

I Choose To Plan Ahead

By: Kristin Roeing; Student Counseling Services, CHOICES Outreach Intern

Earlier this semester I completed the process of applying to graduate school. Admittedly, I ended up pretty far behind in the game; last minute as a matter of fact. I've always known that I would have to continue my education to use my degree the way I wanted. I never considered, however, that certain things beyond my control could get in my way. I never planned on setbacks.

Choose to think about your academic responsibilities beyond your current homework assignments. What are your aspirations? Since the beginning of your college career, I am sure teachers, advisors, and professionals alike have been encouraging you to plan ahead in such ways as building references and getting prepared for future professional experiences. From personal experience, I strongly agree.

For example, you could get to know a professor by asking questions and setting up a research apprenticeship. Also, you could volunteer in activities that are applicable to your major, apply for an internship, and attend professional workshops provided by the university. There will be applications that might challenge you and others that will help you to define what you truly would like to be involved in. In the end, every opportunity you take to learn something new will assist you in being better prepared for the road ahead.

Choose to try things out before you plan to do them for the rest of your life. Choose to ask professionals questions. Choose to keep your eye open for opportunities to get involved. Choose to make time to think and prepare for the future.

Wake up! College will only last for so long. Keep in mind that you will have to create a life outside of college. *No* excuses. BIG responsibilities. Survival in society.

This all may sound a little scary but it is supposed to. That "real world" exists, and your future employers don't care that you had a bad day, or year. One suggestion: Don't underestimate your ability to create opportunities and become better prepared to achieve what you want. Demand it from your education. Demand it from *yourself*. Remember everything is a learning experience. Your future is ultimately in your hands.