

When students should choose a major, what questions to ask, and what resources are available when deciding your career



For any college student, the next question they hear after “Where do you go to school?” is, inevitably, “What’s your major?” That’s hardly surprising. It’s one of the most important decisions a student will ever make—the first and biggest step toward a future career.

Ashley Clayton of Burlington is one student who followed a serendipitous route to her major. Now a junior studying art and

psychology at Georgetown College, her decision involved several happy coincidences. As a child, she had never been particularly interested in art, but one year in high school, the music class she wanted to take was already full. To round out her schedule, she signed up for an art class instead.

“That’s where I fell in love with painting,” she says, “though I never thought about art as a career.” Then she learned that the husband of one of her teachers

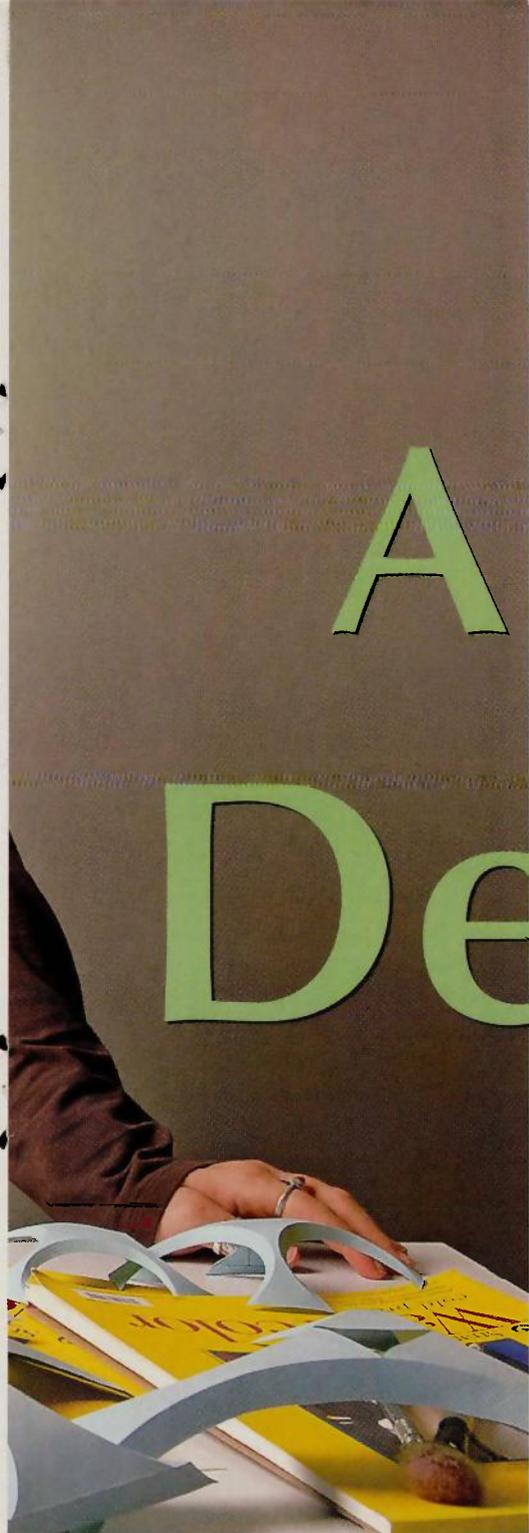
was an art therapist—a professional who helps people resolve difficult emotions by using art to express them. “I knew that art helped me work through my troubles, and I realized that I could help other people.”

