

# Paths to Choosing a Major

*“Choose a job you love and  
you will never work a day in your life.”*

**Colleen DesRuisseaux**

**Director of School Counseling  
Bow High School**

**Maureen O’Dea**

**Director of School Counseling  
Londonderry High School**



**The NHHEAF Network Organizations’  
Center for College Planning**



# The College Experience:

## What You Gain From A College Education

- Career preparation & skills for employment
- Skills and tools to help you *qualify* for better career opportunities
- Life skills to help you become a responsible and involved citizen or leader

# True or False

Choosing a college major locks a student into a specific career path.

**FALSE:** Ask your parents, teachers, neighbors, etc. what they majored in when they were in college. You may find they are in a career field now that has nothing to do with their college major.

# True or False

Some students begin college not knowing what they want to study.

**TRUE: “80% of entering students indicate that they are uncertain about their major...most college students change their major two or three times before they graduate.”**

**-University of Arkansas-Fort Smith**

# True or False

Students should pick a major based on the current job market.

**FALSE:** “If you follow your passion, success will follow you. The job market today may be very different from the job market in four or five years. Choose a major that genuinely interests you and the rest will fall into place.”

**-University of Missouri-St. Louis**

## True or False

Choosing the “perfect” major guarantees the student a job after graduation!

**FALSE:** “If you have a college degree you can be absolutely sure of one thing... you have a college degree.”

**-Author Unknown**

# Words of Wisdom

*“Don’t think that because you want to go into business that you have to study business. If you want to be an artist, you don’t necessarily have to study art. When I look at a resume, I don’t look for a particular degree. I ask myself, what can this person bring to the table that no one else can? I can teach you to use business software; I can’t duplicate the kind of growth you get from four years of college.”*

*~Branch Manager, Ford Motors, Inc.*





# Tangible Skills Acquired In College

- Communication & Speaking Skills
- Problem-Solving & Mediation
- Enhance Written Skills
- Time Management
- Independence
- Collaboration Skills



What we need to be asking our children is:  
***What problems do you want to solve?***

Many high school seniors have no idea what they want to “be” when they grow up. But it’s easy to get them to talk passionately about what they want to fix in the world. Solving a strategic problem engages them.



# A Different Way to Look At It

**Imagine what it would be like if students talked about solving problems instead of completing majors:**

“I’m learning human biology so we can eliminate hunger.”

“I’m learning geography and engineering to get clean water to Africa.”

“I’m learning computer science to enable developing nations to connect.”

“I’m learning political science to help people engage their local and federal governments.”

