Students make decisions every day. Choosing a major and/or a career field essentially involves the decision-making process. The effectiveness of choosing a major and career field can be greatly influenced by the information available to you at the point of decision-making and the effectiveness of your decision-making relies on accurate and up-to-date information. Give due time to gathering information about yourself, college majors, and the world of work as you go through the process of choosing a major and/or career field.

There are two ways to begin the process of deciding on a major and/or career path. Some students will begin by working with a career counselor in the Career Center in order to research the world of work, identifying occupations or career fields of interests and then work backwards to identify what training and experience will the student need to achieve that occupational goal.

On the other hand, some students will research various college majors, meet with academic advisors in majors of interest and then work with a career counselor in the Career Center to identify career options for that major.

The effectiveness of choosing a major and career field relies on information you have gathered. Information is vitally important in the decision-making process. The effectiveness of any decision you make relies on accurate and up-to-date information. Information about yourself, college majors, and the world of work will be helpful to you as you go through the process of choosing a major and/or career field.

Recent research indicates that it is typical for undergraduates to try out four or five majors before arriving at a decision. If you have not selected a major or you are uncomfortable with the major you are currently in, you are not alone.

A common myth about selecting an academic major is that the major you choose must relate to a specific field. The reality is that a bachelor's degree prepares you for many different career paths. Some majors are more directly linked to specific career options, while others are less directly related. For example, a Nursing major will most likely work in the field of nursing or a closely related healthcare position. However, a Sociology major may work as a caseworker, manager, claims representative or marketing manager, to name a few.

There are many factors that may influence your choice of major and/or career field. For example, family and cultural influences, economic trends, skill preferences, peer pressure, personal values, work values, interests, personality, health considerations, natural talents, and aptitude are several factors that may influence career and education decisions. Everyone experiences some fear or apprehension when making a decision. We also learn about ourselves and about how we make decisions each time we go through the decision-making process.

People use many different strategies when making decisions. The decision-making process is a very personal process that varies from one person to the next. The following are a few decision-making strategies each of us has used.
• **Impulsive**: Little thought or examination; taking the first alternative; one does not "look before they leap."
• **Fatalistic**: Letting the environment decide; leaving it up to fate, "it is all in the stars."
• **Compliant**: Let someone else decide for you or follow someone else's ideas.
• **Delaying**: Postponing the decision or action; "deciding" to make the decision sometime in the future.
• **Agonizing**: Getting lost in all the data; getting overwhelmed with analyzing the alternatives.
• **Intuition**: Using your gut feeling, hunch, or sense to make a decision, usually done without gathering all the necessary information or considering alternatives.
• **Frozen**: Unable to make a decision; no alternative seems possible; complete indecision and fear.

All of us have used some or all of the above decision-making strategies at one time in our life. Sometimes the decision-making strategy we use may interfere or prevent us from making a decision, making a decision in a timely manner, or making one that is right for us.