It’s perfectly normal to be experiencing a wide range of emotions during your sophomore year. You may be anxious about selecting a major yet excited about all the possibilities your future may bring. Your feelings may have to do with both your short-term and long-term goals, such as what you’re going to major in, what you should do with the rest of your life, and who your true friends are. As a result, your sophomore year will have mountain top as well as valley experiences.

In addition to your coursework and choosing (and keeping) a major, you are probably interested in getting involved on campus and making life-long friends. You may be wondering how you’re going to manage your homework as well as a part-time job, extra-curricular activities, and time for friends.

The Sophomore Connection will answer many of these questions as well as provide a lot of information about resources on campus, important events that are coming up, and opportunities for involvement.

Your sophomore year is a special year. The newness and excitement of your first year is gone and new challenges have come your way as a sophomore. MSU wants to help you find your place in the university community. Our hope is that you stay active this year by getting involved but also asking for help when you need it.

Carpe Diem is a Latin phrase that I love, which means to “seize the day”. Now enjoy, make use of, and seize all the opportunities MSU offers you!

MSU is thrilled you are here. May your year be filled with success and joy!

What is the “Sophomore Slump”?

Research suggests that during the sophomore year, students may experience a period of confusion and uncertainty (Furr & Gannaway, 1982). There is a whole new set of stressors sophomores experience when they return to college. Unlike freshmen, they receive less attention about college life and expectations about how things work. Combined with the push to declare a major, find an internship, and decide whether or not to study abroad leads sophomores to fall into the “sophomore slump”. Continued on page 2
There are three general areas that cause sophomores the most stress.

1. **Academics**
   - Pressure to choose a major
   - Taking upper-level classes with juniors and seniors who may have formed closer relationships with professors.

2. **Personal**
   - Uncertainty about the direction of their life
   - Feeling guilty about the time and money gone into college when they are uncertain about the direction of their life.
   - Changing and challenging of previously held family values

3. **Relationships**
   - Desire for intimacy increases
   - Friendship ties at home decrease
   - Not wanting to go home on breaks
   - Desire for life-long friends and sense of belongingness

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Do you want to know if you are experiencing the “Sophomore Slump”?

Do you find yourself wondering any of the following?

1. What am I doing here at MSU?
2. Why do I have more questions now than when I first got here?
3. Who are these people I hang around with that I thought were my friends?
4. Why am I majoring in this, even if I don’t like it?
5. Why am I constantly overwhelmed?
6. Why do I see only negatives in my life?
7. Why can’t I find time to relax?
8. Why am I so uncertain about my future?
9. Why am I not having as much fun as last year?
10. Why am I ready to cry if the smallest thing goes wrong?
11. Why do I feel like my parents are constantly pressuring me to know what I want to do with my life?
12. Does everyone have this all figured out but me?
13. Why am I so unmotivated and/or anxious?

If you find yourself answering **yes** to **three** or more of these questions, you could be suffering from the “Sophomore Slump”.

**Now what?** If you think that you might be experiencing the Sophomore Slump, there are many things you can do to cope such as taking care of your body physically by exercising and eating right as well as seeking out help when you need it. Evaluate how you are spending your time and make adjustments if you are stretching yourself out too thin.

MSU has many resources available to you to help you deal with stress, managing money, selecting your major, and getting involved. If you don’t know where to begin, contact Katelyn Romsa, the new Sophomore Initiatives Coordinator at MSU. Call the office of First Year Experience at 389-5498 or email Katelyn.romsa@mnsu.edu.

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Many students think of the office of First Year Experience (FYE) is an office _only_ for freshmen when actually that is not the case. Rather, the Office of FYE offers resources for freshmen, sophomores, and transfer students. When students are undeclared, FYE assists them with academic advising. Katelyn Romsa, the new Interim Sophomore Initiatives Coordinator, assists sophomores with defining their career paths as well as finding ways to overcome the sophomore slump. Katelyn will also be creating programs specifically designed for sophomores.

