The Piper Center for Vocation and Career

Management Studies Senior Capstone Project 2018-2019
Your Senior Capstone Project will demonstrate the interrelatedness of your varied learning experiences at St. Olaf and illustrate connections between all facets of your learning. Below are the specific requirements.

THE GOALS OF THE PROJECT ARE:

To help you articulate your vocational vision
To prepare you to search and interview for jobs, graduate school program, and gap year opportunities
To provide you with a directed means of reflecting on your academic and experiential learning as it relates to your future

All work for your capstone project must be submitted by the deadline during the fall of your senior year.

WHAT IS VOCATION AND HOW IS IT DIFFERENT FROM CAREER?

Vocation is more than a career choice. Vocation, in its broadest sense, encompasses every role that a person has in his or her life. Your vocation is created by the roles you play and the actions you take, which can range from a job to family life, or from being active in a community to taking time for yourself. Career is often a big part of your vocational goals but it’s important to consider the broader context career plays in our lives.

WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS PROJECT?

Put simply, this is what adults do who are successful in landing roles and opportunities that they want. Successful adults use and apply these skills to achieve opportunities that help them take incremental steps forward towards their overall vocational goals. These are skills that will be applied throughout your life.

IMPORTANT RESOURCES:

Piper Center for Vocation and Career
Tomson Hall 270 x3268
http://wp.stolaf.edu/pipercenter/

Management Studies
Holland Hall 317
http://wp.stolaf.edu/management-studies/

TO BEGIN THE MANAGEMENT STUDIES PROGRAM, YOU MUST FIRST COMPLETE A CONTRACT WITH A MANAGEMENT STUDIES FACULTY MEMBER.
Due Friday, October 12, 2018

1. Develop a Vocational Vision: In 2-3 paragraphs, write about your vocational vision, including the type of meaningful work you plan to do. - SUBMIT ON MOODLE
   a. For some people, the term "vocation" is synonymous with career; for others, it refers to the multiple roles one plays at any given time in life and the interplay between those roles.
   b. Resource: “What is Vocation?” Handout (attached)

2. Experiential Learning Requirements Synopsis: 2-3 paragraphs including how these experiences have informed your vocational discernment process - SUBMIT ON MOODLE
   a. Informational Interview #1 (Start by giving the person’s name, title, and organization.)
   b. Informational Interview #2 (Start by giving the person’s name, title, and organization.)
   c. Required Internship or approved significant work experience. If not yet completed, describe an internship that you are seeking to fulfill this requirement.
   d. Second experiential learning activity (second work experience, volunteer or leadership experience, etc.) If not yet completed, describe an experiential learning activity that you are seeking to fulfill this requirement.
   e. Resource: https://wp.stolaf.edu/pipercenter/how-to-guides/interview-guide/
   f. Resource: https://wp.stolaf.edu/pipercenter/find-internships-research-opportunities/

3. Develop a robust, professional LinkedIn profile
   a. Your profile should have a professional quality head shot that is appropriate for your vocational space. Headshots can be taken in the Piper Center - schedule an appointment by emailing: piper.center@stolaf.edu.
   b. Your profile summary presents the space to express your vocational and career vision to others. It is also an opportunity to highlight any significant experiences. Take your time to develop a summary that will stand out, capture who you are, and help the reader understand your goals.
   c. Include details for each experience. This can be in narrative form, bullet points, or a hybrid - be complete, yet concise. Experience can be work, internships, etc.
   d. Consider whether having additional profile sections would make sense for you. These could include: volunteering, skills, and/or accomplishments.
   e. Upload a copy of your resume as a document.
   f. Follow at least 5 groups, companies, organizations, news sites, or other entities related to your vocational interests.
   g. Once your draft profile is complete, have it reviewed by a Peer Advisor in the Piper Center.
   h. Optional: Attend a LinkedIn workshop sponsored by the Piper Center or meet with a peer advisor if you need helping getting started.
   i. Optional: Upload videos, other photos, presentations, work products, portfolios, and other media to your profile.
4. Explore Professional Interviewing Skills  
   a. Attend an interview skills workshop presented by the Piper Center. Workshop schedule will be shared at the start of the fall semester.  
   -OR-  
   If you have an actual pending job interview, you may satisfy this requirement by completing a mock interview with a Piper Center coach. In advance of your interview, it is recommended that you email the coach a copy of your resume and a sample job or internship position description that is within your vocational interests.  
   b. Write a 1-2 paragraph reflection on the experience, including how you perceived your interview skills before and after. - SUBMIT ON MOODLE  

5. Participate in at least one of the following Piper Center programs: Write 1-2 paragraph reflection on why you chose the event and how it benefited (or will benefit) you. - SUBMIT ON MOODLE  
   a. Ole Suite Event (Biz, Law+Policy, Health, Arts, Social Impact, or STEM), Showcase Events, Connections Program, Service Expo, or Minnesota’s Private Colleges Job and Internship Fair.  
   b. Other programs may be offered that suit your particular vocational interests.  

