

Control Program Master Document

***Note:** These transcripts were edited to keep the identity of the speakers and the university confidential.*

1. Trace your path for finding your major.

Panelist 1:

When I arrived at [University Name], I only knew that I was not interested in anything math or science related, as those areas were not where my interests or abilities lie. I had also been very involved in journalism in high school, so I had thought extensively about doing a journalism major and actually decided against it (especially because a career path was so set and I didn't want to follow it).

I had no real idea what I wanted to major in until spring quarter of freshman year when I took my first 300 level English class. I really enjoyed analyzing literature and writing about it, and always enjoyed that during high school, so I decided I should major in it—even if it doesn't have a set career path after college. I felt that my strengths and interests lay in English, though, so I feel rather confident in my choice. I also want to do the [Program name] certificate, which I decided on after meeting with the adviser spring quarter.

Right now, I am deciding between double majoring in either communications (and switching to the school of communications) or economics. I want to work in PR, business, or marketing, so I think either of these choices could suit a career path.

Panelist 2:

I'm a journalism and political science major, but I actually applied to [University Name] as a biology major and I expected I'd go to med school. I knew I was always interested in journalism, but all of my advisers and mentors before [University Name] warned me against essentially wasting my major on journalism because they said most publications or companies I might be interested in working for wouldn't really care about a degree from a journalism school, but the experience I had from the real world – like writing clips from actual publications. So I decided I would just major in something else I was passionate about and figured I'd gain my journalism experience firsthand by joining the school newspaper or a local publication or something like that. So I went with the bio major instead. But between the time I submitted my application and when I began at [University Name], I realized I couldn't stand the sight of blood and would probably make a pretty terrible doctor. So I ended up switching to political science. I guess the 2008 election was happening at the time and it was really interesting to me and I figured it would be a nice thing to supplement my journalism interest with. So I declared my

political science major sometime during my freshmen year. And later that year, I guess I realized that I was sort of wasting the potential for training, networking and connections that a journalism school like [Program Name] would provide, because it's like one of the best journalism schools in the country. So I started the rigorous process of transferring into [Program Name], and a year later, I pulled it off and was officially a [Program Name] journalism student and political science double major.

Panelist 3:

I had already decided that I wanted to major in political science and international studies before coming to [University Name]. After hearing Rose Mapendo, a survivor of the Congolese genocide and co-founder of New Horizons, which is an organization that helps refugees from around the world... after hearing her speak at the [University Name] Conference for Human Rights, my decision to pursue international studies and humanitarian affairs was reinforced. I felt that her speech was very inspiring and empowering.

Panelist 4:

I actually arrived to [University Name] early as part of the [omitted] Program. For those of you not familiar with the program, it is a pre-[omitted] Welcome week trip that takes place in the city of [City]. Arriving on this trip, I was still somewhat convinced I would be a Chemistry major, as I had excelled in the sciences in high school. By the time I arrived on campus after [omitted], I was already questioning if the sciences was the right place for me. I started asking around to people I knew about the [Education School Name] before emailing the program advisor. By October 4th, I had started the process of applying to the [Education School Name] to major in Education as I loved what I was seeing from the school. The curriculum, the focus, and the students I had met all drew me in to the [Education School Name]. I officially became a Education major for the winter term of my freshman year.

Panelist 5:

My journey was a bit different than most as a transfer student. I came from the College of Business at another university and realized throughout my freshman year (through coursework and extracurricular involvement) that Economics and International Affairs were what I could see myself committing to for the rest of my life. So upon looking for schools to transfer to, [University Name] appeared to have strong programs in both- the rest is history!

Panelist 6:

When I came to [University Name] I knew that I wanted to major in some area of engineering because the engineering field is one of the only disciplines that you can make a considerable amount of money with only a bachelor's degree and since I only planned to use engineering as a backup plan, that suited my needs well. I plan on going to law

school to be an intellectual property lawyer and the bar exam for this field requires a technical degree. Once I got on campus and began exploring the necessary classes needed for electrical engineering which was the type of engineering I had applied to [University Name] planning to study, I realized that there was too much science for my liking. I also saw that Industrial Engineering was more focused on businesses and management. This interested me because I knew I wanted to end up working for a corporation one day and the coursework would help me as an intellectual property attorney as well as an engineer.

