

## **APPENDIX A**

### Student Activities

Despite the challenges and stresses they can present, classrooms can be places of exponential learning, and social science classes in particular expose students to ideas that enable them to reflect on themselves. Self-reflection is an essential tool in finding your way through college, and so for each chapter we offer activities that can promote such reflection. Most of these activities can also be implemented in group settings, so consider gathering a group of friends to complete some of them—especially if they are also reading this book. For each activity, we draw upon our own best practices (in classrooms, advising, and as former participants in student groups) to suggest ways to address the challenges we describe throughout the book. In linking the previous sections, our aim with the activities for each chapter is to engage you in the problem-naming and problem-solving processes that are most crucial for success in college. These activities reflect the experiences, roles, and diversity of our author team and should work well in raising your own awareness of the issues this book addresses.

## CHAPTER 1 — DISCUSSING EMERGING ADULTHOOD AND GENERATIONAL LABELING

To get started with an activity related to the content of this book, we recommend reading the background on emerging adulthood in chapter 1. Read over the case studies and the advice we provide at the end of the chapter. Reflect upon and then jot down your answers to the following questions:

1. Do you think of yourself as an adult?
2. What do you think it takes to be an adult? When will you know you are an adult?
3. How might becoming an adult be more complicated than just having a job?
4. What barriers do you think young people encounter on the way to becoming an adult?
5. Do you think it is more challenging to become an adult today than it was for your parents, or for your grandparents; or do you think it is just different?

If you have the opportunity, ask these same questions of some of your classmates. How are their answers similar to yours? What are the primary differences? We find knowing more about emerging adulthood generally enables you to become a better advocate for yourself with parents and other adults, including employers. Consider whether you have ever encountered adults who have a negative impression of today's young people, as a whole or in reference to particular generations of young people. If so, do you think their impressions may have been missing information about emerging adulthood and the changing life course? Specifically, it is helpful to think about how negative impressions of young people could change if older adults knew more about how it takes young people today longer to complete their schooling and find stable jobs than in the past. To conclude this activity, take a few minutes to write down what you could say to these adults to advocate for yourself and other emerging adults.

## CHAPTER 2—UNDERSTANDING HIGHER EDUCATION AND DEVELOPING ACADEMIC SKILLS

To work through developmental tasks of emerging adulthood, while also challenging your own preconceived notions about college, we recommend that you give the following activities a try. For the first activity, start by reading the student stories at the beginning of the chapter. With which do you most identify: multiple moves, big transition from high school, or recent breakup? Think beyond the specifics of each particular student story. Perhaps you have experienced other kinds of disillusionment when you encountered the reality of college and how it may be different from what you had imagined. Take a few minutes to write down what in your own story resonates with or is similar to the student story you chose, as well as how it is different. Discuss this topic with other students, especially other students who are reading this book. Write down any common themes you notice after speaking with other students.

A second activity, one that can orient you to the higher education system, is to examine the “About” section of your university website. Find that section (or one similar) and read every link. Who does what on your campus? Can you determine what each individual’s title means? Is it clear what each office does for your institution? What is the mission of your institution? What traditions are associated with your institution? Do you know of any famous or influential individuals that graduated from your institution? Chat with one of your instructors or a staff member on campus about some of these topics. Ask them to clarify anything you are unsure about. Finally, if you have the opportunity, try to explain this material to a friend or family member that is not affiliated with your institution.

As a third activity, take some time to reflect on these topics: study skills, the ability to take quality notes, strategies for increasing reading comprehension and improving your test-taking capacities, and advice on taking initiative with your professors. How competent do you feel in each of these areas? Based on the science section of the chapter, which introduces you to the value of a college education beyond boosting your income by describing the kinds of skills that employers desire, we invite

you to take ownership of your learning by employing strategies that work for these skills. As several student stories in this chapter illustrate, university study habits need to be more elaborate than the approaches used in high school. Do you find yourself asking, “What do I need to do to get an A?” or “What are the steps for getting into medical school?” These questions indicate that you may be thinking about college as a destination rather than a process, an end rather than a means to adulthood decisions.

- Visit our online website supplements to find additional resources.
- We also included a number of relevant resources in the chapter 2 online reading section, with tips for success in college, ways to improve test-taking, reading comprehension, study habits, and how to survive finals.
- Finally, one of the most important actions you can take is to connect with the academic support offices that exist on your campus. Is there a tutoring center on campus? How about a writing center or a math-specific tutoring center? Ask an advisor, an instructor, a friend—anyone you can think of to make sure you know about all the support resources on your campus.

A fourth and final activity involves a very simple task: go talk with one of your instructors. Determine the office hours of at least one of them, and plan to visit with the instructor during these office hours. Rather than approaching professors to ask questions such as “What do I need to do to get an A?” or “What are the steps for getting into medical school?”, we recommend that you engage professors as a resource for developing your own plan. This will help you confront any apprehension you may have regarding what happens during office hours. You should know that there is no cookie-cutter process for success in college. At first, it may be frustrating when instructors do not provide you with rubrics that spell out step-by-step the process for success. This may be what you

were used to, but college tends to be very different. Let your instructors help you adjust to this change. Use your first visit to your instructor to think about your expectations for college and the ways you intend to navigate it.

## CHAPTER 3—MONEY MANAGEMENT AND FINANCIAL LITERACY

Because the focus in the third chapter includes the economic aspects of college, we urge you to spend some time investigating the rising costs of student loans and college education more generally (see online reading section for more information). On the one hand, viewing information about the amount of money that students are paying to attend college can be overwhelming, and is something we should take care to avoid as much as possible. On the other hand, it would be irresponsible not to address the financial aspects of the college experience. We have sat with numerous emerging adults who did not know about or really understand the financial implications of the loans they had during college. Many of these emerging adults later regretted not becoming more informed about finances earlier on when their budget was more within their control—before they had committed to a certain housing situation, and so on. As uncomfortable or confusing as this topic can be, we think it deserves your attention.

The top takeaway of this chapter is that social class helps shape individual lives and experiences during college. Sometimes Americans are uncomfortable talking about social class. It rubs against the grain. But most folks in the United States can readily recount money stories that, in their way, reveal the contours of social class. We encourage you to ask yourself, “What is my money story?” Talk with people about money. Discussing your financial background with other students is also one of the great opportunities of college—meeting people who come from a range of socioeconomic backgrounds. Hear each other’s stories, and try to wear each other’s metaphorical shoes for a while. Then spend some

time thinking about financial goals, expected income, and how budgeting as early as possible in emerging adulthood can help people build a comfortable life.

Student debt, financial goals, estimating income, budgeting, financial literacy—these aren't topics that most college students enjoy discussing, but they still stand to benefit greatly from the discussion. In addition to the links at the end of chapter 3 (in the online reading section), here are other financial literacy activities.

