

If you're in a place where you're feeling a little bit stuck around academic major selection. Maybe you're thinking about changing academic majors. Maybe you're even contemplating about your future. I hope today we can get you from being in this stuck place to gaining a little bit of traction towards making some solid decisions for yourself. So, let's see what that looks like. And what we're going to do today is we're going to have you explore identity and some of your interests and talk about connecting this to academic majors. So very quickly just to let you know my background, this is a lot. Ignore it. Simply to say, I've already told you I am a professor on campus, I teach in the college student personnel administration graduate program. What that means is you probably know a lot of my students because I educate and prepare students to work in student affairs in higher education positions on campus. So, if you live in the rest hall, one of those RC's you run into is one of my students. And as you go into different functional areas on campus, you'll run into my students. My background as a researcher and in practice is as a career counselor. I'm a licensed mental health counselor with a specialty in career. And that is my major focus. And so, I bring that with me today to help you try and take some of these pieces we'll be talking about and connect those to some steps towards these decisions you're making about I academic majors. So, what we know about college students, for those students who have not declared an academic major, they have less of a propensity to persist to their second semester or maybe even their second year. When we purpose, we need a goal. We need to know where we're driving our cars and what the destination is, okay? And so also there's pressure not only on students, but there's pressure on the institution. And that's why they keep telling you, you got to declare major. You got to declare major, right? And this is because federal law requires students, any students who receive federal student aid to declare academic major. Now they say within a reasonable amount of time, and the institution determines that reasonable amount of time. For UCA, that's 27 credit hours. So, if you have it declared a major yet, by the time you get to 27 academic credit hours, then UCA is in your academic advisor is going to be having this conversation with you and putting even a little more pressure on you. So, what are you to do if you're still trying to figure this out? There're so many choices, right? And so, what we hope again today to do is to help you begin thinking about who you are as a person and how you can connect some of those things to a possible academic major selection. Now, I do want to remind you have access to UCA's Career Services. And perhaps you've been and you've met with someone there and you talked with someone. Maybe you've even taken the career planning assessment tool, which is called the Focus 2. You can actually do this online. So, if you haven't done it yet, I would encourage you to do this first. It's a nice beginning to being able to add these other pieces we will discuss today. And so, if you go to career services or if you contact them, you can ask questions about this and other services they have available. If you go to their website, you will find access to the Focus 2. And again, you have to be an enrolled student and you can do that online. So that's where you would begin and they can help you to understand the results of your Focus 2. What it's going to do is, as you work your way through the prompts and through the questions, of that Focus 2. It's going to sort your answer into six categories if you will. Now this is based on the work of John Holland, who was a theorist. And way back in the fifties, long before we were thought about, he developed a theory indicating from his observations that we all, as human beings have basically a personality type. We can categorize them into six categories. He also said, interestingly enough, if we look at the world of work, we look at the available occupations. We can do the same. We can categorize those into six different categories. So, I have those here. And you see how those work. Your results from your Focus 2 are going to give you a three, sometimes a two-letter, but most often a three-letter code, what we call your RIASEC Code. RIASEC simply stands for the first letter of each of these items around the hexagon. Realistic, investigated, artistic, social,

enterprising, and conventional. Someone at the Career Services Office can then help you take that three-letter code, understand what that means in the context of your results. And they should also be able to connect you to additional resources. So, our purpose today is not to really talk about the Focus 2. Because again, that's something you do separate from this. But that will come into play when you begin in adding the other pieces we're going to talk about. What we know from this, even though Holland theorized way back in the fifties this idea around personality types and work environments within these six categories. Even over the decades and his career theorist and researchers have tested his model. It's held true through the decades, even as occupations and the world of work changes. And so that kind of brings us to this place as to how a career practitioner or career counselor might have worked with you in the past and then thinking about the future. So basically, when you get your RIASEC, your Focus 2 results, you'll see your personality type will fit within three. It actually fits within all those categories, but three will be stronger than the others. And that will match you with the compatible work environment and academic major. So, for instance, if you're really strong in the investigative category, then it's probably going to make some