

Attachment 21

Representative Detailed Student Narratives
Describing Personal Stories and Experiences During
Career and Major Exploration Experiences in UGS

UGS Program Review
Fall 2019





STUDENT QUOTES

“As an undeclared freshman, I was relentlessly pursuing transferring into the McComb’s School of Business. It felt like that was what my family had always wanted me to do and it sounded like a good idea at the time, so I just went with it- I made a plan and I stuck to it. I carried this persistent mindset until about half-way through my first semester when I began to really struggle in my introductory economics class. As most students do, I found myself having an identity crisis. As a future business major, I had planned on taking a lot of classes very similar to that economics class in which I began to heavily dislike- begging the question if that was truly the right path for me. Seeking guidance, I made myself frequent career counseling appointments at the Vick Center for Strategic Advising and Career Counseling and academic advising appointments with my advisor. It was through utilizing these resources that I began to build the courage to acknowledge other majors as possible options. I considered social work and a handful of other majors but had eventually narrowed it down to communication studies and mathematics- actuarial science. It was through making even more appointments with a career counselor and my advisor that I decided to pursue a major in mathematics, a minor in communication studies, and a certificate in risk management. Although they are very different fields, I feel as though this path is my own and one I feel comfortable and confident in pursuing. Going forward with this plan, I have made more appointments with my advisor in order to make sure that not only am I meeting the internal transfer requirements but that I am also taking classes along my degree plan as well. Had it not been for these resources, I probably would be continuing to pursue a major that in the end, I would not be content with.”

“Before coming to UT, I had planned on transferring into Computer Science from Undergraduate Studies. I had very little in the way of the actual planning of my career after college. In order to find what I was truly passionate about, I used every single resource Undergraduate Studies had to offer. I visited my career counselor very often in order to understand what life was like past college. I also got a feel for what each major had to offer in terms of career path and skill sets developed. It was here that I learned that Computer Science was really not for me at all. I also visited my academic advisor frequently for advice on class registration and course planning. It was through my academic advisor that I found out about the new major/career exploration class, UGS 107D. I was part of the inaugural class for this program. Through this new class I found a major that fit my newly discovered passion for laboratory science, Medical Laboratory Science.”



STUDENT QUOTE

“The Vick Center has been a huge part of my experience in exploring my majors and career options. At least once a week I've been utilizing the Wayfinder website to explore options suited to my interests; in fact, I entered college believing I wanted to explore the Health field simply due to it being almost a family tradition. Utilizing career counseling with Adriana and Celean, as well as listening to Alumni guides provided by UGS Council, has opened my eyes to not pursue what may be the most profitable career, but one that fulfills your social and mental requirements as well as financial. Finally, a huge impact occurred in my life when I was invited to attend the Undergraduate Student Leadership Summit. A speaker in particular stood out to me when he spoke out on types of leadership; he essentially mentioned that a leader cannot truly be a leader for a pursuit they are not passionate about. This helped me realize I can never truly be 100% a nurse or doctor if I don't have that initial passion or care, and from then on I made it my goal to find my own passion not only for the personal gain, but what kind of leadership I could inspire. Now I'm involved in 5 organizations (and counting) where I'm aiming to have a leadership goal, as well as heightening my experience in what career I may want to pursue.

Now I'm pursuing a major in either Biochemistry or a Molecular Biology specialization, as well as a certificate in Marine and Freshwater Science as well as a foreign language. Prior to using the resources mentioned above, I had no clue what area I was even interested in. Now I'm confident to say I'm passionate about science, specifically research, and also love working on writing legislation and being involved with that process thanks to the UGS Legislative Counsel. I am now inspired to pursue an internship at the Athens Fish Hatchery to further explore my interests this summer, and to pinpoint exactly what ignites my passion for our molecular, interconnected world.

I can securely say I would be lost without these career websites, leadership summits, and just general guides through the Undergraduate College; already I feel I've had numerous doors opened and networks connected thanks to the truly open minded and caring advisors. I make full use of these resources, and they have been and will continue to be valuable through my college time, and I look forward to passing on the skills and leadership I've learned to the next generation of Longhorns.”



