Student Career Success
BOLD FUTURES

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Special Topic: Place all students on a positive career track journey, including a mentoring connection with alumni

Key Insights from interviews

- Career track/long-term aspirations
  - Wide range of feedback with regard to how individuals’ envisioned their post collegiate careers upon first arriving at NIU – from “no idea” to “I’ve known since high school”
  - Career aspirations and majors evolve as students mature, begin taking classes and get involved in student related activities, internships have been very insightful
  - Most interviewees have started formulating ideas of what they plan to do after college but elements of uncertainty continue to exist
  - Mixed feedback with regard to how well students feel their programs are preparing them and how confident they’ll be successful post-graduation
  - For the most part interviewees felt they were receiving helpful career guidance from advisors in their majors

- Mentoring Concepts
  - “The Meaning of” – a recurring theme across the interviews is mentoring is a supportive and trusting relationship whereby one provides perspectives, resources and guidance to another to assist in achieving both personal and professional goals
  - All interviewees emphasized the importance of communication between the mentor and mentee
  - When it comes to professional goals, most interviewees stated alumni, faculty, or individuals in their chosen field of study would be preferred mentors. In addition to assisting one in finding a job and learning about an occupation, interviewees also emphasized mentors are beneficial in terms of helping them stay on track with goals and providing advice on personal matters

Ideas for creating alumni mentor relationships to place students’ on positive career track journeys

- Establish an online resource whereby alumni and students are placed into mentoring relationships based upon a short series of matching criteria, such as degree, occupation, industry, geographic location, etc.
  - On the one side would be students having a “Craig’s List” type of needs
  - The other side would be vetted alumni having a list of valued offerings

- Alumni could be invited to campus on a regular basis, potentially as an extension of the online resource program, to meet with small groups of interested students. Topics could range from campus life, career opportunities in chosen field, transitioning into the workforce and “real world” experiences to student-led free form discussion
  - The program could be linked to other campus/student activities such as career fairs, homecoming, and internships
  - In addition to the personal satisfaction gained, incentives for participation in the program could be offered to the alumni, i.e. tickets to campus events, NIU attire, tuition waivers, etc.

- Alumni could invite students to participate in job shadowing opportunities, worksite tours, etc.