

CAREER SERVICES: MAJORS AND CAREER PLANNING

Choosing a major may get you started in thinking about your future career. Finding your career direction is a process that begins with self-discovery, leads to preparation, and ends with finding a fit between yourself and the work you love. Good career decision making can only happen after you know yourself by considering your interests, values, and skills. This process should begin now as you consider your academic plans, and how they can lead to a successful career beyond Swarthmore.

Although it is wise to begin considering career choices early on in your college education, you do not necessarily have to decide on a career goal before you choose your major. In some cases, a major does provide coursework to train you in a specific field, such as engineering or economics, but knowledge learned from all majors is transferable to various careers. Career trends are reflecting a great deal of career mobility wherein people make an average of six to eight career changes during their working lives.

A liberal arts curriculum provides a wealth of skills sets that will be useful in a multitude of career paths. Employers from all fields are interested in hiring competent people who can benefit their organizations. Your choice of a major should be based on your own personal needs and interests. What are you looking for during your college years? What are your future goals? What are your needs? What concepts, skills, and abilities do you wish to develop? And, once you've developed them, in what settings would you like to express these talents? In answering these questions it is often helpful to think about some of your favorite classes. Consider accomplishments that make you proud. Reflect upon the types of activities that give you energy. Think about when and where you have done your best work. Lastly, contemplate where you have enjoyed volunteering and/or working.

Come to Career Services to talk with a Career Counselor about all of these questions. In addition to providing you with career information related to your major, Career Services offers career interest inventories to help clarify some personality traits and interests as they relate to your major and potential career paths. Also, take the time to talk with friends, family, professors, and academic advisors to get feedback about what they know about you and your fields of interest. Finally, make sure to check out the Career Services library, website, workshops, alumni panels, and employer information sessions so you can learn more about how to find the right fit for you.

Sophomore Year

- Attend the Career Services **Sophomore Open House** to learn the many ways we can help develop your career path and guide you in researching career options
- Participate in the *Extern Program*, an opportunity to shadow a Swarthmore alumnus/a and engage in a short-term project over winter break
- Plan early to obtain a summer internship and attend our *Internship Search* workshop
- Meet with a Career Counselor to talk about what you can do with various majors and learn more about your interests, skills and values; the counselor can administer the MBTI and Campbell Interest and Skill Survey to help clarify career possibilities

Summer after Sophomore Year

This summer “counts,” and is not free; try to do one of the following:

- Find an internship or summer job in an industry or field that you would potentially like to pursue after graduation; if you discover you don't like it, you can still change direction successfully.
- Find an academically-related internship/research position that supports your graduate school plans.
- Get to know Swarthmore alumni in fields of interest – access their contact information via the College's Online Alumni Directory.