Panelist 7:

When I first started at [University Name], I was undeclared. My friends encouraged me to major in something that I thought was “fun”, but I wanted something that was not only enjoyable. I wanted to study something that would challenge me to think analytically and benefit me economically in the future. I became curious about economics after reading *Freakonomics* in high school. I do not know whether or not that was actually a deciding factor, but the book definitely made the field seem more appealing. Taking a freshman seminar that was loosely based on econ gave me the opportunity to speak with one of the professors, and halfway through my freshman year, an upperclassman encouraged me to take an introduction course with [Professor Name]. I think that such endorsement helped me decide on my major. The most difficult part about finding it was probably taking a bunch of courses that, as it turned out, did not cover any of my requirements. Most of them had great instructors though, and more importantly, they gave me an idea of what I did not want to study in the future.

Panelist 8:

I was accepted into [University Name] as an undeclared engineer. I had always had an interest in chemistry, and so I took chem 101 my first quarter. I thoroughly enjoyed the class, and I knew I wanted to keep pursuing engineering after a quarters worth of classes. So right at the end of fall quarter freshman year I declared chemical engineering as my major.

2. **What were some of the experiences that led you to your major and what were some challenges?**

Panelist 2:

My freshmen advisor (from [School Name]) was actually the first to suggest that I pursue journalism as a major. He complimented my writing and said I should consider focusing more of my efforts on improving those skills. So I decided to sign up for a few journalism classes to test the waters. One of the first classes I took was about doing journalism in immigrant communities. It was a hands-on course and I had the chance to go into [City] and speak directly with real people and write real stories about them and actually got a few stories published in some local publications. So it was a great class and it really got my interest going for journalism.

As for challenges, it was definitely frustrating choosing my major because I wasn't quite sure what I wanted to pursue, but I think the system is set up in a way that makes it kind of difficult to test anything out. I think the system sort of demands that you pick something and stick with it. And reality is obviously quite different than that, because most people, or at least a lot of people I know, don't quite know what they want to do right away. So it's just difficult trying to test things out when you're sort of forced to commit to stuff.

Panelist 3:

While I was in high school, I was very interested in the United Nations, and more specifically, their humanitarian affairs department. This interest further developed after I began participating in Peace Week and local Unity camps. Eventually, I decided that I wanted to pursue a major in international studies in addition to my political science major. My decision to major in political science comes from a long time interest in government and foreign affairs as well as an interest in law.

Panelist 4:

The [Program Name] is definitely most influential experience at [University Name] that led to my transfer. Without [Program Name], I just may have never met people majoring in Social Policy as quickly or had the chances to see community development firsthand. If I had not experienced this, I may not have started seriously considering that my interests in education reform could be more than an interest. Finding my major was relatively easy for me. Without the [Program Name] it may have been much more difficult.

Panelist 5:

My coursework has definitely shaped my interests. I enrolled in a course about economics and nonprofit organizations during Spring Quarter and fell in love with the material. To be able to explain everyday systems and phenomena through my studies of Economics has yet to become boring or useless for me.

However, knowing that I could be successful in fields that may be more fiscally rewarding (i.e. doctor, engineer, pharmacist...) and aligned with expectations of me by others made it difficult for me to detach myself and veer off the beaten path in terms of career choice.

Panelist 8:

Coming to [University Name], I had always been interested in chemistry and knew I wanted to major in some sort of engineering. After having a good introductory chemistry class, chemical engineering seemed like a great fit.

3. What has been your favorite class and least favorite so far and why?

Panelist 1:

One of my favorite classes was a Humanities course taught by [Professor Name] and [Professor Name]. It was called [Class Name]. Obviously, the level of instruction was incredible as it included one of the most popular professors at [University Name] co-teaching with the university president. I also really enjoyed the fact that it was multi-disciplinary, including teaching from literature, economics, political science, history, and religion. It did help shape my future plans, as it continued my interest in writing and analyzing as well as sparked my interest in real-world economics.

My least favorite class so far has been multivariable calculus, fall quarter of freshman year. I think it was not my favorite because I wasn't really interested in course material of the class, but I felt as though what I was learning would not help me in the future. Much of what we were doing (like sketching 3D figures of saddles from equations) seemed very disconnected from anything I would be doing in real life, especially in a future career path.