She chose Georgetown College for its strong programs in both art and psychology, and has been taking a broad variety of courses in both departments—this semester, her schedule includes art history and a paper arts class, as well as courses in abnor-



A Major Decision

by Kristin Johannsen



Ashley Clayton, Burlington, is majoring in both art and psychology at Georgetown College, and has already used what she's learned to teach art classes at a day camp for inner-city children. Photo: Tim Webb

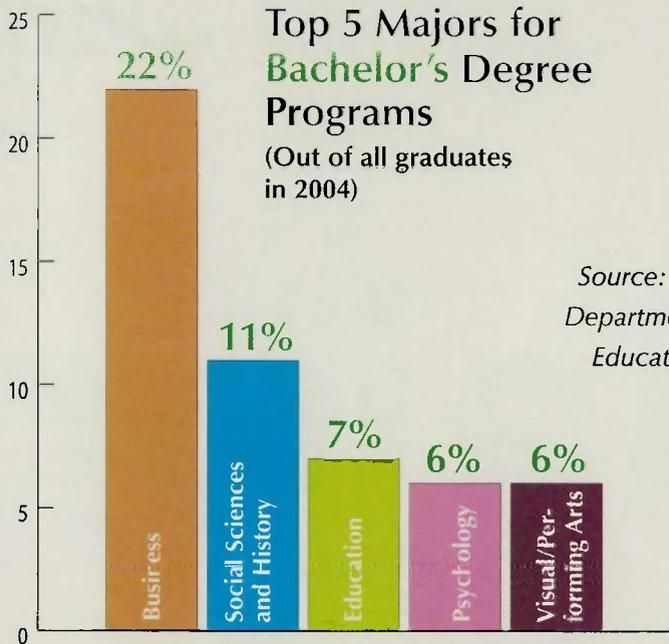
mal psychology and learning, experimental psychology, and German. She's already delved into her future career: she spent last summer teaching art classes at a day camp for inner-city children in New Jersey—"An amazing experience!" she says. Ultimately, she wants to earn a Ph.D. in psychology, and to work with women and girls who are survivors of traumatic situations.

For some people, choosing a college major is simple. Growing up in Loretto,

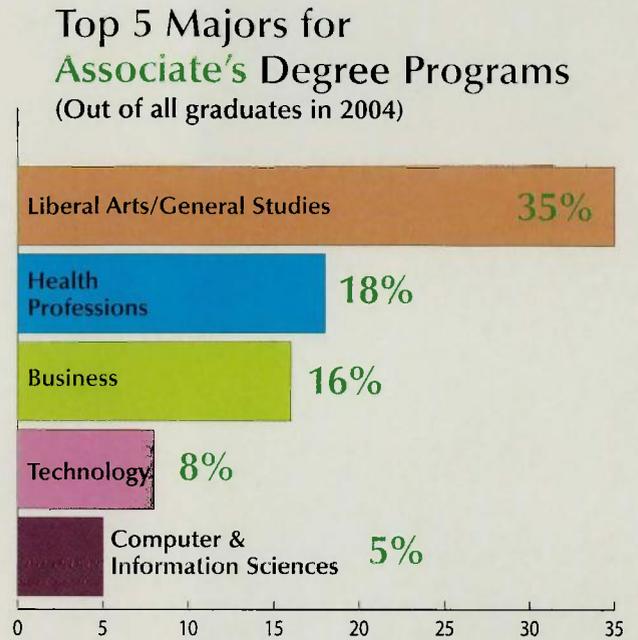
Ashley Raley loved to tend her dolls when they got "sick." "I've always been tender-hearted, always wanted to help people in trouble," she says. As a senior at Marion County High School, she took courses to become a certified nursing assistant, which included practical experience in a nursing home. When she enrolled at Saint Catharine College, just outside of Springfield, her path was clear. She is now majoring in nursing, and will receive her associate's degree in May.

It's an intensive and demanding program, but Raley thrives on it. She attends classes on campus three days a week, and has developed her skills in the college's state-of-the-art nursing labs—full-fledged hospital rooms with a high-tech mannequin in each bed. Dressed in her blue uniform, she checks a "patient's" blood pressure and cleans his teeth.

