



INSPIRED  
PATHWAYS



# Winter Newsletter

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# The Inspired Pathways Scholarship and Advising Programs are Open for the HS Class of 2023

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Seniors, now is the time to apply for the Hormel Inspired Pathways Scholarship, which covers two years of community college. In addition to having your tuition covered, applying to the program gives you access to all of the Inspired Pathways program resources, including:

- One-on-one college admissions advising from former college admissions counselors through our digital Office Hours program.
- Presentations by experts that'll help you understand:
  - Financial Aid & Scholarships
  - College Essays, Community College, 4-year Universities, and Transfer Admissions
  - Finding the Best-Fit College for you or your child
  - How to Take advantage of the College's Academic and Support Resources
  - Pre-graduation Career Search
- Access to the Hormel Inspired Website which includes resources like:
  - Scholarship search engines
  - Contact information for college admissions offices
  - Lists of colleges with the best financial aid programs in the country
  - Links to financial aid forms like FAFSA and The CSS Profile
  - and much more!
- Information about and access to apply to Hormel Foods Internship Programs.

Even if you are unsure if you will attend a community college next fall, we encourage you to apply to gain access to all the resources Inspired Pathways has to offer.

The program and resources are 100% free and applying does not commit you to anything.



# Academic Planning for Students in College

## Not Fun, but Critical

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In college, academic planning is more than just choosing a list of courses for next semester. Unlike high school where you have a few options for each subject, in college there can be dozens. And, in college the choices you make affect many things including: your major (obvious), but also if you'll be able to take minors, the type of specialties you can focus on in the future, the types of colleges you'll be able to transfer to, and most importantly, whether you'll be able to graduate on time with the degree you want.

With all academic planning, the place to start is the "program sheet". The term program sheet comes from the time when students would be handed a list of all available courses in their major and the requirements these courses met. Some colleges, like Riverland, still post PDF versions of program sheets, which can be searched for on the college's website. Other colleges, like Ridgewater CC, have gotten rid of official program sheets and now post a "List of Programs Offered," where you click your program to find the information.

### Once you have this information, you will see

- **Core Required Courses** Every student at the college will have to take these, regardless of the major that the student is in. They often include liberal arts courses like history, humanities, math and English.
- **Major Required Courses** Courses every student in the major has to take; they can be viewed as the foundational courses for the major.

- **Major Specific Elective Courses**

These courses within your major allow you to choose your focus area. For example, if you're majoring in business, for your Major Specific Elective Courses you may have the opportunity to choose between tracks in accounting, management, marketing, etc.

- **General Elective Courses**

You have complete freedom to choose these courses. Depending on the degree, you may have between three and 10 of these slots available to you throughout your college career. Some students choose to take classes for enjoyment or interest, like art or a sport – great ways for business majors to take a break from all that calculus. Other students use this as an opportunity to add a minor to their degree. Each college is different, but on average, adding a minor only requires 15 credits, which equals about five classes, giving some overachievers the opportunity to pursue a major and two minors.

With all your available courses in front of you, you'll first want to see if any have prerequisites. If a course has **prerequisites**, it means there are other courses that you'll have to take first. So, you'll want to start your planning with these courses, as you don't want to get to the spring of your senior year with only two classes left, but one has to be taken before the other, meaning you'll have to take one in the summer or following fall. Second, you'll want to see if any have **limited availability**, which means they may only be offered at certain times, like only during spring semesters.

This background should help you make informed decisions on which classes to take to ensure you graduate on time with the degree you want. You still have to decide which major and minor(s) to pursue. If you have questions about course selection, academic planning or the types of opportunities different majors provide, you can talk to an advisor at your school, or feel free to reach out to our advising team by visiting : [www.Hormelinspiredpathways.com](http://www.Hormelinspiredpathways.com) and schedule a digital meeting, or send an email with your questions.

# Transferring from Community College to a 4-year College or University

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Whether you're just graduating high school or looking to advance your career, there are many advantages to starting your higher education at a community college and transferring to a four-year school upon graduation.

## Save Money

Starting at a community college is one of the best ways a student can mitigate the expense of a bachelor's degree. With the average cost of a four-year university surpassing \$35,000, this strategy can save you tens of thousands of dollars. This is especially true for Inspired Pathways students, who will be able to complete the first two years of their college journey absolutely free.

## Find Your Passion

One of the most common concerns among students entering college is that they aren't absolutely certain about which degree to pursue. In fact, more than 80% of students end up changing their major at some point during their college career. By starting at a community college, you'll have to opportunity to try out a wide range of courses and programs without locking yourself into the major you listed on your application.

