BOLD FUTURES TEAM #7

Question/Topic:
Place all students on a positive career track journey, including mentoring connections with alumni.

1. Would you be interested in getting connected with an NIU alum? And why?
   All students interviewed were interested in the benefits that could result from being connected to an NIU alum.
   - “I am strongly interested in having an NIU alum as a mentor because I would look forward to the insight that a mentor could provide.”
   - “My roommate currently has an alumni mentor and really enjoys the conversations and tips the mentor passes along.”
   - “Yes, I want to start networking ASAP. Sure, if they were in a field I was majoring in.”

2. At what point in your time at NIU would you want to be connected with alumni? (Fr, So, Jr, Sr year?)
   Most students preferred the idea of being paired with a mentor after their freshman year.
   - “I would like a mentor as soon as I begin major coursework; the information I learn from the alumni mentor is applicable to day-to-day academic work at NIU.” And, “My sophomore year would be a good time to get connected with a mentor.”

3. Would you like your alum mentor to be from a specific field or career? If so why?
   All students interviewed would like their mentor to be from their future career field and/or specific major because the mentor’s experience would be relevant to the students.

4. What would you like to learn from your alum mentor? What goals would you have for this connection?
   All students interviewed were very interested in the networking aspect of the relationship, with the goal of landing a job.
   - “I would like to learn from my mentor’s experience in the Nursing program; specifically the expectations of “clinicals”. I would also like to learn about the types of resources available to nurses seeking employment, help with résumé editing, networking, and tips on getting a job.”
   - “I would like to learn how to be a better communicator and would like tips on being a successful post-grad.”

5. How would you prefer to communicate with your mentor? And how often would this take place?
   All students interviewed preferred phone, email, and in-person meetings; communication on an as needed basis.

6. What is the best way to prepare students while they are at NIU for entry into their career field after graduation?
   All students interviewed suggested hands-on experience, such as internships.

7. Do you know anyone on campus that has participated in an internship? Or have you? If you have not participated in an internship experience, would you be interested? Why?
   Most students interviewed said no; however one student had a good experience in a summer internship, but had a roommate who had an internship that was mostly making copies and make-work. Regarding interest in internships, all students responded yes; they are interested in internships for career preparation prior to entering their chosen field.

8. Do you think it would be beneficial for most NIU students to participate in an internship experience? What are some of the benefits of that experience?
   All students responded, “Yes!” Benefits: exposure to networking opportunities, getting more comfortable in the professional environment, experience/material for future interviews, and it would be beneficial to see if the chosen career path is right for you before you graduate with a degree in that field.

Recommendations:
- Develop a formal process, or host a “Mentor Fair” to match students with alumni mentors from their chosen field.
- Host an alumni event to attract alumni to campus to discuss the new “Huskie Mentor” program.
- H3 – Huskies Helping Huskies.
- Identify internship opportunities for all of the academic colleges; possibly pairing the experience with course credit.
- Ensure that students are taking advantage of Career Services and the many services they provide such as career counseling, internship fairs, résumé prep, etc.
- Provide more education on matching majors with potential career paths and preparing students for the job search.
- Make the Huskies Get Hired link on the NIU Career Services site more prominent on the University home page.