

Career Exploration

Welcome to “College Prep News” – helpful tips from EducationQuest Foundation on how to plan -- and pay for college.

Hi! This is Marron from EducationQuest. Today I’m going to help you answer the question you’ll hear constantly as college approaches – *“What are you going to major in?”*

While this question may get annoying at times, it’s actually a good idea to stop and give it some serious thought *before* you select a college. After all, doing some career exploration *now* will help you find a college that’s a good fit for you.

Here are some ways to get started:

First, think about your talents. Do you excel in math? How about writing? Are you a good artist? Are you good at fixing or building things?

Then think about **what you like to do**. Do you enjoy outdoor activities? Do you like working with people or working independently? What topics interest you – history? the arts? computers?

Next, **complete a career assessment**. This tool will provide career options that match your personality, interests and skills. Ask your guidance counselor or EducationQuest about assessment tools they would recommend.

Once you discover career options that interest you, it’s time to do some research. Find out what degree programs are available for those careers – and then research colleges that offer those degrees. This will not only help you select a major, it will also help you narrow your list of potential colleges.

Keep in mind that some careers will require a master’s degree or even a doctorate -- so you may need to do some long-term planning.

There are many resources available to help you with your research including **NebraskaCareerConnections.org**. This Web site has an assessment tool that will guide you to groups of careers that fit your interests. It also provides information about specific occupations within those career areas, and the types of college degrees you would need to earn.

Other helpful tools are available at **EducationQuest.org** including the *Index of Majors* which will list colleges that offer the degree programs you wish to pursue. You'll also want to check out *College Profiles* on the EducationQuest Web site. It has information about colleges in Nebraska – and across the country.

In addition to research, we also recommend that you do some **job shadowing**. For example, if you want to become an x-ray technician, contact the hospital in your area to see if you can visit their radiology department for a day or two. By observing the different occupations in that department – and by asking lots of questions – you'll get a better idea if that's a career you really want to pursue.

Of course, many students begin college with no idea of what they want to major in – and that's okay. Colleges have many resources to help with career exploration. But if you take the time to explore your options, do some research, and find the right college – you may very well have a quick answer when someone asks, "What are you going to major in?"

That concludes this segment of *College Prep News*. Thanks for listening!

For free help with college planning, visit EducationQuest.org for information and resources - and to find the EducationQuest location nearest you.

EducationQuest Foundation is a nonprofit organization with a mission to improve access to higher education in Nebraska.