

The future  
belongs to  
those who  
believe in  
the beauty  
of their  
dreams.

*Eleanor  
Roosevelt*

## INVOLVEMENT

Research has shown that more than 70% of what a student learns during college results from out-of-class experiences. With so many students devoting so much of their free time, what could possibly be the benefit other than relaxation and fun?

A recent study by AT&T found that participation in cocurricular activities is the second most important clue in identifying potential managers and predicting job success. While the major was most important, involvement was more important than both the quality of the college attended and the final cumulative GPA.

And that's just the beginning of what involvement at any level in any aspect of cocurricular activities can offer. In addition to career-related success, involvement also points to other areas of success in students' lives.

For nearly 30 years, Dr. Alexander Astin at the University of California - Los Angeles has been studying the effects of various factors (where students live, if students work, if students attend orientation) on college students's success and persistence in college. Following are some of his research findings (from *Involving Colleges*, Kuh, Schuh, Witt & Associates, 1991):

- Students involved in out-of-class activities are more positive about their college experience; are more satisfied with their social life, living environment, academic major, and contacts with faculty; and are more likely to graduate than students who are not involved. In addition, students who were involved in college attribute some of their job success after college to participation in out-of-class activities.
- Out-of-class activities provide opportunities for development of leadership Skills (team work, decision making, planning) which are increasingly important for effective participation in civic and community affairs.
- The ability of students to establish mature, interpersonal relationships is greater if students are involved in campus organizations and recreational activities.
- The single most important characteristic associated with social concern and altruistic values is participation in cocurricular activities.

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In addition to cocurricular involvement enriching the college experience, it also serves as a link for careers. When searching for that first job out of college, students who have a strong involvement experience have an equally strong network of friends to draw on to find out about job opportunities, to share experiences and insights in the job search process, and to serve as a resource for any questions or thoughts they may have about resumes, cover letters, interviews and negotiating.

Also, POFs (Parents of Friends) are included in this network. And don't forget about FOPs (Friends of Parents).

Other reasons for being involved:

- develop new friendships
- develop mentoring relationships with faculty and staff
- complement and reinforce classroom learning
- teach self discipline, initiative, self direction, and responsibility
- allow students to apply learned concepts in real life settings
- act as an arena for testing beliefs, values, attitudes and morals
- solidify personal identity through contact with diverse and conflicting viewpoints
- improve leadership and communication skills
- learn to work effectively with and within a group
- promote closer contact with faculty, staff and other influential role models
- channel anxiety and energy into enjoyable and productive pursuits
- provide support groups for students with common needs and interests
- broaden perspectives due to contact with a variety of personalities