CAREER SERVICES

Power of Possibilities Helps Students Link Interests, Majors and Careers

By Kim Hachiya

Uncertainty about career paths and indecisiveness about majors can really bog students down. They don’t know which majors can lead to what careers. They fear that choosing a major will lock them into something they won’t like. Or they don’t know what major matches their current interests and talents. These worries can lead students to avoid choosing a major, which can slow their progress toward graduation, adding semesters, even years to their college experience.

A new web-based tool developed at UNL helps students find answers for those questions. Called the Power of Possibilities, the tool allows students, either enrolled at UNL or those thinking about college in general, to match their interests with majors offered at UNL and the possible careers to which those majors lead.

The interactive tool, found at http://possibilities.unl.edu/, allows students to choose from eight general areas of interest: business world, communities and schools, health and medical, numbers and logic, science, communication, world views, and arts and humanities. The user can “mouse over” the interest areas to learn what types of items the area includes. Once the student selects an interest area, he or she is presented with a series of statements that narrow the field. And once those areas are selected, the tool shows which UNL majors tap into those interest areas, possible careers the majors can lead to, and even recent internships experienced by students enrolled in those majors. When done, the student can click a box that gives him or her a printout of the session for future reference.

Here’s a quick example. Say the student selects “Communications.” The mouse-over indicates the broad topic includes information on assisting those with hearing impairments, media, public relations, and speaking and writing. By clicking that sub-topic, interest phrases can be selected. Say the student chooses “I like to develop and present information to the public.” From there, 20 possible majors are identified. They range from Advertising to Theatre and English. By selecting a major, several possible career choices are presented, as well as a definition of the major and some recent internship opportunities.

The tool is specific to UNL because it links interests with UNL majors, but students who are interested in college in general might like the tool because it helps them connect interests with majors offered at many institutions.

The tool shows there are a variety of options for many career interests. For instance, students interested
Your Student’s UNL Bill

By Jennifer Hellwege

How do I get access to my student’s account?
Students can set up access for another individual to view their billing information very easily. In their WAM (wam.unl.edu) account under “My Bill,” they should click on “Grant Access to Parents or Others.” The page will explain what this option will grant access to. The student simply enters a password they have chosen. The parent/authorized user can then log into the WAMS (wams.unl.edu) account with their student’s ID and the password created.

Can I pay my student’s bill online?
Yes, you can! We offer an electronic check payment and credit card payment online at both WAM and WAMS. Please note that for credit card payments we only accept MasterCard and Discover and there is a 2% convenience fee charged on your payment amount.

When are bills due?
UNL generates a monthly bill. Statements will always be available by the 25th of the month, and associated payments are due on the second Wednesday of the following month. Payment of tuition and fees is due in September for the fall semester and February for the spring semester.

Where can I find additional information regarding the billing process?
Our web site! Go to http://stuaccts.unl.edu/ and bookmark us. We have a large amount of information available online. We also have our contact information there. Please contact us if you have questions.

Office of Student Accounts
124 Canfield Administration Building
Lincoln, NE 68588-0413
Phone: (402) 472-2887
Fax: (402) 472-2959
Email: stuacct@unlnotes.unl.edu

Parents/authorized users can log into the WAMS site shown above (wams.unl.edu) with their student’s ID and password. First, however, students must set up access using their WAM (wam.unl.edu) account.
Students enrolling at UNL in fall 2008 may earn their degrees under a new curriculum called Achievement Centered Education (ACE). UNL faculty are developing the curriculum, which focuses on providing students with a solid preparation for academic work in their majors and for their post-baccalaureate lives.

It's easy to understand the value of the academic major, says David Wilson, associate vice chancellor for academic affairs. Once they graduate, however, students are likely to experience a number of career shifts. Achievement Centered Education is designed to help them be intellectually nimble throughout their lives, he said.

General education is loosely defined as a common set of objectives that all students must achieve regardless of their majors. Thus, students in fields as disparate as English and Engineering will have some common academic experiences and emerge with similar skills and knowledge to complement their majors.

