While it is difficult enough watching children struggle to find their life’s path, it can also be costly. With tuition averaging $13,833 a year at public universities, indecisiveness can drain college savings accounts as students restart course sequences or transfer schools — losing credits in the process. Ultimately they risk extending their college days beyond the four years parents planned to finance.

The key, according to Grupe, is helping students — preferably while still in high school — identify those areas of study best suited for them before the college tuition clock ever starts ticking.

"It’s important for students to have the information they need to make the best decisions about their future," said Jon Erickson, ACT president of education and career solutions. “They should be made aware that choosing a college major that reflects their interests will give them a better chance of succeeding and could also contribute to their satisfaction and happiness in school and on the job."

Previous ACT research has suggested that students whose interests are similar to those of people in their chosen college majors are more likely to remain in their major, persist in college and complete their degree in a timely manner. Students who change their major while in college may have to take additional courses to satisfy degree requirements or even transfer to a different institution, potentially delaying their graduation.

BUT WAIT
—are majors really that important?

Yale’s Dean of Undergraduate admissions, Jeff Brenzel, says that majors really aren’t THAT important - they just provide “bookends” to your college education, a framework to work within. He does acknowledge, however, that more technical majors like engineering require that you commit within that sphere to have access to the higher level classes you would need to have a good experience. Additionally, as nice as exploratory learning sounds, the reality remains that college is incredibly expensive and financing semesters of subject exploration isn’t feasible for most families. The education system, as it stands, requires that its students commit to a framework of classes in order to achieve higher level learning within university academia, thus students must choose.

“80% of college-bound students have yet to choose a major, yet are still expected to pick schools, apply to and start degrees all without knowing where they might end up. It’s no wonder 50% of those who declare a major change it, sometimes 2 or more times.”

- Dr. Fritz Grupe, founder of MyMajors.com

http://www.nbcnews.com/id/10154383/ns/business-personal_finance/t/college-freshmen-face-major-dilemma/#.VqDWu5MrKfU

http://www.act.org/newsroom/many-students-select-a-college-major-that-doesn%E2%80%99t-fit-their-interests-well/

https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/explore-careers/college-majors
In person mentorship is a strong factor: college ambassador, tour guide, family friend, peer gives insight into an interesting major

How to harness this?
- Provide interviews of students across majors, honest about their experience and what they hope to do with their major
- Succinct but engaging descriptions of what a major entails, how to make it less textual?

What can help students make more informed decisions about the major they choose?
- Social Media: meet teenagers where they share and learn information and life events
- Quizzes to summarize interests in a digestible manner so they can make further decisions

How to engage a generation that does most of their research online?
- Crowd-source reviews on majors -- a college education is like an investment, why not treat majors like a product?

What do students need?
- A human element to breathe life into the 12pt Arial list of majors on so many websites/tests they come across
- to feel well-informed, like they have all the cards they need to make a good play
- to be excited about their decision, feel like it fits them
**High School Students**

**What are the emotions that reflect your experience of choosing a major?**

- excited
- stressful
- nerve-racking
- indecisive
- frustrating
- nervous
- upset
- confused
- challenging
- hard

**How could the process be made easier?**

- "Talking to people who have graduated with these majors."
- "Exposure to majors in school rather than leaving it up to students to figuring out more."
- "Have people from different majors come in and speak to us about their day and how they go about life in college."

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**High School Faculty**

- "I think if there are holes [in their college preparedness], it's the students' lack of going and using the resources that they've been given."
  - JENNIFER SMITH, CURRICULUM COORDINATOR

- "Now, those [resources] are available to students, but do they use them? No. Have we talked to them about it? Yes. But again, we're talking about high schoolers. Even our seniors might have an idea of what they think they want to go into, but it's still this kind of foreign concept to them. So, I think our population of students isn't using those resources as much as we would like them to because it isn't meaningful to them yet."
  - KELLY BRUN, GUIDANCE COUNSELOR

- "I think they choose career paths based upon what they're knowledgeable about. Like what their parents do and what their friends' parents do and what careers they've been exposed to."
  - KELLY BRUN, GUIDANCE COUNSELOR
PROCESS // System Development

**Web Interface**
- major promo videos/student interviews
- larger rate-my-major type of review system
- quiz/question system to help determine interests of students to narrow information
- data visualization to help students understand their interests visually
[Will personally choose 10 majors to outline through promo/interviews as sample material]

**Social Media**
- Facebook/Twitter: Utilize for students to share interesting majors they find
- Instagram/Snapchat: short videos that promote specific majors

**Brand System**
- logo, application across web, social media, promotional content

**Promotional Collateral**
- For high school guidance counselors to encourage kids to use as a resource (like College Board) -- posters
- "customization" -- when students choose a major when applying to college after using this resource they can get a customized sticker or something to promote the major they chose, rather than having to wait to promote a school (different identity to stand behind than students are usually given)
my major powers my passion.
Major’s brand is youthful, trustworthy, and engaging.