STUDENT QUOTES

“I have made and gone to both Career Counseling appointments and Academic Advising appointments to help aid in the pursuit to find my career. Being a first generation college student makes it difficult to ask my family the questions I have regarding finding a career and the magnitude of a college degree. Luckily these services at the Vick Center and Sanger has helped me tremendously. I scheduled a career counseling appointment and met with a woman named Emily, who helped me figure out that I want to be able to help people in my career, specifically minorities. We discussed going into political action based fields, social work, and even teaching. None of these that we discussed I thought about before talking to her, and it amazed me what an hour conversation could do to help me figure out the right path for me to go on. I am so grateful for her helping me figure out what to do, and just simply talking to me. She even asked me how I was doing outside of the stresses of school, which made me realize the thought of being a teacher or counselor is something I could see myself doing. I also scheduled an appointment with an academic advisor, and although I do not remember her name, she was also extremely kind in helping me formulate my career plans. We discussed the classes to take that I need to graduate, but how to make them specific for me and still interesting.

Both of these appointments helped me not only realize the amount of resources on campus available, but that putting in effort to go out and use these resources help you so much. Without having the guidance on what classes to take and what my interests are, I would still feel like I did when I first got to college: lost and no idea what direction to go in. I have now searched classes to take next semester, and I already know because of Emily that I should explore my interests in sociology. Part of being in Undergraduate Studies is taking the risk of putting yourself in classes you don't know a lot about, but have a slight interest. This is something that I enjoy doing, because having no expectations entering a class usually results in you enjoying it overall. I am excited to see what the future holds, and I know that if I ever have any questions on how to get there, I can continue to use those resources available and have no fear asking questions about my journey to discovering my major.”

“Through these services I recognized that as a person I want to be able to adapt to my circumstances and the inevitable shift in the job market that will take place in my lifetime. The career exploration services have made me come to believe that McCombs will give me the skills and abilities to be able to take control of my academic career. Without engaging in the services offered to me as an undergraduate studies student I never would've realized that as an individual I'm not the entirely analytical and formulaic person I was lead to believe my whole life. Instead, I am a person who seeks a balance between analysis and creativity. Not only have the programs, advisors, and mentors helped me formulate what I want in my career but also have crafted me into a person that is ambitious, ingenious, and more eager to learn.”



STUDENT QUOTE

“When I was applying to The University of Texas at Austin, I had no idea exactly what I wanted to major in. I knew I had interests in psychology, law and even education, but I wasn’t sure what I wanted to fully pursue. Put simply, I was very overwhelmed and not ready to decide on a major just yet. Due to this, I applied to the School of Undergraduate Studies. UGS sparked my interest because it is specifically designed for students still exploring majors while allowing them to find their unique paths to success. It was the perfect fit for me!

I am so blessed to be in a program that gives students the resources to fully explore their passions without having to commit to a certain major. One resource I have taken advantage of is Career Counseling. I recently had an appointment with my career counselor, and it was such an eye opening experience. During the appointment, we explored my majors of interest, and I was introduced to a website called Wayfinder. With the use of Wayfinder, I was able to assess which of my strengths would be valuable in certain career fields, and I was able to explore various degree plans. Ultimately, this website made the decision of choosing a major less overwhelming. Also during the appointment my counselor outlined what a typical work day looks like in my careers of interest. This was very helpful because I was able to visualize myself in certain careers and decide if I was still interested in pursuing them. Thanks to the help of my career counselor, I am now one step closer to declaring a major.

Another service that I have benefited from is Academic Advising. I really enjoy meeting with my academic advisor because she has given me lots of information about the internal transfer process. She has gone above and beyond by telling me when transfer applications open, where application meetings are being held, and she has even offered to revise my application essays. Additionally, my wonderful advisor has made sure that I have successfully transitioned from high school to college. She often asks me if I am maintaining a balance between school and social life, and I can tell she really cares about my well-being. My career counselor has definitely made an impact on my career and major exploration.