Check out the new sophomore website to access resources that pertain to your unique needs at [www.mnsu.edu/fye/sophomores](http://www.mnsu.edu/fye/sophomores).

She looks forward to working with you!
Career Timeline

Are you feeling stuck about what you should be doing to stay on track to graduate on time and to have a successful career path. Gretchen Stahl, Acting Career Exploration Coordinator of the Career Development Center (CDC), has created this timeline for all students at MSU. As sophomores, you most likely fall in steps 1 and 2 with a goal of nearing step 3 sometime soon. Use this as a guide to assist you with your career planning.

Step 1: Assess
Learning about yourself by discovering your interests, skills, and values and how they relate to the world of work.

- Take an interest inventory from the Career Development Center and meet with one of the counselors to discuss results
- Consider taking a FYEX 100 class or enrolling in CSP 110, Decision Making for Career and Life
- Get to know your academic advisor
- Read the Handbook for Students Choosing or Changing Their Major, available in the Career Development Center

Get involved with campus activities or organizations
- Identify possible major and career fields
- Obtain a strong GPA
- Enroll in classes that fulfill general education courses but also potential majors

Step 2: Explore
Gathering information about occupations and relating information from self-assessment to possible career and major options.

- Research majors and careers in the Career Resource Library located in WA 209
- Consider the possibility of study abroad, visit the International Programs Office in CSU250 for info
- Continue to explore interests, values, abilities and lifestyle preferences
- Use the Maverick Mentor Network on www.mavjobs.com to connect with alumni and professionals in your field of interest
- Maintain a strong GPA
- Talk to faculty or advisors in your major to learn about potential career opportunities
- Use What Can I Do with a Major In? to identify possible careers within your major

Step 3: Focus
Narrowing and prioritizing career options. Identifying education/training/employment options

- Gain experience through part time jobs or internships, you can use mavjobs.com to browse job postings
- Take a leadership role in a campus organization
- Research graduate and professional schools and their requirements
- Prepare and take tests required for admissions, the Counseling Center offers many graduate admissions testing opportunities
- Draft a resume and cover letter. Use the Job Search Handbook available in the Career Development Center
- Consider adding a minor or another major that relates to coursework you are already taking
- Fill out any required graduation documentation 1 year before desired graduation date

Step 4: Implement
Carrying through on your plan of action. Entering the world of work or graduate/professional school

- Register for and attend career or job fairs where you can network and participate in the interview process
- Utilize the CDC’s Perfect Interview program, where you can practice your interview skills.
- Upload your resume into mavjobs.com and make it available for employers to review
- Attend one of the CDC’s job search workshops
- Complete graduate and professional school application process
- Consider attending an on campus recruiting info or interview session.

A complete viewing of this may be found at http://www.mnsu.edu/cdc/students/career/careersuccessguide.html#second

WELCOME TO THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER
**2009-2010 Residence Hall Room Selection**

**When can I sign up?**

For sophomores currently living on campus, class status at MSU this semester determines eligibility. Rooms may be chosen at the Department of Residential Life Office, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. from Monday, Nov. 3 - Friday, Nov. 7.

To secure your space, bring a picture ID and your $250 prepayment when you sign up. We will apply your prepayment to your 2009-2010 fall semester room and board charges. You can pay with cash, check, money order, or credit card.

See the Res Life website at [http://www.mnsu.edu/reslife/index.html](http://www.mnsu.edu/reslife/index.html) or call 507-389-1011 for more information.

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**A Class Just For Sophomores!**

*Are you a Sophomore who has any of the following characteristics?*

- Undeclared and need help with choosing a major
- Open to exploring major options
- Want to declare a major by the end of spring semester
- Would like to get involved on campus
- Would like to develop relationships with other sophomores on campus

If you need some direction, then **CSP 110, Decision Making for Career and Life**, is just for you! A specific section will be created *only* for sophomores. The class will meet Mondays and Wednesdays from 9:30-10:50 in Gage 45. Be sure to register for the section taught by Katelyn Romsa.