*Identifying Your Financial Goals.* Here is an excellent quote from John Ricchini and Terry Arndt<sup>1</sup> on budgeting:

When people think of budgeting, they usually envision hours spent pouring over piles of bills, accounting for every penny, and depriving themselves of certain pleasures. However, the budgeting process does not have to be like this at all. Developing a budget simply requires creating a plan—a plan that will allow you to pay for life's necessities, as well as some luxuries. The secret to making it work, however, is creating one and sticking to it. By evaluating your financial goals, determining how you make and spend money and occasionally reviewing your overall plan, you will be able to better manage your time, your money, and meet your financial goals. What are your financial goals? Your goals can be anything that is important to you, like buying new clothes or CDs, paying off a credit card bill, purchasing an airline ticket home for the holidays, saving money for a spring-break trip, or even just saving a few dollars a month in case of an emergency. By establishing your financial goals you give yourself an incentive to stay focused on developing and maintaining your budget.

*Exercises.* Make a budget using the following worksheet, estimating as well as possible current income and expenses, both fixed and flexible. Read over the online resource on the difference between fixed and flexible costs (the link is in the online reading section at the end of chapter 3). Then fill out the worksheet on the next page.

## A Budget for College Spending

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### INCOME

Money from home	\$ _____
Money from savings	\$ _____
Part-time work	\$ _____
Scholarship, grant, or student loan	\$ _____
Other	\$ _____
TOTAL INCOME	\$ _____

### EXPENSES

#### FIXED EXPENSES

College room and board or rent	\$ _____
Car payment and insurance	\$ _____
Credit card payment	\$ _____
Health insurance	\$ _____
Emergency fund	\$ _____
Savings	\$ _____
Other	\$ _____
TOTAL FIXED EXPENSES	\$ _____

#### FLEXIBLE EXPENSES

Tuition	\$ _____
Books	\$ _____
Meals and snacks	\$ _____
Telephone bill and utilities	\$ _____
Social and recreation	\$ _____
Transportation	\$ _____
Personal	\$ _____
Clothing allowance	\$ _____
Health care	\$ _____
Other	\$ _____
TOTAL FLEXIBLE	\$ _____

TOTAL FIXED AND FLEXIBLE EXPENSES	\$ _____
TOTAL INCOME	\$ _____
Minus TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ _____
BALANCE	\$ _____

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*Evaluating your Results.* After you complete your budget worksheet, evaluate your results: How did your budget turn out? Was it what you were expecting, or were you surprised? What changes do you think you can make to your finances to improve it in light of both short- and long-term financial goals? How likely is it that you will make those changes? Reflect on the statements that follow.

*Living beyond Your Means.* To quote Ricchini and Arndt,

If the Remaining Income amount in your income statement is a negative number, you are living beyond your means. In other words, you are spending more money than you take in. If earning more money is not an option, you need to reduce your expenses. Look first at your variable expenses to determine what expenses might be reduced. Check your fixed expenses next. If changes can be made, implement them and reevaluate your budget. Continue reducing or removing items until your budget balances. If you are still unable to balance your budget, consider seeking professional assistance. Living above your means even for just a few months can have serious long-term consequences, affecting your class performance and/or plans for degree completion.

*Living within Your Means*

If the Remaining Income amount in your income statement is a positive number, you are living within your means. In other words, you are spending less money than you take in. Living within your means is a great accomplishment, and you should be proud of yourself. However, just because you are living within your means does not necessarily mean that you are meeting your financial goals. If those goals require your setting aside a little extra money every month, be sure to budget for that as well. (Ricchini & Arndt 2004)



### *Preparing for Unexpected Expenses*

No matter how diligent you are at budgeting, it is impossible to imagine every potential expense . . . Although you can't anticipate every possible expense, what you can do is plan for them. For example, you can develop a category in your fixed expenses for an emergency fund. Each month, simply set aside a few dollars to be saved. (Ricchini & Arndt 2004)

## CHAPTER 4—OWNERSHIP OF LEARNING AND TIME MANAGEMENT

For activities related to the topics of chapter 4, we encourage you to engage in the numerous resources that exist on managing time, goal-setting, prioritizing, and scheduling. However, beware that many of the available worksheets on these issues are simplistic. Some students may benefit from them, but we have heard a number of students moan over the busywork that seemingly mindless worksheets entail, sometimes even feeling the presence of the worksheets insults their intelligence. We think the most essential skill that you can gain is developing a *framework* for navigating your way through college. This orienting framework needs to spring from your values, what you desire and aim to be and do. These are not necessarily values with theological weight. We mean values in a broader, sociological sense, as anything you desire that gives you meaning. Without some degree of clarity about what your values are, worksheets on time management and priorities will prove futile. Even the best strategies can become busywork without some deeper understanding of what orients your actions. As an emerging adult, it is critical that you reflect upon what measuring stick you use to guide your own decisions.

*Time Budget.* Similar to the income-expense spreadsheet in the previous section, you can make something called a “time budget.” The time

budget works on the same principle as the expense worksheet. You can enter your fixed and flexible expenses, in terms of time. Having outlined where you spend your time, you can think about what time goals you want to set for spending your time in ways that help you to get the most out of college. Then consider whether you want to reprioritize where you invest most of your time. To do this, start with 120 hours for each five-day schoolwork week. Then create lines for each of the following time categories: class/seminar, work/job, study time, sleep, eating/meals, commuting/travel, personal business/chores, relationships (including intimate, friends, and family), leisure/entertainment, other (and write out what other types of time are). After listing your current time investments, ask yourself whether any of these are moveable. Consider whether there are ways to put some of these time investments together, to be more efficient in how much time it takes to accomplish certain tasks, or whether there are ways to expand tasks that you want to further prioritize. Talk this over with your friends and family, especially how this time budget is consistent with your values and goals for college.

*College Pathways.* We recommend discussing the topics of this chapter with other students. You can informally discuss (inside or outside of class) which of the college pathways described by Armstrong and Hamilton (2013)<sup>2</sup> you see yourself as being on: the professional pathway, the party pathway, or the social mobility pathway. In addition to chatting with other students, take some time to reflect individually by writing down answers to these questions:

1. Which pathway do you think you are on as you navigate college?
2. What aspects of your personal and social biography help you align with this pathway?
3. In what ways do you think you could improve your alignment with the pathway you are, or hope to be, on?

It is important to remember that all three pathways are acceptable routes to traverse through college. The problem is not being on one versus another

pathway; rather, the goal is to avoid misalignment with a pathway that is not the best fit.