Panelist 2:

My favorite class was definitely the one I mentioned before about journalism in immigrant communities. I just thought it was really rewarding and I thought we did something that had a natural positive impact, which I really liked.

As for my least favorite class, statistics was pretty awful, mostly because I was just generally bad at it. But I had to take it.

Panelist 4:

My favorite class at [University Name] after my freshman year was Twentieth Century American Literature with [Professor Name]. I initially took it as a distribution requirement for [Education School Name]. I had loved American literature in high school, but I had spent two quarters at [University Name] deeply immersed in the social sciences. American Lit was like a breath of fresh air for me and helped me to truly realize how much personal pleasure I got from reading books, and discussing them. It was different from the enjoyment I got from my Social Policy coursework and got me to thinking about a career in teaching. I bounced back and forth between deciding whether to pursue a History or English teaching certification after graduation because I am a history minor and it seemed like the obvious choice. American Lit and the experience I had in that class really helped steer me to select English as my teaching certification goal.

My least favorite class so far had to be the Religious Studies freshman seminar I took in the fall while still in [School Name]. It was my least favorite as my expectations of the class were simply much higher than what I actually experienced in the class. The

freshman seminar was poorly utilized, focusing on minute details of the religions in question and I felt I truly walked away from the class learning little. I honestly felt like I had wasted my time in the class, which is a terrible feeling to walk away with at a university such as this one. The class just had little impact on my major or future plans.

Panelist 5:

My favorite class would probably be a research seminar on political history. The research seminar was a combination of a great classroom setting of 12 students in addition to being taught by arguably the best professor in the History department. There were no exams- just one large paper at the end of the quarter and several presentations. Our grades were primarily based on discussion. I took this class as a sophomore with seniors writing their honors theses. Being among such bright, mature, and well-read students made not only for the most intimidating but invigorating classroom I have ever been in. The material was extremely specific and explains a lot of what is going on in the world today.

On the other hand, Econometrics has been the worst class for me at [University Name]. I did not have as strong of a technical foundation with the statistical software as my contemporaries, which made for long hours at the library with material that was of no interest to me. But some good did come from it because after this course I realized that furthering my education in Economics (in grad school) is definitely not the thing for me. I love Economic theory and application but the methods...not so much.

Panelist 6:

My favorite class so far at [University Name] was Engineering Design and Communication. I greatly enjoyed using our class instruction to create an actual product for a client. I enjoyed following a product from the brainstorming stage through production. This class made me contemplate taking time to work in the engineering field before pursuing my graduate degree.

My least favorite class was Math integrals. This class was very difficult and the applications of it were very abstract. I did not understand why the class was mandated and this made me feel like attending the class was a chore. This class did not affect my future plans because the material will not be included in my future career.

Panelist 7:

My favorite class was my intro to microeconomics course, and I felt like that played a role in my decision to major in economics. The material covered was rather basic, but the professor made attending class worthwhile. He was incredibly engaging because he always tried to relate concepts to interesting current events. He also liked to tell our class about humorous tidbits of his life, which I guess allowed us to see him on a more personal level. The professor taught the class based on the progress of the students'

understanding. I really appreciated the fact that he wanted us to be comfortable before moving onto new ideas.

My least favorite class was a geological course that I took for a distribution requirement. I think that the class had potential, but the material was presented in a very dry manner. I eventually stopped attending lectures. I felt that it was more productive to read the PowerPoint slides on my own. In terms of shaping future plans, the class probably influenced me to avoid anything related to geology.

4. What do you do to be successful in your classes? For example, how do you plan your courses and what are some strategies for being successful in those courses?

Panelist 1:

To plan my courses, I begin by taking into account what requirements I need to fill and search [Course Catalog] using those requirements (major, distribution areas, etc.) After locking down my core classes, I look for others that fit around them. I definitely take course and teacher evaluations into account, as I find them fairly accurate. Course and teacher evaluations are the reviews of the professor and the class generated by students. I look both at the classes' course and teacher evaluations and the professor's course and teacher evaluations. Generally the professors' are more important, because a good professor can make a bad class enjoyable; a bad professor can't make a good class worthwhile.

