



Undeclared...

Don't Be Scared!

Upon entering college many students are pressured into determining a single course of study. This pressure often leads students to declare majors that are not aligned with their own personal ambitions.

Students need to realize that the process of choosing a major should not be hastily conducted. Students should take time to explore their options and gradually ease their way into a major befitting their own capabilities. Unfortunately, while searching for a career, many external pressures may lead students down the wrong path.

In one instance, an undeclared college freshman entered an advisor's office hoping to incorporate her playwriting class with her journalism studies. Unfortunately, she emerged from the office with all her previous ambitions abandoned and a career in theater forced upon her. The advisor, who is also a drama teacher, informed her that theater would provide a solid foundation for any chosen career path. After taking one acting class and giving it some careful thought, the student deemed the advisor's guidance helpful, but not relevant to her own personal aspirations and opted to reconsider her previously abandoned journalism plans.

In another instance, a sophomore informed his parents of his newfound interest to be an English teacher. Since his parents always thought their son would become a lawyer, this newfound interest came as a quite a surprise to them. Although they saw the benefits of a degree in English, they were uneasy about his disregarded plans of becoming a lawyer. They saw the law profession as a much more lucrative and secure line of work. Regardless of his parents' opinions, the student decided to remain an English major and even qualified for the Teacher's Education Program at his school.

Both of these experiences represent the difficulty of balancing the input of others with one's own personal ambitions. One must realize that although the guidance of others may serve as signposts on the road of life, we must follow our own internal compass and stay true to our direction.

You can use the following steps to develop your own individual road to success:

1. **Follow your own ambitions.** Ultimately, you must stay true to yourself. You must pursue your own aspirations and not be misled by the influence of others.
2. **Ask** parents/teachers/advisors/peers for advice, but do not let them determine your future. Although their guidance is given in goodwill, it oftentimes reflects a biased opinion.
3. **Complete core courses first.** Doing so, gives you more time to choose a career path while allowing you to explore different areas of study.
4. **Pursue personal interests** outside of class. Through internships and extracurricular activities, you can get hands-on experience in a career of interest to you.
5. **Use the career center.** This valuable service provides you with a positive environment for exploring different professions and further narrowing down one's career options.

*Conor Cashman, College of the Holy Cross graduate,
and Cara Devins, Boston College graduate*