



Jenkins Hall

“The first thing to consider when picking a major is what you like to do. By the time you graduate high school you’ll have enough information and experience from your classes to figure out what you might or might not be interested in pursuing”- College Board



Loyola Flag

Minimizing Major Stress and Maximizing Major Possibilities By Kylie Maddalena

I could say choosing a college comes with ease, but such a statement would be an utter lie. I could also say choosing a major once you get there also comes with ease, but that would be an even bigger lie. Figuring out what you want to do in life is arguably one of the most challenging decisions you will ever have to make. To steer away from the overwhelming aspect of this undoubtedly difficult task, I offer a suggestion: breathe. This may sound ignorant coming from someone who has known for years exactly what she wants to do in life, but I promise simply relaxing and taking a deep breath often escapes our minds. I don't have all the answers and probably never will, but I have learned how to identify my talents and, therefore, figure out how to put them to good use. Discovering what you are good at and learning how to apply that to a career path provides a solid foundation for solidifying major.

Determining Your Skills and Talents

Scrambling to find your path urgently will only bring stress and frustration. In a situation like this, the breathing part comes into play. You don't decide what you want to do in life overnight, and no one expects you to. For me, I identified my strongest subjects in school, English and history. I have always had a passion for law, but I needed to determine whether my love for law would prove to be the right fit as a career path. After realizing my strengths academically, I also thought about my talents outside the classroom. I have always loved reading, as well as writing, which led me to choose a writing minor, but I'll come back to that later. I also have excelled in analytical thinking, as well as public speaking. Most kids in middle school, or even high school, hated when we had debates in class. For me, debating was my favorite part of the day. After recognizing my skills and interests, I came to the conclusion that law was, in fact, the right career path for me. What subjects and interests are your favorites?

Determine What You Want

I am now taking history and writing, the two subjects I considered minoring in. I concluded quickly that history was no longer a minor interest of mine and after my Effective Writing class with Dr. Leary, I now know that a writing minor is the best fit for me. After writing the almost weekly reflections and realizing how much I enjoyed putting my thoughts onto paper, I realized that a writing minor would be a great fit. I remember vividly my first meeting with Dr. Leary when she suggested I consider a writing minor. At first, I was hesitant due to the simple fact that I was under the impression history “looked better” for my career. After reflecting on how much I enjoyed writing the papers for her class, and talking with Dr. Leary about how a writing minor would, in fact, prove immensely useful in my career, I reconsidered. I decided that Dr. Leary was right. My experiences in her class led me to select this minor, and someone trying to decipher which major or minor they truly are interested in can benefit from taking both classes in college as well.



Benefits of Messina

An incredibly helpful tool that Loyola has given us all is Messina advisors and Evergreens. Your Messina advisor helps guide you in scheduling courses and any other challenges you may face. Messina advisors and Evergreens are there to help you to get acclimated to college life and are important resources to utilize. Dr. Leary, my Messina advisor, has not only helped me tremendously in determining a minor, but also, an unexpected benefit from her class is the incredible friendships we have developed. [Messina](#) classes consist of a small number of students, making them more personal and tighter knit. Being able to form close relationships with your peers helps to gain a sense of comfort and community within the classroom environment. A more personal environment has really helped us to make great friendships, as well as guided us on our path to determining majors and minors.



Humanities Building

Building Connections

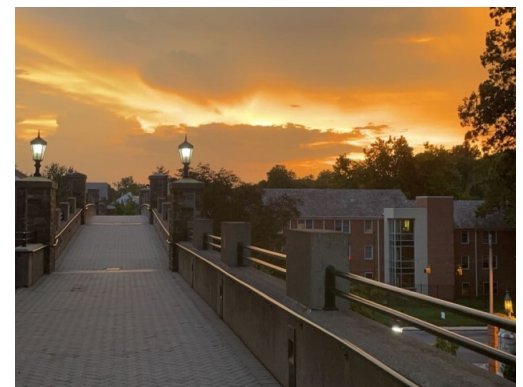
One of the many benefits of a smaller school is more personal relationships with your professors. This will prove exceedingly beneficial in determining a major or minor as well. Being able to talk to your professors and getting to know them will allow you to reach out to them with any questions about potentially majoring in their subject area. Olivia Paré, first-year in the class of '25, states, "After reaching out to a professor in a time of distress, I formed a close relationship that has helped me navigate college life." As Olivia explains, this relationship will not only help you academically, but also to adjust to the college experience. This relationship will also enable you to gain insight into a potential major and help you to build connections in the future when looking for letters of recommendation. Building connections with professors, and even more importantly, your advisors, is crucial in taking advantage of all the incredible opportunities provided at Loyola.

"My Messina has helped me by helping me with my schedule. I also really like my Evergreen. I feel like I can really trust her, and she tells us the truth about classes and college life."

Grace Shartle '25

Career Center

Another valuable resource at Loyola to aid in choosing a major or minor is the [Career Center](#). The experts at the Career Center will not only help you in determining a major, but they can also help you create a resume as well as provide you with resources to see potential interview opportunities. For me personally, I don't know the first thing about formatting a resume and the Career Center has helped me with that tremendously. The people at the Career Center are here to help you. Rachel Bachman, Assistant Director at the Career Center, explains, "We often hear that students don't think that Career Services 'is for' (insert major) or 'only helps' (insert major) but actually, we aim to be inclusive with our services and offerings. We host several, major-specific fairs and events, but also an all majors, all class years job and internship fair every spring." As Rachel explains, the Career Center fairs and events encompass all majors and minors. Due to their widespread expertise, the Career Center is a great resource to look into when seeking help in determining a major and/or minor.



Sunset over the bridge
