



My personal favorite building
on campus, Maryland Hall

***“As you’re
coming into
college, no one
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know
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Picture from the freshman
dorms—Hillside on campus

Discovering Your Passions

By Reilly Hylton

Have you ever been at an event or social gathering and dreaded the upcoming small talk of being asked things like “what’s your major?” “what career do you want?” or “what’s your plan for the future?” I know I’m not alone in my anxious dread of being asked these questions. Oftentimes people answer these questions with what they think will satisfy the person who’s asking instead of actually thinking about what they want to do. Many people starting college do not know what major they want, or what their passion is. That is okay. I know it can be worrisome and stressful to not know what you want to do, but it can also be incredibly exciting. It is okay to not have your future perfectly planned because it is a period of growth to discover your passions and calling in life.

Trial and Error

As you’re coming into college, no one expects you to know everything. Some may know what they want their future careers to be. Others may know what they want their major to be. But many do not. Starting college, I didn’t know what I wanted my major to be. I hadn’t even thought about minors and I had no idea what I wanted my future career to be. I still don’t know. But I’ve learned that that’s okay and expected from a college first-year. You can learn more about yourself and your interests slowly. For me, I came in thinking I might want to be a psychology major, so I decided to take an Introduction to Psychology class. I was hoping that I’d take this class and love it and realize that I wanted to major in psychology. Spoiler alert: that didn’t happen. Although I’m still currently taking the class, to be honest, I don’t love it and I don’t think I can see myself majoring in it. Now, I’ve learned that things can change, so for all I know in a few months I might want to be a psychology major, but I doubt that is going to happen. Since I didn’t find a love for psychology like I was hoping, I realized I needed to branch out.

Figuring Out What You Don’t Want

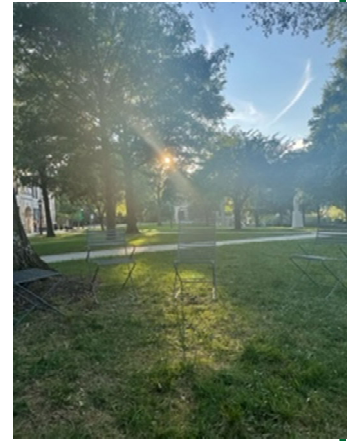
At the beginning of the semester, I also decided to take some classes that peaked my interest, even if I didn’t think I would find my major or minor from those classes. I’m taking two writing classes this semester—my Messina Effective Writing class and Intro to Poetry and Fiction. Through these classes I have realized that I do enjoy writing and might want to pursue a writing minor. Coming into college, I did not expect to be considering a writing minor but now I could see myself minoring in writing, which is unexpected but exciting. Although none of the classes I’m taking my first semester at college have helped me figure out what I want to major in, they’ve helped me know what I do *not* want to major in, which is also important. I know that my time was not wasted by taking my psychology class because now, moving forward, I won’t have any doubts about not majoring in psychology. I’m also hopeful that the classes I’m taking next semester will help me decide on my major.

Not Alone In Your Exploration

Sometimes we assume that we are alone in our thoughts and feelings. Especially about college. I know when I started college I thought I was going to be alone in not knowing what I wanted to major in. Carolyn Barry, a Dean and Professor at Loyola said that "from my twenty years of experience at Loyola, there is always a proportion of students who are undecided." To expand on what Professor Barry said, I know that I was pleasantly surprised during Fall Welcome Weekend to meet lots of other first-years who were also undecided on their major coming in. Know that you are not alone and many others are feeling similarly to you.

You will find during your first year that there are also a lot of people who have a mindset of having a general idea of what they might want to major in, but not knowing their exact major yet. There are also many students who do have an idea of their major, like Abby Kiewe('24), but who are trying to figure out a minor:

"Coming into college, I knew I wanted to be an accounting major...One thing that I did not account for is a minor but after reflecting on my interests I was able to decide on a minor this fall."



Picture from the Quad, a great place to study

New Perspectives on Core Requirements

As you may know, there is a list of [core](#) requirement classes that every Loyola student must take. Although at first you may be wary of taking these core classes, I know I was, they can surprise you. As Professor Barry put it: "explore through the core." Professor Barry also went into specifics of how helpful the core can be: "many of the core classes, particularly in the social sciences (e.g., sociology) and humanities (e.g., philosophy) are not courses students have encountered previously during their education." I think that hearing Professor Barry's perspective is thought-provoking. I think we often look at core classes as just something we have to get done and get through. But if we change our perspectives about these classes then we not only will enjoy them more, but also we can use them as opportunities to discover our majors. Yamil is a current first-year student, so most of his classes are core classes and he shares he feels these classes help him "figure out" his major: "Now at Loyola I think there is space for me to take multiple classes for me to discover and figure out my major" (Yamil '25).

**"Explore
through the
core."
Professor
Barry**

Loyola's Career Center

Another resource at Loyola that can be helpful for discovering your major is the [Career Center](#). I know when I first heard about the Career Center I thought it wasn't relevant to me. I thought, "*I don't even know my major yet, let alone career, so that place won't be helpful to me for a few years.*" But, like a lot of times before, I was wrong. The Career Center assured me that "Our approach is grounded in the reality that a one-size fits all approach doesn't work in navigating the career journey of today's students and professionals" ([Rizzo Career Center](#)). The Career Center here at Loyola realizes that every Loyola student is different and so they adapt to each student's personal needs with resources that will help them most. Matt Maforo ('25) said that the Career Center helped him to solidify his major: "pretty much what they did is like they told me all the different avenues I could go to with my major, cause I'm a finance major; they told me I could go be a financial advisor or go into wealth management which really helped." He also gave this advice to incoming first-years about going to the Career Center "I would, if you're unsure about your major then I would 100% go...they will definitely help if you don't know."

(After my year of exploring different major options, I have declared an interdisciplinary sociology and writing major!)

A nice place to study in
Selling Hall

