

A Guide for Parents

In working with students, the Career Center professional team helps students discover answers to three important questions: What are my talents? What do I love to do? How can I make a difference in the world? Parents can be of vital importance in helping their students think about the answers to these questions and in being aware that the Career Center offers active support and extensive resources for students to use during their time of vocational discernment.

The questions from parents provided below are the most common ones we hear in our communication with parents. Keep in mind that we serve your students in several ways: major and career exploration; career counseling and support; major- and career-related courses, workshops, and events; skill-building around resumes, cover letters, interviewing, and networking; internship and job search assistance; employer and alumni connections; and on-campus employment. We're here to help your students make the most of their college experience and to begin their career journey on the right foot.

MY STUDENT HAS NO IDEA WHAT MAJOR TO CHOOSE OR WHAT CAREER TO PURSUE! WHAT DO I DO?

Being unsure about which major to pursue only becomes problematic when, in the junior and senior years, students have made little attempt to discover who they are or some potential career areas that are of real interest to them. During the early college years, it's most important for them to become engaged in the college experience and community. Through participation in campus clubs, programs, and internships, your student will develop more as a unique person and begin to crystallize career interests. Both academics and involvement in campus life stir passions that lead to the choosing of a major and, ultimately, of a career path. Encourage your student to come into the Career Center where our counselors can assist your student with the exploration and decision-making processes.

IS IT TRUE THAT CHOOSING A COLLEGE MAJOR IS EQUIVALENT TO CHOOSING A CAREER?

Choosing a major to study during college is an important decision. However, major does not equal career! Choosing a major is making a statement that the student has more interest and/or skills in one area than another. The knowledge the student gains from that choice will surface upon graduation when your student will have a certain level of content and understanding in a specific area. Although some majors, such as accounting or electrical engineering, are pre-requisites for the industries they represent, dozens of other majors, from theater to history to marketing, serve as launching pads to a vast array of career options.

Employers, however, while very interested in the content of what the student has learned, are more concerned with overall educational exposure and whether or not the student has emerged with transferable skills such as leadership, critical thinking, problem solving, and oral and written communication. Employers can teach the content through various methods such as training or mentoring. They are less inclined to take a risk on a candidate who does not demonstrate the more general transferable skills.

What's most important for a student to consider when choosing a major is whether he/she is engaged in that choice.

Being engaged and motivated by a major may mean the difference between being intellectually stimulated, passionate, and successful or being unmotivated and uninspired. It is less important to see a direct correlation between a major and a career.

WILL MY STUDENT HAVE A JOB UPON GRADUATION? WHAT ORGANIZATIONS RECRUIT AT SCU?

SCU students are in the center of the radar of local, regional, and national employers. Employers in a multitude of industries are continually impressed with the caliber of student from SCU. Some of the biggest names in their industries continually recruit our students including Accenture Consulting, Applied Materials, Cisco Systems, Deloitte and Touche, eBay, Enterprise, Ernst & Young, The Gap, Google, Hitachi, KPMG, National Semiconductor, Navigant Consulting, Peace Corps, and Pricewaterhousecoopers, to name a few.

And while a wide variety of well-established computer companies and start-up organizations recruit ALL majors of SCU students (you don't have to be a computer science major to go into high tech), many other industries appreciate the value of an SCU education. Recruiters from retail, non-profit, insurance, banking, biotechnology, and education also recruit students through our on-campus interviewing program, career fairs, and informational events.

The bottom line is that once your student obtains the quality education and leadership training that Santa Clara University provides, with initiative and a little assertiveness, his or her career opportunities are endless.

WHAT ARE THE HOTTEST JOBS FOR NEW COLLEGE GRADUATES AND WHAT SALARY CAN MY STUDENT EXPECT TO RECEIVE UPON GRADUATION?

The answer to this question may change before we print this guide! Prior to January 2001, we had seen a tremendous boom in the economy, with employers eagerly tapping into the potential workforce of the new college graduate. However, we then experienced a major correction in the economy, and the number of employers coming to campus decreased.

That trend then changed again, and we saw an increase in recruitment with a variety of new companies. In the current economy, we are once again experiencing a downturn. So, while we always have opportunities for our students to explore, it is more important than ever for the students to develop work-related, communication, and leadership skills while they are at SCU. We know that the marketplace is cyclical, and it is hard to predict what an entering student will experience at graduation.

With regard to salary levels, these differ dramatically according to the industry in which the student will be working and the job market at the time of graduation. During the boom years, we saw salary levels for new college graduates ranging from \$24,000 (liberal arts) to \$64,000 (engineering) per year. We are now experiencing salaries ranging from \$35,000 to \$64,000.

WHAT SPECIFIC PROGRAMS DOES THE CAREER CENTER PROVIDE TO HELP MY STUDENT?

The Career Center is proud to cater to the unique needs of our SCU student population. We strive to develop and present programming that satisfies the current and specific needs of our students and so our programming changes with the times.

Such programming includes the Career Center's three major Career Fairs that host organizations representing a wide

range of industries, including non-profit, high-tech, biotech, education, and more. In addition to half-hour or hour-long career sessions with a career counselor, we also offer Same Day appointments where your student may walk in with an immediate need and see a career counselor at that moment or at a more convenient time that same day. We work diligently to inform our students of the experiential educational opportunities afforded by internships. We use various assessment tools to help your students clarify their strengths and interests. We host programs that give our students mock interviewing practice to help prepare them for the real thing. We often offer an Etiquette Dinner that helps shape our students' professional business etiquette so that they are prepared for those meals and meetings that occur during an interview and on the job. We host an on-campus interviewing program that connects recruiters with graduating students. We provide access to jobs and internships, current career-related events, and the popular Career Center Online (www.scu.edu/careercenter). We manage the on-campus student employment process. And, of course, consulting on resumes, cover letters, and job search strategies is second nature to the Career Center's team of professionals.

For specific suggestions and steps for your student to follow throughout his or her college experience, refer to the Career Center guide, "Yearly Steps to Success: Your Career Action Plan." For further information on helping your student succeed in college, consider reading the book, [The Parent's Crash Course in Career Planning](#), by Marcia B. Harris and Sharon L. Jones.

