February 3, 2009

Dear Class of 2011,

Declaring your major is an exciting time in the sophomore year. Faculty regulations require that Wesleyan sophomores declare a major in a department or program in order to be eligible for promotion to the junior year. To receive major preference in the next Planning, Scheduling, and Adjustment period (April 3-21), you must have an approved major by Friday, March 6. This letter contains important information that will help you navigate your way to major declaration, so keep reading!

Although departments and programs vary slightly in the process by which students are accepted into the major, the following steps are applicable to all of you:

- Visit the Major Declaration Website (www.wesleyan.edu/deans/major_declaration/) for helpful links and information.
- Familiarize yourself with department and program major requirements by reviewing the description in WesMaps and on the department or program’s website, which also can be accessed from the major declaration homepage.
- Consult with a member of the faculty in the department or program in which you hope to major. If you are not sure to whom you should speak, see the list of chairs and advising experts on the major declaration website. You also can consult with the departmental administrative assistant (AA). AAs are knowledgeable and can be very helpful.
- Attend the Open House of the major(s) you are considering. Many departments and programs have scheduled Open Houses between February 11 and February 27. Faculty members will be available to answer your questions and address concerns you have about major requirements, and other issues. Click here for a schedule of these Open Houses (listed by major). Also, the schedule will be posted on the major declaration website and on the Class of 2011 blog.

Declaring majors will now be handled directly through the Student EPortfolio. Beginning on Wednesday, February 18, students will be able to submit electronic major requests to the appropriate departments/programs within EP>Student>Wesleyan Career>Major Declaration (Click Here). Please note that students may still be required to submit additional application information and/or meet in person with department officials. Also, please be aware that submitting a major request allows that department/program access to review the Student Academic History. An important feature of the new online submission system is the Pre-Major Advising Survey. Upon the first declared major, students will be prompted to submit feedback regarding their advising experiences. These confidential answers will later be available to the advisor as a tool to further enhance their advising methods.

You will have successfully declared a major when the department chair or a designated faculty member approves your Major Acceptance completed via your e-portfolio. To determine who your major advisor will be, you should talk with the department chair and/or administrative assistant. Individual departments and programs have different procedures for helping you identify an advisor. Your major advisor will help you design a major program of study and select courses in April for the fall semester.

If you are unable to declare your major by the Friday, March 6 deadline because you are currently completing a prerequisite course, you must complete a Major Deferral form so that the Deans’ Office
knows that your entry into a major is in progress. You also must be in touch with the department or program chair about your intent to declare that major so they are aware of your situation. Individual departments and programs will have different policies regarding declaring a major while a prerequisite course is in progress.

**IMPORTANT – KEEP READING!**

Some of you may be feeling anxious or unsure about making the major declaration deadline in early March. Common concerns I have heard from sophomores in recent weeks include the following:

- *I don’t have the entry requirements for the major I want! What will happen to me if I don’t have a major by March 6?*
- *I have changed my mind about my major and now have to start from the beginning. Will I be too far behind to graduate in ’11?*
- *I still haven’t decided on a major and I have no idea how to figure out what I should do! Can I get an extension?*
- *I know what I want to major in, but now I’m worrying about whether it’s the best choice if I want to go to grad school or get on the right career track.*

If any of these situations sound familiar, please come to my office so that we can get a handle on your particular situation and work out a plan of action that will get you to where you want to be. While choosing a major is an important landmark in your college career, it is not a decision that will affect all aspects of your future in a profound and irreversible way. That may sound like heresy, but it is true. This is not to say that your major is irrelevant or insignificant, but it is important to know that there are many myths surrounding one’s choice of a major. Often, these myths—for example, that only certain majors lead to certain careers—create a lot of the anxiety and stress some of you may be facing right now.

Please come to my drop-in hours (listed below) or make an appointment (x2774) if you would like to discuss your concerns or plans. You also should discuss any concerns you have with your faculty advisor, departmental and program advising experts, and any other professor or resource person who you think might have some good advice. In addition, refer to the sidebar for a list of resources that includes group sessions, workshops, offices, and websites that should be helpful to you as you plot the course of your remaining semesters at Wesleyan.

All the best for a fabulous semester!

Sincerely,

Noel R. Garrett, Ph.D.
Dean for the Class of 2011
[Email me](mailto:ngarrett@wesleyan.edu)

**Drop-In Hours**

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