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**Leadership Opportunities at FYE**

In January, the Office of First Year Experience will be accepting applications for Learning Community Coordinators (LCCs). These are student staff who live in the Residence Halls and work with students involved in a Learning Community.

**Responsibilities:**

LCCs are responsible for providing academic support by being available to students, planning study groups, and making referrals to campus resources. They also help connect students to faculty and staff on campus. They are expected to create a fun, socially supportive and welcoming environment for students to be a part of. LCCs are required to live on campus, and are paid for their time. LCCs receive a single room, but pay the amount they would pay if they had a roommate (when available). Enthusiastic, dedicated students with solid communication skills are encouraged to apply!

Stop by the Office of FYE (Gage 10) or check out [www.mnsu.edu/fye/communities](http://www.mnsu.edu/fye/communities) for more information.

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**FYE- Orientation Programs Wants to Hire You!**

The Office of FYE seeks to employ undergraduate students who are committed to assisting new and transfer students with their transition to MSU. The orientation positions require students to serve as positive role models, mentors, discussion leaders, tour guides, educators, and/or class registration advisors. Summer orientation positions require students to be available from the middle of May through the end of July and periodically throughout the 2009-2010 academic year.

**Applications for summer orientation staff positions will be available starting January 12, 2009!!!**

Stop by the office of FYE (Gage 10) or check the website ([http://www.mnsu.edu/fye/resources.html](http://www.mnsu.edu/fye/resources.html)) for more information.

**Potential benefits include:**

- Earn up to $3500.00; Free housing during the summer orientation programs; Free meals during the orientation programs; Earn university credit

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**“Enthusiastic, dedicated students with solid communication skills are encouraged to apply!”**
SOPHOMORES

Target Your Major

Did you know that registration for Sophomores begins November 18th? Are you a sophomore who has still not selected or declared a major? Have you declared a major but want to change majors? Do you feel anxious about what classes to register for?

If you have some or all of these concerns, then the office of First Year Experience and Residential Life would like to help you “target your major”.

**Target Your Major** is a pre-registration workshop for all sophomores (choosers and changers and undeclared)

**Where?** Julia Sears (main entrance)

**When?** Wednesday, November 12th from 12:00-2:00 p.m.

Bring your questions, and we’ll help you find answers!

Free popcorn!

Questions or concerns?
Call 507-389-5498 or e-mail Katelyn.romsa@mnsu.edu

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Study Abroad

by Stanislav Matusevschi

I think my exchange semester at Krems, Austria, will not only benefit me in terms of my career and resume, but also for a lifetime. Integration in the environment isn’t easy, and also depends on one’s personality, but what is great, is that people working at FH Krems make it easy and exciting for us, international students, to get to know each other and feel more comfortable. When I got here, during the orientation (which was great) we had two excursions.

"My exchange semester at Krems, Austria, will not only benefit me in terms of my career and resume, but also for a lifetime."

One to Durnstein, a village nearby, and the other to Sonbrunn palace in Vienna. I’ve enjoyed both, especially the one to Durnstein. Its landscape and beautiful ancient architecture took my breath away.

Also, the learning environment is different, so you have to adapt. But I believe that one’s strengths are discovered through resistance, so I strongly believe that exchange program strengthens us, students, from within.

Apart from studying, I would point out great Austrian cuisine. That schnitzel and sandwich with raw fish just can’t get out of my head. The architecture. I would say that Austria is a must see place for its beautiful architecture.

I strongly recommend Mankato students taking an exchange semester. It works great for me, and I am confident, it will work for you!

Kind regards,

Stanislav Matusevschi

If you are interested in studying abroad contact the Kearney International Center 250 Centennial Student Union 507-389-6669