*Personal Values.* Some people think that younger generations, such as Millennials, are becoming more selfish. For example, an article in *Time* magazine garnered a great deal of attention in 2013 under the headline “The Me, Me, Me Generation: Millennials Are Lazy, Entitled Narcissists Who Still Live With Their Parents.”<sup>3</sup> Conversely, others suggest that generosity is rising among millennials, asking as a *USA Today* article did: “Millennials: The Giving Generation?”<sup>4</sup> Take a moments to peruse both articles. With these divergent views about young people in mind, decide which of the following categories most accurately describes you: (a) individualist, (b) collectivist, or (c) voluntarist.<sup>5</sup> An individualist is someone who is primarily self-oriented, whose actions are focused on self-gain. Individualists are happiest in groups that clearly provide more benefit than cost to them; they like it when they get more out of participating in a group than they have to put into it. Collectivists are at the opposite end of the spectrum; they are primarily other-oriented, with actions focused on benefiting others, often accompanied by self-sacrifice. A collectivist is happiest in groups that have a strong sense of group identity, in which it is clear that each individual is part of something that is bigger than themselves and which satisfies their urge to put the good of others above their own. A voluntarist stands, in a sense, in the middle ground between these, with inclinations to do good for others that are understood as ultimately self-benefiting. Someone who is a voluntarist may participate in social groups and want to contribute to them, but voluntarists also value their independence and would be inclined to leave a group if it demanded higher conformity than they desired.

So, which of these categories describes you? Give it some thought and then write down your explanation. Discuss it with someone that knows you very well to see if they agree. These outlines simplify a great deal of nuanced scholarship. At the same time, they offer a great starting point for thinking about your personal values to categorize yourself as belonging to one of these groups. It is important to think about how each of your values come together into a coherent whole. Nearly everyone would agree

that making decisions alone is important, that helping others is good, that sometimes competition can be motivating, and that quality teamwork can be motivating too. It can be helpful to complete value inventories (see the online reading section for examples) to gain a better understanding of what each of your values looks like independently.

*Work Values.* Taking the value assessment process a step further, we also encourage you to evaluate your work values (see online reading section for a suggested worksheet on work values). Figuring out what kind of work setting will best fit your value orientation can help students choose majors, jobs, and workplaces. After gaining a clearer sense of your own value orientation (through the previous activity), you should now consider what kind of career and organization would be the best fit for you.

Most people entering college today have seen how work alignment did not go well for some in previous generations. The rise in job turnover, layoffs, and divorce rates (often related to work burnout or financial worries) means that the typical college student has seen their parents or others around them struggle with how to balance careers, families, fun, and contributing to communities. We encourage you to give some thought to how you will make sure that does not happen to you, which means critically evaluating which careers will best sustain your personal, family, and community values. This kind of reflection may not only promote a deeper sense of self, it also may boost your performance in job interviews by enabling you to demonstrate an authentic sense of self and work that does not overly simplify either.

*Time Management.* Along with assessing values, it is helpful to process the “nitty gritty” of using time wisely. There are many resources on time management, and we suggest a few in the online reading section of chapter 4. We also think that time management resources often “lose the forest for the trees,” so to speak. In this case, the forest is people’s general value orientations, the ideals that they want to carry out. Then, with that guiding compass to orient the map, the next step is to evaluate what barriers may get in the way of a person achieving their values. We offer this adapted table of time-wasters and time-savers to aid this process.<sup>6</sup>

TIME WASTERS	TIME SAVERS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Indecision</li> <li>2. Inefficiency</li> <li>3. Interruptions (unanticipated or not; for example, spending time on social media is an anticipated interruption)</li> <li>4. Procrastination</li> <li>5. Rumination</li> <li>6. Disorganization</li> <li>7. Accumulation</li> <li>8. Burnout, sickness, or emotional drain</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop a sense of value orientation and make decisions that align with values.</li> <li>2. Create an organizing system that helps to carry out value orientations and does not invite avoidance.</li> <li>3. Consider what kind of interruptions are meaningful and important, and which are not; then accept the former and ward off the latter.</li> <li>4. Analyze the root cause: is it because of anxiety, or is it because the task is undesirable? If it is the former, see the online reading section for a link to a wellness assessment, and/or visit a campus health center. If it is the latter, consider whether this indicates a need to reconsider one's major or class selections.</li> <li>5. Reflect on the important aspects of college and life, and do not "over-think" mundane matters (for example, consider what the most important content of a chapter is; don't memorize).</li> <li>6. Make to-do lists, keep schedules, organize time.</li> <li>7. Every so often, remove items from to-do lists, turn down invitations, and otherwise avoid clutter.</li> <li>8. Set aside time to care for oneself and to care for others</li> </ol>

If you want to move toward a deeper exploration of time management, here is another activity. This is an individual activity, but it would be even better if you include a few friends. For starters, brainstorm the types of goals that you or anyone else could have, such as getting good grades, buying a car, or getting more sleep. The goal is not to evaluate each of your responses, but merely to assemble a variety of goals you may have. At the same time, this activity works best if you offer realistic goals and do not seek, as comedic as it may be, to offer goals no one would reasonably consider at this moment in time (for instance, make \$10 million).

You will need some index cards for the next part of the activity. After generating a variety of ideas and writing out a list, select one of the goals from the list, and then write on each index card a different reason or excuse that someone may have for not reaching this goal. Again, think creatively and also reasonably (for instance, “because they do not have internet access” would not cut it). Once you have filled up your index cards, put the reasons/excuses in order based on the extent to which people can control them. The bottom of the ranking is reserved for “parking lot” issues, which are reasons that require an enormous amount of effort or several people to change (for example, “college costs too much” or “politicians never support \_\_\_”).

Moving up from parking lot issues, you should put next those items that a person could do solo, but which may take considerable time or energy (for example, “change my parents’ mind about a major”). Toward the top, then, are those reasons that could be most readily altered (for example, “does not know how many more credits would be needed to switch majors” or “work does not allow enough time for studying”). Now come up with strategies for ways to address the top three reasons within the next month. To conclude this activity, ask yourself the following: What types of factors went into deciding that something was a parking lot issue? What factors made an issue seem movable? How might knowing the difference help you not get stuck ruminating on parking lot issues?

*Health and Well-being.* Most universities provide orientations on alcohol use, sexual assault, and other campus issues. We advise you to pay serious attention to those orientations and trainings, as there are many intense issues that you can confront, whether due to your own actions or not. It is easy to think the worst situations only happen to other people while in truth they could happen to anyone. Best to be prepared. That being said, we recommend that you turn to sources on campus for the most up-to-date information on these issues. Rather than address specifics that may change as new information becomes available, we offer a few global statements on these subjects. Alcohol and drug abuse, eating disorders, and other forms of physiological and psychological distress are real issues

that deserve attention. Many of these emerge for the first time or worsen during college, and students should consider whether they need help now for something that seemed minor or controllable before. We also want to add a social perspective to the readily available messages, which typically concentrate on how the body and brain contribute to these issues. There are multiple ways to treat problems; some have to do with intrinsic aspects to a person (what is on the inside) and some deal with extrinsic factors (what is outside a person), and neither should be ignored. In attending to extrinsic factors, you should consider whether you need to make changes to friend groups, to relationships, or within your family to enhance your ability to deal with a problem.

