



Academic and Co-curricular Planning Time lines

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Freshman Class Standing

(0-25 credits)

Academics

- (1) Meet with your curriculum advisor to determine which general education courses you will need for graduation. Consider using the four year planning guide (location: <http://homepages.wmich.edu/~kritzman>)
- (2) Meet with your major/minor advisor(s) to determine your class schedule for the year. (If your major/minor advisor attends one of your classes and does in-class advising, this may meet your major/minor advising needs)
- (3) Take required courses such as COM 1000 to help explore Communication majors/minors and career options.
- (4) Register for one or two Communication/Journalism classes per semester for your major (and any additional majors) or one class per semester for your Communication/Journalism minor. **(You should declare and begin your minor by the second semester your sophomore year).**
- (5) Meet your professors and T.A.'s. Take advantage of their office hours.
- (6) Use the "Academic Success One Semester at a Time" document located at: (<http://homepages.wmich.edu/~kritzman>). Click on "Undergraduate Advising"
- (7) Start exploring minors. The approved list of minors for Communication majors is located at: <http://homepages.wmich.edu/~kritzman>. Click on "Undergraduate Advising"
- (8) Take advantage of Academic Skills Center (1065 Moore Hall)
- (9) Explore the "Western Edge" (www.wmich.edu/edge). Contact your curriculum advisor to discuss participation.

Career Path Development

- (1) Make a list of your greatest skills and interests.

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Page 2 of 12

- (2) Test your interests through student activities and/or campus organizations.
- (3) Gain exposure to the work of organizations and the skills they require through community volunteerism.
- (4) Target a part-time job, campus or summer job which develops employability skills.
- (5) Identify majors that relate to your abilities and interests. You can use the self-assessment tool “FOCUS” available at www.broncojobs.wmich.edu
- (6) If you are unsure of your major, consider taking a Career Guidance Inventory by contacting Counseling and Testing Services, or Self-Assessments such as *Focus*, *MBTI*, and *Strong* in the Office of Career and Student Employment Services (1401 Ellsworth Hall).
- (7) Participate in FYE and University 1020 to help adjust to university life and explore career options.
- (8) Create a resume. To obtain help with resume writing, visit www.iwebfolio.com/public/urbane and/or meet with a career advisor (387-2745).
- (9) Register with Bronco Jobs (www.broncojobs.wmich.edu) to post your resume and beginning looking for internships.
- (10) Begin developing a list of individuals who can serve as references. Be sure you ask their permission to use them as an advisor. Ask for their complete information including name, title, mailing address, e-mail address, and phone and fax number.
- (11) Meet with a Career and Student Employment Services representative for the College of Arts and Sciences (Call: (269)387-2745) to become more familiar with their resources and to discuss ways to explore career paths and build related skills.
- (12) Register with Bronco Jobs to learn about undergraduate employment opportunities.
- (13) Attend COM Day to hear from, and network with, successful WMU graduates, learn about campus organizations and programs, and interact with students and faculty in the School of Communication.
- (14) Review your college, major and minor information on GoWMU. Visit your curriculum advisor to update information.
- (15) Review your permanent U.S. mailing address, local phone number and e-mail address on file with the university (through Go-WMU). Update at least annually so your contact information is correct.

(16) Create a file or notebook for all your advising paperwork (letter of acceptance, transfer credit evaluations, business cards, major slip(s), minor slip(s), study abroad approval documents, graduation audit information). Keep this file up-to-date and bring it to all your advising appointments.

(17) Did you know that many employers require prospective employees to pass a drug test before they can work in their company, even for a part-time job? Can you pass a drug test? If not, you may want to take steps to remedy this situation. The Sindecuse Health Center and Counseling and Testing Services are good places to seek assistance.

(18). Sign up on LinkedIn to begin establishing your professional network (www.linkedin.com). Be sure to add Marilyn Kritzman (your faculty advisor) to your professional network.

Co-Curricular

(1) Involve yourself with residence hall programs.

(2) Consider joining a student organization or become involved in a community service organization, especially if you live off-campus. Getting involved with an organization will help you create connections, meet new people and enhance your teamwork, interpersonal and organizational communication skills.

