Myths About Majors

1. My major will determine my career. T F

2. My major will limit my choices for graduate or professional schools. T F

3. Engineers and business economics majors are more employable, and make higher salaries than liberal arts. T F

4. The earlier you choose a major the better. T F

5. Most college students choose their majors based on how much money they can make. T F

6. Your GPA is the most important criteria employers look for when hiring. T F

7. There is only one “right job” for you in terms of your ability. T F

8. Double majors do not necessarily make you more marketable. T F

9. Most people are “underemployed” in jobs that don’t match their personal interests and abilities. T F

10. “Without work all life goes rotten. But when work is soulless, life stifles and dies.” T F

Resources On Reserve in the Career Resource Room:

- Major Options: The Student’s Guide to Linking College Majors & Career Opportunities During and After College. Nicholas Basta H.19
- Great Jobs for Liberal Arts Majors. Blythe Camenson H.53

Don’t let assumptions and misinformation hold you back in choosing the major you think you might want. Take this short quiz. Answers are on the back.
Answers To Major Myths Quiz

1. **FALSE.** Even someone in a highly structured major like electrical engineering might end up doing a variety of things. **More than half of all college graduates pursue careers that are not directly related to their major.** In the liberal arts, the list of career options are endless including: business, education, government, health care, the arts, or non-profit organizations.

2. **FALSE.** Consider the art studio major who entered medical school, or the communications major who decided to pursue a Ph.D. in counseling psychology. Granted, no one is accepted into medical school without the appropriate science prerequisites, admissions test scores, and a statement of purpose which demonstrates a commitment to the field. Most college grads do not know long term career objectives until 3 to 5 years experience in the job market. **This may partly explain why two thirds of UCSB students who graduate wait before continuing their education.**

3. **FALSE.** Factors other than your major often play a more important part in determining your employability. Related work experience will often make any student more marketable. **The ability to interact with others, cope with pressure, speaking skills, problem solving ability and the ability to cope with change were rated as the top 5 skills most valued by recent graduates in preparing for their current professional position.** **Strong writing and computer related skills were next on the list.** Salaries may appear initially higher for engineering majors, but surveys show repeatedly how liberal arts majors often do better in management tracks where salary potentials often bypass those without such a broad based education.

4. **FALSE.** Imagine you are traveling down an interesting city street and you can’t see where it may lead. Continue traveling. Should you see a more interesting street, you can try a new direction. The important thing is to start walking. **More than half of UCSB students change majors at least twice before they graduate.** **Many students remain undeclared until the end of their sophomore year.**

5. **FALSE.** According to NACE’s 1996 Graduating Student & Alumni Survey, the top 4 criteria cited by college grads were personal satisfaction with the job’s responsibilities and challenges, enjoyment, opportunity to use skills/abilities and personal development. This is not to say students don’t seek financial independence and success. How much is enough will always be a personal decision to assess in view of one’s personal lifestyle.

6. **FALSE.** GPA is actually 7th out of 10 criteria used by employers surveyed. **Related experience, communication, leadership, teamwork and computer skills are more important.**

7. **FALSE.** Most people change jobs an average of 6 or 7 times during a lifetime. Your abilities, interests and values can mean many different employment options.

8. **TRUE.** You may actually find a minor through the writing program or in another language which would complement your educational and career plans more effectively.

9. **TRUE.** Unfortunately it is estimated that more than 85% of the U.S. population are underemployed. More reason to take time to research and plan for a future that will lead to a rewarding career/life.

10. **TRUE.** Most people would agree with **work that provides a sense of purpose and meaning can also be expressed through family, service, hobbies or recreational activities.”**