

FAST FACTS**Thinking about Transferring**

Wondering why you chose the major that you did? Thinking that you should go into a field in which you'll be more successful? Worried that you made the wrong choice of universities?

You're not alone if you're thinking of changing majors. At one point or another, many undergrads consider making a change in their career paths. Fortunately, these difficult decisions aren't ones you have to make by yourself.

Thinking about changing majors

There are all sorts of reasons why you might be considering a change in career plans. Some of these reasons may be good ones—perhaps you've had a chance to look into another major, one that you think you'd be happier in. Other reasons, though, might not be as well-grounded—maybe your current major isn't working out and, although you don't have any specific alternative in mind, you're ready to try just about *anything* else.

You're not alone if you're thinking of changing majors. At one point or another, many undergrads consider making a change in their career paths. Fortunately, you don't have to make these difficult decisions alone.

At Carnegie Mellon, we believe it's important for you to make the decision to change majors based on a careful survey of what you want to study in school and what you want to do after you graduate. We want to make sure you don't change career directions because of small things that can easily be fixed—because you're not getting straight A's, for example. At the same time, we want to help those who have legitimate reasons for making a change get the help they need.

What are my alternatives?

When you find yourself unhappy with your current academic situation, you essentially have four options. You can (1) stay the course to see if you can get over what may be just short-term hurdles, (2) change your major, (3) leave school for a while to rethink your career plans or (4) transfer to another university.

Where can I get advice?

There are many offices on campus where you can go for help.

The *dean's office* of each Carnegie Mellon college or school works with its students seeking to transfer within or outside the university. Each college has staff available to talk to students who want to transfer into its program. The key contacts for each of the colleges are:

CFA
Barbara Anderson
Associate Dean
x8-2348



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CIT

Robert Kail
Associate Dean
x8-2479

H&SS

Joseph Devine
Associate Dean and Director,
Academic Advisory Center
x8-6117

SIA

Milton Cofield
Executive Director,
Business Administration
x8-2294

MCS

Eric Grotzinger
Associate Dean
x8-6679

SCS

Mark Stehlik
Undergraduate Program Director
x8-3609

It's important that your home department know of your intention to transfer as soon as possible, in order that documentation can be properly filled out. The department that you are transferring to will give you and your home college advisor written confirmation of what is required for transfer. The contact persons listed above will know exactly what to do for your special case.

The *Career Center* (x8-2064) provides a variety of services for students who are considering a change in major and career. Counselors are available to help students rethink their career paths and future goals through informal conversations or through more formal testing. If you wish, they can refer you to an Alumni Networking

program and to appropriate faculty and advisor contacts for more lengthy discussion. The center also has a Career Resource Library that you can use on your own or in conjunction with a counselor to learn more about the academic and career choices available to you.

Counseling and Psychological Services (x8-2922) can help students who are facing complicated, troubling decisions. Concerns about transitions to new surroundings, problems involving family or roommates, as well as one's sense of self and purpose at Carnegie Mellon are all important issues that you can talk over with people at the center.

The *University Libraries* can also be a handy resource. Hunt Library contains undergraduate and graduate microfiche catalogs for educational institutions in the United States and abroad. These can help you find out about a new university—the size of the campus, the student-teacher ratio, the curriculum structure, etc.

The *Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh* (412-622-3119) boasts a variety of useful services. *Discover*, a computerized career guidance system, can help students match interests, abilities and values to majors, careers and universities. This system is especially good if you're thinking about transferring outside the University. The Guidance Information System is a Pennsylvania-based academic and career information service that's also very helpful.

Taking action

The first step is to contact the dean's office of your home college. This is

important for several reasons. First, if you've decided what you *don't* want to do, but are still unsure what you want to do, many colleges allow a "dean's semester" during which you can take courses outside of your major in order to gain a better understanding of what it would mean to major in another field. This is important because the main criteria on which your application to transfer is considered is your presumed ability to graduate from the program you want to transfer into.

A second step may be to talk to someone in the dean's office of the college/school into which you want to transfer. Pick up the application materials from that college and look them over. The more you review the kinds of questions the new college is asking about your interest in transferring, the more prepared you'll be to make a successful application.

The next step may be to apply to the new college, or to take advantage of the dean's semester to enroll in courses to test your interest and demonstrate your ability. It's important to remember that your reasons for transferring to another college/school within the university are in many ways the same as those you had when you made your initial application: it offers a program of study that you honestly want to pursue and in which you think you'll be successful.

But can I afford it?

In figuring whether it makes financial sense to transfer, remember that transferring does not necessarily mean starting over. Credits and units can transfer from one college to another; core courses in particular may transfer with little problem. In

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addition, it may be possible for upperclass students to substitute some lower division core courses for equivalent upper division courses. Each case is unique; therefore, it's important to take the time to speak with the appropriate people to learn how your past experiences at Carnegie Mellon can work for you in your new field.

The mechanics of transferring within Carnegie Mellon are not in themselves difficult; the hard part is figuring out whether you should transfer, and into what. By taking advantage of the resources at the university, you'll be able to make the choice that moves you into a career path you'll enjoy.