Post Grad Planning

Introduction

One common conversation between a student and a faculty mentor revolves around what happens *after* the undergraduate degree is completed. From the book *On Being a Mentor* by W. Brad Johnson - see Faculty Mentoring Resources web page - there are several important connections between those post-grad planning discussions and alumni outcomes.

- "Compared to nonmentored individuals, those with mentors tend to be more satisfied with their careers, enjoy more promotions and higher income, report greater commitment to the organization or profession, and are more likely to mentor others in turn."
- "Across professional disciplines and types of organizations, mentoring simply gives students and young professionals a leg up."
- Contributing to a mentee's social capital by introducing them to elements of your own professional network contributes to both immediate and long-term benefits. Mentees often gain the inside track on grant sources, job possibilities, early opportunities for leadership and engagement in professional organizations, and invitations to co authorship."
- "One of the most clearly established benefits of being mentored is assistance with securing one's first job."

Generally-speaking, there are two options for students after completing their undergraduate degree in the Beaver College of Health Sciences: graduate school or employment. While in some academic programs, the path is fairly clear cut, it is important that students are encouraged by their faculty mentors to consider both options carefully before making a final decision. The "Activities" section of the Faculty Mentoring Resources web page is one place to start the process of empowering students to make a thoughtful decision.

Do Your Homework

It is essential that faculty can articulate the viable employment and education pathways for graduates of their program. While sharing the story of their personal journey and the advice that was imparted to them is highly valuable, faculty mentors should not rely solely on their own experience to talk to students about what to do with their degree. The same is true when talking specifically about pursuing graduate school in the same discipline. "The Way I Did It" advice has its limitations.

- Gather stories and perspectives of your colleagues.
- Talk to the program director and the department chair to learn more about how they coach students through these types of conversations.
- Ask for time to be set aside in a program meeting to talk more about how colleagues are mentoring students regarding life after graduation.
- Plug into the program's alumni network and collect the most recent information about what alumni are doing with their degrees.

App State Resources

1. There are a lot of great resources on the Career Development Center's web pages that faculty mentors should become familiar with before they refer students to them.
    - "Careers for BCHS Graduates"
    - Job & Internship Search
    - Graduate & Professional School
    - Resources for Underrepresented Students

2. The Beaver College of Health Sciences has a dedicated Career Coach, Jennifer (JP) Perry. She is eager, energetic, and always ready to meet students where they are on the career preparation journey. Before faculty mentors redirect student questions to JP, a brief conversation with her could add several tools to the faculty mentor toolbox as well.

3. For all those students who aspire to attend a graduate health professions program in medicine, physical therapy, physician assistant, pharmacy, occupational therapy, athletic training, speech language therapy, and the like, there is no better resource than Health Professions Advising (HPA). With a team of two professionals, as well as a cadre of peer advisors, HPA helps students understand what it takes to create a competitive grad school application. No matter how much faculty think they know about applying to a health professions graduate program, HPA has the most current trends and recommendations, as well as annual comparison sheets for many of the programs mentioned above.

Career Readiness Competencies

From the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), career readiness means the attainment and demonstration of requisite competencies that broadly prepare college graduates for a successful transition into the workplace. Faculty mentors would do well to help students connect their program's core competencies with the following broader career competencies.

- Critical Thinking/Problem Solving: Exercise sound reasoning to analyze issues, make decisions, and overcome problems. The individual is able to obtain, interpret, and use knowledge, facts, and data in this process, and may demonstrate originality and inventiveness.

- Oral/Written Communications: Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively in written and oral forms to persons inside and outside of the organization. The individual has public speaking skills; is able to express ideas to others; and can write/edit memos, letters, and complex technical reports clearly and effectively.

- Teamwork/Collaboration: Build collaborative relationships with colleagues and customers representing diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, religions, lifestyles, and viewpoints. The individual is able to work within a team structure, and can negotiate and manage conflict.

- Digital Technology: Leverage existing digital technologies ethically and efficiently to solve problems, complete tasks, and accomplish goals. The individual demonstrates effective adaptability to new and emerging technologies.

- Leadership: Leverage the strengths of others to achieve common goals, and use interpersonal skills to coach and develop others. The individual is able to assess and manage his/her emotions and those of others; use empathetic skills to guide and motivate; and organize, prioritize, and delegate work.

- Professionalism/Work Ethic: Demonstrate personal accountability and effective work habits, e.g., punctuality, working productively with others, and time workload management, and understand the impact of non-verbal communication on professional work image. The individual demonstrates integrity and ethical behavior, acts responsibly with the interests of the larger community in mind, and is able to learn from his/her mistakes.

- Career Management: Identify and articulate one's skills, strengths, knowledge, and experiences relevant to the position desired and career goals, and identify areas necessary for professional growth. The individual is able to navigate and explore job options, understands and can take the steps necessary to pursue opportunities, and understands how to self-advocate for opportunities in the workplace.

- Global/Intercultural Fluency: Value, respect, and learn from diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, sexual orientations, and religions. The individual demonstrates openness, inclusiveness, sensitivity, and the ability to interact respectfully with all people and understand individuals’ differences.