With the help from my career counselor and academic advisor, I discovered my true passion and I joined two organizations that align with my aspirations. I am in the Association of Black Psychologists and I am also involved in SEAL, an organization that reads to the youth in Austin. My involvement in these organizations and the career services offered by UGS have effectively shaped my career plans in helping me realize that I want to pursue a career involved in helping kids. I have decided to major in Human Development and Family Sciences and minor in Educational Psychology. Being in UGS taught me that it’s okay to not know exactly what you want to major in just yet; life and college is all about exploring what is right for you!”



STUDENT QUOTES

“As a freshman walking in as an undecided student, I was unsure about what classes to take and what career I wanted to pursue. I wanted to study biomedical engineering, but unfortunately, I was not given the opportunity in UT. Without a major and unclear academic path, I felt lost and confused. While all my friends had course schedule that was planned out until their senior year, I was clueless about what to do with the next four years.

After I had my Academic Advising Appointment with my counselor, I started to see my future more clearly. I realized that I had strong interest in science and math and had curiosity and passion in medicine. From the appointment, I took Chemistry and Statistics for health science this semester to prepare myself to transfer into the College of Natural Sciences. After finding the direction for my future, the extracurricular activities came naturally. Because I was interested in the medical field and was passionate about missions, I quickly gravitated towards my student organization, Global Medical Missions Alliance (GMMA). From GMMA I started my volunteer at Micah 6, where we hand out canned goods to people who cannot afford food. Not only I reached out within the campus, but I started to email different doctors for internships or research opportunities. Fortunately, I was given the opportunity to have a medical research in Hawaii.

Now I am a proud UGS student. I am glad that I didn't get into my first pick major in UT because through my adviser and the programs in the Undergraduate Studies, I was able to find what I truly wanted to do with my future.”

“During my first semester I took advantage of a walk-in appointment at the Vick Center for career counseling to search for a new direction. I talked out my interest in the College of Communication, deciding between Journalism and Communication Studies. The amazing counselor that helped me organize my thoughts evaluated my interests and added key insight to affirm that my prospective new majors would perfectly fit my skills and desires! She was so nice and her intimate, personal insight made me feel a lot more confident in my desire to change majors. When I walked in, I was very scared of altering the status quo of my academic career and reaching into a new field. But she gave me a lot of assurance that changing your mind is normal, altering your mind is healthy, and career exploration is exciting! She made me so confident that I set myself up with an academic advisor within 5 minutes to take the next step to start on a new endeavor.”



STUDENT QUOTES

“Being a student in UGS was a great experience for me. I originally came into the university with the belief that I wanted to be a business major. Starting undeclared was a scary feeling for me in the beginning. I felt that I was going to be left behind and that everyone else would be ahead of me. Going into my second semester, I found myself thankful that I started out undeclared. It gave me the opportunity to truly explore the different major options the university offered me. I soon realized that business was not for me since I was interested in many different things. However, after talking with my advisor and career counselor I discovered I wanted to go more in the communications field. I took classes in the Moody School and realized that’s where I wanted to complete my degree. I am currently on the path to get a degree in the Communication and Leadership major. The UGS school was amazing in pointing me toward the right direction. I feel excited about my new education path and could not have done it without the resources provided to me through UGS.”

“Coming into university, I had no idea what I what I wanted to study or how to even choose a major that would be perfect for me. I found that high school can prepare you for broad strokes of various subjects, but with over one hundred individual majors available at a university of this size, I didn’t even know where to start. UGS gave me a home and resources my first year to navigate me into a major that’s perfect for me: American Studies (which I had never even heard of until a career counselor at the Vick Center recommended it to me). I felt so comfortable in UGS that I’ve continued working with them in some capacity every year of my university career, in UGS Council, as an ambassador, and as a FIG mentor. This program has been instrumental in finding my perfect academic path on campus, giving me a way to navigate the endless opportunities available at a university like this.”