

Quest Alumni Newsletter

September, Sophomore Year

Major Excitement

Everybody said, “Don’t major in psychology; you won’t be able to find a job where you can use it.” Well, I did. I use it to get people to jump off a 40-foot crane.

*Ron Sherwood,
employee of a bungee-jumping company*

The ideal major is the one that you’re the most passionate about. Colleges often overemphasize the importance of picking the “right” major, making choosing a major seem like a major life decision—right up there with choosing who you want to spend the rest of your life with. While choosing your major *can* feel like a very big deal, it doesn’t have as large an impact on your career as you may think.

For instance, Sue Coleman majored in behavioral pharmacology and now she manages mutual funds. Richard Thau majored in

Hot Tip: Most graduates testify that if they had it to do over, they would major in whatever interested them the most.



history and now he works in politics. Karen Socher majored in political science and now she works in the music industry. Margot Franssen was a philosophy major and now she owns the international business The Body Shop. Darren Star was an English major and later he went on to

create hit television shows like *Melrose Place*. Let me spell it out: YOUR CHOICE OF MAJOR DOESN’T DICTATE WHAT CAREERS YOU’LL BE ABLE TO ENJOY.

First of all, choosing a major is not a life choice. If statistical averages and present-day trends are any indication of how things will go for you, there’s a 70% chance your first job will be related to your major. But after that, it’s likely that your career will

People can expect to change jobs 4.5 times during their 20’s.

Bureau of Labor Statistics 1998

progress like a pinball. Many, if not most people, end up in all kinds of jobs that have nothing to do with their major. Let me put it this way—after your first job, your major becomes about as important as the classes you took in eighth grade, so you can knock “selecting a major” out of the Major Life Decisions category.

Second, selecting your major is not a rags or riches choice because employers aren’t looking at your resume to see what you majored in, they’re looking to see if you have the basic, practical skill to:

- Answer the phone professionally
- Write a business letter
- Use a computer

- Understand marketing
- Manage your time effectively
- Dress appropriately

If you don’t have the skills to do the above, no business needs you—you might as well have drawn yourself a Monopoly card that says “Go directly to the unemployment line. Do not pass go. Do not collect \$200.” If you do have these skills, you can major in whatever you want. Prove that you have these skills by getting work experience at a job or internship.

Hot Tip: You can choose a major that is “more likely” to get you a job at graduation, but oftentimes you won’t like that job and you’ll wish you’d just majored in what interested you.



Seriously, if you want to design a special major all about European history, go for it. Employers will hire a European history major as long as she/he has also taken some classes and participated in extracurricular activities that demonstrate a competence in the tasks above (99% of employers are going to require that you’ve completed an internship, taken business-writing classes, computer classes, and speech classes, etc.). Why would you major in something like European history? Because if European history is your passion, by focusing on it in college you’ll enjoy your schooling more and you’ll increase your chances of ending up in a career that you absolutely love.

- Major In Success
by Patrick Combs



Don’t let textbooks weigh on your purse.

- **Comparison Shop.** BestBookBuys.com and Bookfinder.com scour Web retailers for low prices, including estimated taxes and shipping costs.
- **Stay Local.** BooksOnCampus.com (through Facebook), CampusBookswap.org and other free networking sites match buyers and sellers by school. Barter online and do the deal in person—sellers can earn more than they would from the campus store’s buybacks, and buyers avoid tax and shipping charges.
- **Broaden Your Scope.** Save up to 90% by purchasing international editions, found through domestic online retailers like Abebooks.com. Students likely won’t notice subtle differences, such as cheaper paper. And if they do, they won’t care.

- Arielle McGowen

What is the Sophomore Slump?

Research shows that during the sophomore year, some students experience a period of confusion and uncertainty (Furr & Ganaway, 1982). In a University of Denver focus group study, sophomore students exhibited some of the following characteristics: 1) lack of motivation 2) burnout 3) changing personal relationships 4) career direction uncertainty and 5) poor time management.

The good news for sophomore students is that if you find yourself exhibiting some of these characteristics, you are not alone! It can be quite common for sophomore students to feel in a “slump” at some time or another during their second year at college.

Many colleges and universities are now recognizing that this is a national phenomenon, affecting many of our students.

The sophomore slump doesn't have to be a negative part of your college experience. If you are aware of the warning signs, you will be better prepared to seek support and guidance from all areas of the campus community!

- Colorado College, The Sophomore Connection
Volume 1, Issue 1



Senior-to-Sophomore Advice

Sophomore year is a great time to branch out from your freshman year. Now that you know the ropes of college, it can be great, and it can also feel routine. Here are some tips for making the most out of your second year.

