career options such as CCO, academic advisors, internship experiences, and student organizations.

**General advice about asking questions/generating discussion:**

--**Talk to them about careers as their peer.** One of the reasons you are all so valuable to this exercise is because incoming students love to hear this kind of information from people like them rather than only from the ‘college professionals’ like advisors. Please personalize your question/answer choices so they are genuine to your experiences. Feel free to adjust questions/activities/advice so you can talk about it in a natural way that feels comfortable for you and for them.

--**What do you think they want/need to know about career/major issues?** What are some things you always wish someone would’ve told you on day 1 about these issues? Share that with them! Be yourself!

--**Try to ask open ended questions**, that is, questions that can’t be answered by only a yes or no.

Some examples of how to begin an open ended question are:
What do you think/feel/know about….., How did you….., Tell me (more) about… Describe…. Explain……

--**Find opportunities to ask probing questions.** If a student answers a question and you feel like there is more under the surface, you can say things like “can you share more about that?” or “tell me more about that” or ask “why”. Don’t miss an opportunity to dig a little deeper if appropriate.

--**Practice using affirming statements.** These are statements that indicate to students that what they said was worthy, positive. Statements like “that is really interesting!” or “I can see why you enjoyed that experience so much” or “that is really impressive, keep up the good work!” or “that is really unique, how cool!” make students feel like they made a good contribution to the group and will
encourage them to participate/open up more. Make sure they know their feelings/choices are important and valued.

--Embrace the diversity of majors and of career path certainty. Some students in your group will know (or think they know) exactly what they want to do after graduation, some will not have a clear choice yet. Some major choices offer a clearly defined career path (like Nursing) while other major choices prepare students with broad, transferrable skills that can be applied to a wide variety of career paths (like English or Communication). It is important that you communicate to your group that each path is valuable and worthy. Often, students with less defined career choices/paths feel anxious – do what you can to lessen this feeling. They will be grateful for this!

IV. Use Career Examples…Tell Your Story

Sometimes the best way to illustrate a point is through examples/stories. You can use the example story we have provided or you can tell personal stories from your own experiences.

Overall, good examples/stories will communicate important ideas such as:

--Things change – and that’s ok! What you think you want to do now may not be exactly where you end up in 4 years. The important thing is learning how to persist despite setbacks. Giving a student permission to be OK with changing their direction can make a huge difference in a later semester.

--Talking/thinking about careers now does NOT mean you need to know exactly what you want to do after college today. It is more about getting in touch with what you love to do and what you are good at early on so you can build on those things during college.

--Discovering and embracing your interests, skills, and abilities is the best way to choose a career path/major. Find what you are passionate about and go for it!

--Make connections among planned and unplanned experiences.
There are jobs/career paths that haven’t even been invented yet. The job marketplace may be very different in 4 years than it is today. Don’t limit yourself!

--Learn how to learn in college. This skill will serve you in ANY career you may choose!

Feel free to use your own examples/stories that might illustrate valuable ideas to your group!

Example Story: A student initially declared an Animal Sciences major in the College of Agriculture. As time went on, she was not enjoying the high-level Biology and Chemistry courses in this major. She was not earning the grades needed either.

She met with a career counselor who asked her, finally, why did you choose this major? She replied ‘Because I love animals’. The counselor noted that there are many other ways to work with animals besides majoring in Animal Sciences. The counselor pressed a bit and asked ‘What do you like to do for fun? What are some things you enjoy doing outside of school?’. The student replied ‘I love photography’.

She ultimately decided to change her major to Photography. Years later, she was a Photographer for National Geographic. She had to work very hard to get to National Geographic but she was passionate about her work each and every day. By examining what she loved to do and what she was good at, and being persistent enough to excel, she wound up on a career path that made excellent sense for her.

V. Career Resources at Purdue You Should Know/Share

There are a wide variety of resources related to career development, career planning, and major exploration/choice at Purdue. We are listing the main resources in these guidelines for your reference. You can cover some/all of the resources that work for the conversations you are having with your STAR students.

We constantly hear students say ‘I wish I would’ve known about this when I first started…I would’ve taken advantage of it then!’ so we definitely know your students will be interested in much of this information.
1. **Center for Career Opportunities (CCO)** – Campus-wide career services center. Robust website with excellent online materials, such as the ‘Career Planning Handbook’ right away (online or printed). The CCO offers in-person major and career exploration services, resume and interview help, and a variety of workshops and events throughout the course of the year. [www.cco.purdue.edu](http://www.cco.purdue.edu)

2. **College Specific Career Development Services** are offered in a variety of forms in each separate college at Purdue. You should talk to your academic advisor about the career services so you know what is available to you within your own area of study.

3. **Purdue’s Career Wiki** – is a great online resource to use as a spring board for career-related information. This collection of links to other online resources is a great way to save yourself time browsing the Internet aimlessly. Someone has already gathered many of the resources you will want to use - check it out! [http://wiki.lib.purdue.edu/display/Career/](http://wiki.lib.purdue.edu/display/Career/)

4. **Center for Pre-Professional Advising** – What major should you choose if you want to go to medical school? How about law school? The answer is ANY major that you can do really well in plus the courses that professional schools require you to take. This means you can major in ANYTHING. The pre-professional office works alongside your major academic advisor to help you choose the ‘other courses’ you need and they help you prepare for all other professional school requirements. If this is your goal, you should talk to them right away! [www.purdue.edu/preprofessional/](http://www.purdue.edu/preprofessional/)

5. **Office of Professional Practice** – Co-op programs allow college student to gain hands on experience during 3-5 rotations at a company which allows for more advanced projects. Co-ops can be found in the majority of Colleges/Schools based on your major. [www.purdue.edu/propractice](http://www.purdue.edu/propractice)

6. **Study abroad opportunities** – When you reach out into your world beyond the classroom here on campus and beyond, you learn many different transferrable skills like independence, cultural sensitivity, leadership, and global awareness. Plan now to participate in over 450 study abroad programs [http://www.studyabroad.purdue.edu/](http://www.studyabroad.purdue.edu/)
7. **Student Organizations & Leadership** – Being actively involved in over 1,000 student organizations and/or leadership positions during college allow you to have real world skills employers admire on your resume such as teamwork, problem solving, and ability to work in a team. Along the way, you might even find your passion! [https://boilerlink.purdue.edu/](https://boilerlink.purdue.edu/)

**VI. Ways to Gain Experience While in College**

There are a wide variety of ways each student may gain experience while in College. Some will be required because of their major choice and some will be voluntary (but highly encouraged).

Students are almost always expected to be able to locate these experiences on their own. Having said that, there are lots of resources to aid in the search and help students land an opportunity.

Depending on the major, students may participate in one or more of the following experiences:

1. Internship (on or off campus)
2. Externship
3. Capstone Experience
4. Clinical Experience
5. Research Experience
6. Field Experience
7. Practicum
8. Co-op
9. Study Abroad Internship

Thank you for taking the time to read about career development/career resources on campus! You play a vital role in helping your fellow Boilermakers start thinking about their career path early and often.

Sincerely,

Career Advising Council