

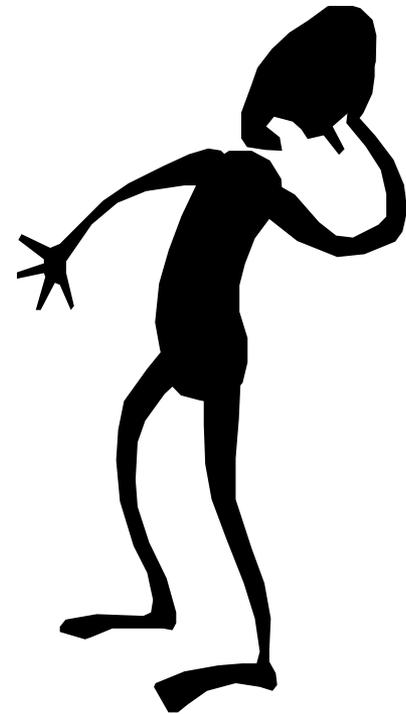
Undeclared and in Distress

Influencing Major Selection Decisions

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Undeclared Student Program

- Students' significant exploration of self (interest, values, skills), majors, and careers.
- Students' successful academic transition and development through their first year in college.
- Students' development as responsible individuals and as part of a diverse and supportive community

Learning Objectives

1. Students will clarify their top concerns for selecting a major and, through self, major, and career exploration activities, and developmental academic advising sessions, reduce their distress level for such concerns.
2. Students will learn more about personal interests, skills, and values, as well as more about majors and careers, through strategically planned activities, and will feel more confident about choosing a major

Methodology

LEARNING METHODS

1. Academic and Major/Career Advising sessions: students participated in three advising sessions during Fall '08 and Fall '09.
2. Major/Career Exploration activities: students completed one or more activities during each quarter, such as, an interview with the Chair or faculty of a department, interview with alumni, the Major Card Sort Online activity, the Myers Briggs Personality Inventory, etc.

Methodology (cont.)

ASSESSMENT

1. In Fall '08, a pre and post assessment was conducted using the Major Decision Self Assessment (MDSA). Students identified concerns for selecting a major, selected their top three concerns, and rated these on the level of distress that each produced.



Major Decision Self-Assessment I
Student Support and Equity Programs

Name: _____ BroncoNumber: _____ Advisor: _____

If you have a major or majors in mind, please list them below with the highest interest first and the lowest interest last:

- A. _____
B. _____
C. _____

For each section below, please read all statements and check those that most apply to you:

Skills and Abilities

- 1 ___ I am not confident that I have the skills required for this major: _____
2 ___ I am not confident that I have the opportunity to enter into this major: _____
3 ___ I don't know what my abilities are
4 ___ I know I have the ability to do well in anything I choose but it's difficult to find just one thing I would like as a career

Multiple Interests

- 5 ___ I am interested in more than one major
6 ___ I am having a difficult time deciding between two or more majors of interest
7 ___ I am interested in various areas but none 'pop out' at me as a high interest
8 ___ I have interest in some things but I'm not sure if they lead to careers

Lack of Interests

- 9 ___ I know I will have to go to work eventually but no majors or careers appeal to me
10 ___ I don't know what my interests are

Concerns and opinions of others

- 11 ___ I know what I want to major in (major: _____) but my:
___ parents
___ friends
___ significant other
___ other family members
would prefer that I do not pursue that interest
12 ___ I want to make sure to please others (who: _____) with my decision of major
13 ___ I think I know what I want to major in but I need additional support from others in order to finalize my decision

Indecision

- 14 ___ Until now, I haven't had to make important decisions for myself
15 ___ I'm used to others telling me what to do
16 ___ I am generally indecisive
17 ___ In regards to my major, I wish I could just take a test and know what to pursue
18 ___ It bothers me to have to make decisions

Uncertain career pathways

- 19 ___ I am discouraged to make a decision of a major because everything is uncertain about what career you will pursue in the future anyway
20 ___ The economy is so bad that it makes me question my major interests (major: _____)
21 ___ I know what I want to major in but it's unclear what careers would follow with that major
22 ___ I know what career I want but it's unclear what major is best to prepare for that career (career: _____)