suggestions for you around the hard sciences, biology, maybe the medical field, things that would fall within some of the standard categories. Likewise, if you test really strong and social, it's probably going to suggest you look into work environments and occupations around helping others, whether it's nursing or teaching or counseling, that sort of thing. And the idea behind that is, if we can take your personality types as tested, match those to a compatible work environment, you're going to have a successful and satisfying career. What we know though, is we're working under a new career paradigm. We know that there has been lots of changes in the structure work over the decades. You experience this every day, your generation more so than the older generations with this idea of how technology and globalization has come into play. And we jump online and we can be anywhere in the world and we can work from anywhere in the world. And also, what we know, instead of trying to place you are match you to an occupation. We know that people are more interested too in a personalized meaning, meaningful work. So, I want to know what I do matters to others, and matters to me. And when we look at quality of life more, what we know also is back when maybe your parents, especially maybe your grandparents, great grandparents in the world of work, their employers took care of them, supported them, kind of managed their career, set up a pension. So, when they retired, the company continued to pay them a pension. Things have changed that now companies will offer maybe a 401K but you still have to be in charge of managing that and you also have to be managing your other retirement options in your savings and different pieces that come together that puts the responsibility on you for managing that. And what we know from research is often people don't do a good job of that. And part of that is struggling to find an environment where we want to work that is satisfying and meaningful. Another piece of this new career paradigm is this continual need to update our skills. To again, your grandparents, great grandparents, when they went to work, maybe worked in a job for 30, 40, 50 years might have done the same thing all these decades. Might have been promoted along the way, but their skill set was essentially the same. Now we have to know so much more. So, I'm a professor, I teach in a college setting, but I also have to know technological things. And I'm not a technology driven person, that's not what I studied. But we know we have to reach across those spectrums to be able to have skill sets that will, that will span across various work environments. And so also there's this idea of a constant competition for positions because as you and others in the workforce hone your skills, increase your skill set. There's a continual competition for the positions that are available. So, from a traditional standpoint, meaning before we started recognizing these different ways in which people wanted to think about career, not careers. A separate thing. We'd go to the career as to part of our life. So, you're

a student, you might be working a part-time job eventually you might be in a relationship with someone and maybe you and your significant other decide to have a family and you're both working. And so, it's more about creating the life you want rather than what career do I want. It's more about creating that life and how career fits into that life. So, we move from this place of me working with everyone in the room to try and get you from an undecided position about your academic major to a decided position. Alright, that's not my goal today. And if I were working with you as an advisor or in a career counseling environment, that would not be my goal with you is to get you from undecided to decided. And I'll explain that a little more in a little bit because I wouldn't want to help you to identify the right career. Because what we know is over the lifespan. We change jobs approximately 12 times on average over our life span, and we actually change careers about 5-6 times. Some of us, I am in my fourth or fifth career right now. And it's a matter of shifting from what we're doing in utilizing our skill set in different environments. And so, it's not necessarily what you want to be. So how many of you, right? Think about this when you were kids, and even now maybe you still have well-meaning relatives. Well, what do you want to be? What do you want to be when you grow up? What do you want to be right now? And I contend we're asking the wrong question because it's not really helping you. It gets you focused on being a particular occupation versus creating this life you want to have. And so, in the past, we might help you minimize your career struggles and help you make definitive career choices. But now what we know in a more contemporary work force setting and work force environment, it's, it's more about identity and self-concept. So instead of asking yourself, what do I want to do, ask yourself, who am I? What might I do with my life? All right, those are the two things I want you to ponder throughout this presentation. And then as you leave, I'll say, who am I? Who do I want to be? What might I do with my life? Because we know career choice is more fluid. We live in a very unpredictable work world now that, I mean, look at Covid. I mean, that's an exaggerated example because we have a pandemic come around maybe once every 100 years. But look how it's impacted all of us in the way we function day-to-day. But there is more uncertainty in employment, even without a pandemic. There's greater opportunity and expectancy around career change, job change. And so, it lessens that possibility of career certainty. So, my concern in working with you as career counselor is helping you to think about the type of life you want to create