Efforts to revise UNL's decade-old general education curriculum first surfaced in 2003, and in 2005 the chancellor officially launched the reform effort. Two committees—a planning team and an advisory committee—gathered information and formulated proposals for the entire campus to review. Two draft proposals are awaiting adoption by faculty in each college. When all colleges adopt the proposals, courses can be designated as fulfilling ACE requirements. A way to evaluate the curriculum’s effectiveness also will be created.

The new plan promises to be simpler by offering a single set of general education outcomes—defining what all of our undergraduate students should know and be able to do by graduation. There will be just one category of course that incorporates both knowledge and skill sets. The current system has two designations and has become unwieldy and hard to manage.

The new plan promises to be simpler by offering a single set of general education outcomes—defining what all of our undergraduate students should know and be able to do by graduation. There will be just one category of course that incorporates both knowledge and skill sets. The current system has two designations and has become unwieldy and hard to manage.

The curriculum proposes four institutional objectives and 10 learning outcomes. They are listed in the box to the right.

For more information, visit: http://www.unl.edu/svcaa/gened/.

### Objectives and Learning Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Learning Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Develop intellectual and practical skills, including proficiency in written, oral, and visual communication, inquiry techniques, critical and creative thinking, quantitative applications, information assessment, teamwork, and problem-solving.</td>
<td>1. Write texts, in various forms, with an identified purpose, that respond to specific audience needs, incorporate research or existing knowledge, and use applicable documentation and appropriate conventions of format and structure. 2. Demonstrate communication competence in one or a combination of the following ways: (a) making oral presentations, (b) participating in problem-solving teams with reporting responsibility, or (c) creating and interpreting visual messages. 3. Use mathematical, statistical, or formal reasoning to solve problems, draw inferences, and determine reasonableness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Build knowledge of diverse peoples and cultures and of the natural and physical world through the study of mathematics, sciences and technologies, histories, humanities, arts, social sciences, and human diversity.</td>
<td>4. Use scientific methods and knowledge of the natural and physical world to address problems through inquiry, interpretation, analysis, and the making of inferences from data, to determine whether conclusions or solutions are reasonable. 5. Use knowledge, analysis, interpretation, critical evaluation, and the standards of evidence appropriate to the humanities to address problems and issues. 6. Use knowledge, theories, or methods appropriate to the social sciences to understand and evaluate human behavior. 7. Use knowledge, theories, or methods appropriate to the arts to understand their context and significance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Exercise individual and social responsibilities through the study of ethical principles and reasoning, application of civic knowledge, interaction with diverse cultures, and engagement with global issues.</td>
<td>8. Explain ethical principles, civics, and stewardship, and their importance to society. 9. Exhibit global awareness or knowledge of human diversity through analysis of an issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Integrate these abilities and capacities, adapting them to new settings, questions, and responsibilities.</td>
<td>10. Generate a creative or scholarly product that requires broad knowledge, appropriate technical proficiency, information collection, synthesis, interpretation, presentation, and reflection.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Applicability — The decision of a student’s degree college regarding the way the student’s credit, including transfer credit, may be applied to a particular degree.

Articulation — The process of communication and interrelation which allows for the transfer of credit from one institution of higher education to another.

Bachelors or Baccalaureate Degree — Recognition of successful completion of a program of studies (usually 120-130 semester hours), with a specific Major and often a minor or concentration, granted by the student’s degree college.

Course Outline — See Syllabus.

Degree College — One of the eight undergraduate colleges within the University of Nebraska–Lincoln which grants the degree the student is seeking, such as the College of Business Administration or the College of Arts and Sciences.

Department — Faculty and administrators associated with a particular academic discipline or program, such as the Sociology Department.

Equivalent — Equal in value or having the same result. Two courses which are determined by faculty to have corresponding content, outcomes, and level are considered equivalent.

Evaluation — Process by which faculty in a department evaluate transfer credit based on its content, outcomes and level to determine its equivalence to UNL course work.

International Credit — Credit earned at an institution outside the United States.

