**Class Discussion: Passion vs. Practicality- Faculty Instructions**

**Module 2: How to Make a Career Decision**

*Topic: Choosing a Career: Passion vs. Practicality*

This is a whole-class discussion. If possible in your classroom, consider moving desks or chairs into a circle or square where students can see all of their classmates. If you’d like a quick refresher of the main points you’ll be covering in this discussion, see video clip 4 – “Choosing a Career” in the module. In addition, you may want to be aware of the pressures educational institutions are facing to produce more graduates in particular fields either being demanded by employers or predicted by economists to be high-need areas. Sometimes we take that to mean we are responsible for encouraging all students to seriously consider those fields, when it really just means we should be trying to support and encourage students *who have natural interests and abilities that align with those high-need areas* in their pursuit of those fields. At the Career Center, we’ve seen many a disaster befall students who chose a career path that didn’t align with their natural characteristics just based on practicality or perceived external pressure. We strongly believe that the best career choice results from finding the middle ground between a student’s personal characteristics (interests, abilities, values) and the needs of our economy. It’s just a matter of figuring out where you fit!

**Discussion Outline:**

**Part 1**

1. (Poll question) Think about those questions you answered in the module about the messages you’ve received regarding how to choose a career. How many of you have heard or been told that when choosing a career, you should pursue your passion?
   1. Who or where did you hear that from? Share your story.
   2. Those of you who got this message, what impact has that had on the way you’ve gone about approaching your own career choice? Or, for those of you who are undecided, how do you think that message has impacted you?
2. (Poll question) How many of you have heard or been told that when choosing a career, you should pursue something practical?
   1. Who or where did you hear that from? Share your story.
   2. Those of you who got this message, what impact has that had on the way you’ve gone about approaching your own career choice? Or, for those of you who are undecided, how do you think that message has impacted you?
3. (Poll question) How many of you have felt pressured at some point to pursue a career that you didn’t really feel was right for you?
   1. Share your story.

**Part 2**

1. What are some of the reasons for pursuing something you’re passionate about as your career?
   1. What about reasons for NOT pursuing your passion?
   2. If you just pursued a passion without considering the job market, what are some possible consequences?
2. What are some of the reasons for basing your career choice on job market demand?
   1. What about reasons for NOT basing your choice on job market demand?
   2. What are some possible consequences of choosing a career JUST based on job market demand?
3. In the module, you heard that the best career choice results from a balance of passion and practicality. Do you agree with this? Why or why not?
4. Do you think it’s possible to have both – a career you’re passionate about and something that’s practical, or do you have to make sacrifices to balance the two? (Note that you’ll receive different answers from different students, often depending on the student’s own passion and whether that happens to align nicely with a real job/in demand job or not. This is ok, but try to reinforce that it’s very unlikely to find a career that has EVERYTHING you want, and choosing the overall best-fitting career will usually involve some sacrifice in order to strike a good balance between passion and practicality.