

Research on Strategies for University Counselors to Assist College Students in Career Planning

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Abstract : In contemporary society, with the popularization of higher education and rapid economic development, the employment challenges of college students have drawn increasing attention. In 2024, the number of college graduates reached 11.79 million, intensifying competition in the job market and subjecting students to unprecedented employment pressure. Against this backdrop, career planning has become critical for college students. As mentors in students' growth, university counselors can deeply understand students' ideological dynamics, interests, and personality traits through close interaction, providing personalized career planning guidance. Therefore, exploring effective strategies for counselors to assist students in career planning holds significant practical importance.

Key Words: university counselors; college students' career planning; strategic research

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1 Current Status of College Students' Career Planning

The weak awareness and delayed action in career planning are prevalent among college students. Many fail to establish career planning consciousness in their early university years, missing the optimal planning period. While some recognize its importance, they lack initiative in practical implementation, participating passively in courses or lectures but rarely reflecting on career directions or developing specific plans. This leads to insufficient experience accumulation for future career development.

Notably, students exhibit deficiencies in self-awareness and career exploration. A shallow understanding of their interests, abilities, and personalities often causes career selection 偏差. Some pursue popular majors and high-paying careers blindly, ignoring personal strengths, which results in academic and professional struggles. Additionally, limited and fragmented access to career information—primarily through informal channels like the internet, family, and friends—hinders comprehensive understanding of job requirements, prospects, and skill demands. Insufficient participation in vocational practice further prevents students from assessing their suitability for specific careers.

In terms of career planning goals and implementation, the main problems are as follows: Unclear planning goals: Many students only generally hope to find a "good job", but lack in - depth thinking and clear answers about what the criteria for a "good job" are and what specific career they want to engage in in the future. Lack of persistence and firmness in implementation: Even if some students have formulated career planning goals, they are easily interfered by external factors during the implementation process and tend to give up when encountering difficulties and setbacks. Some students set too high goals when formulating career plans. When they find that they cannot achieve the goals, they will feel frustrated and then abandon the plans. In addition, some students lack effective time management and task allocation capabilities during the implementation of the plans, resulting in the failure to promote the plans on schedule.

2 Strategies and Practices for Counselors to Assist Career Planning

2.1 Personalized Guidance Strategies

2.1.1 Precise Assessment of Student Characteristics

To achieve precise guidance for students, counselors need to use a variety of assessment tools and methods to comprehensively and deeply evaluate students' characteristics. Psychological assessment is a common and effective

method. For example, through the MBTI assessment, counselors can gain an in-depth understanding of students' personality types, which helps them grasp the characteristics of students in interpersonal communication, information processing, decision-making styles, and other aspects. Students who are outgoing, good at communicating with others, and have strong emotional tendencies may be more suitable for careers that require frequent interaction with people and focus on maintaining interpersonal relationships, such as education, sales, and human resource management. On the other hand, students who are introverted and good at logical thinking and in-depth analysis have more advantages in fields such as scientific research, programming, and data analysis.

Interest assessment is also an indispensable link. The Holland Occupational Interest Inventory classifies human interests into six types: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional (RIASEC). Through this assessment, counselors can clarify students' interests, providing important references for career planning. Realistic students with a strong interest in machinery and tool operation are suitable for careers related to mechanical manufacturing, construction engineering, etc. Investigative students who love exploring knowledge and pursuing truth tend to prefer work in scientific research and academic fields.

In addition, counselors should recognize the impact of students' personal experiences and backgrounds on career choices. Family environment, growth experiences, and educational background subtly shape their career concepts and preferences. For example, students from educational families may feel naturally drawn to education-related careers, while those with entrepreneurial experience often show interest in self-employment or corporate management. By communicating deeply with students to understand their stories, counselors can better meet their career needs and guide their development.

2.1.2 Tailored Career Planning Programs

On the basis of a comprehensive assessment of students' characteristics, counselors should formulate personalized career planning solutions according to their traits. Goal setting is the core of the planning solution, ensuring that goals are both challenging and practical. For students with excellent academic performance, outstanding research capabilities, and aspirations for academic research, counselors can help them set long-term goals, such as pursuing a doctoral degree and entering renowned research institutions to engage in cutting-edge research. Short-term goals can include publishing high-quality academic papers and participating in research projects during undergraduate studies. For students who wish to enter the workforce directly after graduation, goals can be set based on their major and interests, such as joining a desired enterprise to engage in profession-related work upon graduation. In the first few years of employment, they can focus on accumulating rich work experience and enhancing professional skills and comprehensive qualities.

