If you’re undecided about a major, don’t fret! About 20-50% of incoming freshman are truly undecided upon an academic major or their future career plans and of those that have declared a major, 80 percent aren’t certain they’ve chosen the right one. Close to 70% of college students change their major at least once!

Choosing a major is not the same thing as choosing a career. A major is the area or discipline that you plan to study while you are in college, for example Finance, Secondary Education, or Biology. Most students plan to find a job that will utilize their major, such as becoming a financial analyst, a teacher or a doctor. Of course, there are many career options for each major offered at the university, but the first step to a successful career is choosing a major that is right for you! The more you enjoy what you are studying the more successful you will be!

**REASONS FOR CHOOSING A MAJOR**

Here are a few possible reasons why students decide on a particular major:

- Environmental Studies is of interest to me – it is my passion.
- As a pragmatist, I chose Exercise Science because it fulfills the requirements for graduate school.
- I chose an Accounting major because it provides a clearly defined career path.
- My Psychology major is steeped in research and provides a solid foundation for a number of careers.

Whether a decision is motivated by passion, reason, security, or flexibility, choosing a major radically shapes your academic experience.

**KNOW YOUR DECISION MAKING STYLE AND PATTERN**

It is a small investment of time to research both majors and careers so that you will make a well informed decision. Here are a few considerations when faced with important life decisions such as what to major in and what career path to pursue:

1. **Become aware of the need to make a decision.**
2. **Know Who You Are!** You have got to know the WHO before the WHAT!
   a. What are my Values? My Strengths and Weaknesses? My Interests?
   b. What is my personality?
   c. What is my desired lifestyle?
3. **Consult Resources.** See Next Page for Website Resources
5. **Narrow Down Options.** Review the list of all majors offered and cross off those of little interest and highlight those that are appealing. If you know you do not want to go into the health field you can cross off any majors associated with that type of degree. This will help you narrow down your choices and it won’t be quite as overwhelming.
6. **Take various general education classes.** You might find a passion for a subject you’ve never considered before. Taking your general education classes exposes you to a variety of fields where you can interact with experts – your instructors!
7. **Join a student organization.** Joining a club, especially a departmental club, can give you a sense for what that major is like. You’ll meet people currently in the major and can ask them questions about what they like or don’t like about that field. If you don’t want to make a full commitment to joining a club, simply stop by several different clubs over the course of the semester.
8. **Talk with family, friends, students, faculty and advisors.** The more people you talk to, the more perspectives you’ll get. It’s important to remember, however, that it is your decision in the end. Don’t let yourself get convinced you’re destined to become something you have no passion for doing. After a while you may start to realize you’re consistently talking about the same program or major and your future might start to look a little clearer.
9. **Volunteer.** Help out at different organizations to see if anything strikes your interest. The key concept is to get involved, somehow. When you’re out in the community, you’re not only helping people, you’re also meeting a diverse group of people who might be able to give you some direction on future careers.

10. **Keep an open mind.** Sometimes we get the idea that we are only good at one thing or don’t want to take the time to explore other options. Try to keep your options open when you’re undecided – you might surprise yourself! No fixed Mindset – the possibilities are endless!

11. **Take advantage of career tools.** If you can, take some skill assessments! These tools look at your personality and aptitudes and suggest careers that might mesh well with who you are.

12. **Do some research.** Are you thinking of possibly becoming a history major but are hesitant because you don’t know what jobs you would get with that degree? Several websites exist that help you make the connection between a major and various career paths you can take with it. A favorite sites is: “What Can I Do With This Major?” It has just about every major listed on that website.

13. **Relax and breathe.** Your major is not going to dictate what you do for the rest of your life. Not sure you believe me? Ask some professionals in a field you’re interested in the route they took to get to their current positions. Some of their majors might surprise you! A lot of majors share similarities and can lend themselves to a variety of positions.

**CONNECT MAJORS TO POST GRAD OPPORTUNITIES**
Remember that choosing a major is different from selecting a career. Careers are not necessarily related directly to academic majors: any major can lead to a variety of careers. It is often coursework combined with practical experiences gained through internships, research, work, or services projects that makes one competitive for post-grad opportunities.

**CAREER/MAJOR DECISION MAKING DIFFICULTIES**
Indecision is unique to each individual, however, research has identified three major categories of difficulties encountered when making career decisions (Gati, 2011). These difficulties may include:

1. Lack of readiness – a lack of motivation, indecisive approach in general, or dysfunctional beliefs.
2. Lack of Information – a lack of information about the decision making process, lack of self-awareness
3. Inconsistent information – unreliable information, internal conflict and external conflicts – maybe disagreements with significant others on what to major in or career options

**NOW WHAT?? AFTER THE RESEARCH…AFTER THE DECISION…MEET WITH A COUNSELOR!!**
Meet with a counselor to review your findings and research and to eventually develop a Student Educational Plan (SEP) which is your roadmap to goal completion at RCC.
WEBSITES FOR UNDECIDED STUDENTS
Gathering information about majors and careers is an important part of the academic decision-making process. The following websites all you to take stock of your interests, abilities, and values and learn more about majors that might suit you best. You can also learn about career opportunities that are possible for different majors and gain tips on preparing for your future career. Once you have gathered information, see an advisor in the Student Success Center and/or a counselor in Career Development to help you evaluate your findings.

