CAREER DECISION-MAKING

(Basic Steps Required For Making Effective Decisions)

According to The American College Dictionary, a decision is “making up one’s mind”…determining. A decision can also be defined as the act of choosing or selecting one alternative instead of another. For example:

Dorothy and Fred DECIDED to attend a special workshop sponsored by their company to assist employees to effectively respond to an upcoming mass layoff.

John stopped by the Career Development Services office because he DECIDED he needed help with career direction.

Sherri DECIDED to write down her life values and the goals she established to help her move closer to realizing them.

An elaboration of each step follows:

STEP 1: **BECOME AWARE OF THE NEED** to make a decision

Clearly state the concern of whatever it is that requires that a choice be made. If you are unaware that you must make a decision, you may be unconsciously making decisions which are self-defeating. (e.g., You decide whether or not to get up in the morning, read a book, go to work or school, follow-up on a career survey results, etc.)

STEP 2: **DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT MORE INFORMATION IS REQUIRED**

Questions you may want to answer: Do I have enough information about what I value and who I am in order to make an informed choice? If not, what information is needed? Where and how can I get it? You may need to go through a values checklist or something similar. If necessary, seek the assistance of a qualified counselor. The more specific you are in knowing and prioritizing what is most important as well as identify qualities that distinguish you from others, the easier it will be for you to make your choice.

STEP 3: **IF NEEDED, GATHER ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

you believe is needed in order to make a more informed and wiser decision

Some of the additional information may be obtained through personal self-scrutiny or “from within” (You have started to do some of this if you went through the process of identifying your values). Other information may be obtained through sources outside of yourself (Internet, books, magazines, people, etc.). After this initial gathering of information, you should ask yourself the following questions: Do I now have enough information to make an informed choice? If not, what information is still needed? Where and how can I get it?

STEP 4: **Gather any information you need in order to NARROW DOWN POSSIBLE OPTIONS** (eliminate alternatives not close enough to who you are and want to become and what’s most important to you in life)
Which choice appears to have the best possibility of obtaining your desired outcome? Which one offers the least possibility?

**AND SELECT THE “BEST FIT(S)”** or one or more alternative(s) you believe will most effectively help you to most effectively complement who you are (temperaments, strengths, weaknesses, skills, attitudes, etc.) as well as what’s most important to you in life (mission, values and interests) Your selection(s) becomes your **goal(s)**.

A goal can be defined as the end result(s) of that which you value. One could also say a **goal** is something to be attained or is to be achieved. Questions that need to be answered are: Which alternative appears to be closest to my values, personal attributes, skills, and interests? Which one will I go through the most “storms” (pain or difficulty) for in order to “make it happen?”

**STEP 5: DEVELOP A PLAN**

Selecting a career and/or college major is a big decision and it would be wise for you to write down the action steps you plan to take in order to accomplish your occupational and/or educational/training goals (as well as any other critical supporting goals in the other major roles of your life).

**STEP 6: TAKE ACTION**

It is now time for you to actually begin to do the steps cited in your plan. You have already began to “take action” when you complete Step 5 or write down what you plan to do. The action you take will normally consist of setting and attaining **short-term and intermediate goal(s)** which, in turn, move you closer to your **long-term goal(s)**. This process should help you to increasingly realize you most important values.

For example, one might say, “My decision is to attend GRCC and earn an associate degree in Radiological Technology. Therefore, I must take Biology and Chemistry this semester and pass both classes with at least a “B.” It would also help if I work part-time in a hospital this summer.”

**ANALYSIS:** The **short-term goal**, although not cited might be to get an “A” on today’s Chemistry quiz. The **intermediate goals** are passing both Biology and Chemistry with at least a “B” and working part-time this summer. The **long-term goal** is to earn an Associate’s Degree in Radiological Technology. Accomplishing these goals would help this person to increasingly realize the important life values of *Health, Helping Others and Skill*.

**STEP 7: CONTINUALLY MONITOR, AND WHEN NECESSARY, REPEAT ONE, SOME OR ALL OF THE PREVIOUS STEPS.**