Recent change in interest

- 23 ___ I have experienced recent changes in what I like to do that have impacted my interest in major
24 ___ The field that I was interested in has gone through some significant changes that it makes me think twice about following it
25 ___ I recently found out I cannot pursue my major of interest and need to begin exploring other majors

"The right one"

- 26 ___ I believe there is only one "right" major for me and I want to find out what it is
27 ___ I want to be 100% sure about the major I choose
28 ___ I want to be 100% sure about the career I pursue

Need information

- 29 ___ I know what I want to major in and I just need to know what to do to declare
30 ___ I know what career I want and I just need to know what majors can prepare me for it
31 ___ I know what major I want but I still want to explore many majors and careers before I commit to it so that I don't miss anything
32 ___ I want to fully explore majors and careers before deciding on one

Other

- 33 ___ Write other statements that describe your level of decisiveness in addition to any selected from above:

Of the statements you checked, please choose 3 that are of greatest concern to you, and rate the level of distress each is causing you:

Item # or Description	Level of distress				
	Minimal	Mild	Moderate	Severe	Extreme
#1 Concern _____	___	___	___	___	___
#2 Concern _____	___	___	___	___	___
#3 Concern _____	___	___	___	___	___

Adapted from the Career Decision Scale (Samuel Osipow et al., 1976, PAR Inc.) and the Student Concerns Checklist (Nicole Rusek, Ph.D., 2008, CAPS, Cal Poly Pomona).



Methodology (cont.)

ASSESSMENT (cont.)

2. In Fall '09, a pre and post assessment of students' confidence in major before and after completing major/career exploration activities was also implemented by using the Major/Career Exploration Activities assessment with a confidence rating scale.



Major/Career Exploration Activities

As part of Student Development and Undeclared Services, the following activities are available for you to complete, or will be recommended by your academic advisor. **Undeclared majors must complete one of these activities per quarter** within their first year (3 quarters) at Cal Poly Pomona. These activities will assist you in exploring major / career interests and further develop your knowledge in the specified areas:

MAJOR/CAREER ACTIVITIES LIST <i>*See activity descriptions on the back of this sheet</i>	Circle Your Level of Confidence: 1 = no confidence to 5 = very confident	<u>DUE DATE</u>
<i>Attend a departmental "Change of Major" meeting</i>	Before activity: 1 2 3 4 5 After activity: 1 2 3 4 5	
<i>Complete the Career & Major Exploration Worksheet at the Career Center</i>	Before activity: 1 2 3 4 5 After activity: 1 2 3 4 5	
<i>Attend a Major / Career Exploration Workshop</i>	Before activity: 1 2 3 4 5 After activity: 1 2 3 4 5	
<i>Make an appointment with a Career Counselor to complete a career interest inventory or complete on-line assessments and discuss results with academic advisor</i>	Before activity: 1 2 3 4 5 After activity: 1 2 3 4 5	
<i>Complete the Major Card Sort Activity on-line</i>	Before activity: 1 2 3 4 5 After activity: 1 2 3 4 5	
<i>Complete a Job Shadowing activity</i>	Before activity: 1 2 3 4 5 After activity: 1 2 3 4 5	
<i>Complete an informational interview: interview with Alumnus who graduated in the major you are interested in or a professional in the field</i>	Before activity: 1 2 3 4 5 After activity: 1 2 3 4 5	
<i>Interview the Dept Chair (or another faculty member) of the major you are interested in</i>	Before activity: 1 2 3 4 5 After activity: 1 2 3 4 5	
<i>Observe a course in the major interest area of your choice, with permission of instructor</i>	Before activity: 1 2 3 4 5 After activity: 1 2 3 4 5	
<i>Volunteer to work in major interest area</i>	Before activity: 1 2 3 4 5 After activity: 1 2 3 4 5	
<i>Personal action plan(s) - discuss with your academic advisor</i>	Before activity: 1 2 3 4 5 After activity: 1 2 3 4 5	