Path planning is key to achieving goals. For postgraduate exam candidates, counselors should help formulate detailed study plans, including arranging review time, selecting tutoring classes, and joining academic activities. Encourage students to engage in research projects, build good relationships with supervisors for recommendation letters and interview advantages. For job-seeking students, counselors should guide practical plans: intern during vacations to gain experience, take training courses for certificates to boost competitiveness, and actively participate in campus recruitment to learn interview skills.

In formulating the planning scheme, counselors should respect students' dominant position, encourage their active participation in discussions, and let them express ideas and needs. Discuss the pros and cons of different career paths with students to help them make independent choices based on in-depth understanding. Regularly communicate with students, adjust the plan in a timely manner according to their actual situation and external changes, and ensure its effectiveness and adaptability. If students lose interest in the original career goals during internships or market demand changes significantly, counselors should re-evaluate and adjust the career direction and planning content together with students to help them adapt to career development needs.

2.2 Holistic Education Strategies

2.2.1 Stage-Based Progressive Education

In freshman year, focus on guiding students in self-awareness and career exploration. New to college, they are often

confused about future careers and unclear about their interests, abilities, and values. Counselors can organize career planning lectures, inviting outstanding alumni and industry elites to share experiences, so students can learn about different professions' work, prospects, and skills needed. For example, invite Internet-industry alumni to talk about its innovative environment and talent needs, or education experts to share educators' responsibilities and professional requirements. Also, encourage students to take career assessments to understand themselves better and explore initial career paths.

The sophomore and junior years are the preparation period. Students should build a reasonable knowledge structure and enhance professional skills around their preliminary career direction. Counselors need to guide them in formulating study plans and selecting suitable professional and elective courses based on career goals. For those aiming at the financial industry, besides mastering core courses like Finance, Securities Investment, and Financial Management, they should take electives such as Risk Management and Financial Data Analysis to broaden knowledge. Actively encourage participation in internships, part-time jobs, volunteer services, and subject competitions related to career goals. For example, interning at financial institutions during vacations to understand industry operations, joining financial simulation trading competitions to hone analysis and decision-making skills, and participating in financial knowledge promotion volunteer work to improve communication and social responsibility. These practices help students apply theory to reality, clarify career interests, and enhance professional literacy and competitiveness.

The senior year is a critical sprint period for employment. Students should fully devote themselves to job search preparations, translating past accumulations into practical employment results. Counselors should assist students in refining application materials, guiding them to craft resumes that highlight professional skills, practical experience, and awards to stand out. Provide interview training through mock interviews and case analysis to help students master skills and improve performance. Help collect and filter job information, promptly release recruitment updates, and recommend suitable positions based on students' career goals. Encourage active participation in various job fairs to seize opportunities. Additionally, pay attention to students' mental state, offer timely counseling to ease pressure, and help them maintain a positive attitude for employment challenges.

2.2.2 Continuous Tracking and Dynamic Adjustment

During the implementation of students' career planning, counselors should establish an effective tracking mechanism to continuously pay attention to students' progress. Regular one-on-one exchanges with students should be carried out to understand their actual situations in learning, practice, job hunting and other aspects, so as to timely identify problems and provide guidance. For students preparing for the postgraduate entrance examination, counselors can communicate with them once a month to understand their review progress, encountered difficulties and psychological state. If students encounter bottlenecks in mathematics review, counselors can help them analyze the reasons and provide suggestions on learning methods, such as recommending appropriate tutoring materials and learning videos, or introducing senior students with rich learning experience for communication and guidance.

During each semester, organize students to conduct career planning summaries and reflections, requiring them to comprehensively sort out the implementation of their career planning in the current semester, summarize experiences and lessons, and clarify the direction for future efforts. Guide students to analyze whether they have made expected progress in aspects such as career cognition, skill improvement, and practical experience, identify where there are still deficiencies, and determine how to improve. Encourage students to actively share their career planning stories and insights. Through communication and interaction, enable students to learn from and inspire each other, and make progress together.

