

# College Major Decision Matrix

## Complete System for Choosing Your College Major

**Includes:** Customizable Criteria Weights | Scoring Templates | Career Research Worksheets | Systematic Evaluation Tools

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## How to Use This System

**Step 1:** Complete the Self-Assessment Worksheets (Section 1) **Step 2:** Research potential majors using Career Research Worksheets (Section 2) **Step 3:** Customize your criteria weights based on priorities (Section 3) **Step 4:** Score each major using the Decision Matrix (Section 4) **Step 5:** Compare results and make your final decision (Section 5)

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## SECTION 1: SELF-ASSESSMENT WORKSHEETS

### Worksheet 1A: Interest Inventory

Rate your interest level (1-10) in each subject area:

#### STEM Fields

- Mathematics: \_\_\_\_/10
- Physical Sciences (Physics, Chemistry): \_\_\_\_/10
- Biological Sciences: \_\_\_\_/10
- Computer Science/Technology: \_\_\_\_/10
- Engineering: \_\_\_\_/10

#### Social Sciences

- Psychology: \_\_\_\_/10
- Sociology: \_\_\_\_/10
- Political Science: \_\_\_\_/10
- Economics: \_\_\_\_/10
- Anthropology: \_\_\_\_/10

#### Humanities

- Literature/English: \_\_\_\_/10
- History: \_\_\_\_/10

- Philosophy: \_\_\_\_/10
- Languages: \_\_\_\_/10
- Religious Studies: \_\_\_\_/10

#### **Arts & Communication**

- Visual Arts: \_\_\_\_/10
- Performing Arts: \_\_\_\_/10
- Music: \_\_\_\_/10
- Communication/Media: \_\_\_\_/10
- Film/Photography: \_\_\_\_/10

#### **Business & Applied Fields**

- Business Administration: \_\_\_\_/10
- Marketing: \_\_\_\_/10
- Finance/Accounting: \_\_\_\_/10
- Education: \_\_\_\_/10
- Health Sciences: \_\_\_\_/10

#### **Top 3 Interest Areas:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ (Score: \_\_\_\_/10)
  2. \_\_\_\_\_ (Score: \_\_\_\_/10)
  3. \_\_\_\_\_ (Score: \_\_\_\_/10)
- 

## **Worksheet 1B: Skills Assessment**

Rate your current skill level (1-10):

#### **Analytical Skills**

- Problem-solving: \_\_\_\_/10
- Critical thinking: \_\_\_\_/10
- Data analysis: \_\_\_\_/10
- Research: \_\_\_\_/10
- Logical reasoning: \_\_\_\_/10

#### **Creative Skills**

- Original thinking: \_\_\_\_/10
- Design/aesthetics: \_\_\_\_/10
- Writing/expression: \_\_\_\_/10

- Innovation: \_\_\_\_/10
- Artistic ability: \_\_\_\_/10

### People Skills

- Communication: \_\_\_\_/10
- Leadership: \_\_\_\_/10
- Teamwork: \_\_\_\_/10
- Teaching/mentoring: \_\_\_\_/10
- Empathy: \_\_\_\_/10

### Technical Skills

- Computer proficiency: \_\_\_\_/10
- Mathematical ability: \_\_\_\_/10
- Scientific method: \_\_\_\_/10
- Technical writing: \_\_\_\_/10
- Programming: \_\_\_\_/10

### Strongest Skill Categories:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ (Average: \_\_\_\_/10)
  2. \_\_\_\_\_ (Average: \_\_\_\_/10)
  3. \_\_\_\_\_ (Average: \_\_\_\_/10)
- 

## Worksheet 1C: Values & Priorities

Rank importance (1-10) of each factor:

### Career Factors

- High earning potential: \_\_\_\_/10
- Job security/stability: \_\_\_\_/10
- Work-life balance: \_\_\_\_/10
- Career advancement opportunities: \_\_\_\_/10
- Prestige/status: \_\_\_\_/10

### Personal Fulfillment

- Helping others: \_\_\_\_/10
- Creative expression: \_\_\_\_/10
- Intellectual challenge: \_\_\_\_/10
- Making a difference: \_\_\_\_/10

- Personal passion: \_\_\_\_/10

### Practical Considerations

- Job availability: \_\_\_\_/10
- Geographic flexibility: \_\_\_\_/10
- Entrepreneurship potential: \_\_\_\_/10
- Graduate school requirements: \_\_\_\_/10
- Starting salary: \_\_\_\_/10