Tip #1—Keep in touch with people from your freshman year hall/wing.

Wasn't first year's hall awesome? Didn't you have a great time bonding with the first people you met on campus? Well take time to go do stuff with friends you made first year. Form an IM team, meet at a coffee shop, or have a “hall dinner” once a semester or so. Now that I'm a senior, I still hang out with some people from my hall first year because they became some of my best friends.

Tip #2—Talk to someone about the “sophomore slump” if you're feeling it.

Now that your first year is completed, you have to think about a major, a career, a job, a significant other, friends, resumes, activities, parents' expectations, your expectations, grades, etc. It can be overwhelming, and that is normal! Everything is new and exciting first year, and when sophomore year rolls around it's not that same rush first year was, and it can feel disappointing. Just know people are available to help you, and there are many other students feeling this way too. Seek support if you are feeling the slump. Talk with your advisor, friends, RA, or anyone else on campus who can be a resource and support for you. Most of all enjoy your sophomore year and have a great time!

- Rebecca Sinclair
Colorado College Class of 2006

Diversify Your College Activities

College life offers an array of activities in which to participate. As a sophomore, you should continue to try to take advantage of as many new endeavors as possible in order to broaden your horizons. Here are a few more reasons why you should diversify your college activities.

- **You could find a possible career path.** If you limit yourself to activities that you are already comfortable with, then you could miss out on a possible career path that you find truly exciting. By participating in an extracurricular activity that you have never considered before, you could end up having a whole new perspective on what you want to do with your life. So, if you are the type of student who is interested in art, why don't you mix it up a little and try joining a science club? Only involved in math clubs? Try something new by writing for the school newspaper. You never know...you could find the career of your dreams.
- **You will look good to potential employers.** Employers want well-rounded individuals who are interested in growing and learning about new ideas. You should still definitely be involved in activities that pertain to your career path, but you should also be involved in maybe one or two other activities that show you can be a flexible and diverse employee. For instance, even if you won't be dealing with the general public in your chosen career field, employers for that career will still want an employee with good communication skills. Think drama club or debate club.
- **You will meet and make friends with a variety of people.** College is a melting pot of diverse cultures, lineages, and ideas. Being involved in different activities will allow you to meet a variety of people and learn about their different cultures and ideas. Use this opportunity to learn as much as you can while making new friends along the way.
- **You will build self-esteem.** By putting yourself out there and trying something new, you will help build your self-esteem. You will be proud of yourself for opening up to new experiences. Think about how great you would feel if you tried out for a sport's team and made it, even though you thought you weren't that good. If you try something new and succeed, you will gain the confidence to keep trying new activities.
- **You will expand your leadership skills.** Part of being a leader means being able to adapt to new ideas and experiences. Become involved in an activity that challenges you. A person who does not feel the thrill of challenge will not progress into being a leader.

Keep in mind that while you should diversify your college activities in order to be a well-rounded person, you shouldn't spread yourself too thin. Don't be involved in so many different activities that you don't have time for your school work. Find a few activities that you are interested in and that pertain to your possible career path(s), and then find one or two activities where you can challenge yourself and be open to new possibilities.

- www.eCampusTours.com

How to Stretch Your College Dough

It's not how much you have. It's what you do with it that counts. Even if parents and aid keep you fully funded, you will thank yourself a million times throughout your life if you start practicing a frugal lifestyle now.

CollegeData's Top Money-Saving Tips

- **Plan.** Call it a spending plan or budget, but make one now. Budgets keep your spending in check.
- **Ditch the car.** Use public transportation or a bicycle instead of owning a car. Take the bus or locate a shared ride to get home. The cost of car payments, upkeep, and insurance is a huge nonessential student expense.
- **Use credit wisely.** If you want to use credit, get a low-limit card. Use it only for planned purchases or for emergencies. Never let anyone else charge purchases to your card.
- **Eat in.** If you are on a dining plan, choose the most economical one and use it. If you are preparing your own meals, learn to be a reasonably good cook. Take your lunch to school. Shop the food co-ops and bargain aisles at the local market.
- **Resist "impulse" purchases.** Delay such purchases for a week. Buy only what you can pay off that month. Have no shame about returning things.
- **Buy textbooks on the cheap.** Buy used books early. Share books with friends. Use the Internet to shop for the best price. (BigWords.com will search for the best prices.) Keep them unmarked and in good condition and resell them as soon as the term is over.
- **Pay your bills on time.** Even a few late fees seriously set you back. Plus, you build a good credit history, which pays off when you rent housing, buy a home, or start your own business.
- **Be a ferocious bargain hunter for items you need.** For example, buy almost all your clothes on sale or at discount stores and thrift stores.
- **Set aside money for fun.** You have to enjoy yourself.
- **Work.** Work income adds up, even if it's a few hours a week. Babysitting and art/music lessons can be well-paid and rewarding.
- **Save and invest ten percent of your income.** Your whole life is ahead of you. You need to build the resources to support it.