Minimum Grades — All transfer grades must be passing. The student’s degree college determines acceptability and applicability of course work with grades lower than “C” (2.0 on a 4.0 scale) including “C-”.

Prerequisite — A course which must be passed before enrolling in a more advanced course in the same or a related discipline. (College Algebra is a prerequisite for Calculus.)

Quarter — An academic term of approximately 10-12 weeks.

Quarter/ Semester Hour Conversion —
Quarter credits times 2/3 equals Semester Credits
(4.5 quarter hours X 2/3 = 3 semester hours) or Semester Credits times 3/2 equals Quarter Credits (3 semester hours X 3/2 = 4.5 quarter hours)

Regional Accreditation — Accredited status granted by one of the six regional accrediting commissions recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation. (www.chea.org)

Semester — An academic term of approximately 15-16 weeks.

Study Abroad Credit — Credit earned by a UNL student while studying outside the United States.

Substitution — Process by which the degree college agrees to substitute a similar (comparable) course for a particular requirement of a student’s degree.

Syllabus — A description of the main content, organization and expected outcomes of a course, normally including the number of credits awarded, hours of class time, how the course is evaluated, assignments, and texts. Also called Course Outline.

Transcript — An official transcript is the original record verifying a student’s academic history (dates of enrollment, courses, grades, etc.), and certified by the institution with a signature or seal. It is normally sent directly, by mail, upon the student’s written request.

Transfer Credit — Any post-secondary credit earned at an institution outside the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, including other institutions in the University of Nebraska System.

Undergraduate Bulletin — The book of rules, regulations, policies, programs, requirements, and courses for a particular post-secondary institution. Sometimes called a catalog, it is also available online. The UNL bulletin is updated annually. A student is normally bound by the requirements of the bulletin in effect when the student was admitted to the degree college, but the policy can vary by college.
The Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office is designated with the responsibility of assisting the University community with reasonable accommodations for students with a documented disability. Services are offered to promote and facilitate the integration of students with disabilities into the mainstream of University academic life. UNL is committed to providing all students with the opportunity to take full advantage of its programs and facilities.

SSD provides special assistance to students with disabilities through individualized help and counseling. As they transition to the new demands of college life, students with disabilities confront new challenges. SSD is committed to providing students with the support that will enable them to reach their academic goals.

SSD coordinates and delivers the services required to accommodate a disability. Some of the various accommodations are: testing accommodations, which can include extended time, the use of a scribe or reader and a quiet distraction reduced test environment. Other accommodations are: a notetaker or tape recorder in the classroom, a sign language interpreter, a captionist in the classroom, and textbooks in alternate format, such as braille, taped text or in electronic format. There are other services that deal with housing, inter campus transportation and accessible classroom identification.

All accommodation requests are initiated by meeting with the Director, Veva Cheney. Appropriate documentation must be submitted to support any accommodations requested. Once accommodations are approved and an Individual Accommodation Plan (IAP) is completed by the ADA Compliance Officer, the individual student is eligible to receive services. After this process is completed, the student must request services in writing each semester to receive the individual services needed.

The University is now offering a course specifically for students registered with the SSD office. It is EDPS 498 – College Survival Skills. This study skills course helps students with identified disabilities cope with the demands of college life. Skills such as self-advocating, acquiring appropriate accommodations, dealing with professors, test taking, notetaking, and writing college research papers are all addressed. A large portion of the class is dedicated to assistive technology; UNL has a lab devoted entirely to assistive technology for students with disabilities. Students who enroll in this class will have the opportunity to use these resources in the remaining semesters while they are completing their college degree at UNL.

We also have volunteer opportunities for students attending UNL. We utilize students in classes as notetakers for students who need this accommodation. Most students find that they take better notes if they know someone else will be using them. If your son or daughter would like to volunteer to be a notetaker, please have them call the SSD office at 402-472-3787 or stop by our office at 132 Canfield Administration Building.
**SCHOLARSHIPS AND FINANCIAL AID**

They Come Disguised…

*By Craig Munier, Director, Scholarships and Financial Aid*

They come disguised. “To the Parents of…”, the envelope reads. It looks official. Important. Timely. Designed to catch our attention. Demanding to be opened before the letter from Aunt Maude. And, inside, there are promises that sound too good to be true. “Apply early!”, “Off-campus Board Plan!”, “Free money/grants/scholarships— many unclaimed!” Something for little or nothing and lots of it!! A service that you should never have had to live without!