### Top 5 Priorities:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ (Score: \_\_\_\_/10)
  2. \_\_\_\_\_ (Score: \_\_\_\_/10)
  3. \_\_\_\_\_ (Score: \_\_\_\_/10)
  4. \_\_\_\_\_ (Score: \_\_\_\_/10)
  5. \_\_\_\_\_ (Score: \_\_\_\_/10)
- 

## Worksheet 1D: Learning Style Preference

Which describes you best? (Check all that apply)

### Learning Environment

- Prefer hands-on, practical work
- Enjoy theoretical, abstract concepts
- Like structured, clear guidelines
- Thrive in open-ended exploration
- Work best independently
- Prefer collaborative learning

### Academic Preferences

- Math-heavy coursework appeals to me
- I enjoy reading and writing
- Lab work excites me
- I like presentations and discussions
- Memorization comes easily
- I prefer understanding concepts deeply

### Project Preferences

- Research papers

- Lab experiments
- Creative projects
- Group presentations
- Problem sets
- Case studies

**Dominant Learning Style:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## SECTION 2: CAREER RESEARCH WORKSHEETS

### Worksheet 2A: Major Research Template

Complete one worksheet for each major you're considering (3-5 majors recommended)

**Major Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### Academic Requirements

- Total credit hours required: \_\_\_\_\_
- Core courses (list 5-7 key classes): \_\_\_\_\_
- Math/Science requirements: \_\_\_\_\_
- Writing-intensive courses: \_\_\_\_\_
- Lab/practical work required: Yes / No
- Capstone/thesis required: Yes / No

#### Difficulty & Workload

- Average GPA in major: \_\_\_\_\_
- Hours/week study time (estimated): \_\_\_\_\_
- Grade distribution (% A's): \_\_\_\_\_
- Difficulty level (1-10): \_\_\_\_/10

#### Career Outcomes

- Common career paths (list 5): \_\_\_\_\_
- Employment rate at graduation: \_\_\_\_\_%
- Median starting salary: \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Mid-career salary (10 years): \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Job growth projection (10 years): \_\_\_\_\_%

#### Graduate School

- Graduate degree required for career: Yes / No / Optional
- Common graduate programs:
- Professional certifications needed: \_\_\_\_\_

### Program Specifics at Your School

- Department size: \_\_\_\_\_ faculty / \_\_\_\_\_ students
- Faculty-student ratio: 1:\_\_\_\_\_
- Research opportunities: Yes / No
- Internship opportunities: Yes / No
- Study abroad options: Yes / No
- Specialized tracks available: \_\_\_\_\_

### Alumni Network

- Alumni career success (1-10): \_\_\_\_/10
- Networking opportunities (1-10): \_\_\_\_/10
- Notable alumni: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Worksheet 2B: Career Path Investigation

### For Each Major's Top Career Path:

Career Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Related Major: \_\_\_\_\_

### Job Description

- Daily responsibilities:

### Work Environment

- Typical setting: Office / Lab / Field / Remote / Mixed
- Work hours: Standard / Flexible / Long / Variable
- Physical demands: Low / Moderate / High
- Travel required: None / Occasional / Frequent

### Compensation

- Entry-level salary: \$\_\_\_\_\_
- 5-year salary: \$\_\_\_\_\_
- 10-year salary: \$\_\_\_\_\_
- Senior-level salary: \$\_\_\_\_\_

- Benefits typically offered: \_\_\_\_\_

### Job Market

- Current job openings (search): \_\_\_\_\_ positions
- Geographic concentration: \_\_\_\_\_
- Industry growth rate: \_\_\_\_\_%
- Automation risk: Low / Medium / High
- Competition level: Low / Moderate / High

### Education Requirements

- Minimum degree: \_\_\_\_\_
- Preferred degree: \_\_\_\_\_
- Certifications needed: \_\_\_\_\_
- Continuing education: Yes / No

### Career Progression

- Entry-level position: \_\_\_\_\_
- Mid-level position (5 years): \_\_\_\_\_
- Senior position (10+ years): \_\_\_\_\_
- Leadership opportunities: Yes / No

### Personal Fit

- Aligns with interests (1-10): \_\_\_\_/10
- Uses my strengths (1-10): \_\_\_\_/10
- Matches lifestyle goals (1-10): \_\_\_\_/10
- Excites me (1-10): \_\_\_\_/10

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## Worksheet 2C: Informational Interview Template

Interview with: \_\_\_\_\_ Their Role: \_\_\_\_\_  
Major/Degree: \_\_\_\_\_ Years in  
Field: \_\_\_\_\_

### Questions to Ask:

1. What does a typical day look like in your role?

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

2. What do you like most about your career?

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

3. What are the biggest challenges?

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

4. How well did your major prepare you for this career?

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

5. What skills are most important in your field?

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

6. What's the career trajectory in this field?

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

7. What advice would you give someone considering this major?

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Are there related careers I should consider?

