**Gathering Clues about Interests, Abilities, and Values- Faculty Instructions**

**Module 1: The Career Planning Process: An Overview**

When engaging in career planning, students will commonly skip Step 1 of the Career Planning Process and proceed immediately to Step 2 – exploring career options. As you have probably seen, this often results in students traveling too far down a given path before realizing it’s not the right fit for them. This activity will force students to at least begin thinking about their interests, abilities, and values, and how those translate into criteria for a career.

Have students complete the Gathering Clues about Your Interests, Abilities, and Values worksheet (included). Note that this worksheet is double-sided. Students will answer a series of brainstorming questions that can provide clues about their interests, abilities, and values. At the end, students will review what they wrote down, decide which of those items might apply to a future career (for example, many people have hobby interests that they want to keep separate from career interests), and choose a few that seem important enough to be criteria for an ideal career.

Once students have completed the worksheet, break the class into small groups. Consider counting off or some other method to randomize the groups and minimize the chances of friends being in the same group together. Give the following instructions:

1. Each group member will share the criteria they came up with.
2. After a group member has shared, he will tell the group whether he has decided on a career already, is trying to decide between a few options, or doesn’t know what he wants to do for a career. He WILL NOT tell the group what career or careers he’s thinking about or planning on at this point.
3. The remaining group members will brainstorm careers that might fit his criteria. If the student doesn’t have any career ideas yet, the focus will be on helping the student identify possible types of work that might fit.
4. If applicable, the student will then share the career he’s planning on or the careers he’s considering. If they were among the options the group came up with, the group can move on to the next student. If a student’s chosen career was NOT among the options the group came up with, the student should explain to the group how he feels his chosen career WILL meet the criteria he listed. (In the cases where there is a disconnect between a student’s criteria and the career path they have chosen, this will help bring those issues to light.)

**Gathering Clues about Your Interests, Abilities, and Values**

***Instructions:*** Identifying your interests, abilities, and values is not as easy or simple as it sounds. The questions below will help you think about the clues that different aspects of your life can provide you with. For each question, jot down as many things as you can think of, and keep in mind that not everything you write down must be something you want to incorporate into a career. After answering the questions, you will decide which of the things you wrote down DO apply to your future career, or are important enough to be criteria for your ideal career.

**Interests**

1. What classes (high school or college) have you enjoyed most?

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2. What are your hobbies?

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3. What have you liked about jobs you’ve had?

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4. When you were little, what did you want to be when you grew up, and what about that kind of work made it sound fun?

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5. What’s your dream job, and what about it makes it sound fun?

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6. If you were going to voluntarily read a non-fiction book on any topic you wanted to learn about, what would the book be on?

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**Abilities**

1. What classes have come the easiest to you, and/or in what classes have you outperformed your classmates?

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2. What have family and friends said you are good at?

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3. What do other people ask you for help with?

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4. What parts of jobs you’ve had have come easily to you?

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5. What are your greatest accomplishments, and what skills did you use to achieve those things?

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6. What skill do you feel the most proud of having?

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**Work Values**

1. In previous jobs, what has given you satisfaction? (This could be anything about the experience, not just what you did, like having coworkers that all support each other, having variety in your work, feeling like you’re paid fairly for the work you do, etc.)

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2. In previous jobs, what did you especially dislike? (This will also tell you what kinds of things are important to you in a future career.)

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3. What motivates you most to pursue a career – what do you want to get out of it? (What motivates you to invest all this time and money in your education? Is it the thought of money? Prestige? Saving the world? Being able to do something you love? Etc.)

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4. Think about your greatest accomplishments again. What about accomplishing those things made them satisfying to you?

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**Criteria for My Ideal Career**

Decide which of the things you wrote down you want to be included in your future career, and which are important enough to be criteria for your ideal career. You will be able to use this list to evaluate your potential career options when you research them to determine which career is the best fit you.

***My career will…***

…allow me to use these interests:

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…make use of these abilities:

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…have these characteristics to fit my values:

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