**Tough Decisions Discussion and Activity- Faculty Instructions**

**Module 2: How to Make a Career Decision**

This activity will help your students think about what their work values are, as well as how they prioritize them. They will evaluate six different common scenarios that describe a choice that must be made, and this choice will reflect what is most important to them – their work values.

Give a copy of the “Tough Decisions – Prioritizing Your Values” worksheet (provided) to every student. Ask for a volunteer to read the first scenario aloud for the class. Poll the class, allowing for three responses – “yes,” “no,” and “not sure yet.” Next, you will engage your students in a whole-class discussion about the scenario, giving students the opportunity to consider different perspectives. Ask for volunteers to explain why they would choose “yes,” in that situation, then “no.” If an answer is too short/incomplete (i.e. “because X is important to me”), ask the student follow-up questions to explore why something is important and/or how they came to realize or decide it was personally important. This will not only help the student to clarify his values, but will help the “undecided” students in the room as they think about whether they can identify with the responses given.

If you feel comfortable doing so, during the discussion, try to identify what the underlying values students are considering in the scenario are. For example, the first scenario primarily deals with one value – being able to choose where you live. Students may identify other values in this scenario, though, such as being able to live in a particular place, being able to live near family, or not being forced to relocate their family because of a job. Others may focus on being able to have the greatest number of items on their wish list. Some scenarios, like the second, open the door to a multitude of potential values students could hone in on, such as being in control, financial stability, not having to frequently compete for work, etc. After a student shares their opinion, try to follow-up by explicitly stating the value it sounds like they are describing. For example, you might say, “So it sounds like financial stability is very important to you; is that right?”

After discussing the first scenario, instruct students to circle the answer they have chosen for that scenario on their worksheet. On the worksheet, there is no “unsure” option, so let students know that they must now circle the one they are leaning towards after listening to the discussion and having more time to think about it. Also have them write their answer to the question immediately below the scenario (“What does this say about your values?”). Remind them that this answer might be different for everyone. For some, it might be that a particular value is critical and will always take precedence over anything else. It might be that Value X is desirable, but something they’re willing to sacrifice in order to get Value Y, which they ultimately feel is more important. It might simply be that a particular value is not important and not a factor to consider.

Repeat this process for the remaining five scenarios.

**Tough Decisions – Prioritizing Your Values**

***Instructions:*** Below are a few examples of common dilemmas students and graduates encounter that require them to prioritize their values. Read through each and circle the answer YOU would choose. Depending on your values, some may be clear answers, and some may require more deliberation. While these are only a few examples, and will not allow you to assess all of your values, they will provide you with some clues about what’s most important to you.

After answering “yes” or “no,” write down what you think that decision says about your values and how you prioritize them. In some cases, a question might show you that multiple things are important to you, and your answer might be “Both are important but I value X more than Y.” In other cases, a question might call more attention to something that you realize is NOT important to you.

***Which would YOU choose?***

You find a great job that meets most of your criteria, except that you would not get to pick where you live, and would have to go wherever the company sends you. Would you take it?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Yes | No |

What does this say about your values? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

In the career field you’re most interested in, almost everyone is self-employed, and there are very few opportunities to be a permanent employee at a company. You’d get to be your own boss, but you wouldn’t have a stable paycheck to count on, or benefits, and you would be having to frequently seek out work. Would you still pursue that career field?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Yes | No |

What does this say about your values? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

You are interested in a career field that pays very well and could make you rich, but it would require you to work all the time and have very little leisure time for relaxation, family, or hobbies. Would you do it?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Yes | No |

What does this say about your values? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

You have an ideal job that fits most of your criteria for a career. Your boss offers you an opportunity for a promotion to an even better job and more money, but to get it you’d have to do work that conflicts with your personal ethics. Would you do it?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Yes | No |

What does this say about your values? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The career field you are passionate about is very competitive to get into. You have to be one of the best out there, know the right people, and get really lucky to make it. If you try to pursue this career, there is a good chance you could fail. Would you go for it anyway?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Yes | No |

What does this say about your values? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

You’ve found a career that fits nearly all your criteria, except that it does not pay very well. You create a budget and learn that you could get by on that salary, but you wouldn’t be able to afford many luxuries, and would have to live a more modest lifestyle than you originally thought you would. Would you still do it?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Yes | No |

What does this say about your values? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_