Choosing A Major

Choosing a Major is usually one of those things many students tend to run into quickly and run out of quickly. Don't panic! With constraints including time, money, family, and future goals no wonder so many students rush in and out of majors. Many end up with extra credits, extra years in college, and extra money to pay back. But remember NOT to Panic! Though some students do come to college with a major chosen, there are many who do not.

Did you know that most students change their major at least once throughout their college experience, and many students change their major multiple times? College is the time for you to choose a major, get an education, and prepare for your career.

The Choosing A Major Model guides you through the process of successfully finding, not only a major but a purposeful career that encompasses your strengths, passions, talents, values, and personality. Spend time discovering what you were created to do. Keep in mind that choosing a major is a journey, and journeys require time, resources, and often pitstops, U-turns, and detours. Don't be discouraged, and if at any point you get stuck feel free to visit us at the Career Center, Counseling and Testing Center, or Student Success.
ASSESS

Self-Assessment consists of identifying and understanding interests, skills, values, personalities, and spirituality as the foundation for planning and decision making.

- Visit a Career Counselor @ the Counseling and Testing Center
- Complete a Self-Assessment. For a list of complete Self-Assessment questions check out the Career Planning section.
- Career Assessments can be administered at the Counseling and Testing Center. Check out the Career Services section for a complete list of Career Assessments available to students.
- "Know Who You Are!"

INTERESTS/ABILITIES

Our interests and abilities give us an in depth look at what drives us, what we are passionate about, as well as what we have to offer. Your ultimate goal is to find a career where you are "doing what you love!" which can, in some instances, stem directly from your interests and abilities. Ask yourself:

- What are my hobbies?
- What do I like to do in my free time?
- What am I good at?
- What were my favorite subjects in High School?
- Have I received awards, recognition, or accolades and for what subject/topic/or event?
- What activities can I do all day without getting bored or anxious?

VALUES

When choosing a major/career it's important to consider the things about your life that you value most so that you can appropriately choose a career path that will align with your values. This affects how satisfied/unsatisfied you are in your choice of work. Ask yourself:

- What do I value in life?
- What do I about value family, friendships, relationships, work, etc.?

PERSONALITY

Personality refers to the individual qualities that make each person unique. Understanding your personality enables you to search for careers that match you rather than trying to make yourself match a career. Assessments such as the 16PF and Achievement Works aid in developing a greater understanding of your personality and the careers that are most suitable for it. Ask yourself:

- How do I make decisions?
- How do I work best with others?
- What is my ideal work environment?

SPIRITUALITY

Understanding and realizing what role spirituality plays in your decision making will serve as a better guide to living a purposeful life. Consider the following:
EXPLORE

Career Exploration gives you the opportunity to get a sense for what your field of interest entails including salary, skills needed, work environment, work requirements, and demand for the field. Exploration allows you to get a holistic picture of the field of interest. When exploring:

- Conduct basic research on your field(s) of interest
- Research career trends, conduct a basic major or career information search, participate in job shadowing and informational interviews (advisors, friends, family, or employers currently working in the field of interest), take classes and complete course work in the interested major, learn about the required certification for work, etc.
- For research assistance, check out "What Can I Do With This Major?" and the "Bureau of Labor Statistics"

WEIGH OPTIONS

Now it’s time to evaluate where you are and what you have concluded from your journey.

- Gather all the information you have collected about yourself and about the field and narrow options down to no more than 3 options.
- Set goals! What do want to be, do, have? (Short- and long-term goals)
- Next, it’s time for a Reality Check! Where are you in terms of your goals? What is really happening at this moment? Review problems.
- Make note of any assumptions that are being made.
- Think of all possible obstacles that may come up in relation to that goal.
- Brainstorm different actions you are going to need to take to achieve these goals. (Don't limit yourself to one).

ACT

Execute your action plan.

- What are you going to need to know?
- Plan which options you are going to act on right now and how long it will take to accomplish each goal?
- Who do you need to meet, talk, and work with?
- Make a commitment to your plan.
- Take action!

Whatever your Action Plan entails, make sure any action is taken in this last step! And remember this journey may take you more than one try, but don't be discouraged you will complete the journey!