The dashed underlines represent the choice students have to make in choosing their major - though it isn't necessarily a final choice, it is something that must be written in while in college.
Use of engaging language and vibrant photography gives voice and image to Major's brand. The dashed underline motif enables an interchangeable space of words used in advertising and interviews.

Bottom: Dynamic web advertisement stills; Right: Advertising and interview footage
Once a student is ready to actively find a major, they can be directed to the website through social media, friends, teachers, or another college-related website. The Major’s website is centered around interviews with current students. This mirrors the experience students receive while touring a college and talking to an ambassador - the chance to get a brief overview of the major and its experience, in addition to more in depth questions that students may pursue if they so choose. The combination of personalized videos and broader reviews to educate students towards an ideal program selection allows students to move forward confidently with their choice in major and start applying.
Final / Website

Great Design Program

Great Design Program

Great Design Program

Fun but now I'm poor

Nuclear Engineering

Nuclear Engineering

Nuclear Engineering

Choose a visualization mode, input a major and university, and find the best program for your passion.

Choose a visualization mode, input a major and university, and find the best program for your passion.

Choose a visualization mode, input a major and university, and find the best program for your passion.

Compare major satisfaction visually.

Choose a visualization mode, input a major and university, and find the best program for your passion.
One of Major’s primary channels into a prospective college student’s radar is through social media, where the internalization of mass amounts of information is comfortable.

Once a user stumbles upon Major through Instagram, Facebook, or Twitter, they can follow to see videos, blog posts, and images that passively educate about different majors (A). This helps the user become more comfortable with a wide range of programs as time passes by, and prepares them to delve deeper once they are ready to actively pursue finding a major.

A key element of Major’s social media is the daily Major Baton (B), where current college students have control over the account for the day and share what their daily activities are like in their majors. This gives high school students the ability to “shadow” several different college students throughout each week in order to become educated about what each major entails.
Static web advertisement featuring an interviewee that utilizes the casual but engaging tone of Major’s brand.

The nitty gritty beautiful scary exciting complicated passionate honest to a fault details about each major — so you can choose yours.
GRIFFEN
Anthropology, UNC Chapel Hill
Sample clips

KRISTIE
Nuclear Engineering, NC State University
Sample clips, advertisements

THOM
Industrial Design, NC State University
Full sample Major in a Minute interview, sample clips
Final Video Script:

Deciding on a college major can be an intimidating and often confusing challenge for prospective college students. There are several resources available that discuss a broad concept of what each major entails, laid out in crisp paragraphs of academic prose, but what about the experience?

The shiny gloss of a neat 12 pt Arial major title is quickly dispelled by the realities of late nights and hours of tedious coursework. Prospective college students rely too often upon the connotation of a major or just what the people in their lives have exposed them to rather than the true breadth of possibilities available to college students today. Consequently, fifty percent of college students change their major at least once, often leading to extended years in college and higher student debt.

Major strives to educate prospective college students about their options in an honest, relatable, and understandable way. This is achieved through video and textual testimonies of current college students provided on a website and social media. College students’ honest accounts of the beautiful and ugly facets of their degree program can provide a window into prospective students’ wishes for a major.

Through these candid reviews and interviews, prospective students can be inspired and informed through the passions and experience of students to precede them. To engage high school students initially, Major’s strong social media presence allows students to follow and get a steady stream of videos, blog posts, and bite-size info about different majors until they are prepared to actively find a major that fits their passions.

Students can use Major’s website to search via subject matter or start by watching interviews. Related majors are suggested as Major learns what fields the student is interested in. This allows the student to start exploring what majors they’re familiar with and branch out from there.

A more expansive view of majors can be viewed in the reviews section, where college students across the nation submit their experiences of their specific degree program within a greater university. This is useful for prospective students who are deciding between multiple colleges for one major, and need insight into which university’s program is best.

Programs that hold interest for students can be saved in order to share with friends, teachers, or parents. This helps the student’s community join him or her on the journey towards choosing the best college major for that student’s passions, talents, and career goals.
**FINAL // System Concept**

**SOCIAL MEDIA**
- **Instagram**
  - Major Baton
  - college students take over Major Instagram account to share their activities as "x" major; provides a window into daily college life for high school followers
- **Facebook**
  - Major Promos
  - short 15-30 second videos that give a snapshot into a specific major; passive education of users
- **Twitter**
  - Share discoveries/insights
  - share findings with friends and family to garner support throughout major exploration process

**WEBSITE**
- **Reviews**
  - filter based on major/college program
  - 3-4 minute overview
  - in-depth dive
- **Interviews**
  - in-depth accounts of experiences
- **Blog**
  - Visualization
  - more majors are suggested based on system learning user preferences.