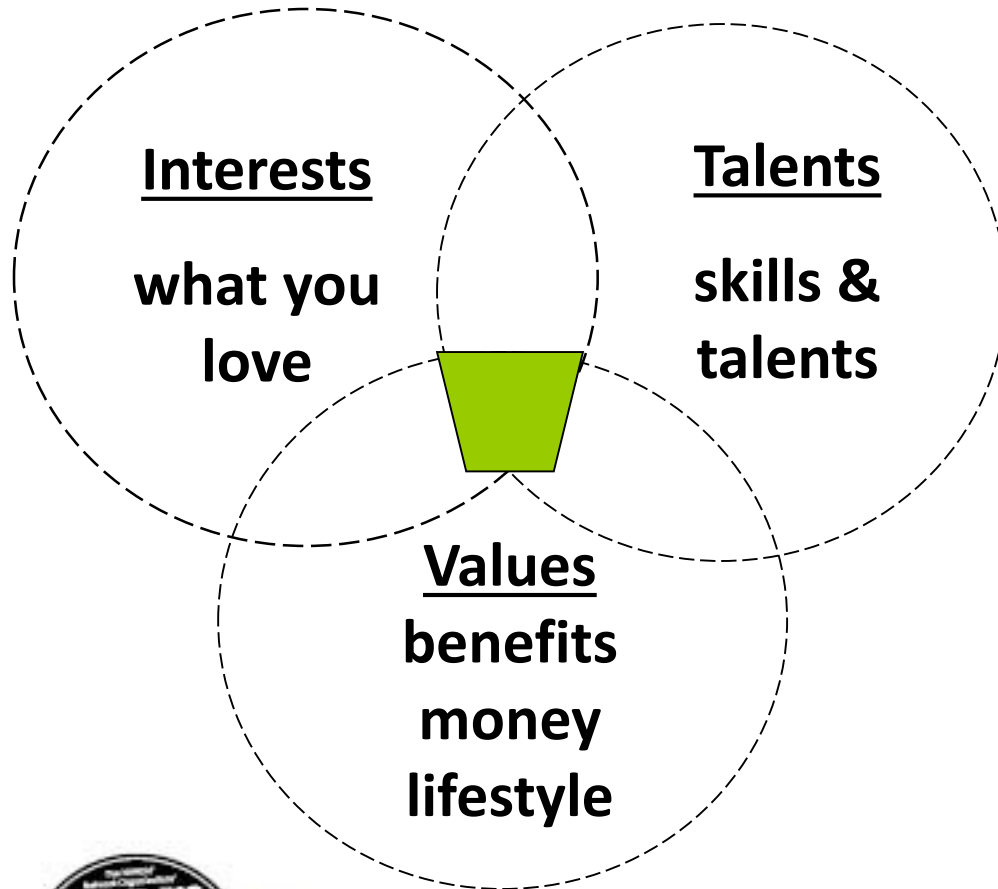


# A Major Checklist

## Ask Yourself...

1. What am I good at?
2. What are my interests?
3. What are my life/work values?
4. What am I looking for in a work environment?
5. How can I explore my options?
6. How can I take a reality check?

# Get Centered!



Find a career  
where all three  
areas intersect  
to find the key  
to your  
professional life

