

Choosing a Major

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Myths About College and Career

I SHOULD KNOW MY MAJOR AND CAREER WHEN I ENTER COLLEGE

Studies show that 30 percent of incoming college students are unsure about their major and 65-70% change majors at least once while in college. It is okay to be unsure, but it is also important to take steps that will help you make an informed decision.

ONCE I SELECT A COLLEGE MAJOR, IT WILL DETERMINE MY CAREER CHOICE.

Some majors are career-specific (i.e. nursing), however; most majors connect with a variety of career options and many times there are multiple majors that relate to the same occupation.

THERE IS ONE CAREER THAT IS A PERFECT MATCH FOR ME.

On average people have 3 career changes and 7 - 10 jobs in their lifetime. Career satisfaction can come from a variety of opportunities. It is influenced by who we are and who we are continually changes based on our life experiences.

ONLY PAID WORK EXPERIENCE WILL HELP ME DEVELOP A CAREER PATH.

Insight gained from any experience allows you to define and refine your career path. Also, employers value both paid and unpaid experience as long as it demonstrates the needed skills for the job.

I SHOULD INVESTIGATE THE JOB MARKET JUST PRIOR TO MY COLLEGE GRADUATION.

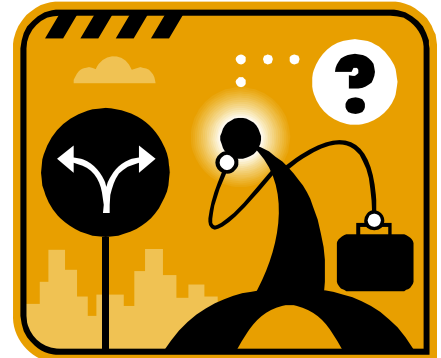
There are steps students should take every year while in college to assist in the transition to full time employment after graduation. Students that wait until graduation is near often find themselves stressed, frustrated, and jobless when graduation day arrives.

CAREER SERVICES FOCUSES ON SENIORS LOOKING FOR EMPLOYMENT.

Career Services provides a variety of services and resources that benefit students of all stages in their college career and at varying stages of the career planning process. Students are encouraged to meet with a Career Advisor at least once per semester.

Types of Career Decision Makers

As you begin to explore the world of work and decide on your perfect job target, it's important to know how you make decisions. When making decisions, do you tend to spend a lot of time exhausting all of the pros and cons, or are you closer to the other end of the spectrum—just going with what feels right or what your gut instinct is telling you? Look at these various career decision-making styles and identify the style or styles that you tend to gravitate toward. You may find that, due to the seriousness of choosing the perfect job target, you have to incorporate a style that you haven't had to use in the past.



PROCRASTINATING DECISION MAKERS have a tough time making decisions. The pressure of making a difficult decision gives them a sense of paralysis that leads to indecision. Many job seekers procrastinate about their decisions on a job target because of the amount of time it takes to explore all the options.

INTUITIVE DECISION MAKERS go with their gut feelings or instincts when making decisions. Intuitive job seekers tend to use this style after being influenced by some external force, such as television, family, and friends. They see their cousin do well in accounting, so they feel like accounting would be good for them. There's not much thought put into the decision for the intuitive decision maker.

DEPENDENT DECISION MAKERS rely on the opinions of others. Many job seekers fall into this category. They feel overwhelmed by having to pick that one perfect job target out of the thousands of prospects. Dependent job seekers rely on anyone and everyone to help them make this all-important decision.

EDUCATED DECISION MAKERS identify all their options, research options of interest, ask numerous questions, and systematically engage in a process of elimination until that perfect option is found. Educated career decision makers engage in a thorough self-assessment process, read about all career options, seek advice from career counselors and professionals in the workforce, and observe professionals at work (job shadowing). They keep logs of what they've learned and constantly analyze their options.

THE BEST CAREER DECISION MAKER is a combination of all the above styles with the exception of the procrastinating method. You should primarily use the educated decision-making style, but along the way, rely on career advisors, professionals, and other people you respect to offer advice, guidance, and feedback (dependent decision-making). Then, once you have thoroughly completed the self-assessment and career exploration processes, incorporate the intuitive decision-making style to let your feelings and intuition in on the decision. Your intuition is always a fairly accurate gauge, but it's even more accurate after you have all the factors laid out on the table.

Model for Decision Making

The purpose of this model is to teach a planning process and to apply it to career decision making.

Step 1: Learn about Self

When making life's major decisions it is important to understand the kind of person you are - your likes, strengths, weaknesses, values, sources of satisfaction, and personality characteristics.

Step 2: Set Goals

In each major decision, there should be a goal which you are trying to reach, presumably a goal which would bring you satisfaction or at least an improved status.



Step 3: Find or Make Alternatives

Two or more realistic alternatives must be found in order to have a decision. For major decisions, as many realistic alternatives as possible should be identified for consideration. This is the time to think and dream expansively.

Step 4: Learn about Alternatives

In order to dismiss some alternatives and seriously consider another, it is essential to get as much information as possible about each, and to project how you would feel or fit in each of them.