In between her classwork, she is doing clinical practice in the cancer unit of



Source: U.S. Department of Education



More than 311,000 students received bachelor's degrees in business in 2004



At times, she can't help thinking about her friends who have chosen other majors with easier schedules—one friend is studying interior design, and has much more free time to relax and enjoy her college years. But Ashley Raley's future goal is clear in her mind: nursing in a hospital near Lebanon, where she and her fiancé are building their home. She

proudly calls herself a "small-town girl." For other students, college is a time of exploration, and they spend time investigating various possibilities before settling on a major and a future career. Nationwide, a majority of students at four-year colleges have not chosen a major before enrolling, and an estimated half to two-thirds will change their major at least once.

Ashley Raley, who grew up in Loretto, is majoring in nursing at St. Catharine College in Springfield and will receive her associate's degree in May. Here she practices what she has learned on patient simulators in the college's state-of-the-art nursing lab. Photos: Jim Battles

University of Louisville Hospital. All told, she spends up to 55 hours a week on her studies and clinical training, but she always finds time for the human side of her work. "Last week, I was feeding a cup of ice cream to a cancer patient who was all alone, with no family there. His smile made it all worthwhile, all the long hours."



“More than 60% of our students haven’t decided on a major yet when they enroll here,” says Jerry Jackson, dean of enrollment at Union College in Barbourville. “They’re excited about college, and want a good future for themselves, but they’re still exploring. And we encourage that.” Union College has a core curriculum of required courses in seven areas, designed to expose all students to a range of fields they might not have considered. The goal is to have them focus on a major by the end of their second year.

Dr. Juilee Decker, chair of Georgetown College’s art department and one of Ashley Clayton’s professors, agrees that students should take as much time as they need in making decisions. “I was actually a biology major,” she says, “but then I took an art history class as a general education requirement, and I just loved it.” And to those who might think that art is not “practical” as a major, she points out that art majors have important marketable skills: “In any type of business field, creativity is needed. Artists fill that niche.”

But all this seems much clearer in retrospect. What can students do if they feel

“It’s a mistake trying to orient students to a particular field before they’re ready.”

they don’t have a clue about their future?

“First, relax,” says Karl Wallhausser, a student advisor at Union College. “Dive into your courses. Look at what’s out there. Then think carefully, systematically, and honestly about who you are.” He recommends that students consider what they really love to do, and not just potential careers. Many nontechnical, liberal arts



Preparing
LEADERS
to serve and
succeed



www.kwc.edu • 3000 Frederica Street • Owensboro, KY 42301 • 1-800-999-0592



QUALITY MADE PERSONAL

NKU remains committed to providing up-close and personal attention to each of its students. NKU’s average class size is 24 and the school boasts a student-to-faculty ratio of 16:1. Undergraduates work side-by-side with nationally renowned faculty in unique research experiences. Plus they have access to some of the world’s most advanced academic equipment. Northern Kentucky University offers all of the comforts of a private institution for the most affordable tuition rates in Greater Cincinnati.

QUALITY-MADE,
COMMUNITY-DRIVEN

www.nku.edu



Kentucky

GEORGETOWN COLLEGE

RECOGNIZED AS A TOP PRODUCER of Fulbright Awards

Georgetown College is the only institution of higher learning in Kentucky and one of only 43 Bachelor's degree colleges and universities* nationally to be recognized in the October 26, 2007, edition of *The Chronicle of Higher Education* for being among the top producers of Fulbright Awards for U.S. students for 2007-2008.

Since 1990, a total of 17 Georgetown College graduating seniors have received Fulbright Awards, including these three who are currently sharing their knowledge and skills abroad - a tribute to Georgetown's excellence in academics.

SCHOLARS DEVELOPING SCHOLARS

Learn more.

Office of Admissions
502-863-8009 or 800-788-9985
admissions@georgetowncollege.edu



GEORGETOWN
COLLEGE

Live. Learn. Believe.

