**I. Potential Career Pathways**

Before you can begin exploring careers, you need to define what it is you might be interested in doing. This is easier than it sounds – remember, you are simply defining areas to explore, not signing up for a lifetime devoted to this type of work/industry/mission.

1. **What are your interests?** List at least 3 interest areas that excite you enough you could give a speech about them for 10 minutes. To help you get started, think about the programs you watch on Netflix, the subject of things you read for fun, classes you like, your hobbies, a social issue you find compelling, your reason for choosing the O’Neill School, etc. List as many things that come to mind below:

*Example: wilderness education, economics, children and family issues, food deserts*

1. **What do you like to do (work function)?** Now think about things you like to do that aren’t necessarily related to the things above.

*Example: leading group projects, recruiting new members to the sustainability student organization, giving presentations,**writing code, creating graphics, working in Excel*

1. **Where do you want to live?** List at least 3 cities you would like to live in after you graduate.

*Example: San Diego, Austin, Boston*

1. **Mix and match!** Combine your fields, activities, and locations above to create *at least 5* different combinations to create potential career pathways to explore. Be creative, combine these in any way that appeals to you.

*Example: lead efforts to recruit community members for an organization working to eliminate hunger in San Diego; develop and lead financial literacy courses for single mothers in Boston; support tech start-up assessing success of clean air initiatives in Austin; raise money for clean beach and sea life initiatives in San Diego by giving presentations for donors in-person and online; teach outdoor education classes to children in San Diego*

1. **Find your top choices.** Circle the 3 options that appeal to you most, and then rank those in order of most exciting to less exciting.
2. **What themes do you see?** In those top 3, do you see a recurring interest area? Recurring skill/set of skills? A location that comes up more than once?
3. **Identify your career path targets.** Write Career Pathway statementsfor each of the following categories. Career Path 1 is ideally an interest area + skill + geographic location:
   1. Career Path 1 (interest area and function combined – your first choice in question 5 above)**:**

*Example: I would like to learn about supporting environmental causes in San Diego using my presentation and recruitment skills.*

* 1. Career Path 2 (functional, interest area, or geographic location top theme):
  2. Career Path 3 (functional, interest area, or geographic location top theme not listed for Career Path 2):

**II. Begin Exploring**

Go through these steps for each of the career paths you defined above. These become your plans A, B, and C and allow you to learn about a wide variety of options available to you professionally.

1. Develop foundational knowledge of the industry. A simple Google search is a great way to find preliminary information.
   1. Read blogs, journals, articles, etc.
   2. Watch Ted Talks, YouTube videos
   3. Opt into Career Community/Communities that relate to this industry

Are you still interested in this industry?

**YES** – Go to the next step

**NO** –What did you learn about this industry that makes you no longer interested? Return to step 1 to review your interests.

1. Start learning more by talking to people in the industry/field.
   1. Use LinkedIn to find potential contacts
   2. Request informational interviews with them

Are you still interested in this industry?

**YES** – Go to the next step. Continue finding contacts and conducting informational interviews.

**NO** –What did you learn about this industry that makes you no longer interested? Return to step 1 to review your interests.

1. Get experience in the industry/functional area.
   1. Academics – add a minor or certificate? Double major? Take classes outside of your current major/minor? Online training?
   2. Student Organizations – find one focused on your interest area to learn more; participate in any organization you are interested in providing functional support (budget, recruiting, event planning, contacting guest speakers, etc.)
   3. Part-time Job – find an organization in your industry or a position that will give you functional experience

Are you still interested in this industry?

**YES** – Go to the next step

**NO** –What did you learn about this industry that makes you no longer interested? Return to step 1 to review your interests.

1. Find an internship.
   1. Conduct an *intentional* search using the contacts and information you gathered from informational interviews.
   2. Apply to your dream organizations. Even if you do not get the internship, if you submit a high-impact application and perform well in the interview, you will be on the recruiters’ radar for the next hiring season.
   3. Only 1 internship is required for your O’Neill School degree, but 2 – 5 internships will make you much more competitive. Use your summers and fall/spring semesters to get experience.

Are you still interested in this industry?

**YES** – Go to the next step

**NO** –What did you learn about this industry that makes you no longer interested? Return to step 1 to review your interests.

1. Apply for a full-time position.
   1. Activate the network you have built through informational interviewing.