

PLANNING A DEPARTMENTAL VISIT

Departmental visits can be an invaluable asset in choosing a major. Undergraduate Major Advisors (UMA) in the department can tell you much more about the department than what you will find in the bulletin. They are especially valuable resources in helping you to evaluate whether the department would be a good match for your academic interests and abilities.

The following tips have been suggested by other students and by advisors:

Don't Be Anxious

Believe it or not, departmental visits can be fun. Most faculty and staff enjoy talking about their programs. On your visit, you will be gathering information that will help you make a wise academic decision. Department staff are aware of this and are comfortable talking to students who are beginning to explore majors as they are with students close to declaring majors in their programs. Visiting a UMA in no way obligates you to declare a major in that department. Many students visit several departments before making a decision about declaring a major.

Make An Appointment

Call ahead to make an appointment. Not all departments are staffed to advise students on a walk-in basis. Call ahead to find out the office hours of the UMA. When speaking with departmental staff, a good opening line would be, "I'm thinking about majoring in _____ and I would like to talk to the person who speaks with prospective majors. Could you tell me how I could make an appointment with that person?"

Be Prepared

Prepare for the appointment. You will feel most comfortable in the appointment if you are well prepared. Make sure that you review the information about the major that is in the General Catalog. When making the appointment, ask if there are other written materials that you could pick up or print out from the department's website. Many departments have handouts or handbooks that elaborate on the information that is in the General Catalog. Departments do not have access to all of your records so bring a copy of your transcripts and/or transfer evaluation to the appointment. Advisers can help you more if they know about your academic progress. An adviser will need to know about the course(s) you have taken and your grades.

Do It Soon

Make an appointment as quickly as possible. It is important not to procrastinate in making an appointment because in some cases, you may need to talk with several people before all of your questions can be answered. In addition, you may need to attend a group meeting before seeing a UMA individually. Lastly, there is a chance that you may need to wait a couple of weeks before you can meet with someone.