



The UNIVERSITY of
WEST ALABAMA

Changing Your Major: Learning to Go with the Flow

As a college student, selecting your major has probably been one of the most challenging decision you've made so far. It can be a daunting task to decide what you want to be when you grow up, so I'm going to share a little secret that may make it less stressful: You don't have to stick with your initial decision forever.

In fact, according to the National Center for Education Statistics, 80 percent of students in the United States change their major at least once. And on average, college students change their major at least *three times* during their college career.

Take me, for example.

I managed to finish college in four years (people still did that back then), but during those eight semesters, I changed my major five times. *Five. Times.*

I started as an education major, but a quick stint in the classroom proved I wasn't well suited to work with kids. I changed to English where I loved the courses but worried I wouldn't find a job. So I changed to nursing. Nope, bad idea. Back to English, with a minor in accounting (don't ask... I don't even remember why), and finally dropped the minor. I now have a Bachelor of Arts in English and a job.

That was a long way to go to make this point: If you discover your original decision no longer works for you, change it. You've probably noticed that most majors require the same core classes, which take up most of your first two years. So changing your major shouldn't slow you down much during the early years.

Also, remember you don't have to make a decision on your own. Check out the resources in the guidance office for help, and take advantage of the access you have to some useful tools to help you actually decide on a major. You can find out where your strengths lie by taking a personality test or a standardized preference test. Get detailed economic outlooks for specific professions. Learn what each major truly entails. And of course, find out which classes you need to add for your new major (once you decide on one). These resources can also help you put together a class schedule that keeps you on track for graduation (or as closely as possible).

Take my word for it: changing your major is just part of the deal. Keep searching for the one that suits you—the one you're passionate about. It may take a little longer to finish, but take it from someone who's happy she's not a nurse or an elementary school teacher. It will be worth it in the long run.