*Academic Integrity.* Many campuses also address academic integrity in orientation sessions. We will defer to general orientations on this subject and urge you to attend to the “gray” areas, the acts that may not seem like outright cheating to them. Some students want to cheat, but many other students wind up in trouble over issues that they did not understand to be wrong at the time.<sup>7</sup> For example, it is increasingly easy for instructors to detect that a student has submitted the same term paper to multiple classes, which is generally considered to be an integrity violation, unless permission was granted by all instructors involved. Submitting materials in papers or presentations that were developed by someone else without citing those materials is also a problem. Many times students know that it is wrong to plagiarize an original source, but they may not realize that taking material from a blog or study guide about an original text without citation likewise violates academic integrity. Whether students are allowed to consult with others when completing quizzes or exams, especially when taken online, varies across courses. You should consult your instructors for their policies on this matter, as there is no universal guideline, but not knowing that an instructor’s policy was for non-collaboration can still result in a violation. More generally, you should consider whether you want to be the kind of person who relies on the work of others to succeed. Do we want to be operated on by a doctor who cheated through medical school? Do we want a pilot who cheated on a flight exam? No. Be the kind

of professional who acts with integrity, who will not cross moral lines even if blurry, and who can be relied upon to produce their own work. Form that lifelong practice now.

## CHAPTER 5—CAMPUS SUPPORT AND RESOURCE SCENARIOS

One of the chief ways that you can bolster your resiliency in college is to make campus resources part of your social support system. You may have already encountered the laundry lists of available offices and their contact information provided by instructors or staff members trying to help you. You may have also already realized that these lists are not always that helpful. You can probably find geographic locations of these resources using map apps or your university's website, but do you know if the specific problems you may encounter are addressed by a resource on this list? With or without a list, do you know the best keywords to use in order to find particular information on university websites (or websites generally)? The activities associated with chapter 5 (described next) seek to increase these skills, especially to ensure that you understand how best to access the basic tools for navigating college.

A big part of bouncing back in the face of adversity is knowing where to start and actually getting started, rather than letting challenges pile up and become overwhelming. At the risk of stating what may be obvious to you, one of the best ways to tackle adversity and learn more about available resources is to ask Google. We suggest narrowing the keyword search to include only websites of the university. For example, we are at the University of Arkansas, whose website is [uark.edu](http://uark.edu). To restrict searches to university Web pages, you can open Google Chrome and type this into the URL field: "counseling services [uark.edu](http://uark.edu)." Only counseling services available at the University of Arkansas will be returned in the results. (Students can often accomplish the same thing by using a search field within the campus website, but this approach saves a couple steps.) Here are some



examples of information you should practice finding online, perhaps bookmark the pages most relevant to you:

1. What is the name and location of the campus medical facility or health center? Are walk-ins allowed, or do students need to make appointments first?
2. Where can students receive counseling? Is it available in the same facility as the health center or at a separate facility? Is both individual and group counseling available?
3. Does the university have a Dean of Students or an Office of Undergraduate Studies? If so, where is it located, and how can students meet with a representative of this office?
4. Where is the writing center located, and what are its hours? Does it offer walk-in times, or is it open by appointment only?
5. Is there a tutoring facility on campus, or can campus offices help to connect students with tutors available on particular topics?
6. Where is the Registrar's office located?
7. Where is the Financial Aid Office located? Is there a location where students can pay their college bills in person? What are the Web addresses for setting up automatic payments for tuition or meal plans?
8. What are the hours of the library? Are there multiple library locations? What is the website for interlibrary loans (often called ILLIAD) through which students can request access to books and articles from any library affiliated with the campus?
9. Where are the computer lab locations, and what are their hours? Are students able to print at all locations, or are there particular locations with printers, or with color printers? How do students refill their printing quotas or cards?
10. If students have declared a major, what is the location of the department for that major? What is the department website? Who is the chairperson for the department? What are the names of some of the faculty in the department?

The point of this activity is for you to gain experience in finding the answers to these questions. Even if you were given handouts answering all these questions at orientation, it is critical that you still learn the process for finding this information for yourself.

Now it is time for a second activity in which you apply these skills to some real-life problems that you may face as a college student. For the potential problems listed next, take time to research relevant campus information and resources, and then write down the actions you would take to address the problem:

- You need to add or drop a class.
- You need to pay a bill.
- It's flu season, and you know you get sick easily.
- You want to know what scholarships are available for current students.
- You want to know how to apply for an RA position.
- You need to find a work-study position to help out with finances.
- You don't know why you received a parking ticket.
- You have been sexually assaulted.
- It's late at night and you need a walking escort across campus.
- You don't understand how to finish your math homework.
- You're finding it difficult to keep up with assignments in your English Comp class.
- Your professor assigned you to a group to complete a project. Each person in your group is responsible for writing a portion of the group paper. You're concerned that one member of your group has a looser definition of plagiarism than you.
- You always wanted to study abroad, but you aren't sure how you could afford it.
- You enjoy meeting people from other cultures, and you want to get involved with some international students.

- You have an outstanding account balance that needs to be resolved.
- You aren't sure what major you want to study.
- You don't understand how to complete an assignment your professor gave you.
- Your computer has begun acting erratically.
- You don't feel safe in your residence hall.
- You and your roommate aren't getting along at all, and you think it's time for a change.
- You've heard of assessments for finding majors or career interests, and want to take one.
- You know your budget will be tight next semester, and you're hoping to find a way to avoid paying big bucks for textbooks.
- There are three weeks left in the semester, but you're quickly running out of swipes on your meal plan.
- You want to form a new student organization.
- You want to sign up for an intramural sport.
- You are looking for things to do on the weekends.

Finally, it is time to put your new skills to the test in a very comprehensive way. You will find many different scenarios in what follows that real college students have experienced. The first step in this activity is for you to put yourself in the middle of these scenarios. Assume that it is you who is experiencing what is described. How should you respond to each scenario? Which campus resources should you interact with? If possible, this activity would be even more effective if you can include one or more friends. One of you should assume the identity of the main character in the scenario while the other person should pretend to be that student's roommate or good friend. Rotate these roles as you move through the different situations. As you work through these scenarios, also consider this question: Why do you think that some students are reluctant to use social and academic support services, even though they need to access them in order to succeed?

## Advising and Career Development

1. Chelsea has not completed the last five assignments for her biology class, and she failed last week's quiz on cell structure. She doesn't know how to catch up.
2. Recently, Chuck completely lost his motivation to study. He is still getting good grades in his courses, but he does not see the point of what he is doing in life right now. He wonders if he should take a year off from school.
3. Jose appreciates the freedom that college permits him, especially compared to high school. His first Monday-Wednesday-Friday class doesn't start until 10:40 a.m., and he is out by 2:00 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays. With all this free time, he starts delaying homework assignments and test preparation, believing he'll just save them for later in the day or another time. Four weeks into the semester, he already feels behind.
4. In her first year, Vanessa began taking courses with a cohort of students wanting to go to physical therapy school. When asked to describe the cohort and whether it has been helpful to her, Vanessa states: "I'm in the cohort for physical therapy, so we all just take the same science classes. Following their suggestions helps a lot. If it hadn't been for them, I think I would've been lost." Vanessa relies on the cohort for advice about the classes and the path she will take. She sees her cohort as a credible source of information about school and trusts the information given to her.
5. Rachel lives in the Quad, and one of her roommates has a boyfriend over constantly. The roommate's boyfriend eats all their food without asking for it or replacing it. Her roommates are becoming impatient, but they do not want to cause conflict.
6. Salva just received his math midterm, and the grade was much lower than what he expected. He studied extremely hard for this exam and thought he was well-prepared. He doesn't understand why he missed some of the problems or how the final grade was determined.

