



# Career Philosophy

## Philosophical Understanding of Career Planning and Professional Development

**Career Orientation:** There is a difference between a job and a career. And there is a difference between job hunting and career planning. The college track student is reminded to be intentional about his or her career planning efforts and to be deliberate about adopting techniques and strategies that will foster a professional career planning orientation and avoid the less sophisticated, less effective, job hunting orientation.

**Proactive Approach:** Students need to be proactive, plan ahead, and begin early establishing a relationship with their college career center. A career is too important to be tended to only under desperation circumstances and in a state of panic. It is not wise to solicit help from the career center on short notice. It is not advisable that students wait until the last minute to address any component of their career planning or job search process.

**Ongoing Process:** Career planning is a process, not a one-time act. It is multifaceted and progressive. To be successful in their career pursuit, students will need to understand that important things in life take time and require planning. One visit to the career center will not solve all their problems, nor will it equip them with everything they need to be effective in the attainment of their career goals.

**Beyond the Degree:** A degree alone will not guarantee a lucrative career upon graduation. In order to be regarded as a serious candidate in today's competitive job market, students will need to extend their education beyond the classroom and expand their experience beyond the degree. To have the necessary credibility, students must get involved in extracurricular activities and projects, relevant clubs and organizations, and internships that can provide opportunities to apply their knowledge and gain experience before graduation.

**Goal Oriented:** The more goal-oriented students are, the more likely they are to obtain career success. Once students explore their range of career options, they should be encouraged to set realistic and attainable career goals. Without some notion of where they want to go and what they want to do, students will lack the sense of focus and direction necessary for career success. Choosing their career goal before they choose their academic major is oftentimes more advisable.

**Active Participation:** To ensure they are adequately prepared and fully equipped, students will need to take full advantage of the services offered and actively participate in the various programs, events and activities sponsored by the career center. Students' attendance at career workshops, career fairs, information sessions, and other career-related events provides them the tools necessary to effectively manage their career.

**Professional Growth and Maturity:** College is an appropriate time for students to begin thinking and acting like professionals. If they intend to pursue a serious career, it will be necessary for them to devote adequate time and energy to such critical details as professional attire, professional behavior and attitude, etiquette, employer expectations, workplace culture, networking techniques, prospecting techniques, negotiation techniques, job market research methods, job search strategies, interview preparation, and résumé writing skills. Too often, young candidates head out into the job market with no training in any of these important areas, and they suffer the consequences.

**Self-Awareness:** Students' ability to make good decisions about their career and education are greatly enhanced by their ability to clearly and accurately define who they are. A deep understanding of one's personal traits is the basis for understanding one's interaction with the world around them. It is advisable that students assess themselves in terms of their interests, skills, strengths, weaknesses, talents, abilities, values, beliefs, needs, and attitudes. Students can gain greater confidence in their goal-setting and decision-making when they possess a firm understanding of their unique personality.

**Holistic Perspective:** Students must realize that effective career planning and career development require a holistic and broad-based perspective. The concept of a career encompasses more than the simple matters of employment. Career issues are intricately related to one's personal life. They are expressed through academic pursuits, extracurricular activities, volunteer community service, leadership development, membership in clubs and organizations, and continuing education, including graduate and professional school. The concept of a career encompasses a broad array of life issues, including family, relationships, finances, health, and leisure.

**Assume Responsibility:** Students will need to take responsibility for their own career planning and job search efforts. It is not the role of the campus career center to find a job for their students. More often than not, the career center will focus on teaching job search skills rather than actually placing students in jobs. While many job openings will be posted through the career center, and many interviews will be available through the career center, the majority of opportunities that await students will be the ones they discover through the comprehensive career planning and job search process taught by the career center. It is the intention of the career center to provide the tools and resources that empower students to manage their own independent campaign.



Birmingham-Southern College | Office of Career Services  
Box 549010 | Norton Campus Center 214 | (205) 226-4719 | (205) 226-4717