

## The College to Career Road Map: A Four-Year Guide to Coaching Your Student (Parent Edition)

Atwood Publishing 2006, 253 pages

and

## The College to Career Road Map: A Four-Year Guide to Finding Your Path (Student Edition)

Atwood Publishing 2006, 248 pages

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*The College to Career Road Map* (Student and Parent editions) take a unique approach to the process of career development in the college years. Predicated on the assumption that today's parents are much more involved in their students' education than was common in the past, the student and parent volumes are intended to be used as a set during a student's journey toward graduation and initial career decisions. As stated in the promotional material, "The two books together foster an integration of efforts on the part of the student and the parent and thus, promote a higher potential for success."

*The College to Career Road Map: A Four-Year Guide to Finding Your Path* (the student edition) takes students through college year by year, spelling out the essential academic and experiential activities they should pursue to best prepare themselves for a satisfying, purposeful life after college. The authors' goal is simple: to provide the detailed road map a student needs to find a satisfying career—one that aligns with his or her purposes and pays the bills!

Orientation professionals who delve into these guides will be heartened to see that the authors' starting point is Orientation, academic advising, Welcome Week, and first-year experience courses which can foster academic success and resource exploration for freshmen. The student version helps students work on their goals throughout their college careers—not just in the year or two before graduation—and this developmental approach is one of the strengths of the book. Another strength is that the book covers not only the *what* but also the *why* and *how* of each activity, helping students understand the bigger picture behind the exercises.

The suggested academic and experiential activities for each of the four college years "ring true" to these reviewers. While suggestions for the first year include focusing on the theme of **exploration**—taking a broad range of courses, learning how to study, and

getting to know academic advisers and professors—junior year activities aim at developing concrete **experiences** such as internships, networking, and taking on campus leadership positions. An intriguing recommendation, starting in the junior year, is the development of a “career portfolio” to display tangible evidence of past accomplishments and current skills.

Senior year tasks (with the theme of **employment and education**) become even more focused as students are encouraged to seek professional references, participate in on-campus interviewing, and form informal job-search support groups. Students following this 4-year plan can be confident that they are engaging in a comprehensive, intentional process that will lead to rewarding entry-level career choices and strategies for lifelong career decision making.

Another “positive” of the student edition is its emphasis on rich reflection and understanding one’s purpose, passions, talents, and values. Critical thinking skills are called for as a student works through the “Road Map Questions” that permeate each chapter, with longer reflections at the end of each college year. One concern is that the guide assumes that the student user is willing and able to spend a significant amount of time reflecting and writing for a non-required purpose. Not all students will do so, even with parental encouragement. With its longitudinal focus, it will take a highly motivated student to return to the book throughout the course of 4 years to receive maximum benefit from the resource.

Turning to the parent edition, the authors lay out their view of the parent’s *facilitative* or *coaching* role, which consists of five core principles: listening for understanding, questioning to uncover ideas, promoting action, engaging in dialogue, and encouraging reflection. The parent guide mirrors the information and activities in the student edition, but it includes additional exercises for parents and students to do together. First-time college parents who use the guide will find that it helps them make sense of the multitude of career development strategies and opportunities, including career fairs, internships, mock interviews, resume critiques, and internships. Especially helpful are “Parent Tips” interspersed throughout the book.

Even if the books aren’t read in tandem, they are worthy stand-alone works with valuable information for their target audiences. They also have value for student affairs practitioners, including orientation professionals, who have daily contact with new students and parents with career development concerns.

The authors intend for students and parents to first read their books separately and then meet together for profitable dialogue, but is this a realistic expectation? Students are busy with course work and other commitments, and parents are just plain busy! An interactive Web site of the *Road Maps* might appeal to tech-savvy readers who are continuously using computers to communicate and to do work. Checklists and activity pages would be only a click away, and students and parents could correspond more easily and often by e-mail.

In summary, the books are conceptually sound and well written. Practicality of the resource will determine whether they accomplish their intended purpose. If one party is enthusiastic about the diligent use of the guide and the other is not, its usefulness will be

limited (and family dynamics may be strained).

All in all, this valuable set of resources has found a place on the recommended reading list for parents and students on these reviewers' campus. The true "litmus test" for "The College to Career Road Maps" will be whether members of the Class of 2011 and their parents pick up and use these guides to achieve maximum benefit in the career development process.

students who are (a) members of racial/ethnic groups that have been historically underrepresented and underserved in America's education system and (b) socially defined as minorities who are most likely to become targets of oppression, prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination regardless of numerical status and distribution. (p. 7)

The chapter concludes by highlighting several critical educational issues for students of color. Issues examined include negotiating the transition to college, retention, pre-college experiences relating to success in college, college attendance factors affecting retention and academic success, inter-group relations, and teaching and