400 East College Street • Georgetown, KY 40324
www.georgetowncollege.edu

*Source: Institute of International Education



Questions to ask yourself before choosing a college major

Jerry Jackson and Karl Wallhausser of Union College in Barbourville suggest you take time to think it over and consider these questions, in choosing a major and a future career:

- What areas interest you? What are you absolutely not interested in?
- What do you most enjoy working with: people? things? numbers? ideas?
- What are you good at? What special abilities do you have?
- Where do you want to live after college? If staying near your hometown is important for you, what kinds of jobs are available there? (For instance, there is not much demand for astronauts in southeastern Kentucky, but there are plenty of jobs for teachers.)

- What are your financial goals? Realistically, how much money do you hope to earn? What fields would put you in this category?

A meeting with student advisors at your high school or college can give you many more points to think about as well as potential majors that you may have overlooked, so be sure to take advantage of their expertise.

fields actually develop skills that are more broadly useful. For example, a student who loves English literature has many career options besides just teaching English. The ability to write well and to analyze what you read is valuable to many different kinds of employers.

Students can begin by thinking about

MOREHEAD STATE UNIVERSITY

achieve.
experience.
succeed.



MSU graduates are accepted into professional schools at rates well above state and national averages.

Morehead State University has been recognized for the fourth consecutive year as one of the top public universities in the South in "America's Best Colleges" by *U.S. News & World Report*.



For more information, call 1.800.585.6781.
www.moreheadstate.edu

MSU is an affirmative action, equal opportunity, educational institution.

high school subjects and activities they enjoyed, and any courses they especially disliked. For instance, someone who loved working on the school newspaper might thrive as a communications major, while a student who hated science courses would have a difficult time studying nursing.

Wallhausser says it's often the parents who are most worried when a student hesitates in choosing a major, because they are concerned that hard-earned tuition money is being wasted. "But it's a mistake trying to orient students to a particular field before they're ready," he says. It's not unknown for students who start college with a firm choice of majors to discover, late in the game, that they don't want to work in that field at all—and to change to a new major in their senior year, requiring extra semesters of study. "That's when money gets wasted."

Of course, there are exceptions. Two-year associate's degree programs are very focused, and unless a student is earning a degree in general studies to prepare for a

Internet links to college majors

For a listing of several Web sites offering information on a variety of majors, careers information, questionnaires, and statistics, go to www.KentuckyLiving.com and type "college majors" in the Keyword Search box.



bachelor's degree program, changing your major could mean starting over again. There are also some bachelor's degree programs that require four whole years to complete, particularly in education, and for these, an early decision is essential.

The process of choosing a major can be an enjoyable quest, a treasure hunt through what lies inside you. By getting to know yourself better, you lay the foundation for a career that will bring you great personal satisfaction.

MOBILE HOME ROOF PROBLEMS?

Lifetime Warranty



CALL FOR FREE ESTIMATE



PERMA-ROOF

from Southern Builders

• SERVICE • QUALITY • COMMITMENT

The Mobile Home Roofover Specialist

▶ **STEEL ROOFING**

▶ **2" - 3" INSULATION**

▶ **ONE FOOT OVERHANG**

▶ **NO MORE ROOF RUMBLE**

▶ **LOWER UTILITY BILLS**

on the web: www.roofover.com




1-800-633-8969



Flaget Sleep Disorders Center can restore your restful sleep

Has it been a while since you've had a good night's rest? Flaget's Sleep Disorders Center offers overnight and daytime testing that can pinpoint the cause of your disrupted sleep. Whether you suffer from insomnia, sleep apnea, or other sleep disorders, Flaget's sleep specialist physicians can diagnose your problem and restore your restful sleep.



While you rest in the sleep lab, Flaget's team monitors you from a separate room via specialized equipment. Flaget has been named one of the 100 top hospitals in the nation three years in a row. See for yourself. Get the most advanced sleep disorder treatment in your own community.

Located on Flaget's medical campus, The Sleep Disorders Center offers private sleeping suites. Call 350-5475.

† CATHOLIC HEALTH INITIATIVES

Flaget Memorial Hospital

4305 New Shepherdsville Road/Hwy. 245
Bardstown, KY 40004 • www.flaget.com
(502) 350-5000