## Get into a better 4-year college

Another benefit of starting at a community college is the opportunity to improve your grades, which could even help you qualify for scholarships that would not have been an option if you had entered directly into a university. Especially if you are looking at prestigious schools, attending community college can give you a better chance of acceptance if you achieve good grades.

In addition, many colleges like to admit transfers instead of freshmen because they have proof that these students can be successful at the college level. Because of this, many colleges either design programs to help encourage community college transfers to attend or change their admissions criteria to make it easier to get in. Below are some examples of four-year-university initiatives intended to recruit community college graduates:

1. **MnCAP**  
When you enroll in the Minnesota Cooperative Admissions Program, you will be guaranteed transfer admission to the University of Minnesota.
2. **Ohio Guaranteed Transfer Pathways**  
These programs provide a direct path to degree completion for community college students who plan to transfer to an Ohio public university to complete their bachelor's degree.
3. **Transfer Admission Guarantee (TAG)**  
This program guarantees admission to some of the most competitive colleges in the University of California system, which includes UCLA and UC Berkeley.



If you have any questions or want to learn more about guaranteed transfer programs in your state, visit the Inspired Pathways website and schedule an advisor meeting!

# Choosing the Right Career for You

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Successful career decisions are based on acquiring the right information, knowing enough about your skills, the task required by specific jobs, and how to acquire the skills you don't yet have to be successful in your goal job.

Career planning should never stop. As you progress through your career, it is important to continue to consider the Skill-Assessment steps below to decide whether you're on the right path.

A **Skill-Assessment** is the process of determining if your skills will allow you to gain and successfully perform the job you wish to have. There are three important steps to any successful skill assessment which are outlined below.

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## 70%

**Of college graduates found college helpful while job hunting**

- Pew Research Center

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### Step 1: Self-Assessment

Since there is no better source of information about you, the easiest method of increasing self-understanding is to review and analyze your past and present experiences with a career counselor. Increasing your knowledge of your skills, values, and interests will help determine the type of work which fits you best. **Skills include a wide variety of personal attributes. Including:**

**Talents/Strengths:** These are skills that come naturally to you. These vary greatly from person to person. Maybe you're great at understanding how machines work, or helping through challenging times, understanding complex math problems. It is critical that this is the first assessment you make.

**Specific knowledge/abilities acquired through training.** These are the skills which you have developed by doing academic and hands-on work. One of the best ways to determine if a skill was developed by training is to consider the areas in which you used to struggle, but now find easy. Then look at all the things you did to make that improvement. By doing this, you'll be able to not only figure out which skills you have, but how you can continue to improve them.

### Step 2: Task-Assessment

Too often students fall in love with the idea of a job, without realizing the daily tasks they'll be performing don't align with their skills—leaving them in a position in which they struggle or feel unchallenged. For this reason, the second step to take while determining your future career is identifying the specific tasks different jobs require.

To find these, simply start reviewing job postings. Each posting will list the role and responsibilities or "tasks" for which the person in that position is required to perform. By reviewing and taking notes on a large number of positions at different levels across a variety of industries, you'll develop a strong understanding of the jobs that fit both your talent and training based skills. As importantly, you will discover the areas where you need to develop your skills further to get hired in the positions you really want to have.

### Step 3: Skill Development

Having thoroughly assessed your skills and the tasks required for specific positions that you're interested in, it is now time to assess the resources you have available to further develop current skills or acquire new ones. It is important to remember that skills can be developed both in and outside of the classroom, so always look for new and

unique opportunities. Often there are academic and career service advisors on college campuses who can help you with this. But in general, these are some of the best places to start:

**Education.** Your major is the obvious one, but there are many more learning opportunities available on a college campus including: work-study jobs and research opportunities, career-focused clubs and organizations, service programs, and academic minors..

**Internships.** Every single internship you have is valuable. Short, long, paid, unpaid, something you love or hate—internships will not only help you develop new skills but help you focus-in on what you really want to do. Additionally, they are one of the best additions to any resume whether you're planning to enter the workforce or apply to a 4-year university.

**Jobs.** It may be tempting to stick with the same part-time job you've had since you were 16, but if you are no longer developing new skills and there aren't opportunities for advancement that you're interested in, then it is not the best option in the long run. You would be much better suited trying a wide variety of jobs that help you develop the skills that you need, even if those jobs don't pay quite as well.

By strategically choosing classes, extra-curriculars, and jobs that will help you develop the skills you now know you need from your assessments, you'll set yourself up for a future with a job that is satisfying both in the enjoyment of the day-to-day and the take home pay.