I also definitely take into account the schedule of the classes. I like to either have them back to back or with big breaks in between classes. First quarter last year I thought it would be a good idea to have short breaks between each class; I found that with short breaks I couldn't sleep or do homework, more often than not I would just sit around doing nothing and waiting for class. Final exam schedules are also fairly important to me; I look for finals early in the week without too many in any one day.

As for being successful in those courses, I think the first and foremost thing you can do at [University Name] to succeed in your courses is to stay on track with your syllabus. Because the quarter system is so unbelievably rushed, it's imperative to stay on top of your coursework, even if that means just getting your reading done. Because teachers are no longer holding your hand, you have to figure out how to prioritize and get everything done on your own. Having a calendar or schedule is incredibly helpful.

It's also important to make sure you understand everything as you go. If you don't get something definitely go into office hours or set up an appointment with your teaching

assistant. Otherwise you'll be in major problems when exam time comes; and that's when everyone else wants to meet with the TA also. Get ahead.

Panelist 2:

I really don't have any particular method for choosing courses. Basically, the journalism school gives us a chart that says what classes we have to take. So I have a general idea of what I have to take each quarter. From there, I typically consult with a few close friends to see what classes we might be able to take together or what classes seem the most interesting.

Overall, I've found it pretty easy to stay on top of everything, and the rules I think are just: just show up, pay attention, take notes and do the readings.

Panelist 3:

I'm taking Arabic, which is a priority for me, so I choose that class first and build the rest of my schedule around it, which can be done with any course that is part of a series. I look at which courses will fulfill my distribution requirements as well as which courses I need to fulfill my major requirements. I compile a list of about eight courses that I'm interested in and then narrow it down by time, professor, location, and course and teacher evaluations. I try to make sure it's evenly balanced, so I don't end up with four classes that all require extensive reading or paper-writing. The most important factor that I consider is my interest in the class followed by the time, but if I really want to take a course, I'll rearrange my schedule completely.

To be successful in your classes, go to class and pay attention. It isn't good enough to just show up, you have to actually listen to what the professor is saying and resist going on Facebook or checking your email or doing work for another class. It's simple, but effective. It's also really helpful to go to discussion sections, even if they are optional, or meet with your TA during their office hours. I find that meeting with a TA is most helpful when writing a paper because they are going to be the one reading and grading it. They can usually give you an idea if you're on the right track or completely missing the point. If anything, you can discuss the material and get a better sense of the direction you want to go with your paper. Meeting with your professor if you don't understand something or have questions is also a good idea especially before midterms and finals.

Panelist 4:

Because I am trying to graduate early while majoring in social policy, minoring in history, and completing courses for my teaching certification, the way that I plan out my course schedule each quarter is extremely meticulous. Once course listings for the upcoming quarter hit [Course Catalog], I find myself spending a decent amount of time

compiling a list of courses I find interesting. Once I create this master list, I begin to look at course descriptions - to see what subjects the class covers, the reading materials, and how the class is formatted - to start narrowing down the list. After considering the descriptions of the class, I scour course and teacher evaluations and truly begin to weed out the list. While all course and teacher evaluations must be taken with a grain of salt (for example, the professor for my South African history class had very mixed reviews and I absolutely loved it, even though it was difficult), I find that they are a huge factor in determining what classes stay and go on the list.

Being organized is a huge key in being successful in courses. I'd say you should keep a planner of important dates so you can see upcoming exams visually. Also, do the reading. Some classes, sure, you can get by without doing all of the reading, but I feel like you aren't fully utilizing a class to its potential when you don't. A way to make all of this reading seem more bearable is to break it down by the week. Smaller goals are easier to achieve and you are less likely to get discouraged.

Also, go to class. It seems like another no-brainer, but sometimes skipping class seems like the best or easiest option at the time. I highly recommend not doing this unless you have a really good reason - such as using that time more constructively. But really, go to class.

Panelist 6:

To plan out my courses, I try to write down all of my foreseeable obligations before picking classes. If I know that some days I will be busy with extra-curriculars, I try not to schedule much class for that day. I also try to schedule all my classes close together so that I won't go back to my room and sleep through a class or something.

As for being successful in my courses, office hours and tutoring are great tools for being successful. Doing homework problems without consulting the book or other people is also helpful for testing your understanding and knowledge of the topic.

