

The Career & Professional Development Plan  
...a Comprehensive Four-Year Plan for Undergraduates

Freshman Year  
2011—2012



**Walk-in Hours:**

**Monday** 1—3 pm

**Wednesday** 1—3 pm

**Tuesday** 2—4 pm

**Thursday** 9—11 am

**Friday** 10 am—12 pm

DCC 209 \* 518/276-6234 \* [www.rpi.edu/dept/cdc/](http://www.rpi.edu/dept/cdc/)

**The Center**  
Rensselaer  
Center for Career and Professional Development

# Freshman Year Theme: Focus on Self Awareness

## Welcome!

As you begin your first year of college, we encourage you to embark on a year of personal discovery to learn more about your values, your interests, your personality and your skills. Three of twelve total career and professional development competencies will be underscored each year. During your freshman year, **Time Management and Prioritizing, Effective Communication Skills and Key Professional Skills** will be highlighted. Our goal is to help you transition successfully, while learning to balance your academic responsibilities with personal, social and professional development activities.

Developing these competencies during your undergraduate career will provide a foundation for future learning and personal success – in the classroom, at work and in life beyond college!

Use this plan throughout the year to help seek out activities, programs and events which will foster the three competencies outlined below. Suggested first year **Achievements** have also been included to help keep you on track and help you to measure your own personal accomplishments.

## Time Management & Prioritizing

- Attend workshops to strengthen time management & goal setting skills
- Learn to handle your free time and develop healthy stress-reducing behaviors
- Work to maximize time on task and learn to manage distractions
- Strive for good grades and stay in good academic standing; seek tutoring help when needed
- Set a goal to obtain at least one relevant experience during this year that supports your career choice or field of interest
- Make adjustments as necessary when evaluating future plans & options: try to stay open & flexible
- In the classroom, on teams & in activities - learn to work effectively under pressure and realize your impact on others
- Manage information effectively - including incoming phone calls, emails, texts and social media

## Effective Communication Skills

- Visit faculty during office hours to clarify what you are learning in class and to link material to career options
- As you prepare for summer jobs and internship interviews, be able to identify and define problems and challenges in terms of objectives, goals and constraining factors
- Take advantage of services in **The Center for Communication Practices** to help you strengthen your writing skills—get help early and often
- Learn to take good notes in and out of the classroom; never go to any class or meeting without a pen & paper
- Learn to accept negative criticism in classes and in work settings
- Prepare and rehearse your elevator pitch with a Career Counselor to be used in interviews and self-promotion situations
- Demonstrate your ability to write an effective college-level resume and cover letter; begin to learn how to tailor cover letters to specific job openings

## Key Professional Skills

- Explore **FOCUS 2** online to further expand your self knowledge of values, interests, personality and skills
- Research career choices and be able to discuss career options available in your field of interest or major
- Become familiar with **ProNet** (our professional networking system found online through **JobLink**) to expand your network; learn about the career choices of others & options open to you
- Set at least one career or professional development goal for this year
- Build self confidence in your intended major or field of study through networking and employer research
- Get to know a variety of people in your first year including: students, faculty and staff; begin to develop life-long relationships and build your personal network
- Consider submitting a research proposal for **Summer Undergraduate Research Program (SURP)** opportunities at Rensselaer

## Top 10 Career & Professional Development Achievements for Freshmen

- Develop a personalized system for organizing your classes, activities and work schedule (if appropriate) to stay on track and meet your goals during the year.
- Attend one or more **The Center's** programs or events to enhance your career and professional development this year.
- Create an online profile through **FOCUS 2**, a self-paced, online career and education planning tool. **FOCUS 2** will enable you to self-assess your career relevant personal qualities and explore career fields and major areas of study that are most compatible with your assessment results.
- Participate in any or all of our **Freshmen Fridays** during the year—details will be available on our Calendar of Events. Topics and themes will vary ~ prizes and refreshments will be available!
- Attend the annual **Activities Fair** in the fall and get involved with at least one campus club or activity to enhance your leadership skills and build new relationships.
- Using **The Center's Resume Writing Handout**, create a college-level resume during the fall semester ~ there may be many opportunities that will require you to have a resume in your first year.
- Develop strong written communication skills; become adept at writing cover letters and other job search related documents.
- Become familiar with using **JobLink**, our online recruiting and job posting system to search for summer internships and co-op opportunities; post at least one copy of your critiqued resume in **JobLink**.
- Meet with faculty during office hours and get to know at least one faculty member this year.
- Make frequent use of **The Center's Walk-in Hours** for quick career-related questions!

## Annual "To-Do" List

- Pick up your copy of **The Career and Professional Development Guide** in DCC 209.
- Check your email weekly for **The Center's e-newsletter** to find out about **The Center's** programs, events, professional development tips, job leads and more!
- Use our online **Appointment Scheduler** to schedule a meeting with a Career Counselor.
- Read the **Resume Writing** handout found on **The Center's** website and create a college-level resume.
- Activate your **JobLink** account by updating your online Profile at the beginning of the fall semester; learn to use **JobLink** to search for summer, co-op and full-time jobs.
- Employers begin interviewing students in the fall for all types of job opportunities; remember to begin your summer job search early in the fall semester.
- When updating your resume at the beginning of each semester remember to include your academic, leadership and professional development experience. **NOTE:** Please do not post a resume in **JobLink** that has not been critiqued by a Career Counselor in the CCPD.
- Have your resume critiqued by an employer representative during **RESUMANIA!** held at the beginning of each semester (check **The Center's** Calendar of Events for dates & times).
- Review the **Cover Letter** handout found on **The Center's** website; draft a cover letter and have it critiqued by a Career Counselor during **The Center's** regularly scheduled Walk-in Hours.
- Schedule a **Mock Interview** with a Career Counselor; gain insight and experience preparing for interviews.
- Attend **Employer Information Sessions & Events** during the year to expand your network and make contact with hiring managers.
- Use the **The Center's website** to broaden your research and investigative skills, especially as they relate to your career and professional development.
- Check out **The Center's Career Navigator Handouts** for tips on a variety of career-related topics (available online or printed copies can be found in our office).
- View the short **CareerSpots** Videos found on **The Center's** website; prepare a 30-second pitch to share with employers at upcoming career fairs.

For details on our Programs and Events,  
please pick up The Center's Calendar of Events in DCC 209 or visit our website at:

<http://www.rpi.edu/dept/cdc/>