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

9. What's the job market like currently?

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Would you choose this major/career again?

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Key Takeaways:

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- 
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Overall Impression (1-10): \_\_\_\_/10

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## SECTION 3: CUSTOMIZABLE CRITERIA WEIGHTS

### Step 1: Assign Importance Weights

Rate each criterion's importance to YOUR decision (1-10):

#### Academic Factors

- Personal interest in subject: \_\_\_\_/10  $\times$  2 = \_\_\_\_
- Skill alignment: \_\_\_\_/10  $\times$  1.5 = \_\_\_\_
- Academic difficulty manageable: \_\_\_\_/10  $\times$  1 = \_\_\_\_
- Coursework appeals to me: \_\_\_\_/10  $\times$  1.5 = \_\_\_\_

#### Career Factors

- Starting salary potential: \_\_\_\_/10  $\times$  \_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_
- Career growth opportunities: \_\_\_\_/10  $\times$  \_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_
- Job market strength: \_\_\_\_/10  $\times$  \_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_
- Employment rate: \_\_\_\_/10  $\times$  \_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_

### Personal Factors

- Passion/excitement level: \_\_\_\_/10 × \_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_
- Work-life balance in career: \_\_\_\_/10 × \_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_
- Aligns with values: \_\_\_\_/10 × \_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_
- Geographic flexibility: \_\_\_\_/10 × \_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_

### Practical Factors

- No additional degree required: \_\_\_\_/10 × \_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_
- Internship availability: \_\_\_\_/10 × \_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_
- Department quality: \_\_\_\_/10 × \_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_
- Alumni network strength: \_\_\_\_/10 × \_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_

## Custom Weight Multipliers

Assign multipliers based on your priorities:

- **Critical (Must-have):** 3x
- **Very Important:** 2x
- **Important:** 1.5x
- **Somewhat Important:** 1x
- **Nice to Have:** 0.5x

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## SECTION 4: DECISION MATRIX SCORING TEMPLATE

### Major Comparison Matrix

Complete for each major being considered (copy template for each)

Major Name: \_\_\_\_\_

| Criterion                    | Weight | Raw Score (1-10) | Weighted Score |
|------------------------------|--------|------------------|----------------|
| <b>ACADEMIC FACTORS</b>      |        |                  |                |
| Personal interest in subject | _____  | ____/10          | _____          |
| Matches my skills            | _____  | ____/10          | _____          |

| Criterion                      | Weight | Raw Score (1-10) | Weighted Score |
|--------------------------------|--------|------------------|----------------|
| Academic difficulty manageable | ____   | ____/10          | ____           |
| Coursework appeals to me       | ____   | ____/10          | ____           |
| Learning style fit             | ____   | ____/10          | ____           |
| <b>Subtotal Academic</b>       |        |                  | ____           |
|                                |        |                  |                |
| <b>CAREER FACTORS</b>          |        |                  |                |
| Starting salary                | ____   | ____/10          | ____           |
| Mid-career salary              | ____   | ____/10          | ____           |
| Job availability               | ____   | ____/10          | ____           |
| Employment rate                | ____   | ____/10          | ____           |
| Career growth potential        | ____   | ____/10          | ____           |
| Industry stability             | ____   | ____/10          | ____           |
| <b>Subtotal Career</b>         |        |                  | ____           |
|                                |        |                  |                |
| <b>PERSONAL FACTORS</b>        |        |                  |                |
| Passion/excitement             | ____   | ____/10          | ____           |
| Aligns with values             | ____   | ____/10          | ____           |
| Work-life balance              | ____   | ____/10          | ____           |
| Helps others/makes difference  | ____   | ____/10          | ____           |
| Creative fulfillment           | ____   | ____/10          | ____           |
| <b>Subtotal Personal</b>       |        |                  | ____           |
|                                |        |                  |                |
| <b>PRACTICAL FACTORS</b>       |        |                  |                |
| No grad school required        | ____   | ____/10          | ____           |
| Department quality             | ____   | ____/10          | ____           |
| Internship opportunities       | ____   | ____/10          | ____           |
| Geographic flexibility         | ____   | ____/10          | ____           |
| Alumni network                 | ____   | ____/10          | ____           |
| Research opportunities         | ____   | ____/10          | ____           |
| <b>Subtotal Practical</b>      |        |                  | ____           |

| Criterion                   | Weight | Raw Score (1-10) | Weighted Score |
|-----------------------------|--------|------------------|----------------|
|                             |        |                  |                |
| <b>TOTAL WEIGHTED SCORE</b> |        |                  | _____          |

## Scoring Guide

### How to Rate (1-10):

- **9-10:** Exceptional - Exceeds expectations
- **7-8:** Strong - Meets needs very well
- **5-6:** Adequate - Acceptable but not ideal
- **3-4:** Weak - Below expectations
- **1-2:** Poor - Does not meet needs

**Calculate Weighted Score:** Raw Score  $\times$  Weight = Weighted Score

### Example:

- Criterion: Starting Salary
- Weight: 2x (Very Important to you)
- Raw Score: 8/10 (Strong salary potential)
- Weighted Score:  $8 \times 2 = 16$  points

## SECTION 5: FINAL COMPARISON & DECISION

### Side-by-Side Major Comparison

| Criterion          | Major 1: _____ | Major 2: _____ | Major 3: _____ | Major 4: _____ |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Academic Score     | _____          | _____          | _____          | _____          |
| Career Score       | _____          | _____          | _____          | _____          |
| Personal Score     | _____          | _____          | _____          | _____          |
| Practical Score    | _____          | _____          | _____          | _____          |
| <b>TOTAL SCORE</b> | _____          | _____          | _____          | _____          |
| Rank               | _____          | _____          | _____          | _____          |

## Qualitative Assessment

For your top 2-3 majors, complete this reflection:

Major: \_\_\_\_\_

### Strengths:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

### Weaknesses:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

### Opportunities:

- 1.
- 2.

### Risks/Concerns:

- 1.
- 2.

Gut Feeling (1-10): \_\_\_\_/10

Can I see myself doing this for 4 years? Yes / No / Unsure

Can I see myself in this career for 10+ years? Yes / No / Unsure

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## Decision Validation Checklist

Before finalizing your decision, answer these questions:

### Academic Fit

- I genuinely enjoy the subject matter

- The coursework aligns with my learning style
- I have the prerequisites/background needed
- The workload is manageable for me
- I'm excited about the core classes

#### **Career Alignment**

- Career paths interest me
- Salary meets my needs
- Job market is stable/growing
- I can see myself in this career long-term
- Geographic opportunities exist where I want to live

#### **Personal Satisfaction**

- This major excites me
- It aligns with my values
- I'll feel fulfilled in this career
- It offers the lifestyle I want
- I'm not choosing it just for money/parents

#### **Practical Viability**

- I can afford any additional education needed
- Internships/jobs available in this field
- My school has a strong program
- Backup career options exist
- I've talked to people in this field

**Total Checks:** \_\_\_\_/20

**18-20 checks:** Strong choice - Move forward confidently **14-17 checks:** Good choice - Address concerns **10-13 checks:** Moderate concerns - Research more **Below 10:** Reconsider - May not be the right fit

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## **Final Decision Framework**

**Scenario Testing:** Imagine yourself 5 years from now...

#### **Scenario 1: You're struggling in a difficult major course**

- Which major would you still push through for? \_\_\_\_\_
- Why? \_\_\_\_\_

**Scenario 2: You're offered your dream job in this field**

- Which offer excites you most? \_\_\_\_\_
- Why? \_\_\_\_\_

**Scenario 3: The job market shifts dramatically**

- Which major's skills transfer best? \_\_\_\_\_
- Why? \_\_\_\_\_

**Scenario 4: You're at a family gathering explaining your major**

- Which one are you proudest to discuss? \_\_\_\_\_
- Why? \_\_\_\_\_

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## Double Major / Minor Consideration

Primary Major: \_\_\_\_\_ Potential Double Major: \_\_\_\_\_  
Potential Minor: \_\_\_\_\_

**Benefits of Double Major/Minor:**

- Complements primary major
- Increases job marketability
- Satisfies multiple interests
- Opens additional career paths
- Manageable workload

**Feasibility Check:**

- Additional semesters needed: \_\_\_\_\_
- Extra cost: \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Credit overlap: \_\_\_\_\_ courses
- Workload manageable: Yes / No
- Worth the investment: Yes / No

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## SECTION 6: ACTION PLAN

### Next Steps Timeline

### **Immediate (This Week)**

- Review all scoring results
- Discuss top 2-3 majors with academic advisor
- Talk to professors in top major departments
- Review course catalogs for top choices

### **Short-Term (This Month)**

- Attend information sessions for top majors
- Shadow a professional in top career paths
- Take introductory course in top major (if possible)
- Join student organizations related to major
- Conduct 2-3 informational interviews

**Decision Deadline:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Official Declaration Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Declaration Requirements Checklist**

**Before officially declaring, ensure you have:**

- Completed prerequisite courses (if any)
- Met with major advisor
- Obtained required signatures
- Reviewed 4-year plan
- Understood graduation requirements
- Checked major-specific GPA requirements
- Explored study abroad options
- Identified internship opportunities
- Reviewed minor/certificate options

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## **Backup Plan**

**If my first choice doesn't work out:**

**Plan B Major:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Why this backup:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Warning Signs to Reconsider:**

- Consistent grades below major GPA requirement
- No longer interested in core courses
- Career paths no longer appealing
- Better opportunity in another field emerges

**Changing Majors Protocol:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

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## SECTION 7: ONGOING EVALUATION

### Semester Check-In Template

Complete at the end of each semester

Semester: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_ Major: \_\_\_\_\_

**Academic Performance**

- Major GPA: \_\_\_\_\_
- Overall GPA: \_\_\_\_\_
- Favorite course this semester: \_\_\_\_\_
- Most challenging course: \_\_\_\_\_
- Interest level in major (1-10): \_\_\_\_/10

**Career Preparation**

- Internship/work experience gained: \_\_\_\_\_
- Skills developed: \_\_\_\_\_
- Networking connections made: \_\_\_\_\_
- Career clarity (1-10): \_\_\_\_/10

**Satisfaction Assessment**

- Still excited about major: Yes / No / Unsure
- Career path still appealing: Yes / No / Unsure
- Would choose this major again: Yes / No / Unsure

**Adjustments Needed:**

- Add a minor
- Consider double major
- Change major
- Add certificates
- Explore different career paths within major

**Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## **APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

### **Salary Research Resources**

- Bureau of Labor Statistics (bls.gov/ooh)
- PayScale.com
- Glassdoor.com
- LinkedIn Salary
- Your university career services salary data

### **Career Research Tools**

- O\*NET Online (onetonline.org)
- Occupational Outlook Handbook
- Industry association websites
- Professional organization career pages
- LinkedIn job searches

### **Major Exploration**

- University major/minor catalog
- Department websites and faculty pages
- Student organization lists
- Course evaluation websites
- Academic advising office resources

### **Skills Assessment Tools**

- Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)

- Strong Interest Inventory
- CliftonStrengths
- Career assessment through career services
- Free online aptitude tests

## Informational Interview Sources

- LinkedIn alumni tool
  - University alumni database
  - Professional associations
  - Family and friend connections
  - Professors and teaching assistants
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## CONCLUSION: MAKING YOUR DECISION

### Remember:

- ✓ **There's no one "perfect" major** - Multiple paths can lead to success and fulfillment
- ✓ **Your major doesn't lock you into one career** - Many successful professionals work in fields unrelated to their major
- ✓ **You can change your mind** - Changing majors is common and acceptable
- ✓ **Skills matter more than major** - Develop transferable skills regardless of major choice
- ✓ **Passion + pragmatism = best outcomes** - Balance what you love with what's practical
- ✓ **Use this matrix as a guide, not a rule** - Numbers help clarify, but trust your instincts too

### Your Decision:

After completing this comprehensive evaluation, my chosen major is:

**Major:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Declaration Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian (optional):** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Academic Advisor:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Download Companion Materials:**

- Printable PDF worksheets
- Excel scoring calculator
- Major comparison spreadsheet
- Career research template pack
- Sample completed matrices

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*This decision matrix is a tool to help organize and evaluate your options systematically. Use it alongside conversations with advisors, professors, professionals, family, and friends. Your college major is an important decision, but it's also just the beginning of a lifelong learning journey.*