7. Trevor always attends his physics class, takes notes, and follows along with the lecture as best he can. He joins a study group before the first test but quickly realizes when he meets with his peers that he has not grasped the major concepts. Everyone else seems to have somehow gleaned the most important points of the chapters and lectures and can use the information to solve the problems, but not Trevor. He feels lost and unsure how he could sit in the same class with these students but come away with such a different level of information.
8. Evan founded an after-school acting troupe for at-risk junior high and high school students. He's found his passion, as he can practice a talent that he honed growing up and help people at the same time. He's a pre-med biology major, but his heart is not in his coursework, and his grades reflect his lack of interest. His GPA hovers around a 3.50, though his biology/chemistry/physics GPA is barely a 3.0. Going into his junior year, he has started shadowing at a local surgery clinic and will begin studying for the MCAT in January.
9. Martina is a self-described "master note-taker." She writes down the key points of the lecture, doesn't try to get every word, fills in the gaps after each lecture, and reviews her notes each day. On her midterm exams, however, her highest grade was a B, and she made C's in three other tests. Now, Martina is confused about what to do. She knew her notes forwards and backwards, so why isn't she making A's?

### Study Abroad

1. In many ways, Sam has loved her university experience, but at times she has found the curriculum a little rigid, with the set number of core courses and waiting to take upper-level classes in her majors. She also gets a little tired of people saying, "What are you going to do with that?" when she says that she is a sociology

and German major with a religious studies minor. She likes learning for the sake of learning and finds herself reading about other cultures and religious beliefs frequently. Learning languages comes easily to her. Her goal is to be fluent in German, and already she can make her way through both formal and informal conversations, but she'd really appreciate the more in-depth learning that studying abroad would allow. Money, however, may be an obstacle for Sam. She has a small scholarship and her parents are able to pay the difference, but little is left over after tuition and fees are paid at the beginning of each semester.

2. Taylor did well in his first semester although he had not felt sure how he would transition to the university. Though his high school GPA was solid, he went to a small school in a rural part of the state and didn't know if that would translate to success in college. He quickly learned to review his notes each day, read assignments in advance of class, and start preparing for exams a week beforehand. Still, he thinks maybe he is motivated more by a fear of failing than by liking his classes right now. He is thinking about the possibility of studying abroad. He doesn't have many friends and is afraid to tell the handful of people he has met that he has never been out of the country and only once has been in an airplane. His feelings are jumbled. On the one hand, he wants to take advantage of all the college offers and develop friendships, but on the other hand, the thoughts of being so far from home is not comfortable. It won't be for his mom and dad either.
3. Gabby's family took vacations every summer for as long as she can remember, and Europe was a frequent destination, instilling in Gabby a love of travel and the ability to adapt quickly to new environments. The emphasis on studying abroad is one of the main reasons she selected this university. She's an international studies and anthropology double major, with the ultimate goal of working for the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

To make herself marketable for a career with the IOC, Gabby is taking two world languages—French and Russian—and she believes that the best way to become proficient is to study in a French- or Russian-speaking country. Gabby is a planner. She likes structure and wants to begin working out the details now, as she selects her study abroad program.

4. Devon is a pre-med biological sciences major. He knows that medical schools will receive hundreds of applications from students majoring in biology and chemistry, so he wants to choose activities that will distinguish him. Studying abroad, he feels, will provide a strong look to his profile. He is interested in learning about cultures, but a longer program may conflict with his MCAT preparation. So much of his academic plan is regimented, and he must complete certain classes—like human physiology and biochemistry—before taking the MCAT at the end of his junior year. Devon loves the idea of experiencing a new culture and taking classes outside the natural sciences to broaden his perspective. On top of staying on track for the MCAT, he is also concerned about shadowing at medical clinics, volunteering, and taking a leadership role in his favorite student organization.
5. Sam recently met with her academic advisor and learned she can graduate in three years, even though she has a major and two minors. Sam has the Arkansas Governor's Distinguished Scholarship and the Chancellor's Scholarship, so finishing early would mean giving up a full year of paid funding. Sam will consider the options she and her advisor discussed. She can graduate early, stay a fourth year and take classes for the joy of learning, stay and add a second major to her degree plan, or study abroad. She's already studied abroad once, in the summer between her first and second year, with the Classics in Rome Program. She's intrigued with the idea of a different kind of international learning experience than she had previously.

## Academic Integrity

1. Bradly, Anna, and Phinneas all have a multiple-user text messaging service through SupportMe. They use it to stay connected with one another through the school day since their class schedules are different. They also use it to chat about course assignments in cell biology. Although they are in different sections, they have the same instructor, so they can conveniently ask one another for help on a particular problem without having to get together. The second cell biology test is on October 28. Bradly has it first at 8:00 a.m. Anna's test is at 10:30, and Phinneas's takes place at 2:00 that afternoon. When Bradly finishes his test, he uses SupportMe to text Anna and Phinneas several of the questions that were on his test as a heads-up for the types of questions they may see on their tests. Anna reads Bradly's text and uses the questions as a study guide. Phinneas, however, texts Bradly back and tells him he shouldn't be sending out test questions, as he could get in trouble for sharing exam questions with others who have not taken the exam. Bradly is surprised, thinking that he is just helping out friends. Anna texts back that she sees nothing wrong with what Bradly did, that it wasn't like he sent them the actual test. Ask students: Did Bradly violate the academic integrity policy by sharing test questions? If someone texted you questions that would likely be on your next test in a class, would your view be more like Phinneas's or Anna's?
2. Robert's political science professor uses clickers to keep track of attendance and assigned readings in a class of over 200 students. At the beginning of each class, Robert clicks in with an answer to a question related to the assignment. If he clicks the correct answer, he receives 10 points. If he clicks an incorrect answer, he still gets 3 points for being in class. At the end of the semester, Robert's accumulated clicker points will account for a quarter of his final grade. Robert needs to see his advisor, and the only appointment slot he finds open is for the same time as



his political science class. If he doesn't take this appointment, he won't be able to see his advisor for another two weeks, which will delay his registering for classes with the risk that he won't be able to get in the classes he wants. So he cuts a deal with his friend Taylor, who is also in the class: "If you will cover for me today, then I will click in for you whenever you have an appointment that conflicts with this class." Taylor agrees and takes two clickers to class that afternoon. But before he can use them, Professor Greenway notices that Taylor has not one but two clickers on his desk. "Why the extra clicker?" she asks Taylor. Ask students: How should Taylor answer? Should Dr. Greenway turn him in for a violation of the academic integrity policy? How does Dr. Greenway figure out who owns the other clicker? What happens to Robert?

