Get in the Zone: Choosing a Major

Here is a list of things you can do to explore possible majors. Some are easier than others. Some may take an hour while others take a semester. Some will work for you and some won’t. Whichever you decide to do you should:

✓ Approach the process as you should an exam…Do a little preparing and ‘studying’ along the way.
✓ Set specific goals. For example, “By the end of this semester, I’ll attend information sessions for my top five majors, try to narrow to three, and then meet with the department advisers for these majors.”
✓ Work with advisers throughout the process. Advisers can be outstanding partners in this process. They can help you discover your own interests, help you set your goals, and can be a wealth of information, too.

Did you know…

- A majority of students in all colleges and universities change their major at least once in their college careers and many change their major several times over the course of their college career.
- Most college majors don’t offer specific preparation for a single type of work. Instead, they educate you and help (along with your activities, work, etc.) to make up the personal package that can enable you to become anything you want to be.
- Majors don’t limit you to one type of work.
- Your goals should be narrowing your focus from all possible majors to a few areas that you can then explore in greater depth.
- Your choice of a major is only one factor in determining your future job prospects and career path. Your grades, the electives you choose, and the skills you acquire through your coursework often tell employers more about what you have to offer than your major.

Tips to Remember!

- The best advice: Don’t panic.
- When we are stressed, a chemical produced by our brain called cortisol increases our appetite. In addition to the stress and anxiety we are all feeling, we are also experiencing sadness, anger and frustration, all of which are common emotional eating cues.
- Just 20-30 minutes of walking a day, for example, can give you more energy, help put things in perspective, improve sleep, sharpen your mental productivity, and boost your self-confidence.
- Lack of enough restful sleep results in daytime sleepiness, increased accidents, problems concentrating, increased sickness, and poor performance on the job and in school.
- A higher dose of caffeine (average of two-and-a-half cups a day of coffee) leads to headaches in about 50% of people.
- When you're under stress, your legal blood limit for alcohol is 0.00.
  - Alcohol can make you drowsy and fuzzy up your thinking.
  - When even a little alcohol enters your body, your brain automatically starts working on ways to get rid of it instead of trying to fight off stress. The upshot? Though one beer may not make you drunk enough to forget your stress, it could be enough to make your body forget about trying to deal with it.

Six Important Things to Consider when Determining Your Major:
- 1) Your Interests
- 2) Your Abilities
- 3) Your Values
- 4) Your Personality
- 5) Your Motivations
- 6) Realities
Take Advantage Of:

- Seeking the assistance and advice of a Discovery Advisor, a peer academic advisor available in each residence hall in the traditional undergraduate residential communities, as well as in the Hillside and Susquehanna Communities and via the Off Campus College Office for true commuters. Or the Discovery Academic Advisor
- Your school’s (i.e. CCPA, DSON, Harpur, SOM, or Watson) academic advisor(s)
- Your college’s course catalog – you’ll be amazed at the wealth of information you can find here…from required courses to specialized majors and tracks
- Your professors, including your academic advisor – talk with your professors, whether you have taken a class with them or not…many of them have worked in the field in which they teach and all are experts about careers and career opportunities
- Your classmates, especially upperclassmen – these are the folks who are deep into their major, perhaps already having had an internship or gone through job interviews…use them as a resource to gather more information
- Exploring the Alumni Career Network, which can be accessed via BUSI or the Career Development Center’s (CDC) website http://cdc.binghamton.edu
- Your family and friends – there’s a wealth of information right at your fingertips. Next time you go home or call home, ask your family about majors and careers
- Visiting the CDC, located in Library South Ground 500

Campus Resources:

- Discovery Program:
  - Administrative Offices: CIW Library, 607-777-5985
  - Website: discovery.binghamton.edu; Email: discovery@binghamton.edu
- Health Education:
  - Located in University Health Service, downstairs in room 102
  - Website: healtheducation.binghamton.edu; Phone: 607-777-2254
  - Email: healthed@binghamton.edu
- REACH Peer Education:
  - Located in University Health Service, downstairs in room 102
  - Phone: 607-777-2254
  - Email: reach@binghamton.edu
- Harpur Advising:
  - Located in Student Wing 110
  - Website: harpur-advising.binghamton.edu
  - Phone: 607-777-6305
- College of Community and Public Affairs:
  - Located at the Downtown Center
  - Website: ccpa.binghamton.edu
  - Phone: 607-777-2841
- School of Management:
  - Located in AA 142
  - Website: som.binghamton.edu
  - Phone: 607-777-2316
- Decker School of Nursing:
  - Located in AB 114
  - Website: dson.binghamton.edu
  - Phone: 607-777-4954
- Watson School of Engineering:
  - Located in ENGB-H
  - http://watson.binghamton.edu/WatsonStudentServices/index.htm
  - Phone: 607-777-6203
- University Counseling Center:
  - Located diagonally across from the main entrance of the Glenn G. Bartle Library.
  - Website: counseling.binghamton.edu; Phone: 607-777-277
- Center for Students with Disabilities:
  - Located in the Lecture Hall, Room B51
  - Website: ssd.binghamton.edu/support.htm; Phone: 607-777-2686
- Career Development Center:
  - Located in the basement of the Glenn G. Bartle Library, LSG 500
  - Website: cdc.binghamton.edu
  - Phone: 607-777-2400
- Writing Center
  - Located behind Coffee Kiosk in Library Building and through double doors, LN 1209
  - Website: writingcenter.binghamton.edu; Phone: 607-777-6725
- Student Support Services
  - Located in Champlain Hall, G17
  - Website: sss.binghamton.edu
  - Phone: 607-777-2024