Choosing a Major

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# Myths about College and Career

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<th>Myth</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>I SHOULD KNOW MY MAJOR AND CAREER WHEN I ENTER COLLEGE.</strong></td>
<td>Studies show that 30% 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.</td>
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<td><strong>ONCE I SELECT A COLLEGE MAJOR, IT WILL DETERMINE MY CAREER CHOICE.</strong></td>
<td>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.</td>
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<td><strong>THERE IS ONE CAREER THAT IS A PERFECT MATCH FOR ME.</strong></td>
<td>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.</td>
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<td><strong>ONLY PAID WORK EXPERIENCE WILL HELP ME DEVELOP A CAREER PATH.</strong></td>
<td>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.</td>
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<td><strong>I SHOULD INVESTIGATE THE JOB MARKET JUST PRIOR TO MY COLLEGE GRADUATION.</strong></td>
<td>There are steps students 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.</td>
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<td><strong>CAREER SERVICES FOCUSES ON SENIORS LOOKING FOR EMPLOYMENT.</strong></td>
<td>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.</td>
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Types of Career Decision Makers

As you begin to explore the majors available at Stanislaus State, 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 a major, 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 students procrastinate about their decision of a major 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 students 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.

**Dependent Decision Makers** rely on the opinions of others. Many students fall into this category. They feel overwhelmed by having to choose a major out of the dozens of possibilities. Dependent decision makers rely on anyone and everyone to help them make this all-important decision.

**Educated Decision Makers** identify all their options, research majors of interest, ask numerous questions, and systematically engage in a process of elimination until the best options are found. Educated decision makers engage in a thorough self-assessment process, read about all the majors, and seek advice from career counselors and professionals in the workforce. 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 major exploration process, 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 deciding on your major.

1. Learn about Self
   When deciding on a major, it is important to understand the kind of person you are - your likes, strengths, weaknesses, values, sources of satisfaction, and personality characteristics.

2. Set Goals
   The goal in choosing a major is to identify the academic discipline that best suits your strengths and interests and which will help you gain knowledge and grow in an environment that includes professors and other students who share your values and interests. A secondary goal is to continue exploring what you can do with the major you choose. The major is a launching pad that can take you in a variety of different career directions.

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 read about all the majors before you narrow the list of possibilities.

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.

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

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. In many cases you can add a minor as well as a major.

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.

8. Experience the Consequences
   The choices and actions taken begin to bring results. As you commit to a major, you will take a class or complete a pre-requisite. The hope is that these classes move you closer to confirmation that this major is right for you. 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 2
With Focus 2 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 Stanislaus State. The catalog provides information on departments, degrees offered, related career opportunities, and course offerings and descriptions.

3. Enroll in Introductory Courses
When possible fulfill general education requirements by taking introductory courses that help you gather more information about a subject that interests you. Be careful of taking extra intro courses from the same General Education category. Seek advising if you're unsure.

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 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 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.

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, qualifications needed to enter the field, and strategies for success.

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

Dr. John Holland theorized that people work best in environments that match their personality preferences. According to his research, people and work environments can be loosely classified into six different groups.

While you may have some interests in and similarities to several of the six groups, you may be attracted primarily to two or three of the areas. These two or three letters are your “Holland Code.” For example, with a code of “RES” you would most resemble the Realistic type, somewhat less resemble the Enterprising type, and resemble the Social type even less. Research shows that people are most satisfied if there is some degree of fit between their personality and their work environment.

Investigative
“Thinkers”

People who like to observe, learn, investigate, analyze, evaluate, or solve problems.

Realistic
“Doers”

People who have athletic or mechanical ability, prefer to work with machines, tools, plants, or animals or to be outdoors.

Artistic
“Creators”

People who have artistic, innovating, or intuitional abilities and like to work in unstructured situations.

Conventional
“Organizers”

People who like to work with data, have clerical or numerical ability, and like to carry things out in detail or follow through on others’ instructions.

Enterprising
“Persuaders”

People who like to work with people – influencing, persuading, performing, leading or managing for organizational goals.