Step 5: Prioritize Alternatives

Based on the information you collected, you can "project" yourself into each alternative. This allows enables you to throw some away and arrange the others in priority order.

Step 6: Make a Choice

The painful side of decision making is that you have to give up some desirable alternatives in favor of even more desirable ones - and ultimately to choose one - while keeping other options open, if possible.

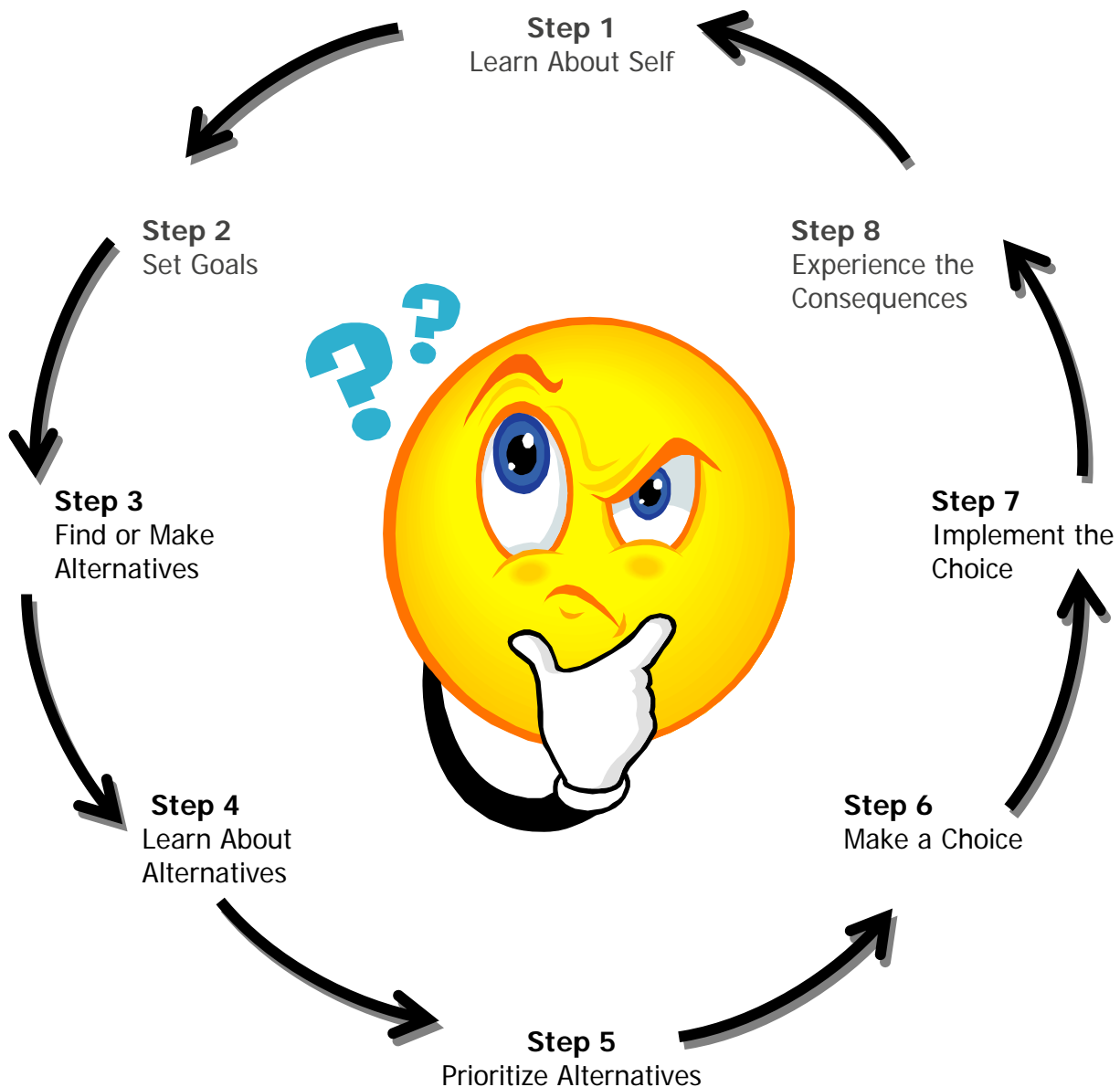
Step 7: Implement the Choice

Some concrete actions steps must be taken. Decision making moves from an internal thought process to an external action process at this step.

Model for Decision Making (cont'd)

Step 8: Experience the Consequences

The choices and actions taken begin to bring results. The hope is that these results move you closer to your goal and keep with your view of self. If so, you probably will not be redoing this decision soon; if not, you may be ready for step 1 again.



