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CAREER EXPLORATION

The Greater Washington College Info Center has a variety of resources which you can use to help you select a college or choose a career path. To help you access these resources we suggest you follow the process outlined below:

I Make a list of your favorite subjects in school, your favorite tasks at work or at home, hobbies that interest you, extra-curricular activities at school and volunteer experiences with a community organization or church. Add to that list any jobs/careers/majors which family members or friends have mentioned which sound interesting to you.

i Ask a College Info Center advisor to help you review the list to determine what careers or fields of study might interest you. The counselor may also recommend additional tools to help you assess your interests. ECOS (Educational and Career Opportunity System), our guidance software program, has a brief career search that can help you identify potential careers.

D Read about your career path or major in the reference books located in the College Info Center. There are many resources--below are just a few to get you started.

The following resource guides will help you with your career exploration.

- ◆ The Career Connection for College Education: A Guide to College Education and Related Career Opportunities. By Fred A. Rowe, Ed.D.
Publisher: JIST Works, Inc. 1994.

This book provides a two-page overview of a variety of college majors. Each description reviews:

- < recommended high school courses
- < general college course requirements for the major
- < options within the major
- < possible career paths

- < outlook for careers
- < potential salaries

- ◆ The College Board Guide to 150 Popular College Majors. By College Board Publications
Publisher: Guidance Publishing.

This book is divided into chapters which cover 17 broad areas of study. Each chapter breaks down the area of study into specific majors. Descriptions of each major include information on:

- < what is involved to pursue the major
- < what skills, interests, and qualities are needed for success in the major
- < recommended H.S. courses
- < typical college courses
- < related majors
- < related careers
- < organizations to contact for more information

- ◆ Encyclopedia of Careers and Vocational Guidance. Edited by William E. Hopke
Publisher: J.G. Ferguson Publishing Company.

Each occupational listing provides the following information:

- < history of the occupation
- < detailed account of the nature of the work
- < educational requirements
- < opportunities to gain first hand knowledge of the career
- < employment search strategies to enter and advance in the field
- < work environment/conditions

This book is also helpful because it lists professions that may not require a college education but some other form of occupational training.

- ◆ Occupational Outlook Handbook 1999 edition By the U.S. Department of Labor
Publisher: VGM Career Horizons.

This resource also covers a broad spectrum of occupations from the trades to service occupations to professional careers. Be sure to check out the section Tomorrow's Jobs which describes present labor market trends and highlights areas of growth for the future job market. Occupational descriptions include:

- < Nature of the work
- < Work Conditions
- < Employment Opportunities
- < Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement
- < Earnings
- < Related Occupations
- < Sources of Additional Information (Professional Organizations)

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It is now time to speak to people who chose the same field of study or who work in the same career that interests you. Ask friends, family, and teachers if they know of someone you can contact. You might also call the professional organizations listed in the resource books you read earlier to see if someone on their staff would be willing to talk to you. Most people enjoy speaking about their own educational and career paths.

When you arrange to speak with someone, ask them for 20 minutes of their time on the phone or in person so that you can learn more about what they do or what they studied. Then be sure to mark the date and time down and be prompt when visiting or calling them. You should also make a list of 3- 4 questions to ask during your conversation. This shows the person you are very serious about learning from them. If you need assistance preparing for your conversation, ask a College Info Center advisor for guidance.

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Now that you have narrowed down your list of career paths and their related majors down to 3 or 4 possibilities, you are ready to begin your search for the right college or training program. Ask a College Info Center advisor for assistance with computerized searches and print materials located in the center.

GOOD LUCK!

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