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## Mapping Your Future

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BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – Students wondering how to pursue personally-meaningful professions will have the opportunity to learn what factors should guide their search in the Hart Career Center's upcoming program "Career Choice: Mapping Your Future" on Tuesday, October 16 at 4:00 p.m. in room 305 of the Center for Liberal Arts (CLA), (205 Beecher St., Bloomington).

While the program is free and open to all students, it is designed for first-year and sophomore students who are either in the process of selecting a major or are exploring professions related to their major.

Career Counselor Robyn Walter, of the Hart Career Center, will discuss how a student's interests, abilities, values and personality influence career choices, in addition to detailing the resources available to students at the Center. Considering career choices early in one's academic career is important, Walter explains, because "by participating in early professional experiences like internships and job shadowing, students learn whether they want to continue in their major on their current career track, or may be inspired and learn that they really want to do something they had not originally planned."

Every major, Walter continued, can benefit from early experience in professional fields, both to solidify pre-existing career goals and to choose new ones: "I remember a business major who loved history. He always took history classes because he loved it, and consistently participated in internships where he worked with children and adolescents. He was sure, though, that he wanted to do something practical: he had to study business. Second semester [of his senior year] the student came into my office, and I asked him how the job search was going. 'I think I'm going to be certified to teach history' he told me. And it made perfect sense: though his academic courses were leading him in another direction, his internships reinforced his instinctive desire to work with young students and to teach history."

Many students of the class of 2008—now facing a crunch time of graduate school exams, law exams, and a flurry of applications—might agree. Senior English major Jessica Jacoby participated in an internship opportunity the second semester of her junior year with Catholic Charities in Bloomington, learning that "While I've gained a lot of experience and developed many skills [as an English major] I learned that I love helping people." Inspired by her time with Catholic Charities, Jacoby has decided to pursue a career in counseling after graduation.

Early career planning has helped guide the decisions of some students, including many who are considering medical professions. Sophomore and biology/pre-med major Simonne Francis participated in a medical internship in the summer of 2007. Taking to heart Walter's testament that "students who don't have internships are now graduating with 'just a degree,' while other students are graduating with a degree and professional experience," Francis participated in a program giving her the opportunity to intern at a hospital in Louisville, Ky. "I learned a lot and had a great time...I feel more confident, and I know that this [pursuing a medical degree] is something that I really want to do."

Through programs like "Mapping Your Future," said Walter, the Career Center hopes to help students utilize the multitude of resources the counselors provide: "We have all kinds of resources to help students choose careers...and we are happy to use our network of contacts to help students learn what is best for them."

In addition to staff-lead programming, the Center organizes an employment and internship fair, a graduate and professional school fair, provides career and internship counseling, a resume assistance service, and has developed a resource library with information on internships and post-graduation options.

For more information about the program or student career services contact Walter at [rwalter@iwu.edu](mailto:rwalter@iwu.edu) or the Hart Career Center at (309) 556-3071.