(3) Student organizations in the School of Communication open to undergraduates include: COMMA (Undergraduate Communication Association), PRO (Public Relations Organization, SPJ (Society of Professional Journalists). Consider joining one of these organizations.

(3) If needed, seek help from your Resident Advisor (R.A.), the Sindecuse Health Center, or the Counseling Center. They are available for personal advising and/or assistance.

(4) Balance schoolwork, a job, hobbies and leisure activities.

Sophomore Class Standing (26-55 credits)

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Page 4 of 12

Academics

- (1) Meet with your curriculum, major and minor advisors to develop a planned schedule for classes during your remaining time at Western Michigan University. Consider using the four year planning guide (<http://homepages.wmich.edu/~kritzman>)
- (2) Visit department home pages to learn about possible majors and the requirements to declare, or apply, for the major.
- (3) Consider using the “what if” function of CAPP to explore progress toward completion of various majors and minors. Contact your curriculum advisor to discuss the results or any questions you have regarding transfer credits and how they are applied toward your degree.
- (4) Declare, or apply, for your major and minor (keep your major and minor slips for your graduation audit in the future).
- (5) Take two Communication/Journalism classes per semester toward your major or one Communication/Journalism class per semester toward your minor. Look for classes that will help develop writing, listening, and organizational skills.
- (6) Complete the pre-requisites required for your major.
- (7) Apply for, or declare, your major (s). Retain your major slip(s) for your graduation audit.
- (8) Apply for, or declare, your minor(s). Retain your minor slip(s) for your graduation audit.
- (9) Review your college, major and minor information on GoWMU. Visit your curriculum advisor to update information.
- (10) Review your permanent U.S. mailing address, local phone number and e-mail address on file with the university (through Go-WMU). Update at least annually so your contact information is correct.
- (11) Get to know your advisors and instructors.

Career

- (1) Spend time researching careers. Utilize Career & Student Employment Services, resources at www.broncojobs.wmich.edu, Counseling and Testing Services, and internet searches.
- (2) Ask yourself: “What can I do with this major?” Identify values and what is important to you in a job.

- (3)** Meet with a career counselor to help discuss possible jobs/careers related to your major, and to discuss how you can begin documenting your achievements and abilities.
- (4)** Contact professional associations which provide current information about fields that interest you.
- (5)** Target course electives which will enhance your marketability to employers.
- (6)** Attend workshops on the internship and study abroad programs at Western Michigan University to help you decide how these programs can fit into your academic plans
- (7)** Attend career fairs and related career planning workshops.
- (8)** Attend COM Day to hear from, and network with, successful WMU graduates, learn about campus organizations and programs, and interact with students and faculty in the School of Communication.
- (9)** Look for a summer job or internship to gain career experience, enhance interpersonal, communication and teamwork skills. Create an electronic portfolio using “iwebfolio” as part of your internship.
- (10)** Update your profile and resume on Bronco Jobs (www.broncojobs.wmich.edu)
- (11)** Review your voice mail greeting and email address. What do they say about you? Is it time to update these to create a professional impression when prospective internship supervisors or employers contact you?
- (12)** Review content of “My Space”, “Face Book”, and other on-line social networking sites. What message does the content say about you? Would a prospective employer or internship supervisor want to hire you after they reviewed this information? It may be time to remove some or all of this information.
- (13)** Consider and investigate to study abroad for a semester. Visit the Study Abroad Office (2449 Ellsworth Hall).
- (14)** Know your criminal history report. Certain professions are out of bounds if you have a criminal history. Review your history report be sure that your chosen career path is not adversely affected. You may need to re-think your career path if your criminal history changes during your college career.
- (15)** Did you know that many employers require prospective employees to pass a drug test before they can work in their company, even for a part-time job? Can you pass a drug test? If not, you

may want to take steps to remedy this situation. The Sindecuse Health Center and Counseling and Testing Services are good places to seek assistance.