More Consumer Tips

Get smart with your phone. Join with family or friends to get a group cell plan. Use internet phone access. Get free long distance or use cheap phone cards. Know your cell

phone limits on usage and don't ever exceed them. Use email instead of text messaging.

Stick with the basics. If you are signing up for services, such as TV in your dorm room, choose only basic packages.

Beware spring breaks. Student vacations can be a big trap for impulse spending. Try taking your break doing something close to home.

Ignore bargains that you don't need. Fifty percent off a \$200 impulse purchase means you are still spending \$100 you didn't plan on and probably don't have.

Keep your receipts and read them carefully. This helps you track your spending. Plus, many stores have limited return policies. Or you might be overcharged.

Keep an organized wallet. So you can find your discount cards when you need them.

No late fees. Late fees are a complete waste. Don't give your precious cash to video rental stores, libraries, the parking department, etc.

Socializing and Entertainment Tips

Have fun on campus. You can enjoy movies, lectures, performances, and sports for nothing or at highly discounted prices right on campus.

Join activity clubs. Get involved in campus activities: clubs, papers, sports, drama, etc. Costs are usually low and you will get plenty of socializing and fun without a high entry fee. Carefully evaluate, however, high-ticket social clubs, such as sororities and fraternities.

Learn the art of the cheap date. Cook at home or find cheap but yummy eateries. Go to parks and museums. Bike together. Volunteer together. Date people who appreciate your financial savvy.

Remember that vice is expensive. Enough said.

Socialize at home even if it is your dorm room. Take a tip from your grandparents and learn a few group games. Did you know that lots of students enjoy playing cards? Bridge and penny poker can be great fun. Go to www.pagat.com for card game ideas and rules.

Find frugal friends. If your pals are big spenders, find new ones. Ditto for girlfriends and boyfriends.

www.CollegeData.com

(CollegeData is a free service of 1st Financial Bank USA.)



STUDY BREAK

www.PrintSudoku.com

2	5						6	3
		7	9			8		
4			8		6			
8				9		2	5	
				4				
	7	5		6				1
			1		5			9
		2			3	1		
6	1						2	7

Medium Difficulty

Fun Website

Sometime when you're sitting at the computer and need a short break from the schoolwork, check out www.neave.com. The creator, Paul Neave, is an inventive Flash designer from Britain, and his website is his "playground". He has included several applications that he has designed for no other reason than the fact that he wanted to see if he could do it. See if you can find your own house on FlashEarth! Or perhaps you'll find the planetarium more intriguing. There are games, videos and other activities involving computer graphics. But lest you think that Neave spends all his time in front of a computer, check out his photos on Flickr photos—some are truly amazing!

Welcome back to Study Break! In this section of our newsletter you will find a puzzle as well as some other type of "diversion." We may include a bit of trivia, some humor, an interesting website to check out—or anything else that strikes our fancy. We hope that you have some fun with it, and feel free to pass on suggestions for future Study Breaks!

Scholarships

Did you research scholarships over the summer? If so, wonderful! If not, you're already behind. Many scholarships have deadlines in the fall. You should review the renewal criteria for any scholarships that you are currently receiving, and check with your major department and the financial aid office at your school to discuss any additional scholarships that they offer. The web is also a good resource—contact Marilyn in the Quest of office for a list of scholarship search engines.

Memo From Marilyn

Remember, this is **your** newsletter, and your input is welcome! Please let us know what features and articles you find most useful. If you'd like to see a particular topic addressed or have a suggestion for a "Study Break" activity, send me an e-mail. Or better yet, submit an article! You can reach me at Marilyn@questctr.com.

Mark Your Calendars Now!

Meet with QFK high school seniors preparing to enter college! These students could benefit from your advice and experience. They would love to hear about how you dealt with "the roommate from hell" as well as what everyday life is like at college. Please plan to come and share your helpful tips and "words of wisdom." Many of your fellow Quest graduates participate in this event every year, so this is a great opportunity for you to reconnect with other Quest Alumni.

Watch your e-mail for notification of the dates and times, and be sure to RSVP as soon as possible. We always have a full house!

Quest Staff

Holly Kelly
Holly@questctr.com
Sandy Oswald
Sandy@questctr.com
Marilyn Wolpert
Marilyn@questctr.com
Susan Zumstein
Sue@questctr.com