# To Be Inspired...

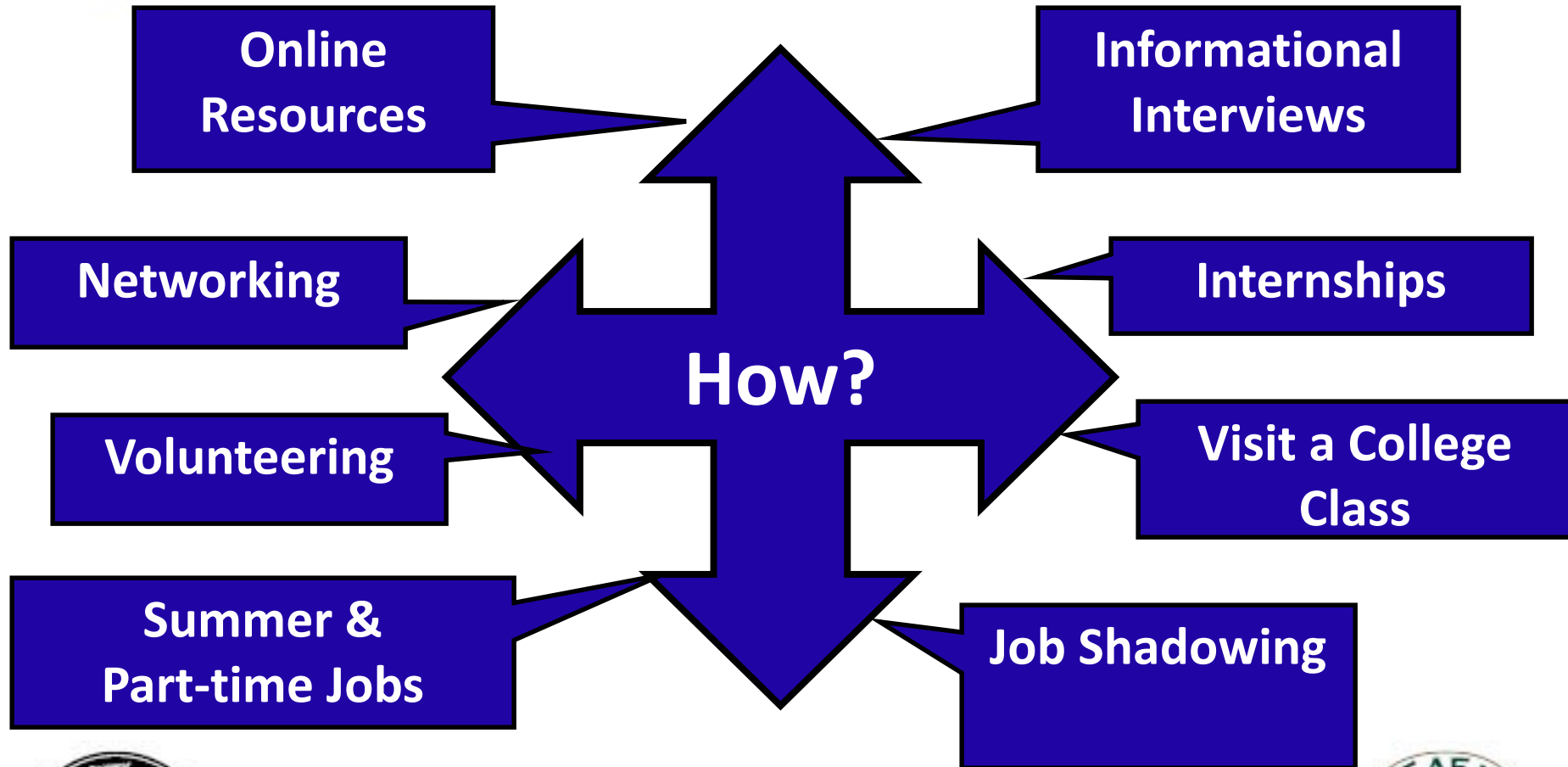


## You Don't Have to Travel Far!

**“A good mentor offers directions and driving tips from the back seat. *You* still have to drive the car.”**

*~Michael Johnson,  
Gold Medal Olympian*

# Research Your Options





- Loyola College Quiz  
[luc.edu/undergrad/academiclife/whatsmymajorquiz/](http://luc.edu/undergrad/academiclife/whatsmymajorquiz/)
- Best Colleges Guide  
[bestcolleges.com/resources/choosing-a-major/](http://bestcolleges.com/resources/choosing-a-major/)
- What can you do with this major?  
[whatcanidowiththismajor.com](http://whatcanidowiththismajor.com)
- Find your Calling  
[findyourcalling.com/](http://findyourcalling.com/)
- Princeton Review Career Quiz  
[princetonreview.com/quiz/career-quiz](http://princetonreview.com/quiz/career-quiz)

# Loyola's 35 Questions give instant results

NURSING · FILM AND DIGITAL MEDIA · FORENSIC SCIENCE ·  
SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY ·  
ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE · DANCE · BIOPHYSICS ·  
EXERCISE SCIENCE · CHEMISTRY ·  
INFORMATION SYSTEMS ·  
PSYCHOLOGY · HUMAN SERVICES · BIOCHEMISTRY ·  
AFRICAN STUDIES AND THE AFRICAN DIASPORA · MUSIC ·  
CLASSICAL CIVILIZATION · GREEK · FINANCE · ITALIAN · ART HISTORY ·  
ANTHROPOLOGY · ENGLISH · INTERNATIONAL STUDIES ·  
JOURNALISM ·

# Check Out Your Colleges!

- Remember: not all colleges offer the same majors
- Ask yourself: Does the college I'm interested in offer a wide variety of majors?
- Talk to college representatives at high school visits
- Attend college fairs
- Campus visits – utilize April vacation!
  - ✓ Open Houses & Information Sessions
  - ✓ Tours
  - ✓ Overnight Visits
  - ✓ Interviews
  - ✓ Observe a Class

# A Major Checklist

Have an area of interest, but need a school to  
“rise to the top” of the list?

## Compare Curriculum

- Which school has more courses you are interested in?
- What are the “Gen Ed” requirements at each school?
- At what point do you start major classes?

## Compare Opportunities

- Can undergrads do research?
- Newer facilities?
- Find out about internships & job placements
- Remember- each college has their own wording for majors/programs. Be broad first, then specific.

# Final Thoughts...

- Exploration is key!
  - ✓ Job shadows
  - ✓ Internships
  - ✓ Informational interviews
  - ✓ Take an interest inventory
- Advocate for yourself
- Go online: research careers, majors and colleges
- Visit and talk to colleges
- Take small steps toward a larger goal
- Stay open to the possibilities

# Questions?

The NHHEAF Network Organizations'

Center for College Planning

1.888.747.2382 x119

[nhheaf.org](http://nhheaf.org)

[collegeplanning@nhheaf.org](mailto:collegeplanning@nhheaf.org)