Panelist 8:

Generally as an engineer I don't have too much choice. There are always around 3 required courses I need to take per quarter, which leaves me with one elective. However, engineers are also required to satisfy an elective concentration - which for the past two years dominated my schedule. So really I don't put too much thought into my schedule, it's generally already decided for me.

To be successful in your classes, be willing to devote a lot of time to your courses, no matter what department they are in, is generally a great idea if you want to do well. That,

and willing to be persistent with homework that might be difficult will help tons too. Generally, if it's a hard problem (like in a math course) chances are everyone else will think it is hard too. If you can figure it out you'll be in better shape for the midterm than everyone else.

5. How do you study for midterms and final exams? What are some challenges that you encounter?

Panelist 1:

Throughout the year, I found that the most helpful way to study for midterms and final exams was to re-read material. Though it may be lengthy and boring at times, I found that that was the best way to review material. Often, professors will ask obscure questions from the reading. If you re-read the material and get those questions right, you have a definite advantage over a lot of other students, many of whom didn't do the reading in the first place. That's definitely helpful in curved classes in particular.

I also like making study sheets of a list of all the major concepts I need to know for an exam. Then I can look over the sheet and test myself to make sure I know everything, and I can take it with me right up until the point of the exam.

One challenge is just not understanding something. It seems straightforward, but it really does help a lot to go to office hours for a professor or TA. So many people don't but it can really help you understand concepts, and the TAs can give you tips for the exam (what to study, how to study, etc.)

Panelist 2:

Usually I don't have a particular method for studying either, usually if I'm feeling pressured, I'll lock myself in my room and study alone for a good portion of the days leading up to exams. Otherwise, if you can manage it, study groups are can sometimes be helpful and productive.

Otherwise, the main challenge I face is usually just the lack of time. And chances are, you'll be in a similar crunch at some point. So the best advice I can give is to set aside chunks of about 25 minutes at a time, and for those 25 minutes, just focus on nothing but what you're studying. Don't answer your phone, don't answer the door, don't check Facebook. Just focus for 25 minutes at a time. And I've found those 25 minutes to be super productive, so studying goes by a lot more smoothly. It's probably the best studying technique I've learned.

Panelist 3:

I try to start reviewing the material a few days prior to the exam, making sure that all of the reading is done, going over my notes, and touching on everything mentioned on the study guide, if there is one provided. I go to the review session and multiple review sessions for Arabic. I ask questions during the review session or via email if I need further explanation. I meet with at least one other person in the class to discuss the material the day before the exam. The night before the exam, I try to go over as much as I can without depriving myself of too much sleep. As far as papers go, I try to finish an outline a few days in advance after going over the readings and class notes, and meet with a TA to go over the major points of the paper. After that, I'll write a rough draft and have a friend proofread it before making corrections and submitting the final paper.

Stress is the major problem I face while studying because I start to feel really overwhelmed by how much I have to get done in so little time. Whenever I become overwhelmed, I just relax and arrange everything I have to do in order starting with the most important. I try to set aside time for each thing leading up to the exams and just proceed through my list one by one instead of trying to do everything at once. In addition to this, I make sure that I take as many breaks as necessary while I'm studying and get an adequate amount of time to sleep. However, while I try to avoid pulling all-nighters, I usually end up pulling at least one during reading week.

Panelist 4:

It depends on the subject, honestly. I try to keep up on my readings, so that I don't have to hardcore cram at the end. Also, I think taking notes on readings is really valuable as you can just consult notes before exams instead of having to go back through the reading and overwhelming yourself, potentially. If practice tests are available, definitely use them! I have found that many professors who post their exams on [Online Class Center] really make sure that if you have been studying the old exams and preparing, you will perform better. Meaning, that the exams can be formulaic in structure and the distribution of subject matter on the exam tends to be the same.

Also, making streamlined versions of your readings or class notes is helpful! Just going back through all of the notes and constructing a master sheet can make the information easier to process. Also, just making this sheet is like studying, because you have to consider all of the information and actively think about it.

As for challenges, sometimes I feel that there is just simply too much information to cover in too little time. I find myself in a mountain of papers, notes, and textbooks in the library and it becomes a little much. At moments like that, I think the only thing that you can do to help yourself is to take yourself out of the moment for a bit and calm down to the best of your ability.