3. Helen is nervous as she walks across campus to take her honors microeconomics midterm. She recites concepts as she walks, hoping to get everything to stay in the front of her brain long enough to do well on the test. She also keeps checking her phone: her dad is in the hospital and Mom was going to text her with an update on his condition. Her dad's health is only adding to her nervousness. Helen takes her regular seat in the classroom, checking her phone one last time for news of her dad. When she sees copies of the test coming down the row toward her, she places her phone on her desk and takes a deep breath. Here goes . . . Helen has just turned to the second page of the test when she feels someone looking down at her desk. "Why do you have your phone on and placed on your desk?" Professor Iglesia asks. Before she can answer, the professor continues, "This is a violation of the academic integrity policy. You may continue, but I will have to turn you in for violating the policy." Ask students: Which part of the university's academic integrity policy does Professor Iglesia believe Helen has violated? Do you agree with the professor? Why or why not? What could Helen have done differently so that she did not end up in this situation?

4. Kelsey submits her first paper as a college first-year student in her Composition I class. The instructor notices a 40% match to online sources, according to SafeAssign. After comparing these sources to her paper, it is apparent that two paragraphs of the five-page paper were copied directly from a website without citation. In her meeting with the instructor, Kelsey claims she didn't understand that she was supposed to include quotation marks and thought including the source in her bibliography was sufficient. She pleads that she was not trying to steal someone else's work and it was just an honest mistake. Ask students: Do you think Kelsey violated the academic integrity policy? Why or why not?
5. For students' third essay in honors world history, Professor Luna asks for an annotated works cited page. Professor Luna reviews her expectations of the assignment: students are required to list at least six sources in MLA format and offer a half-page description of each source, and the source will be incorporated into their final paper—standard information on an annotation, she states. Needing to do well in his final two assignments, Terrance finishes his assignment a week before the deadline but plans to wait and submit it on the due date. Before class one day, Anthony tells Terrance he is confused about what MLA format looks like and what should be included in an annotation. He asks Terrance if he can look at his, and Terrance agrees, emailing Anthony a copy. Rather than search for his own sources, Anthony submits the document as his own, unbeknownst to Terrance. Professor Luna realizes that the students' assignments are identical, gives each student a zero on the assignment, and submits both names to Academic Standards. Ask students: Do you think Terrance violated the academic integrity policy? Why or why not? Is Terrance more culpable than Anthony? How should Terrance justify his actions when meeting with the standards committee? What should be the punishment for Terrance and for Anthony?

Finding the right information is only half the battle. To truly get the support you need, you should be interacting with other human beings. Another valuable activity for incoming college students is to practice asking people on campus for help in employing college resources. Find a few other students on campus and ask them some of the following questions. It may seem intimidating at first but interacting with other people on campus is key to forming the support system you need to succeed.

1. What is the best-kept-secret place to eat on or near campus?
2. What is the best place to meet up with people on campus for fun?
3. Where is the best place on campus to study?
4. Which campus computer lab is most accessible?
5. What is the best place or website to buy books and class materials?
6. Who is a professor that everyone should try to take a class with?
7. Who is the best advisor to meet with to sort out classes and career options?
8. What is the most interesting art piece on campus?
9. What is the best sporting event to see, especially one that not everyone knows about?
10. What is one thing you wish you would have known when you were a first-year student?

## CHAPTER 6—DIVERSITY AND FORMING CONNECTIONS

When considering the topic of diversity, the most important step is to focus on authentic (not generic) ways of grappling with real student differences and similarities. The student stories offered at the beginning of chapter 6 can spark reflections and discussions on race and ethnicity, immigration, sexuality, gender, religiosity, and culture generally. Additionally, the resources listed in the online reading section at the end of chapter 6 aim to promote a welcoming campus community that respects differences and highlights underemphasized commonalities.

Another way to address diversity is to use the activity called “Crossing the Line.” It is best implemented as a group activity (even if it is just you and a few friends). The goals are to introduce you to the diversity of others, to expand your definitions of diversity, and to help you connect with similar peers. This activity typically starts with each participant standing on one side of a room. Pretend that there is an imaginary line down the middle of the room. A volunteer will read various prompts with the instruction to cross the line if the statement applies. Alternatively, participants can simply sit in a circle and raise their hands (or otherwise make themselves known) if the statement applies. If you are unable to gather a group of friends for this activity, simply read each prompt, consider whether it applies to you, and then consider the experiences of students that would have an answer opposite from yours. Here are the prompts, and feel free to add some of your own:

- Cross the line if . . .
  1. You are from out of state;
  2. You know what you want to major in;
  3. A school other than this was your first choice;
  4. You have lived in another state;
  5. You graduated from high school with fewer than 50 classmates;
  6. You had over 500 people in your graduating class;
  7. You have been in love;
  8. You are in love;
  9. You have a hero or role model in your life;
  10. You have visited another country;
  11. You own your own car;
  12. You always arrive to meetings, events, and class late;
  13. You want to have children someday;
  14. You plan to get married in the future;
  15. You define marriage as between a man and a woman;
  16. You plan to live in a big city;
  17. You would be happy to live on a farm;

18. You have cried at least once this year;
19. You have laughed at yourself at least once this year;
20. You are the oldest in the family;
21. You are the youngest in the family;
22. You are adopted;
23. You are an only child;
24. You come from a family of four or more children;
25. You have had primary responsibility for raising another member of your family;
26. Your parents are either divorced, separated, or never married;
27. You consider yourself to be a religious person;
28. You are Catholic;
29. You are Protestant;
30. You are Jewish;
31. You are Muslim;
32. You are Hindu;
33. You are some other form of religion or spirituality;
34. You are an atheist or agnostic;
35. You are a person of color;
36. Your parents or grandparents might still have prejudicial thoughts;
37. You did not cross the line in a previous statement when you should have.

In this activity, the goal is to provide you with a mostly nonverbal way of observing differences and similarities within a group. Participants are learning more about who composes their group, and recognizing the diversity within the group and how that contributes to common and distinct experiences. Conclude this activity by writing down answers to the following questions: What made it easy or difficult to participate in this activity? What were the categories that had the greatest degree of similarity, and of difference? Was that surprising? How did it feel when only a few people stepped forward?

During this activity, please remember to establish a safe environment in which it is acceptable for everyone to move or stay still as they are comfortable. No one should feel forced to disclose anything they are uncomfortable sharing. Participants may laugh or in other ways express a degree of discomfort with this situation, and that can become a powerful way to engage with each other. A simple “Why do you think there was laughter when we discussed——?” can be the beginning of an important conversation. In our experience, it works well to write down your reflections independently immediately following the exercise and then share together as a group.

