

High school students attend Career Day in search of direction

by Stella Shepard

Post Secondary Career Day

Anne Peters, School Counsellor at **Souris Regional High School**, helped students prepare for **Post-Secondary Career Day** in October. Representatives from associations, sector councils, and government departments provided career-related information to the students. Recruiters from Atlantic colleges and universities also attended the event to meet students and answer their questions.



Anne was aware of what career choices students are considering and made sure those occupations were represented at the event. She provided students with a list of questions to ask recruiters to make sure they made the best use of the opportunity.

Choices made by graduates

At Souris Regional High School, 46 percent of the 2009 graduates went on to university, 18 percent chose college, and the remaining 36 percent were either undecided or planning to enter the world of work.

Steps to a career choice

“Post-Secondary Career Day is an opportunity for students to gather as much information as possible,” says Anne. “Gathering information is the first step in the decision-making process. Next, students need to talk to others who have attended the institutions they are considering or talk to those in the field of their choice.”

Applying to post-secondary

Anne says that universities may accept grade 12 students based on grade 11 marks. Students offered early admission are required to maintain an acceptable final average and complete graduation requirements.

“I encourage grade 12 students to apply to university or college before Christmas,” says Anne. “That leaves January to focus attention on exams. With February marks so important for both admission and scholarship decisions, it is not helpful to be distracted from studying by trying to sort out future plans.

“Students who do not apply to college or university by Christmas can always change their mind and apply during the second semester.”

Decided and undecided

Brett Whalen and **Brittany Burt**, grade 12 students at Souris Regional High School, talked about their plans after graduation. Brett has decided on a career goal, whereas Brittany is undecided.

Brett Whalen of Bear River

“I have known since I was in grade six that I would attend university. I’ve researched several careers over the years. This past year, I found the high school subject of Global Issues very interesting. The subject is closely related to an International Relations course offered at Mount Allison University. It sparked my interest in an international business career.

“I’ve been accepted to Mount Allison University where I plan to major in Commerce. The International Relations university course will work well with my future career plan of working in the field of international business and advertising. After earning my degree, I plan to pursue a Masters. I believe that you need more than an undergraduate degree to secure good employment opportunities. Eventually, I plan to earn a doctorate, but that is not in the near future.

“Both my parents are university graduates, although they have a passion for their careers as fishermen. I would like to go in a different direction. My parents have always encouraged me and my brothers to pursue any career we desire. My oldest brother recently graduated from university with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. My other brother - also older than myself - has chosen a career in the trades. My parents are very supportive of my career decision, as well as both my brothers. I am very excited about attending university and what the future holds for me.”



Brett Whelan

Brittany Burt of Souris

“It’s so hard to decide what I want to do after graduation. It’s really difficult deciding on a life-time career when I am only 17 years old. People ask questions about my plans after high school and it puts pressure on me. It makes me feel that I should have a plan and I should know what I want, when I don’t.

“I am happy for my friends who have already decided on a career. But that doesn’t mean I too should have a career plan for after high school.

“Throughout high school, I have researched different career options, but none have caught my interest. I have also talked to my guidance counsellor and to the recruiters during Post-Secondary Career Day events at the school.

“It’s so stressful being under pressure to make the choice to apply to a college or university while in high school. My parents think that I should pursue a post-secondary education right after I graduate. I know they want what is best for me but it puts more pressure on me to choose a career when I am not ready. I don’t want a career that I will not be happy with.

“I will be 18 years old when I graduate. I am still very young but I do know that I want to go somewhere off-Island and experience the world before deciding on a career. This year during Career Day, I talked to a recruiter from Katimavik, a youth program that sends volunteers to work in different parts of Canada. It sounds very interesting and is closer to I would like to do after graduating.

“If I take time off to volunteer and travel, it doesn’t mean that I won’t have a career at some point in my life. When the time is right for me, I will decide. I will make a better career choice if I wait until I am ready than go to university undecided.”



Brittany Burt