But wait. As a parent you should ask yourself a few relevant questions. Does my child REALLY need an off-campus board plan? A credit card with a limit as high as I'm willing to request? And why does that letter concerning financial aid go to so much trouble to LOOK like it’s from the U.S. Department of Education in Washington, D.C., complete with a branched oak tree, despite a San Diego, California return address? Does this feel right? Do they want some money from me… fast? Are we quickly approaching a deadline? Funny they didn’t mail the letter earlier; poor planning on their part? Or am I being squeezed? Am I being asked to react and not think?

Every year the parents of college students receive a number of solicitations for products and services. Some of these products and services may actually have an appeal to families. But many solicitations go to extreme lengths to appear “officially sanctioned” by the University of Nebraska even when they are not. These companies would like to borrow the University’s “brand;” use the trust you have in the University to endorse their product or service. They try to make you think the University has done your homework for you.

Several years ago, I talked to a mother of a student from out of state. She couldn't understand why her daughter still owed the University money for the fall semester. Earlier that year she had sent a company $800 in exchange for her understanding of their promise to find scholarship and grant money sufficient to pay her daughter’s college expenses. It was sad and made us so angry, how this mother’s love for her daughter had been used against her to take her money; money that the mother really didn’t have in the first place.

Unfortunately, the University has little control of companies obtaining directory information for students to use for these solicitations. The student directory can easily be scanned to create a mailing database of every student enrolled at virtually any college or university. Dr. Earl Hawkey, Director of Registration and Records says, “State statutes define student directory information as public record unless the student has requested that such information not be released. We can’t refuse to furnish public information, regardless of how it might be used.” And so, the letters come. Laundry service. Pizza plans. Scholarship “search” services, and more.

The best advice is “buyer beware.” Legitimate scholarship programs do not require students to pay a fee to be considered. Rarely does a product or service have a deadline after which the product or service is no longer available; at any price. So, watch the return address. Keep a tight grip on your wallet. Do your homework. And, in some cases, go ahead and open that letter from your Aunt Maude first.

**Editor’s Note:** Students may restrict the release of their directory information by making a request to do so in person with Registration and Records, Room 107 Canfield Administration Building.

---

**POSSIBILITIES continued from page 1**

in a career in a business don’t necessarily need to major in “business;” they could major in communication studies or advertising or psychology. It also shows users all the choices students have when they come to UNL. Students interested in biology, for instance, can see how that interest could be pursued with applications in agriculture, the environment, animals, nutrition, health care, education or engineering. Thus, students can look at biology-related majors in five different colleges.

The tool was developed by UNL's Division of General Studies, Office of Career Services and the Office of Communications and Information Technology using a grant from the university’s Initiative for Teaching and Learning Excellence. The Power of Possibilities came online in late 2006.

Parents may want to encourage their students to check out the Power of Possibilities, particularly if the student is undecided about a major or thinking of changing majors.

---

**TAX TIP**

**Above-the-line Tuition Tax Deduction Info**

Parents may find this brief, provided by the National Association of College and University Business Officers, January 29, 2007, helpful.

“Special IRS instructions for taxpayers who want to claim the above-the-line tuition deduction. Congress belatedly reinstated the tuition and fees tax deduction in December retroactively (it had expired January 1, 2006). The IRS had already sent its paper forms to the printer before Congress acted, so there is no place on the form 1040 for the deduction. Further, IRS needs to reprogram its software (and so will the on-line and software providers) to allow for the deduction, so the key piece of advice is that no returns claiming the tuition and fee deduction should be filed until early February. More information including instructions on how to fill out paper forms, is available at: [www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=165640,00.html](http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=165640,00.html)"