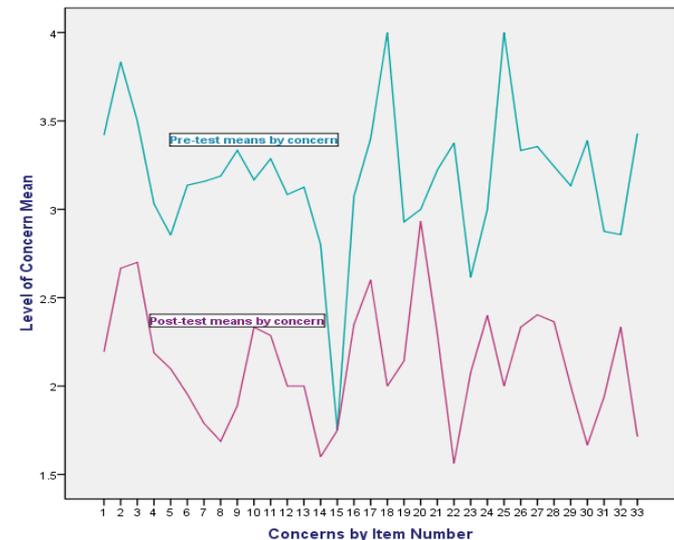
IMPORTANT: KEEP THIS HANDOUT IN YOUR ADVISING PORTFOLIO.



Developed by the academic advising team in Student Support and Equity Programs, revised in 2008.

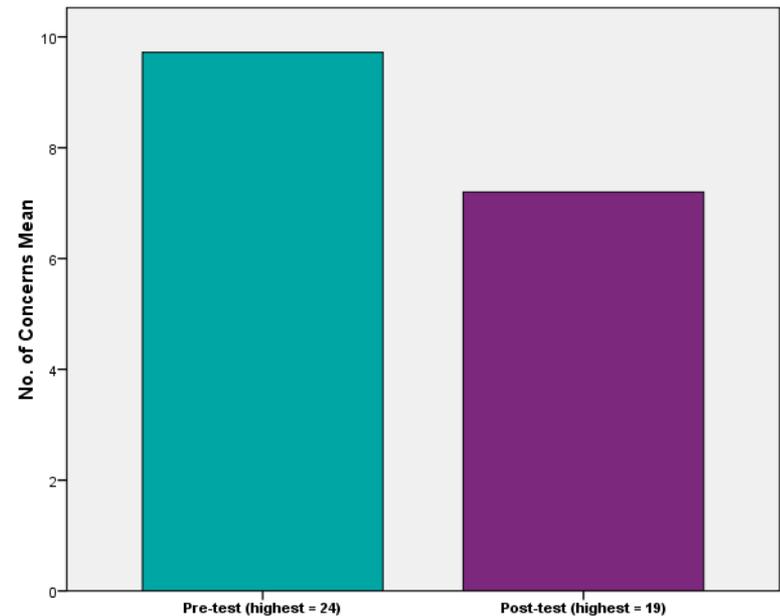
Results

- A t-test repeated measures analysis of variance to compare the level of distress experienced by students on their top three concerns (pre and post) yielded a statistically significant difference, $t(188) = 19.13, p < .000$, indicating that students experienced significantly less distress about their top three concerns at the completion of their first quarter in college.



Results (cont.)

- A second t-test analysis of variance to compare the number of concerns students had before and at the completion of their first quarter resulted in a statistically significant reduction in number of concerns, $t(255) = 10.71, p < .000$.



Conclusion and Implications

- Students' number of concerns and distress level for their top three concerns decreased significantly after Fall '08 quarter. Students shared with advisors that what they learned through their exploration activities and advising sessions helped them feel more comfortable with making a decision, and more confident about their major of interest.
- However, through this assessment, it was not possible to determine the effect of each major/career exploration activity on students' confidence in selecting a major.
- Therefore, in Fall '09, the Major/Career Exploration Activities assessment was implemented (as a pre and post assessment) to learn more about this area.
- We are currently finalizing the input of data for the Fall '09 assessments.

Next Steps...

- Analyze results from the two Fall '09 assessments, compare MDSA results to Fall '08 and determine trends in highest concerns for undecided students
- Identify the exploration activities that are most beneficial to students in developing their confidence in selecting a major
- Develop new programs that may serve more students while addressing top concerns and helping them make a confident decision about the major they will pursue.
- SSEP and the Career Center have begun collaborating to develop one of such potential programs.

Questions...