Career planning is not set in stone but a dynamic process that requires timely adjustments based on actual circumstances. When students' personal interests, abilities, and values change, counselors should guide them to re-examine their career goals and development paths. For example, if a student finds no interest in the originally set career goal after an internship but develops a strong passion for another related field, the counselor should support the student in conducting in-depth exploration, help them reassess their own advantages and career prospects, and adjust the career plan. At the same time, when major changes occur in the external environment, such as employment market demands and industry development trends, counselors should promptly convey information to students and guide them to adjust their

plans to adapt to the new situation.

2.3 Diversified Resource Integration Strategies

2.3.1 Intra-campus Resource Collaboration

Integrating campus resources is crucial for college counselors to aid students in career planning. In terms of curriculum, counselors should collaborate with the Academic Affairs Office and professional colleges to deeply integrate career planning courses with specialized ones. They should incorporate career planning elements into specialized courses, helping students understand the professional application and prospects of their majors while learning knowledge. Additionally, counselors should support the construction of career planning courses by enriching contents and teaching methods, inviting industry experts like enterprise professionals and HR managers to give lectures and case analyses, and utilizing online platforms to provide students with convenient and diverse high-quality learning resources.

Integrating practical activity resources is also of vital importance. Counselors should actively organize students to participate in various practical activities, such as internships, innovation and entrepreneurship projects, and club activities. They should strengthen the connection and cooperation with the school's internship bases to strive for more high-quality internship opportunities for students, enabling them to exercise their professional skills and practical abilities in real work environments and understand workplace rules and corporate culture. Students should be encouraged to participate in innovation and entrepreneurship projects to cultivate their innovative spirit and entrepreneurial capabilities, opening up new paths for future career development. Additionally, counselors should support students in joining club activities, through which students can exercise their organizational and coordination skills, team cooperation abilities, and communication skills, thereby enhancing their comprehensive qualities.

2.3.2 Off-campus Resource Expansion

Actively introducing off-campus resources can provide a broader vision and more opportunities for college students' career planning. In terms of enterprise resources, counselors should strengthen the connection and cooperation with various enterprises to establish long-term and stable cooperative relationships. Through visiting enterprises, participating in school-enterprise cooperation fairs and other means, they should deeply understand the talent needs and job requirements of enterprises, and timely convey this information to students to help them clarify career goals and the direction of efforts. Invite corporate HR to carry out recruitment briefings and career guidance lectures on campus, so that students can understand the company's recruitment process, interview skills and career development planning, helping students improve their professional literacy and job-seeking ability.

Establishing internship bases offers students more internship opportunities, enabling them to understand the professional environment, accumulate work experience, and enhance their professional literacy through practice. Cooperating with enterprises to carry out order-based talent cultivation, formulating talent training programs according to enterprise needs, and cultivating professional talents for enterprises in a targeted manner can improve students' employment competitiveness. A school has collaborated with a well-known enterprise on order-based talent cultivation. The enterprise, based on its own development strategy and talent requirements, has jointly formulated the curriculum system and teaching plan with the school. During the learning process, students not only master professional knowledge and skills but also gain an understanding of the enterprise's culture and values, and directly enter the enterprise to work after graduation.

3 Conclusion

This paper explores strategies for college counselors to aid students in career planning, highlighting the vital role of career planning amid the tough employment landscape. By analyzing the current status of students' career planning and identifying existing issues, it proposes practical strategies. For personalized guidance, multiple assessment tools are used to evaluate students' traits (personality, interests, abilities, etc.), considering their backgrounds to customize plans, ensuring clear goals and flexible adjustments.

The whole-process education strategy adopts phased guidance: freshman year for self-awareness and career exploration, sophomore/junior years for knowledge building and skill enhancement, senior year for job-seeking

preparation. It also establishes a tracking mechanism for regular feedback and dynamic plan adjustments. The diversified resource integration strategy coordinates in-school resources (e.g., integrating career courses with majors, enriching lectures, and organizing practical activities) and expands off-campus partnerships for order-based talent cultivation.

By implementing these strategies, college counselors can effectively enhance college students' career planning capabilities, helping students better understand themselves and the job market, clarify their career development directions, improve their employability, and promote their all-round development and growth. Counselors play an irreplaceable and important role in college students' career planning.

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