

A Guide for Families & Supporters of First-Year Students

Why Career Thinking Starts Now

Career development is a process—not a last-minute decision. Students who start early gain:

- Confidence in their interests and strengths
- Exposure to career options and majors
- Opportunities for internships and experience

Your student doesn't need to have it all figured out. They just need to take the next step.

What the Career Center Offers

All PLU students have access to **free career services** including:

-  **Career & major advising** with in person and virtual options + online [guides](#)
-  **Career assessments** like [PathwayU](#) and the [What Can I Do With This Major](#) tool
-  **Resume & interview help** for every confidence level, via our [coaches](#) & [TimelyCare](#)
-  **Internship & job search support** (via [Handshake](#))
-  **Alumni & employer connections** (via [LuteLink](#))
-  **Workshops & career events**

 *Tip: Encourage your student to visit—even if they don't know what to ask. In a national study, students who used career services were 15% more likely to have a job offer before graduation.*

Myths vs. Reality

Myth	Reality
"Major = career"	Skills and experience matter more—majors are flexible.
"Freshmen can't get internships"	Many first-year students find part-time jobs, shadowing, or summer roles.
"Only GPA matters to employers"	Fewer than 50% of employers filter by GPA. They want skills + experience.
"It's too early to visit Career Center"	The earlier the better—even to explore options.

Questions You Can Ask Your Student

You don't need all the answers—just be curious and supportive.

Try:

“What’s something new you’ve learned about yourself or what you might want to do?”

“Which clubs, events, or jobs on campus are you curious about?”

“What have you been thinking about for summer plans?”

“What support services have you tried on campus?”

First-Year Starting Points

It's not too early to take first steps!

Encourage your student to:

-  Take a career assessment (PathwayU)
-  Attend one career event or workshop
-  Join a club or volunteer
-  Explore Handshake for part-time jobs or internships
-  Meet a career coach—even if unsure

Support Without Pressure

You're already helping just by being

involved! Try to:

-  Ask open-ended questions
-  Encourage small steps, not perfection
-  Normalize changing their mind- it's part of the process!
-  Remind them to ask for help—it's a strength

Career Center Contact Info

Location: Hong Hall, 2nd Floor

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Website: <https://www.plu.edu/career/>

253-535-7415



Use this QR Code to access this guide as well as student-facing year-by-year career development guides.