Another activity that can be completed in tandem with this one, or as a follow-up, is called Similarities and Differences. The objectives of this activity are to discover similarities and differences among people; to identify differences that require little effort to discover; and to identify how sometimes unseen similarities exist despite stereotypes to the contrary. As with the first activity, this one is best implemented as a group activity. Participants should begin by forming into groups with others who have visible similarities to them. Once groups are formed, participants should identify one thing that they value about their similarities. Then they can discuss ways that they are different. Once this is completed, participants should disband their groups and instead form groups based on visible differences. Once groups are formed, they should identify one thing they value about their differences. Then they can discuss ways that they are similar. Finally, as one big group, discuss how college students can feel like a “fish out of water” and whether this activity challenges that perception.

## CHAPTER 7 – PERSONAL STRENGTHS, LEADERSHIP, INTEGRITY, AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The first step to becoming an active and engaged citizen, on campus and in the community, is recognizing your particular strengths as a social leader. Between the common claim that “no two leaders are the same” and the opposite extreme view that “leaders are all alike” is the reality of the middle

ground: leaders exhibit a set of leadership types. There are a variety of ways to classify leader types, which emphasize different aspects of being a leader. The set that we recommend was developed by Paul Schmitz (2011)<sup>8</sup> in a book called *Everyone Leads: Building Leadership from the Community Up*. The leader types are summarized in an excellent handout produced by Everyday Democracy (<https://www.everyday-democracy.org/resources/leadership-compass-activity>).<sup>9</sup> The compass consists of four leadership types: nurturers, teachers, mobilizers, and visionaries. While individuals can have aspects of any of these leader types, this activity may help you recognize which of your leadership qualities are dominant, and which type best represents the way you are most comfortable leading.

This leadership compass activity can be completed on your own, or in a group. Begin by following the instructions for rating which leadership qualities best describe you, then tabulate the responses to discover which leadership style is your strongest. The handout above describes ways of implementing this in a group setting, but you can certainly complete this activity alone to reflect on what you “bring to the table.” It should be underlined that no one style is better than another; rather, each kind of leader is important for a well-balanced team. After tabulating the responses, review the Leadership Compass (<https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/resource/leadershipcompass.pdf>).<sup>10</sup> This handout provides additional descriptions of each leader type’s approach to work, and it lists the best ways to work with a leader of each type. You can benefit from learning about your own style, and may gain even greater insight by learning about the leadership styles of others. Considering that most workplaces, across all sectors, need people who can lead personally *and in teams*, it is essential for you to gain exposure to a wide array of others’ work and leadership styles during college. Though sometimes students dread group work in class, working together with a team is crucial to the college experience, and we encourage you to embrace it as providing one of the more tangible, real-world skills for life after college. Completing this exercise can deepen your sense of where others in your group are coming from, and spur creative thinking about how to engage different types of leaders by emphasizing their particular strengths.

These topics of leadership and teamwork give you another opportunity to reflect on academic integrity at your institution. Students and faculty often view issues of academic integrity differently (Park 2003)<sup>11</sup> and different instructors hold somewhat different expectations. Many students tend to think of the most extreme, black-and-white form of plagiarism: cheating on an exam. However, more common forms of plagiarism include using material from another source and passing it off as one's own work (Park 2003). This can be done intentionally, from buying papers online to using the work of other students who took the course in the past. It can also include unintentional forms of plagiarism, however, which stem from not knowing how to cite information found online or in other sources, or not understanding what constitutes a paraphrase of material written by others.

To help you think through these issues, try this activity. Read each of the examples of possible academic dishonesty below. For each one, write “yes” or “no” to indicate your opinion on whether it constitutes cheating.

1. Taking an exam in place of another student or having someone take an exam in your place.
2. Rewriting passages for a paper that you are typing for a friend.
3. Having someone write a paper to submit as your own work.
4. Discussing your outline/ideas for a paper with a friend in your class who is writing on the same project.
5. Allowing another student to copy from you during an exam.
6. Changing your lab results to reflect what you know they should have been, rather than what you actually got.
7. Turning in the same paper to two different classes.
8. Studying from old exams.
9. Getting questions or answers from someone who has already taken the same exam.
10. Borrowing an idea for a paper without footnoting the source.
11. Working on homework with other students.
12. Including a few items which you didn't really use on a bibliography.



13. Changing a few answers on a graded exam and resubmitting it for a higher grade.
14. Reading just the abstracts of articles, rather than the entire article, when researching a paper.
15. Asking someone to proofread your draft of a paper.

If possible, now ask at least one friend to do the same, and then compare your lists. Are there any differences? Finally, bring this list to at least one instructor to get their input and guidance.

## CHAPTER 8—ACTIVITIES—CAREER EXPLORATION AND PERSONAL STATEMENTS

The activities for this chapter encourage you to reflect on and discuss your values and purpose and connect those to making decisions about your majors and careers. We also offer strategies for you to draft personal statements and talk with your parents about career choices.

*Values Discussion.* This activity can be completed as a personal reflection or in a small group. As a personal reflection, take plenty of time to write answers for each of the questions that follow. As a small group activity, select a leader/facilitator and follow these instructions: “Have participants find two people who are wearing the same color as them. Have them find a spot where they can talk together. Instruct them they will be talking about some issues, career or personal goals, and you will give them new topics every few minutes. This exercise allows them to get to know each other better, and start thinking about what kind of career or field they are interested in. After 30 to 45 minutes, the instructor will ask everyone to sit down, and have one individual from one group talk about his/her partner. Here are some samples:”<sup>12</sup>

- Talk about the most important thing you have learned this year.
- What are the easiest and hardest emotions for you to express and why?

- What is something that few people know about you?
- What do you value in a friend?
- What do you want to be doing in five years?
- What is one goal you have for next year?
- What is a motto you try to live by?
- What is the greatest challenge you are facing?
- What do you like most about yourself?
- What do you value in a loving relationship?
- What do you value most in life?

*Purpose Discussion.* The purpose of this exercise <sup>13</sup> is to challenge you to assess your personal and professional goals. A forward-thinking mindset and a long-term goal will help you to stay focused academically. Moreover, it will guide your planning of your first year and suggest a path to achieve your short- and long-term goals. First, consider the concepts of vision, mission, purpose, and goal. Imagine that you are the CEO of a large corporation (choose one you are familiar with or make one up). Create a vision, mission, purpose, and goal for this corporation. Now, using that same logic, create your own personal vision, mission, purpose, and goals might be.

**Vision:** You should have a mental picture of what you would like to do in the future. Vision answers the question: Where do you want to go? Vision is the formation of an ideal. Considerations about dream careers and sources of happiness aid the formation of a vision. Some questions for stimulating an understanding of vision follow:

- What is your vision for family life?
- What is your vision for a dream job?
- What is your vision for your business?

**Mission:** Once you identify your career interests, you should consider what career paths will take you there. Have you mapped out

the road you need to take to make your vision or dream a reality? A mission is a step-by-step procedure, and it varies based on your career interests. A mission answers the question: How will you get where you want to go?

- Do you have a personal mission statement?
- Do you know what it will take to achieve your dreams?
- Have you explored what career path will lead you toward your ideal job?