6. Coursework and Skills Reflection - SUBMIT ON MOODLE  
   a. Choose 2-3 courses in your major and 2-3 outside of your major to highlight. Provide the name of each course and a brief paragraph on how each course has helped you advance towards your vocational vision.  
   b. Transferable professional skills are sought after by employers and are important to communicating your fit for a job. List at least 5 transferable skills you have developed that are related to your vocational vision. Consider the broad variety of transferable skills that you have developed throughout your liberal arts career. Be sure these skills are included in your LinkedIn profile. Consider “endorsing” skills on your peer’s profiles.  

7. Upload a resume that has been reviewed by a Peer Advisor and/or Coach in the Piper Center.  
   a. Make sure your most recent resume is uploaded on LinkedIn.  

8. Maintaining Connections. Reconnect with at least 2 professional contacts with whom you’ve connected this year. Write a 1-3 paragraph reflection focusing on how the conversation and/or relationship evolved in your second interaction. - SUBMIT ON MOODLE  
   a. Reconnect with at least 2 professional contacts with whom you’ve connected this year.  
   b. This can be from your informational interviews from this capstone project, contacts from your internship experience(s), or an other professional contacts you have made this year.  
   c. This is an opportunity to practice maintaining and moving forward connections and professional relationships following your initial meeting. This is an important step to build your seriousness, credibility, and a productive professional relationship.
Vocation is…

• **More than a career choice**
  Vocation, in its broadest sense, encompasses every role that a person has in his or her life. Your vocation is created by the roles you play and the actions you take, which can range from a job to family life, or from being active in a community to taking time for yourself.

• **Something that arises from within**
  Look at the decisions you’ve made, the paths you’ve gravitated toward. Why have you done so, and what kinds of truths and values arise from these choices? Author Parker J. Palmer says “the deepest vocational question is not ‘What ought I to do with my life?’ It is the more elemental and demanding ‘Who am I? What is my nature?’”

• **Often discussed in terms of religion or spirituality**
  Many people—Lutherans included—see vocation as God’s call to engage in service and community, though this definition can vary widely even within one faith tradition. Others see vocation as a spiritual grounding. Whether spiritual or completely secular, vocation often involves the nurturing of the contemplative self.

• **Discernment that involves attentiveness and listening**
  People writing about vocation almost always speak of a “call,” but this call can be wide in scope. A call could be a set of circumstances that arise, a gut feeling, or recognition of your limits and abilities. A sense of open-mindedness to what constitutes a call is necessary to discern it.

• **All created equal and rooted in community**
  Every role, every job, every person, is created equal in terms of his or her vocation, and each role has equal spiritual and/or vocational value. It takes a variety of people, rooted in their callings and open to sharing them with others, to create a vibrant community.

• **Where “your deep gladness meets the world’s deep need”**
  This famous definition, coined by Frederick Buechner, is an important and fruitful way of thinking about vocation. As author and minister Howard Thurman said, “ask what makes you come alive and go do that…what the world needs is people who have come alive.”

**Further Reading**

- Richard Bode, *First You Have to Row a Little Boat: Reflections on Life and Living*
- Laurence Boldt, *How to Find the Work You Love*
- Gregg Levoy, *Callings: Finding and Following an Authentic Life*
- Parker J. Palmer, *Let Your Life Speak*
- Rainer Maria Rilke, *Letters to a Young Poet*
Reflection

“She is like a wild animal—tough, resilient, savvy, self-sufficient, and yet exceedingly shy. If we want to see a wild animal, the last thing we should do is to go crashing through the woods, shouting for the creature to come out. But if we are willing to walk quietly into the woods and sit silently for an hour or two at the base of a tree, the creature we are waiting for may well emerge, and out of the corner of an eye we will catch a glimpse of the precious wildness we seek.”
-Parker J. Palmer, Let Your Life Speak

Taking the time to reflect on our experiences is essential to our growth and understanding of ourselves. Our vocation does not just appear to us out of nowhere; it takes time to reflect on how our values, gifts and passions intersect. As Parker J. Palmer writes, “What a long time it can take to become the person one has always been!”

Getting Started

- Think about the method of reflection that works for you. Is it journaling, walking, meditating, talking with others, praying?
- Set aside one hour each week for intentional reflection.

Questions to Consider

- What makes you feel alive?
- What is your story? How does your social location, life story, background, family, where you grew up, conversations, classes, connect to the work you want to do in the world?
- What is your native way of being in the world?
- What clues from your childhood can help you understand what your true gifts are?

Vocation Tree Drawing/Exercise

**Roots**: your passions, values, truths
(What is at the heart of your own identity?)

**Trunk**: purpose, interests, skills, gifts
(What you’re good at, what you enjoy doing, how you’d enjoy spending your days.)

**Branches**: your work in the world
(List all the possible things you could do, roles you could play, communities in which you could engage…)