



A tree-lined path on the Quad

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Loyola's beautiful springtime cherry blossoms

What's Your Calling? By Elizabeth Kosik

“What are you going to maj-”-- let me stop there as we all know what I'm going to ask. In my experience as a college applicant, I believe that administrators and institutions take an unimpressible route when directing high school seniors toward their future. Anyone can simply ask you “What are you gonna major in?” and “What's your career path?” but what impact do those mundane questions have? Instead, I propose you ask yourself what parts of your morality you value most and the contribution you would like to make to the world through those ethics. Was that a lot? It's okay, I'll explain.

Your contribution is the specific addition of your best qualities to the rest of the world. Ideally, you would then exercise those qualities in your choice of career, but let's start at the basics. When you imagine yourself, what are some of your prominent virtues? Or, when you imagine the person you would like to be, who is that person, and what virtues do you possess? Now it's okay if you don't completely have these questions answered. The beauty of being so young is that you don't have to, but when deciphering what elements of yourself you would like to project to the rest of the world, hopefully, you choose your best ones. And don't worry, the way in which you practice your contribution does not have to look the same as anyone else's. For some, this may mean technological advancement within the medical world, while for others it's their commitment to a nonprofit organization assisting with aid to the less fortunate. Yes, I understand these examples may not directly relate to your intended path, but your contribution can be anything you happen to have a passion for that can be shared with others. By this point, I hope you don't think I'm making any of this up, so let me share with you how I know the question “What can I contribute to the world?” completely changes your outlook.

For as long as I can remember, I have always known that whatever I ended up doing with my life, I just wanted to help people. As I was growing up, my mom always called me her “little humanitarian” and I used to take it lightly, truthfully, not exactly knowing what that meant. But at 19, I now consider it to be one of the purest compliments ever given to me. According to dictionary.com, a humanitarian is someone who has concern for or helps to improve the welfare and happiness of people; but the reality of that definition holds greater weight. Being a humanitarian is the ability to look at the world with not only reason and ethics, but compassion and empathy for the betterment of those around you. While I knew I wanted to practice this in my day-to-day life, I was unsure how to make a career out of it. Then, the emergence of COVID-19 revealed who had our lives in their hands: politicians. I found that while they had the education to receive the status they had, there was no compassion or sense of humanity toward people of lower status than theirs, the same people who had believed and trusted them. From that moment, I knew I wanted to pursue a career in law to actively participate in the political and social reform for others— a practice I felt truly aligned with my values.

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With that mindset, I entered my first year at Loyola as a political science major, with no intention of deferring from that specific course. But as my time here progressed, I found that my plan began to change. While the idea of your original plan changing sounds worrisome, I promise you it's not. As I realized that political science was not the best fit for me, it opened my eyes to philosophy, a type of education and knowledge I had never heard of. I found that our current execution of politics, and what had called me to it initially, was its lack of humanity, while philosophy exposes you to politics and the way in which they can be practiced morally. Through this, I had the pleasure of meeting Professor Nina Guise-Gerrity, a teacher at Loyola and a member of the philosophy department, who has been of great influence to me. Not only does she continue to educate me on excitingly unfamiliar material, but I am grateful for her participation in my introduction to the path of a philosophy major. When asked what she would share with an incoming first-year, she shared to simply “be ready to adapt.” The adaptation that Guise-Gerrity speaks of is crucial and inevitable but is refreshing when that same redirection better aligns with the morals you hold and how you plan to display them in your career. She takes a moment to lighten the anticipated pressure of first-years by advising you to “find a core group of friends you can really lean on and that you have fun with.” Remember, while your Loyola experience is about finding and pursuing your passions, you're definitely allowed to have fun. Duh, it's still college!

While my original major may have not been the one I receive my degree in, it has directed me toward France Jimenez, a first-year at Loyola and best friend of mine, who also entered Loyola as a political science major. I met France during Fall Welcome Week in September as we shared the common goal of hoping to better the world, hers being through the reformation of the school system in Baltimore. When asked what she believes her greatest contribution to the world may be, she reveals her “selflessness toward a system vulnerable to corruption and greed.” I have and continue to proudly witness France's significant growth in passion toward Baltimore's school system, through Loyola's assistance and introduction toward their many majors. As our first year begins to conclude, France is now an English and writing major with an urban education minor, revealing that her change in major did not worry her as the contribution she would like to make to the world has stayed the same. The way in which she has found an outlet has changed.

Before we can answer the question of what our major will be, I believe we must ask ourselves what is important to us and how we plan to exercise the importance of that matter in our lives. When we can begin to answer this question is when choosing our major and career becomes the easiest task of all. The next four years of your college experience will be challenging and developmental, but encouraging and promising. I sincerely hope that you choose the paths that bring happiness and prosperity, discovering both yourself and your place in the world.



The Humanities Building



The bridge over North Charles Street