The Career & Professional Development Plan

...a Comprehensive Four-Year Plan for Undergraduates

Sophomore Year

2011—2012

Walk-in Hours:

Monday 1—3 pm
Tuesday 2—4 pm
Wednesday 1—3 pm
Thursday 9—11 am
Friday 10 am—12 pm

DCC 209 * 518/276-6234 * www.rpi.edu/dept/cdc/

The Center
Rensselaer
Center for Career and Professional Development

Sophomore Year Theme:
Expand Career Awareness

Welcome!

No longer the "new kid on the block," this year will be filled with exciting opportunities and important decisions. Activities during your second year are focused on helping you learn to explore careers and research future options. All sophomores are invited to participate in the ***The Center's*** award-winning, year-long series of programs entitled, ***The Sophomore Career Experience or SCE***. In collaboration with our employer partners, you will be challenged to develop key professional development skills through a range of programs and activities.

Three additional career and professional development competencies will be introduced this year and they include: **Problem Solving, Teamwork and Personal Integrity & Ethics**. We encourage you to continue to build on the three competencies highlighted in your Freshman Year: Time Management & Prioritizing, Effective Communication Skills and Key Professional Skills.

Developing these competencies during your undergraduate career will provide a foundation for future learning and personal success – in the classroom, at work and in life beyond college!

Use this plan throughout the year to help you seek out activities, programs and events which will foster these three additional competencies. Suggested Sophomore Year ***Achievements*** have also been included to help keep you on track and help you to measure your own personal accomplishments.

Problem Solving

- Approach new experiences with a positive attitude and "can-do" spirit
- Attend ***The Center's*** programs and events to help expand your career awareness and facilitate major-selection
- Prepare to declare your major - gather and analyze relevant information to make an informed decision
- View the online ***Orientation to the Co-op Program*** Powerpoint presentation***;*** consider going on Co-op to gain relevant work experience before you graduate
- Consider a variety of experiences to augment classroom learning including: internships, co-op, summer jobs, research, volunteer, study abroad, project work, consulting or entrepreneurial pursuits
- Seek out and build new study skills to enhance your understanding of complex material & how it may relate to your career interests
- Meet with a Career Counselor to learn to how to research employers & read job descriptions
- Seek help to analyze your skills and determine where you need to broaden your technical and non-technical competencies
- Learn what it means to uncover "The Hidden Job Market"; begin to use sources such as Hoovers.com to research employers
- Consider an Independent Study project to explore an area more in depth or to prepare for advanced education or research
- Identify Job Leads: Actively and regularly search **JobLink** for summer and co-op job postings and OCR interview opportunities beginning in the fall semester of each year

Teamwork

- Cultivate a positive attitude about working on teams - get help if needed
- Join a club or organization to learn to focus on developing common goals & a group vision; embrace differences
- If you have experience leading teams from high school, consider areas you would like to strengthen or expand on; seek out appropriate challenges during this year
- Be able to articulate how skills learned in one environment can transfer to other settings
- Identify your strengths and areas you need to improve - meet with a Career Counselor to discuss

Teamwork (continued)

- Begin to understand how to define common goals and work toward consensus building
- Understand your role on different teams & how your role connects you to your team
- Learn to value each team member's strengths to make the best use of everyone's talents
- Seek out leadership roles & develop your own talents; learn the art of collaboration
- Be able to differentiate between leading and supporting others in and out of class
- Prepare examples of leadership experiences to share during interviews

Personal Integrity & Ethics

- Make sure your word is your honor - in and out of the classroom
- Never misrepresent yourself on your resume or on a job application; make sure all information can be verified
- Develop a reputation as a strong team player with sound personal ethics
- Practice excellent work-related habits including: taking initiative, being on time, wearing appropriate attire to work & enhancing your communication skills
- Begin to develop a professional wardrobe for all types of interviews; consider how your attire may impact first impressions
- Once you accept a job offer - discontinue all interviewing and job search activities
- Google yourself to evaluate your online presence - employers, faculty and admissions officers may be doing this too

Top 10 Career & Professional Development Achievements for Sophomores

- ❑ Participate in all CCPD sponsored **SCE Events** this year; begin networking with employers
- ❑ Complete or update your **FOCUS-2** online inventory to document your accomplishments, review your career interests, and explore employment possibilities within your major. **FOCUS-2** will enable you to self-assess your career relevant personal qualities and explore career fields and major areas of study that are most compatible with your assessment results.
- ❑ Pick up your **SCE** Padfolio as a free gift for having your resume critiqued.
- ❑ Post at least one copy of your critiqued resume online through **JobLink** and give the ***The Center*** permission to add your resume to our online Resume Books
- ❑ Meet with your academic advisor early in your sophomore year to discuss how to integrate a Co-op or Study Abroad experience into your program of study
- ❑ Attend an ***Experience Matters!*** Workshop to learn about the broad range of opportunities available and plan to obtain relevant experience
- ❑ Practice writing cover letters and have one critiqued professionally in the ***The Center***
- ❑ Use **JobLink** to search for summer internships and/or co-op opportunities
- ❑ Complete one **Mock Interview** with a Career Counselor to gain insight and experience preparing for interviews
- ❑ Make at least one alumni contact through ***Pro Net*** to expand your network; learn about the career choices of others & the options open to you

Annual "To-Do" List

- ❑ Pick up your copy of ***The Career and Professional Development Guide*** in DCC 209; review for strategies to strengthen your job search efforts this year
- ❑ Check your email weekly for the ***The Center's e-newsletter*** to find out about ***The Center's*** programs, events, professional development tips, job leads and more!
- ❑ Need help with your job search or evaluating your career options? Use ***The Center's*** **Online Appointment Scheduler** to schedule a meeting with a Career Counselor (this link is found on ***The Center's*** website)
- ❑ Review the online ***Resume Writing WebShop*** and update your resume at the beginning of the fall semester; include academic, leadership and professional development experience when updating your resume
- ❑ Attend ***Employer Information Sessions & Events;*** expand your network & connect with hiring managers
- ❑ Have your resume professionally critiqued by an employer representative during ***RESUMANIA!*** or by a Career Counselor during ***The Center's*** Walk-in Hours
- ❑ Upload a critiqued copy of your resume into **JobLink** and give ***The Center's*** permission to add it to our online Resume Books
- ❑ Review the online ***Cover Letter WebShop*** for tips on writing successful cover letters
- ❑ Activate your **JobLink** account each fall to gain access to summer, co-op and full-time job postings; begin your summer job search in the fall semester
- ❑ Use ***The Center's*** website to broaden your research and investigative skills, especially as they relate to your career and professional development
- ❑ Check out ***The Center's Career Navigator Handouts*** for tips on a variety of career-related topics.
- ❑ View the three-minute ***CareerSpots*** Videos found on ***The Center's*** website; prepare a 30-second pitch to share with employers at the upcoming career fairs

For details on our Programs and Events,
please pick up The Center's Calendar of Events in DCC 209 or visit our website at:

http://www.rpi.edu/dept/cdc/