

PARALLEL PATHS

MAJOR CHOICE AND CAREER GOALS



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“What?” vs “Why?”

Understanding Strengths, Interests, Values, Motivations, & Goals

1. Major and career choice is often strongly influenced by external factors.
2. Students often select a major or career before being fully informed of the expectations, challenges, and realities of the field.
3. Understanding students' strengths, interests, values, and goals can help us as advisors and counselors to guide them in major choice.

The Importance of Parallel Paths

Exploring a World of Possibilities

1. There is no one path to any one career.
2. This means one major can open the door to many majors; an anthropology major has more career options than “anthropologist.”
3. Similarly, for any given career, there are multiple possible pathways.
4. Career assessment such as Focus2Career, CareerExplorer, and Existential help students explore their options.

Pathways to Nursing: Pre Nursing

Important Guidelines

1. Only students admitted as FTF Pre Nursing students will be eligible to apply to the campus Nursing program.
2. Students admitted in other majors are not able to switch to Pre Nursing or to apply for Nursing.
3. Moreover, due to missing milestones, not all Pre Nursing students are admitted to Nursing

Nursing without Pre Nursing

Nursing as Career vs Nursing as Major

- Alternate Paths: Major + Post Bacc
 - Nutritional Science
 - Kinesiology
 - Biology
 - Applied Science
- Alternate Fields: Nursing Adjacent Majors and Careers
 - Public Health
 - Health Care Administration

Case Study: Pre-Med Pathways

Beyond Lab Science

- Traditional Paths: Science
 - Biochemistry
 - Biology
 - Exercise Science
- Alternate Paths: Humanities and Social Sciences
 - English, Communication, History
 - Psychology, Anthropology, Ethnic Studies

Case Study: Criminal Justice

Law Enforcement or CSI?

- Criminal Justice is a social science/social service major
- Students hoping to pursue a career in CSI or forensic science should be advised that this requires a SCIENCE major with additional graduate level training in criminalistics

Case Study: Psychology

Therapist or Theorist?

- What is the student's goal?
- Alternate paths:
 - Rehabilitation Services (and counseling)
 - Social Work
 - Sociology

Case Study: Exploring

Helping Students Find their Path

- Students may begin without a declared major – at Cal State LA, we call such students Exploring students, and they have a dedicated advising center
- During their time as Explorers, students work with advisors to identify the majors that best match their VIPS – values, interests, personality, and strengths – and long-term career and educational goals
- A recent study showed that student who begin without a declared major have 4-year graduation rates equivalent to those of students who begin with a major – and ever BETTER 6-year graduation rates
- But remember: Exploring is NOT a secret path to the Nursing major

Questions?