FROM FRUSTRATION TO FULFILLMENT: UNDERSTANDING THE UNDECIDED COLLEGE STUDENT
Challenges advising undecided students …

- Lack of self-awareness
- Lack career/employment awareness (i.e. options and how to explore them)
- Multiple interests and skills
- No clear interests and skills
- Complex educational and personal histories
- Uncertain about decision-making techniques
- Fearful of making the “wrong” decision
- Short term planners
- Low self-esteem
- Lack of motivation
- Too much or too little parental involvement
- Emerging Adulthood
Community colleges are the #1 choice for undecided students.

- Affordable
- Under prepared in high school
- Close to home
- Not ready for a four-year college (i.e. maturity, self esteem)
- Parental influence
- Easy application process/rolling admissions
- Accessible faculty and professional staff
Competencies need to advise undecided students

- Understand career decision making
- Teach decision-making strategies
- Be flexible in your role to them
- Use career related resources
- Make appropriate referrals
- Use good communication skills
- Dispel career “myths”
Gordon’s developmental approach to advising undecided students

- Help the student determine why he or she is undecided.
- Help the student organize a plan for exploring.
- Help the student integrate all the information that has been collected.
- Support the student while he or she makes decisions.
- Help the student initiate an action plan.
- Encourage follow-up contact.
The Undeclared Option at Monroe Community College

- Individual academic advisement appointments
- Advisement Center walk-in times
- Liberal Arts Faculty Mentor Program
- Career and personal counseling available in the Counseling & Advising Center and Career Center
The Undeclared Option at Monroe Community College

- Publications (Admissions brochure, parent’s brochure, Guide to Major decisions manual, newsletter, mailings)
- College 101 Series: Choosing a College Major
- Workshops (Academic advisement and choosing a major)
- Career Forums
- 30+ hold on student account
- 2+2 dual-admission programs which accommodate undeclared students
- Website/Facebook group
- Career development course: CDL 110
Career and Life Planning for Undeclared Students: CDL 110 (2 credits)

- Objectives of the course
- Units
- Inventories
- Other CDL courses
Training Opportunities for Faculty

- ADV Workshops
  - ADV 101 - Introduction to Advisement
  - ADV 106 – I don’t know how to begin advising
  - ADV 169 - Enhancing Career Advising
  - ADV 170 - Transfer Advising
  - ADV 200 - Human Developmental Models As Applies to Developmental Advisement
  - ADV 202 Parents Gone Wild
  - ADV 203 Understanding the Undecided Student and Techniques for Advisement
  - ADV 220 Cross Cultural Advising

- Faculty Advisor Handbook
- Academic Advisement Day
- Advisement Center Shadowing
How to assess your own undeclared advising practices

- “Assessing your Advising Program for Undecided Students” from *The Undecided College Student* by Virginia N. Gordon
- Site visits
- Student Satisfaction Surveys
- Focus Groups
How can you generalize our practices and program philosophy to your campus?

- Examine your current practices
- Conduct assessment
- Decide what takes priority
- Institutional Support
- Clerical Support
- External Support
References:
