

The Major Issue

Do all majors share equal merit?

By Greer Veon

As the season of finals approaches and the workload grows, I find myself wrestling with a recurring frustration. Every now and then, I either overhear or read online comments made about unruly amounts of papers or exams and how life would just be easier if he or she had picked an “easy major” upon coming to college.

But if you actually believe that there is such a thing as an “easy major,” I feel that you are offending your fellow peers.

I notice that this debate on college majors seems to be an issue not only for students on this campus, but also on college campuses across the globe. As I went to research this topic, I came across an article in *The Washington Post* from January 2012. Columnist Michelle Singletary wrote,

“I have this game I play with college students.

‘What’s your major?’ I ask.

The student might say ‘English,’ ‘psychology,’ ‘political science’ or ‘engineering.’ And then, in my mind, after factoring in some other information, I say to myself ‘job’ or ‘no job.’”

The comment, along with the article’s title, “Not all college majors are created equal,” struck me enough to check what other article titles might pop up from a Google search. They range from “What’s the Most Useless Major?” to “10 Worst College Degrees to Earn.”

All of these writers argue about the same things: the increasing unemployment rates, low financial stability, and overall uselessness of certain degrees in any well-known career. And while I completely understand their arguments, I found that every outlook was made in a completely negative light.

When you make critiques on the overall worth of effort put into a major by using words such as “easy” or “useless,” you’re missing the point of obtaining the major itself.

Some majors require mostly exams, while others are filled with one paper after another.

Others conduct research, spend hours on presentations, or present multiple pieces of artwork.

But all college majors, whether from the sciences, the humanities, or the professional fields, share an equal merit. All fields of study share a common thread of providing their own set of challenges and obstacles for students to complete. But the amount of work should not matter, nor be compared.

Deciding a college major is a completely personal yet rewarding experience. A student weighs their passions and interests with the overall scholarly experience that he or she wants to follow in college. As students, we expand our knowledge on a subject that interests us.

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This should be celebrated.

When you choose your major, you are actively pursuing a passion. You aim toward the desire to expand your own understanding of something that excites or strikes you. Whether you study biology, art history, business or psychology, you make the choice to grow as an educated individual, and that decision leads toward a more fulfilling life.

I don’t intend to knock down those who choose their majors based on future financial stability or job security. Those who weigh the practical points are smart to do so. After all, some majors are designed to guide you directly towards a future career program once you receive your degree.

Nor do I want to criticize those who might make these kinds of comments in a joking manner. I think we all can admit to envying

those who might seem to have less work.

But what I do argue is that we should not compare the amount of our work, the difficulty of our majors and our overall academic experiences to one another, because this kind of debate divides the center of academia.

As individuals, we are all unique. We value different things. We excel in different classes. We seek to answer our curiosity with the world in different ways. And that’s what makes the college environment so admirable.

We also shouldn’t draw this correlation between college majors and potential careers. They are two separate paths. There are those majors in the professional field that aim students toward a certain career path once they earn their degree, but the choice to actively pursue that goal in the end is in the graduate’s hands - not the major’s.

A major, whether career-oriented or not, does provide the necessary basis for learning in the professional world. Your major is far from useless, because each one teaches you to think critically, write and articulate your thoughts clearly, practice problem solving skills, and apply information to real life situations. The knowledge and experience that you have under your belt allows you to adjust to many careers in different ways.

We need those that can be doctors, lawyers, and police officers. We also need those who can teach, write, and create, as well as those who are leaders in politics or faith. Overall, we have to value the groups of citizens that are bold enough to attend college and pursue a major in their interests.

As members of the Hendrix community, we must work together to recognize the value and high regard placed on every student who is set on a path for scholarly growth. We have to reject these ideas that there is such a thing as an easier or useless degree.

Although our minds are currently wrapped within the stress of our finals, we must remind ourselves that our majors will lead us toward a fulfilling lifestyle, one that will make us proud in the end.