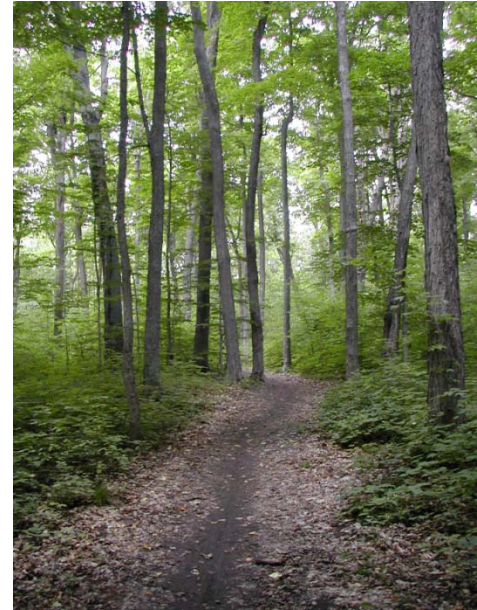


Meandering Pathways – Understanding the Effects of Changing Majors



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External Forces

- The CSU Graduation Initiative has provoked a wide range of enrollment management, retention, and graduation discussions at Humboldt.
(increase grad rate by 12% for all students, 15% for underrepresented by 2015)
- SBI 440 – Student Transfer Achievement Reform (STAR) – Simplified transfer of CC students to CSU with upper division standing.

Institutional Needs

- Understand major choice uncertainty effects on completion rates and time to degree – focus on undeclared students
- Project net major gains/losses to manage enrollment at program level. Goal is to achieve optimal and cost-effective program sizes
- Portray major change patterns in a way the University community can understand

Population and data conventions

- Fall cohorts of first-time freshmen Fall 1999 through Fall 2004 (allows 6 years for graduation) (n=4651)
- Of the 4651 in the combined cohorts, 2259 have graduated by Fall 2010 (48.6%).
- Major change only counted between different programs, not options within a major.
- Used Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) taxonomy for broad category groupings.
- Identified first year major changes and total major changes over career.

Is there an undeclared problem?

- Undeclared students fare similarly to declared majors

	N=	# graduated	Rate
Undeclared	988	411	41.6%
Declared	3663	1571	42.9%

Students who graduated in 6 years			
		Avg years	Avg units
Undeclared	411	5.0	141.1
Declared	1571	5.0	144.4

The Undeclared pathway

- 38% of declared first-time frosh eventually change majors, but only 13% of undeclared entrants change from the first major declared.
- Top destinations for undeclared entrants who graduate:

Destination Major	% of Undeclared who graduate
Business Administration	7.9%
Art	6.4%
Liberal Studies	6.2%
Psychology	5.5%
History	4.5%
Geog, English & Social Work	4% each

Starting intention and first year major changes

- Do declared students changing their major during their first year, behave the same as those starting undeclared?

	First year major change students				
	N=	Grad	Rate	Avg yrs	Avg units
Declared	586	304	52%	4.9	143.1
Undeclared	292	184	63%	4.9	143.5

- First year major changes seem to indicate deliberate planning – Are Undeclared majors getting better advising?

Effect of multiple major changes

- Used broad CIP categories to identify major changes to “remote” major.
- Students who change majors across CIP categories, add nearly a semester to their completion time.

# major changes	N=	Avg years	Avg units
0	885	5.1	145.9
1	1074	5.3	143.3
2	261	5.6	149.0
3+	39	5.8	152.0

Policies recently enacted (Fall 10)

- Students are not permitted to change majors after 90 units unless new major can be completed in less than 140 units.
- Students may declare a second major only if they have filed a major contract for each by the time 90 units are completed, and can graduate with both majors with less than 140 total units

Web Data Presentations

- The following web links are ongoing campus web reports that show major change activity.
- Major transitions OUT (source majors)
http://pine.humboldt.edu/anstud/reports/?mc_major
- Major transitions IN (destination majors)
http://pine.humboldt.edu/anstud/reports/?mc_maj_in
- Completion rates in original major
http://pine.humboldt.edu/anstud/reports/?mc_major_orig

Future changes or additions

- Examine second majors – There are common dual majors such as Biology/Zoology
- Further examine undeclared advising and outcomes for other first year major changes
- Separate degree completion data set from major change profiles – Provide more current major change activity
- Include Transfer Students – Transfers have different major change patterns, retention, and graduation rates
- Issues with disaggregation by sex and ethnicity

Additional web resources

- Link to data for this presentation:

http://www.humboldt.edu/~anstud/reports?mc_major

- Full-time first-time Frosh Graduation within 6 years by sex and origin

<http://www.humboldt.edu/~anstud/reports?regiongradFT>

- Full-time first-time Frosh Graduation within 6 years by sex and ethnicity

<http://www.humboldt.edu/~anstud/reports?ethgradFT>

Credits and Contact Info

- Special thanks to our graduate assistants James Clifton and Michael Le for their help with statistical analysis
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- Our web site is: www.humboldt.edu/irp