Additionally, do not make yourself a slave to your books. Give yourself time to do the things you love. Being miserable does not make for effective studying. Personally, I am a huge fan of watching a short episode of TV on Hulu.

Panelist 5:

The nature of midterms/finals varies widely between courses. Overall, I try to study progressively for two weeks prior to the exam. If it is a final paper and I know about the prompt early on in the quarter, I continuously revisit the prompt and keep it in mind with the hope of coming across something that will spark an idea for my paper. When it does, I do research and come paper-writing time, I have an immense pool of research to draw from.

In terms of challenges, the quarter system makes exams and papers pile on top of each other in a very short period of time. Managing them along with prior commitments to work, extracurriculars, etc. becomes difficult. However, if you try to get ahead from early-on in the quarter, make deadlines for yourself throughout (and keep to them), and utilize weekends to catch up on a week by week basis, it becomes manageable.

Panelist 6:

I usually attend study sessions led by professors and take notes. I then set aside topics that I do not understand and spend extra time brushing up on those topics. Then I go back and look at all the information on [Online Class Center] for the class and work to understand it all. Then I do practice tests. If there are things that I still do not understand, I ask other people in the class to explain it to me. I finish my studying with group review sessions and try to get a good night's sleep before the test.

Personally, preparing one sheet of information with all of the important facts, formulas and figures helps me organize the material for the exam. Many of my classes allowed me to use this sheet of information during the test as well. However, students shouldn't rely on this sheet of paper to get them through the test because exams that allow the notes usually test the application of those formulas and facts.

When preparing for some exams, I wait too late to get started studying and I end up having to cram in order to learn material that I missed during class instruction. I overcome this obstacle by reviewing information daily. It helps me to pinpoint subjects that I don't understand early on in the class.

Panelist 7:

In the past, I used to do practice exams over and over again, but I realized that it would obviously be more reasonable to fully understand the concepts from class instead. If the exam had a question that I did not understand how to answer, I could at least jot down a few ideas to get partial credit. I also like to come up with various mnemonic devices to help me remember, whether they are acronyms or short rhymes.

The problem with exams is that every class seems to have it around the same time, making it incredibly difficult to study for all of them in a sane manner. I try to study for the exams in the order that they are scheduled, and I give myself more time to study unfamiliar material. If I could help it, I would avoid cramming, but things do not always work out the way that I plan. I refuse to pull all-nighters. It is undeniably important to be alert during exams.

When I procrastinate and end up cramming, I sometimes become frustrated and overwhelmed by the amount of material that I have to study, so I would take small breaks to help myself move along.

Panelist 8:

I always try to have in my head what I have for the next 5 days or so in my classes. If I have a midterm, I'll try to get all of my other homework done so I can focus for a good 2-3 days on just studying for the midterm. Finals are particularly hard for engineers, simply because we don't have a reading week like everyone else. One time (Winter 2011) I had a final lecture for a class on the Friday of reading week, and the final at 9am on the following Monday – so time can definitely become an issue. So typically before reading week, I sit down and figure out what exams I have, and when they occur. Since finals generally cover all material from the quarter, I allow for around 4-5 days to study before the exam.

Besides allowing yourself enough time to properly study, I find that repetition really helps me. Such as going over a problem set more than one time, to make sure I really understand the concepts. Also, I remember in high school it would be fairly easy for me to remember almost every detail about what would be on a test. However in college, that's not realistic. Making sure I understand all of the main concepts covered in class is key.

One issue I often have is the sheer amount of work that builds up at the end of the quarter, and is seemingly always due on the same day. Needless to say, reading week is fairly busy getting all of those assignments done instead of studying for finals.

6. **What are some options that you are considering as a future career path? How did you come to recognize those options? What are the advantages/ disadvantages of the different paths you are considering?**

Panelist 1:

Right now, I'm really interesting in pursuing a career in marketing or PR. This summer, I've been an editorial intern at the [City Name] Business Journal. I've learned a lot about the business industry in [City Name] as well as handled press releases, allowing me to learn about the other side of things—media relations, communications, and PR. To me, it seems to be a flexible career path with a lot of different potential options that fit my skill set and interest. So those are definitely some positives. I suppose that a lot of PR firms look for experience as a prerequisite to get positions, so it may be difficult to get a first job.