Co-Curricular

(1) Consider taking a leadership role in your student organization. If you are living on campus, you may want to apply for an R.A. position. This is a great resume builder and will further develop your interpersonal and organizational skills, while enhancing your ability to communicate in stressful situations.

(2) Volunteer for organizations and events that improve group problem solving skills or volunteer for a leadership position in class projects to improve leadership roles.

Junior Class Standing (56-87 credits)

Academics

(1) If you plan to attend graduate, law or medical school, begin preparation for the MCAT, LSAT or GRE exams. See whether test scores are valid for three or five years to determine when to apply (Test registration bulletins are available at the University Counseling and Testing Center in Faunce). April of your junior year is the best time to take the MCAT.

(2) Complete your graduation audit three semesters before you plan to graduate. You will need your major and minor slips.

(3) Look for funded research projects such as the undergraduate research award program offered by the College of Arts & Science (insert web site info) to increase your research skills and create additional opportunities to interact with faculty members.

(4) Take two Communication/Journalism classes per semester toward your major and one Communication/Journalism class per semester toward your minor.

(5) Work on electives, internships or independent studies.

- (6) Research graduate schools, if appropriate.
- (7) By the end of your junior year, **all required** courses for your Communication/Journalism major or minor should be completed
- (8) Review your college, major and minor information on GoWMU. Visit your curriculum advisor to update information.
- (9) Review your permanent U.S. mailing address, local phone number and e-mail address on file with the university (through Go-WMU). Update at least annually so your contact information is correct.

Career

- (1) Update your resume and post it in the resume books on Bronco Jobs. Become comfortable researching jobs and internships (www.broncojobs.wmich.edu)
- (2) Apply for a “for-credit” internship toward your major and begin looking for a summer job or internship relating to your career interests. Review the list of web-based search engines at <http://homepages.wmich.edu/~kritzman> Develop a portfolio using “iwebfolio” as part of your internship.
- (3) Attend seminars on job search, resume, portfolio preparation and interviewing tips. Attend career planning and related workshops.
- (4) Find people in jobs that interest you and interview them about the nature of their work.
- (5) Develop relationships with faculty and professionals in your field.
- (6) Join and attend meetings of professional and or career-related registered student organizations. Review the list of opportunities at <http://homepages.wmich.edu/~kritzman>
- (7) Begin preparing a personal portfolio with examples of writings, clips, etc to use when you apply for internships and jobs
- (8) Attend COM Day to hear from, and network with, successful WMU graduates, learn about campus organizations and programs, and interact with students and faculty in the School of Communication.
- (9) Register for the WMU Alumni Mentor Program (www.wmich.edu/alumni/).

(10) Review your voice mail greeting and email address. What do they say about you? Is it time to update these to create a professional impression when prospective internship supervisors or employers contact you?

(11) Review content of “My Space”, “Face Book” and other on-line social networking sites. What is the message about you? Would a prospective employer or internship supervisor want to hire you after they reviewed your information? It may be time to remove some/all this information.

(12) Have you reviewed your credit reports lately? Often, employers review a candidate’s credit report before they offer them a job. A poor credit rating could prevent you from being offered a position. You should review all three major credit reports in your name. If there are errors in any of your reports, you should begin correcting them. It often takes a year or more to improve a poor credit rating.

(13) Review your criminal history report. Certain professions are out of bounds if you have a criminal history. Be sure that your chosen career path is not adversely affected. You may need to re-think your career path if your criminal history changes during your college career.

(14) Did you know that many employers require prospective employees to pass a drug test before they can work in their company, even for a part-time job? Can you pass a drug test? If not, you may want to take steps to remedy this situation. The Sindecuse Health Center and Counseling and Testing Services are good places to seek assistance.

Co-Curricular

(1) Work in an office to further develop interpersonal skills or consider starting a home-based business.

(2) Participate in a spring break or summer community service project to enhance teamwork and problem solving skills and also to increase civic and social awareness.

(3) Accept a leadership position in a student organization.

