According to James Gladden, Dean of the IU School of Physical Education and Tourism Management, students who dream of being successful after graduation need to find a career path they are passionate about. He believes passion is the direct route to success.

“You can be good at a job you don’t like, but you’re going to be even better at a job you do like. So I think in terms of one’s own optimal success, it’s finding something you’re passionate about; something that [makes you excited] to go to work every single day,” Gladden said. “We spend a lot of time in our work place [and] if you don’t like what you do, it significantly detracts from your satisfaction of life, which I really judge as success.”

Dean Gladden found his own success early on as a college student at DePauw University in Greencastle, Indiana, where he majored in communications and minored in U.S. history. His years as an undergraduate student were valuable and taught him “core skills” that he still uses and applies to challenging situations every day. Of these core skills, Gladden believes that learning how to “think critically” is the most important.

Though he was an exceptional scholar, like many college students, once graduation day loomed, he was still unsure of what the future held for him in terms of a career.

Since this was a personal challenge he faced in school, Gladden has now made it his mission to teach his students about possible career opportunities that apply to the courses they are taking and the majors they have chosen.

Gladden encourages them to participate in the IUPUI “Rise to the Challenge” (RISE) program which has students incorporate at least two of the four RISE (Research opportunities, International [studying abroad], Service learning or Experiential learning) experiences into their bachelor degrees.

“I am a huge believer in anything that’s challenging students to get some hands-on learning,” Gladden said, “and I love the RISE initiative. So when I teach, I have an experiential learning component to my course.”

He also refers undergraduates to IUPUI’s University College to receive extensive guidance regarding majors, classes, and careers.

“I think students in University College have a significant advantage of being able to sit down and get a sense of the different career opportunities that might exist…and some of the majors that can link to those careers as well,” Gladden said. “I would have benefitted greatly from [a service like] that.”

Though Dean Gladden has only been at IUPUI for two years, he has already seen the exceptional work that University College does for both new students and transfer students.

“They [University College] are nationally recognized for their innovation and have received significant recognition and notoriety in a positive way for their efforts with first-year students and helping them stay at IUPUI and for helping identify the best path for their students,” Gladden said.

He values the relationship between University College and his department, the IU School of Physical Education and Tourism Management (PETM). When students transfer into PETM, most of them largely know what they are getting into because of University College’s Learning Communities and exploratory programs. They have been advised properly and have taken prerequisite courses that allow them to discover their major and confirm that this is the area of interest they want to pursue.

“It’s unrealistic to expect every entering college student to know exactly what they want to do….Part of the college experience is exploration and University College exists in support that exploration,” Gladden stated.

Though IUPUI students interested in pursuing degrees in physical education or tourism management will get their degrees from the IU School of Physical Education and Tourism Management, their first years will be spent enrolled at University College. Because of this, these schools and their students are connected. Both have an obligation to make the biggest impact on student lives during the short four years they will attend IUPUI.

The goals of University College and the IU School of Physical Education and Tourism Management, according to Gladden, are the same: to educate students and to help them become better people.

“How we best prepare our students for leaving the university from a structural basis…relates to how we ensure student success,” Gladden said. “These are things I greatly enjoy doing.”

BY SAMANTHA THOMPSON