Panelist 2:

My current post-college plans really aren't set in stone or anything. But my plan right now is to go to law school a few years after I graduate to study constitutional or media law or something like that. I really want to kind of combine my interests in law, journalism and politics. But as far as right after graduation, I'll most likely work for a magazine or newspaper for a few years.

I guess at first, I just assumed I would go to law school right after graduation. But this past year, I realized it would probably be a good idea to spend the time after I graduate to focus on gaining some work experience and perspective. So, before, I suppose I've always craved the stability and the structure of an academic environment. Because the idea of being out of school, without that structure and support, was really sort of intimidating. But lately I've realized I could really benefit from having a few years spent just sort of exploring.

But, like I said, eventually I'd like to go to law school at some point because I actually enjoy studying the law. And until then, I just sort of have to prepare for law school's disadvantages, which is pretty much the huge price tag that a law degree carries.

Panelist 3:

I am considering going into law, politics, or foreign affairs. I have always been interested in law and government, but my interest in foreign affairs stems from a more recent attraction to the Middle East. I am especially interested in relations between the United States and countries in the Middle East. The biggest advantage of going into law would be that it is probably the most secure option with a straightforward path to success, whereas politics is full of uncertainty and there is no guarantee that I get a position in foreign affairs. However the advantage of going into politics or foreign affairs would be my ability to work on issues at a larger scale, which would be unlikely if I were to go into law.

Panelist 4:

Currently, I see my career path as definitely coming in stages. It's really hard for me to guess what I might want to be doing in fifteen years, but I know that I would like to dedicate my life to the field of education, in particular public education reform. As of right now, I plan on being certified for English education after graduation from [University Name] and teaching for a few years. I feel like it would be impossible for me to make any important changes in education without being immersed in it and truly knowing what I am dealing with. After those years of teaching, I cannot really say. Some interests to me are administration or curriculum design, possibly working in guidance. Honestly, these options just kind of came out of the blue to me. At first, they started as just thoughts. But the more time I dedicated to these thoughts, the more I saw the potential of them and the more comfortable I felt about these thoughts becoming my reality. So, mainly these options came to me at first through introspection. Also, books written by teachers about their experiences in the field of education provided more valuable insight and pushed me towards education as a career.

Panelist 5:

Since high school I have been active in local politics, working with the State Representative, pushing an ordinance through local legislation, etc. so the law and government have been a long-time interest of mine and therefore graduate school for policy-related work seemed like a natural step post-undergrad. Through taking courses and being involved with various student groups, I realized that international affairs are of much interest to me. By pursuing a doctorate in international policy-related issues, working in academia is a possibility through this pursuit. However, the field is pretty limited- although growing- so it puts a lot of pressure on me to be the absolute best I can today to get into a prestigious grad school in order to attain a job in the long-term.

Panelist 6:

I am planning on going to law school to become an intellectual property attorney after completing my undergraduate degree. I have always wanted to be a lawyer because I feel like the critical thinking involved in performing the daily duties of practicing law would be fulfilling for me. In school I was always good at math and science, however. My teachers told me that I should look into engineering but I wanted to go into a more social field. So I tried to find a profession that incorporated both aspects. A huge advantage of my chosen career path is that it utilizes all my strengths and allows me to impact the future of technology. Another advantage of the way I am pursuing my career path is that if I ever decide against law, I have another solid profession to fall back on. A disadvantage of my career path is that engineering courses are quite difficult for me and it is likely that my grades will not be on par with other law school applicants and I may not get into the law school that I'd like to attend.

Panelist 7:

I am considering going into finance, accounting, or another related area after attending grad school. To be honest, I have not fully researched what I can do with a degree in economics. These career paths look straightforward, and they seem like they would provide a comfortable wage. A disadvantage, I suppose, would be the office environment in which I would need to work. Sitting in a cubicle all day does not sound appealing at all.

Panelist 8:

Right now I am in the process of applying to graduate school, so in all likelihood I will be moving onto more schooling after graduating from [University Name]. I came to the realization that going to graduate school would be a great option for me after being immersed in such an intellectually stimulating environment like [University Name], as well as being interested in some of the research that is occurring in chemical engineering labs. The advantage of going to grad school is obviously entering the work force with the ability to command a better job, and a higher salary usually comes with that. The big disadvantage is that you're in school for another 5 years.