**Purpose:** Most actions worth taking must carry a purpose for the one undertaking it. It's the purpose that urges us to move forward with our dreams. Purpose answers the question: What are you about? It describes what makes you tick. Consider these questions:

- Do you feel you have a life purpose or calling?
- Why are you interested in getting a college degree?
- Why do you want to attain a particular job?

**Goal:** Since the purpose is the why, the goal is the what. Goals are the desired results of efforts and answer the question: What do you hope to accomplish? Consider these questions:

- What is an academic goal you hope to accomplish this semester?
- What is a personal goal you hope to accomplish this year?
- What is a professional goal you hope to accomplish in 10 years?

*Selecting a Major.* We encourage you to read “Choosing Your Major” by Mary Lou Taylor (<https://www.albright.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/How-to-Choose-Your-Major-Tip-Sheet.pdf>).<sup>14</sup> What follows are a number of additional questions to consider, as well as ideas for additional activities to guide you in selecting a major.<sup>15</sup>

## An Inside Look at Selecting a Major

### Individual Questions

1. Describe how you have attempted to select a major field of study up to this point.
2. What should be the role of parents, friends, and people in your community in the selection of your major?
3. What are the best resources to use as a student in the selection of your field of study?
4. Describe how your major may enhance your career choices.
5. Should your selection of a major be primarily influenced by your potential future income? How important are other factors in your major selection? Please explain.
6. Describe how your interests, talents, and personality should affect your major selection.
7. Describe how electives and a minor are important considerations when selecting a major.

### Class or Group Discussion

1. Consider which aspects of previous jobs or activities you have enjoyed thus far.
2. Would you like to continue these interests in a major?
3. Do you enjoy working with people or working alone? What majors or career opportunities should you avoid?
4. Do you know your strengths? How can you build on these?
5. What basic questions can you ask yourself that may help with your decision on a major?
6. How anxious are you to begin working? What are the advantages of a college (or graduate) degree?

## Activities

1. Make an appointment for personality and career testing.
2. Speak to individuals who work in fields that are of interest to you.
3. Make a list of careers with which you are familiar.
4. Visit career placement centers and speak with your professors about career opportunities.
5. Read as much as possible about your areas of interest.

## Outcomes

1. Discuss guidelines for decision-making about choosing a major.
2. Develop a personal strategy for choosing a major.
3. Name two resources for career guidance and the importance of each.
4. List various majors and their corresponding career possibilities.

Another useful activity to spur reflection on potential careers is to begin drafting your own personal statements. Personal statements are often needed to apply for scholarships, awards, and graduate school. While incoming first-year students may still have a few years before they need to submit a personal statement, it is never too early to begin constructing a draft. At minimum, this asks you to consider where you are headed. Moreover, it serves as an opportunity to consider how your personal biography and background can aid you in asserting your unique contributions.

Multiple issues can deter students from beginning to draft a personal statement: (1) Personal statements are terribly named; they are really *professional* statements with personal biographies interpreted professionally; (2) “Writer’s block” can prevent students from combining all the information they have encountered into something that they enjoy writing, that adequately reflects their professional identity, and that makes others

want to invest in them, their dreams, and their future trajectory; (3) Many students feel they do not have interesting stories. In our experience, students often think that if they haven't overcome severe hardships (physical, mental, socioeconomic, and so on) or haven't accomplished some extraordinary feat (founding a charity, and the like), then their stories are fundamentally uninteresting. The question "What are my unique contributions?" is a way to help you see that your story is unique and can be a compelling way to discuss your strengths. To lessen these potential barriers, this activity introduces you to *the experience* of beginning to think about and draft a personal statement, to form the foundation of a working document that you can revise as you journey through your undergraduate career.

#### TIPS FOR DRAFTING A PERSONAL STATEMENT

1. Break down "writer's block" issues by separately drafting portions that can be synthesized into a personal statement later on.
2. A final draft should never be a first draft, and all quality writing results from multiple rounds of revisions. The goal is merely to craft a first draft, which can be refined and rewritten as your plans inevitably evolve.
3. Exchange your drafted personal statements with other students to gain peer-review feedback. This may be intimidating at first, but it is incredibly helpful to involve peers in this process.
4. Examples of reflection topics to be written on index cards throughout the semester include the following:
  - a. What is my background? (forming initial connections exercise)
  - b. Who have I been? (reflecting on what prior experiences mean for their professional selves)
  - c. What is my [university] identity? (university traditions exercise)
  - d. What is my [college or school] identity? (college/school resources and advising exercise)

- e. What is my [major] identity? (major -specific study skills, groups, course plans)
- f. Who am I now? (reflecting on current undergraduate identity, as evolving from youth)
- g. What is my professional identity? (goal-setting and career development exercises)
- h. What are my unique contributions? (diversity, family backgrounds, race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, nationality, and other cultural norms and experiences)
- i. What is my generous identity? (civic engagement/ philanthropy/citizen exercise)
- j. Who do I aspire to be? (aspirations, career trajectory, desired life, ways to give)
- k. What are my limitations? (time management, study skills, financial aid, health)
- l. What resources can support my strengths? (university resources, campus community, family, and friends)
- m. What will I mobilize? (how students will draw upon resources to mobilize aspirations)

Finally, don't forget to talk with your parents about your evolving career plans. Nearly all students enter college with ambitions and preconceived notions of what they want to do. As they navigate college, however, these plans can and often should change. You need to keep parents informed of those changes.

#### FURTHER READING ONLINE

Here are a few resources we have found helpful:

- Here's a handout regarding the Cornell system for taking notes: [http://www.riverland.edu/riverland/assets/File/study-tips/Cornell\\_System.pdf](http://www.riverland.edu/riverland/assets/File/study-tips/Cornell_System.pdf).

- A handout to explain the forgetting curve is here, by John Wittman of CSU Stanislaus, retrieved from [https://www.csustan.edu/sites/default/files/groups/Writing%20Program/forgetting\\_curve.pdf](https://www.csustan.edu/sites/default/files/groups/Writing%20Program/forgetting_curve.pdf).
- Some tips for improving study skills, for example, are here, on this Virginia Tech “Study Skills Checklist,” retrieved from [https://www.ucc.vt.edu/academic\\_support/study\\_skills\\_information/study\\_skills\\_checklist.html](https://www.ucc.vt.edu/academic_support/study_skills_information/study_skills_checklist.html).
- Here are some resources for discussing memorization and remembering, “Improving Concentration / Memory,” Virginia Tech, retrieved from [http://ucc.vt.edu/academic\\_support/online\\_study\\_skills\\_workshops/improving\\_concentration\\_memory.html](http://ucc.vt.edu/academic_support/online_study_skills_workshops/improving_concentration_memory.html).
- You should also think about finding study environments that are conducive to learning: “Study Environment Analysis,” Antelope Valley College, retrieved from <https://www.avc.edu/sites/default/files/student-services/lc/StudyEnvironmentAnalysis.pdf>.

## NOTES

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