Social
“ Helpers”

People who like to work with people – to inform, enlighten, help, train, develop, or cure them – or are skilled with words.
## What is your Holland Code? (continued)

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<td>Friendly</td>
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<td>Tinker with</td>
<td>Explore a variety</td>
<td>Attend concerts</td>
<td>Work in groups</td>
<td>Make decisions</td>
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<td>help people</td>
<td>Start your own</td>
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<td>Use data processing</td>
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<td>Be physically</td>
<td>Perform lab experiments</td>
<td>Read fiction,</td>
<td>Do volunteer</td>
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<td>plays, and</td>
<td>work</td>
<td>politically</td>
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<td>Do research</td>
<td>poetry</td>
<td>Work with</td>
<td>Meet important</td>
<td>Be responsible</td>
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<td>Build things</td>
<td>Be challenged</td>
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<td>Tend/Train</td>
<td>Can you?</td>
<td>Take photography</td>
<td>Serve others</td>
<td>Have power or status</td>
<td>Collect or</td>
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<td>Express yourself</td>
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<td>Sell things</td>
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Career Services, Choosing a Major
### Stanislaus State Majors and Concentrations

- **Agricultural Studies B.A.**
  - Agricultural Biology
  - Agricultural Economics
  - Sustainable Agriculture
  - Special Concentration

- **Anthropology B.A.**
  - Forensic Anthropology
  - Medical Anthropology

- **Applied Leadership B.A.**

- **Art B.A. or B.F.A.**
  - Graphic Arts
  - Mixed Emphasis
  - Painting
  - Sculpture
  - Video and Time-Based Media

- **Biological Sciences B.A. or B.S.**
  - Biology Education
  - Ecology
  - General Biology
  - Molecular & Microbial
  - Organismal Biology
  - Environmental Sciences

- **Business Administration B.S.**
  - Accounting
  - Computer Information Systems
  - Finance
  - General Business
  - Management
    - Human Resources
    - International Business
    - Strategy/Entrepreneurship
  - Marketing
  - Operations Management

- **Chemistry B.A. or B.S.**
  - Environmental Sciences

- **Child Development B.A.**
  - Early Childhood
  - Middle Childhood
  - Child Development Services

- **Cognitive Studies B.A.**

- **Communication Studies B.A.**
  - Relational & Organization Communication
  - Public Communication & Media

- **Computer Science B.S.**

- **Criminal Justice B.A.**
  - Law Enforcement
  - Corrections
  - Forensic Science
  - Juvenile Justice
  - Criminal Legal Studies

- **Economics B.A.**
  - Banking, Investment, & Managerial Economics
  - International Trade & Alternative Economic Systems
  - Economics & Public Sector
  - Labor Economics
  - Economic History

- **English B.A.**

- **Ethnic Studies B.A.**
  - Socio-cultural Emphasis in Ethnic Minority Families
  - Socio-political Focus on Ethnic Experiences

- **Gender Studies B.A.**
  - History, Society, & Inequality
  - Culture, Ideology, & Representation
  - Ethnicity, Nationality, & Sexuality

- **Geography B.A.**
  - Cultural/Social Geography
  - Physical Geography & Environmental Studies
  - Geospatial Technology
  - California Studies

- **Geology B.S.**
  - Applied Geology

- **Health Science B.S.**
  - Health Leadership & Administration

- **History B.A.**

- **Kinesiology B.A.**
  - Exercise Science
  - Health Promotion

- **Liberal Studies B.A.**

- **Mathematics B.A. or B.S.**

- **Music B.A.**
  - General Music
  - Music Technology

- **Music B.M.**
  - Piano Performance
  - Instrumental Performance
  - Visual Performance
  - Music Education – Instrumental
  - Music Education – Choral
  - Composition
  - Jazz Performance

- **Nursing B.S.**
  - Pre-Licensure BSN Track
  - RN to BSN
  - ASBSN

- **Philosophy B.A.**

- **Physical Sciences B.A.**
  - Applied Physics
  - Earth & Space Sciences
  - Environmental Sciences

- **Physics B.A. or B.S.**

- **Political Science B.A.**

- **Psychology B.A.**
  - Developmental Psychology
  - Experimental Psychology

- **Social Sciences B.A.**
  - International Studies
  - Urban & Community Studies

- **Sociology B.A.**
  - General Sociology
  - Human Services
  - Drug and Alcohol Studies
  - Social Deviance & Criminology
  - Social Inequality
  - Body, Culture, & Society

- **Spanish B.A.**

- **Theatre Arts B.A.**
Stanislaus State Minors

- African American Studies
- Agricultural Studies
- Anthropology
- Art History
- Art
- Asian American Studies
- Biological Sciences
- Business Administration
- Chemistry
- Chicano Studies
- Child Development
- Cognitive Studies
- Computer Information Systems
- Computer Science
- Criminal Justice
- Economics
- English
- Environmental & Resource Studies
- Ethics
- Ethnic Studies
- Exceptional Children & Youth
- Forensic Science
- French
- Gender Studies
- Geography
- Geology
- Gerontology
- History
- Journalism
- Kinesiology
- Latin American Studies
- Mathematics
- Microelectronics
- Music
- Permaculture
- Philosophy
- Physical Sciences
- Physics
- Political Science
- Portuguese
- Psychology
- Sociology
- Spanish
- Speech Communication
- Theatre Arts
- World History
### Evaluating Majors

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