Maximizing Your Undergraduate Experience

Planning for a real-life job while still a college student can be tricky, but it’s not impossible. Your career success will depend largely on your preparation and effort.

Below are some tips for preparing to be a professional – **right now**.

- **Get as much experience as possible**: For any profession, it’s important to have on-the-job experience that relates to your field. Internships, summer jobs, and volunteer positions all prepare you for a professional work environment (and look nice on any résumé). For future teachers, volunteering, tutoring, and any training positions are especially helpful.

- **Make contacts – and keep in touch**: Develop a network of supportive people in your life such as teachers, school administrators, professors, and employers. Tell them your goals and you will be amazed at how much assistance you will receive.

- **Study hard**: All employers admire a strong work ethic, and graduating with a high GPA will improve your job prospects. This is especially important for teachers, who are expected to demonstrate intelligence and an aptitude for school.

- **Explore Your Options**: Make sure you’ve selected a profession and field that interests you, but be open to other possibilities. For instance, if teaching is what you really want to pursue, research different positions within the field of education; Administration, higher education, research, and policy making are a few related career paths.

- **Play the market, and note what professions are currently in demand**: When exploring career options, don’t only consider your interests and strengths, but also research what professional fields need more employees. For teachers, this means seriously considering subjects which have a shortage of teachers. You will find the best job options in those areas.

- **Develop positive work characteristics**: Concentrate on developing characteristics that appeal to employers: strong work ethic, attention to detail, communication skills, a positive attitude, and maturity. This development is particularly important for educators, who are expected to be excellent role models.