Action Steps to Selecting a Major

A major should be interest-motivated. Choose a major you will enjoy. You will perform best in the area you have some motivation for. Here are some steps to consider:

1. **FOCUS – a computerized career guidance system.** With FOCUS you can assess your interests and search for compatible occupations. Occupations can be viewed by major areas of study and work areas that appeal to you. Occupations can also be researched for duties, educational requirements, skills demand, work values, job outlook, and salary.
2. **College catalog.** Don't overlook the obvious. The college catalog can provide you with a great deal of important information about the numerous degrees and majors offered at CSU Stanislaus. The catalog provides information on departments, degrees offered, related career opportunities, and course offerings and descriptions.
3. **Enroll in introductory courses.** Taking courses from several departments can help you gather some information, experiment, and see what interests you. Careful planning may allow you to fulfill general education requirements at the same time.
4. **Meet with faculty.** Schedule meetings with faculty from departments and programs of interest to obtain additional information. You may want to ask the following questions:
 - How did you get into this field?
 - What are recent graduates of your department doing with their major after graduation?
 - What are the most challenging courses?
 - What skills or interests are common among students pursuing this major?
 - Would you to connect me with current students who are enthusiastic about the major and might be willing to answer some questions for me?
5. **Meet with students.** Speak with students who are currently majoring in the fields you are interested in. Use the list of students you received from faculty. Ask them to explain some of the courses and requirements as well as unique challenges and opportunities presented by their department/program of study. Also, do not overlook valuable input from friends, classmates, and roommates.
6. **Network.** Ask faculty and staff members for referrals to alumni or other professionals currently employed in the fields that interest you. Schedule informational interviews to discuss topics, including what a typical work day is like, major responsibilities in this field of work, qualifications needed to enter the field, and strategies for success.
7. **Visit Career Services.** Career Services has books, journals, job listings and other publications to help you in your research.

Pick one of the steps described above, and set a date you will complete it by to make sure you follow through. Make an appointment with a career advisor or faculty advisor to discuss your progress/direction.

Major Programs and Concentrations

California State University, Stanislaus

AGRICULTURAL STUDIES

- Agricultural Biology
- Agricultural Business/Economics
- Permaculture
- Special Concentration

ANTHROPOLOGY

- Archaeology
- Ethnology
- Physical Anthropology
- Environmental and Resource Studies (minor)
- Permaculture (minor)

APPLIED LEADERSHIP

ART

- Art History
- Graphic Design
- Mixed Subjects
- Painting
- Printmaking (certificate)
- Studio
- Sculpture
- Time Based Media

BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

- Botany
- Clinical Laboratory Science
- Ecology and Field Biology
- Entomology
- Genetics
- Marine Biology
- Microbiology
- Zoology

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

- Agriculture Business
- Accounting
- Computer Information Systems
- Finance
- General Business
- Management
- Marketing
- Operations Management

CHEMISTRY

- Environmental Sciences

CHILD DEVELOPMENT

- Early Childhood Track
- General Track
- Middle Childhood Track
- Services Track

COGNITIVE STUDIES

COMMUNICATION STUDIES

- Organizational Communication/ Public Relations
- Speech Communication
- Journalism (minor)

COMPUTER SCIENCE

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

- Corrections
- Criminal Legal Studies
- Forensic Science
- Juvenile Justice
- Law Enforcement

ECONOMICS

ENGINEERING – Joint program with University of the Pacific

ENGLISH

- Teaching English to Speaker of Other Languages (TESOL)

ETHNIC STUDIES (minor)

- African American Studies
- Chicano Studies
- Ethnic Studies

FRENCH

GENDER STUDIES

- History, Society, & Inequality
- Culture, Ideology, & Representation
- Ethnicity, Nationality, and Sexuality
- Applied Geography

GEOGRAPHY

GEOLOGY

- Applied Geology

HISTORY

- World History (minor)

INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAMS

LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES (minor)

LIBERAL STUDIES

- Anthropology
- Applied Philosophy
- Art
- Bilingual/Cross-cultural: South East Asian
- Bilingual/Cross-cultural: Spanish
- Biological Sciences
- Chemistry
- Child Development
- Civics
- Communication Studies
- Earth Science
- Economics
- English
- Ethnic Studies
- Exceptional Children and Youth
- Geography
- History
- Mathematics
- Music
- Physical Education
- Physics and Physical Science
- Sociology
- Spanish
- TESOL
- Theatre

MATHEMATICS

MUSIC

- Composition
- Education
- Jazz Studies
- Performance

NURSING

- Pre-License Program
- RN to BSN

PHILOSOPHY

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- Health and Wellness Management

PHYSICS

PHYSICAL SCIENCES

- Applied Physics
- Earth and Space Sciences
- Environmental Sciences
- Microelectronics (minor)

POLITICAL SCIENCE

PORTUGUESE (minor)

PSYCHOLOGY

- Developmental Psychology
- Experimental Psychology

SOCIAL SCIENCES

- Anthropology
- Communication Studies
- Criminal Justice
- Economics
- Ethnic Studies
- Gender Studies
- Geography
- History
- International Studies
- Political Science
- Psychology
- Sociology
- Urban and Community Studies

SOCIOLOGY

- Drug and Alcohol Studies
- General
- Human Services
- Social Deviance and Criminology
- Social Inequality
- The Body, Culture, and Society
- Gerontology (minor)

SPANISH

THEATRE

- Acting
- Technical Theatre