Identifying Your Interests, Abilities, and Values

www.cacareercafe.com This new website offers career assessment, information about career pathways, job search strategies, professional associations, and Hot Tips for Career Success!

www.careercruising.com Access a Careers Internet Database and various Career Reports. User Name: rcc Password: Magnolia

www.eureka.org This site provides accurate and detailed career information. The descriptive databases include jobs and careers that require training from the apprenticeship level through postgraduate degrees. "EUREKA is a Goldmine of Career Information.” Site ID: J1AVQMH, Log in/Password: You create.

www.onetonline.org The O*NET program is the nation's primary source of occupational information, containing information on hundreds of standardized and occupation-specific descriptors. Information from this database forms the heart of O*NET OnLine, an interactive application for exploring and searching occupations. The database also provides the basis for our Career Exploration Tools, a set of valuable assessment instruments for workers and students looking to find or change careers.

http://whatcanidowiththismajor.com/major/majors/ The information outlines common career areas students enter with this major, typical employers that hire students in this field and strategies designed to maximize career opportunities. Understand that the areas and websites are representative of typical career paths associated with each major and are not an exhaustive list.

http://biggsuccess.com/bigg-articles/princeton-review-career-quiz/ Click on “Take the Career Quiz” at the right of the page to take the 24-item test. You will then receive a career style summary. Next, click on

http://www.princetonreview.com/careers.aspx to see which careers might interest you and access the following information on each career field: a day in the life, quality of life, past and future, career profile, and majors leading to the career field. http://www.princetonreview.com/majors.aspx for a list of majors.

http://www.typefocus.com Take the Free Personality Assessment to get a profile of your personality. After you find your four-letter personality code, go to http://www.typelogic.com to learn more about your personality type. http://www.humanmetrics.com/cgi-win/JTypes1.htm is another personality assessment.

http://www.careerkey.org/english Allows you to assess your personality based on John Holland’s theory of personalities. Click on “You,” and then “Take the Career Key” to get an assessment of your personality and learn about the career fields that relate to your personality.

http://www.keirsey.com By clicking on the section titled “Take the Keirsey Sorter,” you can take a 70-item inventory to learn more about your personality. Once you have your results, go to http://typelogic.com to get more detailed description of your personality.

http://www.mncareers.org/ Contains very helpful information for career and educational exploration. Under the heading of “Explore Careers” you can choose from many options. If you click “Investigate Careers”, you can learn what you should be doing to prepare for specific careers.
http://jobstar.org
Provides a wealth of useful links for learning about prospective majors and careers. Choose “Career Guides”, then “Guides for Specific Careers” to access a list of university majors and explore career options related to the major.

Preparations for Careers
http://www.bls.gov/oco
This U.S. Department of Labor site features the most complete source of information and statistics on careers, the Occupational Handbook. You can learn everything you want to know about any career in the U.S.: 1) nature of the work; 2) working conditions; 3) employment; 4) training, other qualifications, and advancement; 5) job outlook; 6) earnings; 7) related occupations; and 8) sources of additional information.

http://www.jobsweb.com/
Provides resources to help you with all stages of career planning: discovery, exploration, experience and experiment, and choice. Under the “Exploration” and “Experience and Experiment” links, you can get descriptions of careers, learn about “hot jobs”, and access information on graduate schools.

http://www.petersons.com
Peterson’s Education and Career Center is an excellent resource if you are planning for graduate school. You can search the database to find which universities offer programs in your area of interest as well as get information on preparing for graduate admissions tests.

http://www.collegenet.com
Provides a wealth of information on career fields. Click on the opening page. Choose the “College Resources” link at the top right. Next, click on the “Student” link. At the next page, click on the green “Go Career Search” button to learn about the nature of work, working conditions, employment, training, job outlook, earnings, related occupations and sources of additional information for a wide variety of careers.

TAKE ACTION
Now is the time to test out the waters. Once you have found a major that you believe will fit you, it's time to experience it. Keep in mind that one major can lead to a diversity of careers, and that it is okay to change your mind as you learn more about the choices available to you. Make sure you make an appointment with a counselor to develop your Student Educational Plan (SEP).

Find an Internship. An internship is a major/career related work experience where you take on responsible roles as workers. Internships usually last one semester and are available in most major/career areas. They are structured, supervised work experiences that can be paid or unpaid and may be eligible for college credit.

Volunteer. Volunteering is another option for students to gain practical and/or career-related experience. These experiences may help to develop leadership and people skills. It will also cultivate an understanding of citizenship and community beyond the campus.

Participate in a research project. Seek out a faculty member who is conducting research that is of interest.

Consider Graduate School. Is graduate school right for you?

Consider a Double Major, Minor, or a certificate program. Check with an academic advisor, to make sure you will still be able to finish your program in four years. There are ways to combine varied interests through minors, certificate programs, electives, graduate study!

MAKE SURE YOU HAVE A CURRENT STUDENT EDUCATIONAL PLAN ON FILE FROM RCC COUNSELING DEPARTMENT TO MATCH YOUR CAREER GOAL!