(4) Accept invitations to join academic honor societies

Senior Class Standing

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Page 9 of 12

(88+ credits)

Academics

- (1) Complete all electives and requirements for your major and minor during fall semester.
- (2) Complete graduation requirements stated in your graduation audit.
- (3) If not completed during your junior year, register and take the GRE, LSAT or other graduate college entrance exams.
- (4) Research and apply for graduate school or consider working one to three years before graduate school to mature, enhance learning, and clarify career goals.
- (5) Participate in Commencement ceremonies.
- (6) Review your college, major and minor information on GoWMU. Visit your curriculum advisor to update information.
- (7) Review your permanent U.S. mailing address, local phone number and e-mail address on file with the university (through Go-WMU). Update at least annually so your contact information is correct.

Career

- (1) Update your information and current resume on Bronco Jobs. Routinely check job postings on-line and through other modes of media. (www.broncojobs.wmich.edu)
- (2) Meet with a career counselor to critique your resume and cover letters. Develop your job search and discuss future career plans and options.
- (3) Contact former employers and former internship supervisors to request references. Make sure you have their permission to use them as a reference. Obtain current title, complete mailing address, e-mail address and phone numbers. Send them a current copy of your resume.
- (4) Continue to network with professionals in the field that interests you. Talk to them about opportunities and job search techniques.

(5) Complete your personal portfolio with examples of writings, clips, etc to use when you apply for internships, graduate school or jobs.

(6) Research, visit, and view videotapes of possible employers.

(7) Attend job search strategy workshops, career workshops, and job/career fairs

(8) Attend COM Day to hear from, and network with, successful WMU graduates, learn about campus organizations and programs, and interact with students and faculty in the School of Communication.

(9) Join professional organizations or associations. Review the list of opportunities at <http://homepages.wmich.edu/~kritzman>

(10) Review your voice mail greeting and email address. What do they say about you? Is it time to update these to create a professional impression when prospective internship supervisors or employers contact you?

(11) Review content of “My Space”, “Face Book” and other on-line social networking site. What is the message about you? Would a prospective employer or internship supervisor want to hire you after they reviewed your information? It may be time to remove some/all this information.

(12) Have you reviewed your credit reports lately? Often, employers review a candidate’s credit report before they offer them a job. A poor credit rating could prevent you from being offered a position. You should review all three major credit reports in your name. If there are errors in any of your reports, you should begin correcting them. It often takes a year or more to improve a poor credit rating.

(13) Review your criminal history report. Certain professions are out of bounds if you have a criminal history. Be sure that your chosen career path is not adversely affected. You may need to re-think your career path if your criminal history changes during your college career.

(14) Did you know that many employers require prospective employees to pass a drug test before they can work in their company, even for a part-time job? Can you pass a drug test? If not, you may want to take steps to remedy this. The Sindecuse Health Center and Counseling and Testing Services are good places to seek assistance.

Co-Curricular

(1) If you are moving directly into your first job after graduation, talk about the first year after graduation with family, friends, and/or an advisor about:

- ✓ your ideal work environment

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Page 11 of 12

- ✓ the type of community you would like to live in
- ✓ what climate best suites you
- ✓ your desired proximity to family and friends
- ✓ your values and longer-term goals are in relation to choosing your first job

(2) If you are beginning graduate school:

- ✓ project future financial needs by researching overall costs, loans, scholarships, part-time work, and graduate assistantships
- ✓ pay critical attention to application deadlines, since financial aid deadlines frequently precede general application deadlines
- ✓ set a realistic budget for yourself
- ✓ visit campuses of interest to critique the curriculum workload, faculty to student ratios, research interests and publications, size, and internship or practicum opportunities

(3) Accept invitations to join academic honor societies

(4) After graduation:

- ✓ join the WMU Alumni Association (www.wmich.edu/alumni/)
- ✓ complete the Career and Student Employment Services annual graduation survey
- ✓ change your status on Bronco Jobs to “alumni”
- ✓ keep the School of Communication and your undergraduate advisor informed of your career progress
- ✓ consider serving as a mentor in the WMU Alumni Mentor Program
- ✓ contact Career and Student Employment Services as your job search and career progress. They have a reciprocity agreement with colleges and universities around the country and can connect you with local job search resources as you need them.