To learn more or speak with an advisor about how to find opportunities local to you, please visit our website: [www.hormelinspiredpathways.com](http://www.hormelinspiredpathways.com)



# Toward Equitable Access to Education

A conversation with Nate Lockett, Inspired Pathways program director

## Tell us a little about your background and how you came to lead the Inspired Pathways Program for Hormel Foods?

I've had several jobs at different educational institutions since college. I started as a high school teacher teaching economics. I've worked as a college counselor and student advisor at elite private schools and more diverse charter schools. At Cornell, I was the assistant director for the K-12 outreach program. At George Mason University, I was associate director of admissions, focusing on outreach to underrepresented populations. So I've seen the educational system can change lives, but I've also seen how it can be a system that is difficult for some to access.

## What are the main barriers?

Having the money for tuition is, of course, one barrier. That's why Inspired Pathways offers four semesters of tuition grants paid for by Hormel Foods. But students and their families face other obstacles as well. Understanding how colleges and universities work is another big one. Inspired Pathways does a lot of work helping students and families navigate through these systems. There are complex forms to fill out, essays to write, and deadlines to remember. When you are not from a college-going culture, all those things can be real barriers.

## What is a "college-going culture"?

It's a term used by people who study educational systems. Many young people grow up in families where their parents and grandparents went to college. And they might have the opportunity to go to an elite high school where they have a whole team of college advisors. They learn about all their options and things like financial aid packages. All that information and knowledge creates momentum and an expectation that makes it easier for someone to attend college.

All of that can be absent for a first-generation college student or someone from a lower-income or immigrant family. Or maybe they grew up in a place or culture where college was never expected or talked about. The job of Inspired Pathways is to even the playing field and bring some of that information and knowledge to students who don't have easy access to it.

## So it's not just the money you're providing, you're bringing a little of that "college-going culture" to a diverse population.

Right. That's one of the biggest reasons I was excited about Hormel Foods and leading Inspired Pathways. In addition to the scholarship component, we have a mandate to provide advising and to develop educational equity within underserved communities in terms of information about

college. We want to give all sons and daughters of Hormel employees some of the benefits and knowledge that students at elite high schools receive. We want to give families information about writing admission essays and filling out forms and help them make the most of financial aid programs. That means we do presentations to family groups, send newsletters and provide individual consultations with families and students. We even have a glossary on our website with all of the college terms that might be unfamiliar. Everyone deserves the insider information that other students get as a matter of course.

## It seems like that could make a big difference.

It does. In one of my previous jobs, I worked with a student who nearly turned down a college career because her parents thought it would be too expensive. I explained to them that the student had received a full-ride financial aid package that would be tax-free. That's just one of many examples I've witnessed where some critical bit of information can make a life-changing difference.

# Winter Webinars At A Glance

**You're dealing with young people at a critical turning point in their life. Does it become a personal relationship?**

Yes. I'm working with 17- and 18-year-olds who are trying to figure out what they really want to do in life. You can help them uncover some really important things. You get to reflect on not only their academics but their personal experiences as well. Sometimes the stories of hardships can be a little heavy, but I can't let that stress me out. My job is to tell them how to navigate the process and to give them knowledge. I often hear from former advisees. Some of the students I've worked with are in their 30s now and I've gotten to see them graduate and start careers. It's work I definitely feel good about.

**I can imagine that your work might echo down generations. When these students you've worked with have children, they are more likely to grow up in that "college-going culture" because their parents went to college.**

Absolutely. Getting one person to go through college can be the start of a family tradition. That expectation can be passed to the children and grandchildren. Just a small number of people attending college can change families and whole communities.

**4 JANUARY - 6:30 p.m. CDT**

## **Introduction to Inspired Pathways**

We'll discuss who qualifies for the scholarship, how to apply for it in five minutes or less, and getting support from our college advising team.

**11 JANUARY - 6:30 p.m. CDT**

## **Financial Aid and Scholarship**

Learn about all the college funding options available and how to access them, including FAFSA, the CSS Profile, scholarships, grants, loans and work-study.

**18 JANUARY - 6:30 p.m. CDT**

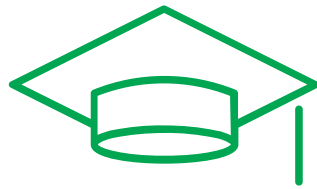
## **Introduction to Inspired Pathways**

We'll discuss who qualifies for the scholarship, how to apply for it in five minutes or less, and getting support from our college advising team.

**25 JANUARY - 6:30 p.m. CDT**

## **Transferring from Community College to a 4-year University**

We'll discuss how Transfer Admissions works, what makes it different than Freshman Admissions, and how to increase your chances of gaining admission to your goal school and maximize your Financial Aid Award Package.



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[www.HormelInspiredPathways.com](http://www.HormelInspiredPathways.com)