

Seniors put college on hold with gap years

By Luis Guzman

As the time comes to consider postsecondary plans, seniors have many options to consider, including possibly taking a gap year. Some seniors have it all planned out, having already decided where they will go to college, but some seniors are undecided on which university they want to attend or whether or not they want to go to college in the first place.

Senior **Zuhayr Alam** was one of those seniors figuring out what to do with college decisions.

"I was thinking about [taking a gap year] for a while, but I realized that I wanted to finish college first and get a head start in the professional world," Alam said. "I knew I had a great opportunity to get into the college of my

choice, and I wanted to take advantage of that instead of feeling like I'm wasting time not being in school."

For many seniors, deciding whether to take a gap year is a back and forth decision process. However, senior **Michael Posey** has already decided that he will divert from the traditional path and take a gap year.

"I like the idea of a gap year," Posey said. "I can work during that time off without the pressure of school and come back the next year with a head start on the financial issues that most [college freshman] have to go through."

The financial aspect of going to college can be a strain on senior parents' pockets. Helping out their parents financially is something that seniors take into account.

"College is expensive; I want to get a job and make money to help my parents out because when I'm done with college there is going to be a bunch of things I have to pay for," Posey said. "It's my education so I think it's my responsibility to at least help out my parents. They've done so much for me."

Gap years also give the advantage to students who are still wondering what they want to do with the rest of their lives and what they would like to major in, instead of going into college unsure of what they want to do and perhaps losing a year by switching majors and losing credits to graduate.

"There's many interests that I have so it's hard to choose," Posey said.

Michael Posey is not the only person that struggles in finding the right major. According to V.N. Gordon, author of *The Undecided College Student*, 50% of the students that go to college list themselves as "undecided" as they enter the university. Not only is that number high, but 75% of college students switch their majors at least once before graduating from college.

"I have went through many options and it took me all the way up to my senior year to realize that I have so many options on what to do later on with my life," Posey said.



Judith Nadine

RUSSELL

Students struggle to choose a college major

One Sunday afternoon after another monotonous college conversation with my parents, I sat down and drafted a list of plans I could fall back on if I become unsuccessful after college.

It looked like one of two things could happen: I could choose a secure career path but be unhappy, or I could choose a risky, no-guarantee career path and be relatively happy. As I was contemplating the options I realized, I was stuck in a state of challenging my ambitions, motivations, and influences that have collectively made me who I am today.

Truth is, there is not one 18-year-old on this planet that can say, "I will never change." When the time comes to choose a major, everyone tells you to choose something you like so you don't regret it. But let's be honest - who really knows what they like? And how do they know what they are destined to be successful in?

After more than twelve years of being told what to do, the allure of choice can become overwhelming.

Millions of students like me grow anxious as the time comes for them to decide what they want to do with the rest of their lives, and in light of all the negative news reports about struggling graduates, one cannot help but question if they are making the right decision.

Through the implications of media and the wedge between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, money seems to be a recurring subject. After all, I don't want to rely on my parent's money for the rest of my life, I have to find some way to establish myself in a respectful career to provide for a hypothetical future family, and if I were to consider financial aid I would have to find some way to pay off the massive amounts of debt.

Being inexperienced with paying

bills and mortgages, I promised myself at a very young age that money would never be my motivation. As years passed by I witnessed how money has become necessary to living a glamorous first-world lifestyle. Nevertheless, I want to hold on to that promise to see how far its ambitious form could take me. Subsequently, I enrolled as a journalism student.

Though it will be harder than choosing a straightforward technical path, I realized that pursuing a major is much more than a pursuit for a well-paid job.

Having fun is not enough to get through four years of school, then afterwards years of employment. Majors require a deep relationship, like the friend who can disagree and still be kind, the job that is hard sometimes, the book or movie we have to take a break from because there is so much there.

Fundamentally, in order to enjoy a degree and a profession, you need to be prepared to work hard to achieve your dream. The reality is, we make choices presuming they are the 'right ones,' but we don't know whether we might hate or love them in the end.

how did you choose your major?



"I plan on double majoring in theater and bioethics. I want to major in theater because it's been my passion, while bioethics is a pursuit of my interest in world religions and biology."

daniel KINGSLEY,
senior



"I am majoring in neuroscience because I am interested in the human brain, and I want to be a doctor."

manna TADELLE,
senior

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