



OFFICE OF CAREER SERVICES
HARVEY MUDD COLLEGE *Your Future Opportunities*

DECIDING ON YOUR MAJOR

Exploring Majors and Careers



Reasons Students Pick a Major

- Love the subject
- Help them get a good-paying job
- To please their parents
- Others said they were good at it (a _____ major)
- Liked a particular class or professor
- Other



Dispelling Myths

- Choosing a pre-med major makes you more likely to get into medical school
- Not true. As long as you do well in the prerequisite courses you can major in anything.



Dispelling Myths (cont)

- There are always plenty of jobs for engineers
- Not true. There are numerous factors that influence the demand for engineers (cancelled contracts, downsizing, takeovers, etc).



A Tip

- Don't base your selection of major on the current "hot jobs" market; by the time you complete your studies, most likely there will be a new list of "hot jobs!" Base your decision on your interests!



What do these five college grads
have in common?

- Bank officer
- Stock market analyst
- Music therapist
- Director of senior citizens' center
- Field archaeologist



Answer

- They were all French majors at the same college!



Where are YOU in this process?

- Have you declared a major?
- If not, what is preventing you from doing so?
- If yes, are you happy with your decision?
- What information do YOU need to help you?



Plan of Action

- Collect information
- Organize the information
- Set goals
- Identify what is important to you
- Exam the options
- Assess the risks
- Establish a plan



Collecting Information

- Abilities
- Interests
- Values
- Factual information about career fields.
- Achievement demonstrated in course work or work experience related to a specific field.



Collecting Information (cont)

- What is the nature of the career?
- What kind of work is performed by typical graduates so that you can match your abilities to the work?
- How is the field described so that you can assess your interest in the major?



Collecting Information (cont)

- What are the major values and benefits that may emerge in this type of occupation?
- What are the personality characteristics of workers in this major?
- What kinds of work activities are in each major?



Collecting Information (cont)

- Is further graduate or professional education likely to be required in this major?
- Will you be able to get a job? Will it be in your major?
- What kind of on-the-job learning will there be, and what will it entail?



Collecting Information (cont)

- What will you be paid, and how much can you make if you choose to remain in the field?
- How does the salary in this field compare with that of other college graduates?



Organize the Information

- Set goals
- Know what is most important
- Examine the options
- Assess the risks involved
- Establish an implementation plan



Setting Goals

- Sum up the issues that were raised about your job future and major area of study
- Next, prioritize the issues
- Write down each of the goals you want
 - What you anticipate doing
 - How long each task should take
 - What outcomes you expect from the activities you pursue
- Evaluate your progress based on the satisfaction you get from the outcome of your achievements



Knowing What is Important

- Identify your values (some examples)
 - Creativity
 - Good salary
 - High achievement
 - Independence
 - Job security
 - Leadership
 - Challenging work
 - Physical activity
 - Variety



Knowing What is Important (cont)

- Identify your Values
 - Work with hands
 - Work with people
 - Work with mind

Action: list your four most important values



Assessing the Risks

- What is the probability that your expectations will be met (such as utilizing your abilities, liking the activities of the occupation, and so on)?
- Are you motivated to pursue this major?



Establishing a Plan

- A Sample List of Headings for an Action Plan:
 - Goals/Activities/Issues (to be explored further)
 - What needs to be done and resources to obtain or people to contact (to answer the questions posed above)
 - Time estimate and date to be completed



Resources

- College Majors Handbook with Real Career Paths and Payoffs
- College Majors and Careers
- How to Get Any Job With Any Major
- Career Services Handouts – What Can I Do with Major in...
- If you need assistance, come to the Office of Career Services.