and then increasing your adaptability skill set so that when change does occur, it's less challenging for you. So, here's what we're going to do and here's why I wanted you to have a piece of paper, whether you pulled up a document on your computer or perhaps you've got a scrap piece of paper there. I am interested in, not only if I were working with you, seeing what your Focus 2 results were, because that's a nice foundation from which to begin. But I'm also interested in hearing your story. And so, I would engage in a five-question interview with you of sorts. And I would ask you specific questions. Now we don't have time for the full version. That's, that would take us a couple hours to be able to facilitate that workshop. But what I've done is I've pulled out two critical pieces. That one will have you think about your identity and the dimensions of your identity and two, your interest. Interests that the Focus 2 cannot measure. And so that's what we're going to do. So, on your sheet of paper, let's get started with the first prompt. I want you to think about, if you can, up to three role models. Try to think of people when you were younger, say younger than six or eight years old. Not current, but when you were younger. And these role models can be real individuals, or fictional, but I do prefer you identify someone other than a relative. We don't get to pick our relatives, right? We're born into a family. So, I want you to think about two to three real or fictional characters who were role models when you were younger. What was it about them? So, if I ask you to describe them what would be the adjectives you would use? And then think about how you're like your role model in how you're different. And I'm going

to be very quiet to give you a few minutes to focus on that. Okay? So, if you can conclude maybe where you are right now. And I notice there are approximately 30 of you in the room, maybe a little bit more. And so, it's a little bit hard to go around the room and inquire as to your role models. Although that's something I'd like to do is have that interaction. So, for the sake of time and so we can get through some of these pieces we want to get through today. I'm going to share some my role models, and I'm just a little bit older than you are, right? And so, I hope some of you recognize my role models, but these were some of my role models when I was younger. Pippi Longstocking was huge for me. She was just my favorite character of all time. And some of the things I liked about her and how I would identify her was or is she was very independent and she just pretty much kind of did her own thing and bumped up against authority. Didn't really want other people kind of taken charge of her life. She kind of broke the rules. If you've ever seen any of her movies and especially maybe some of the old shows, her clothes never, matched, you know, and it was just like I'll do my own thing. She had a lot of personality about her. She was an animal lover. And she also was in crisis. Her goal was trying to find her father who was lost at sea. Her mother had died and her father was lost at sea. So that was always on her mind. And so, when I think about how I was like Pippy Longstocking and maybe how I wasn't, I think about those elements. My mother too died when I was very young. I was eight years old. And at that point, my brother and I went to live with our step mother and our dad. And my dad was an over the road, truck to trailer driver so he was gone a lot. So, I think the connection there was very similar that he was gone more than he was home. Much like Pippy was always kind of searching for her father figure. I've always been an extremely independent person, so we have that in common. That's one way I'm very like her. And so, recognizing and respecting that independence is something I've learned to do when it comes to the work I do. And I'll give you an example. You heard me mention I've changed careers several times. And I was in corporate for over 26 years. And I didn't have a lot of autonomy or independence in that position. I needed to be there Monday through Friday, eight to five, and you can almost punch in the clock. And, you know, and I just grew tired of that. Like, I don't like this real structured framework. And so, I eventually did a career change, went to school. I became a counselor, but I was in that same environment of clocking in under a tight schedule. And then I had some experiences that led me into understanding about myself that I wanted to teach. And to teach I needed to go back to school, which I did. And when I found from being a faculty member is I do have more independence. I have a more flexible schedule. That's not say I get to do my own thing. But I had to recognize and respect that, that, that independence, that flexibility is really important. So, when you look at your role models and you look at some of the adjectives, pay attention to those. Pay attention to the ways you think you are like your role models and how will these connect to a career? And I'm going to send a resource later where you can go online to a free resource to start exploring occupations. So, I could go in there may be and find occupations that allowed me that flexibility and independence. So, I'm a lot like her, independent, I love animals. I've finally gotten to a place in my life where I know authentically me. And I try not to base who I am and what others think I should be. Nancy Drew was another one for me. And with her, it's about the mystery and it's problem-solving and trying to understand the mysteries of life, and again my life was very mysterious to me. You know, I already told you about my mom dying, but there were also some chaotic things in my childhood that I could identify with her because I was very interested in why, and trying to answer the question why which Nancy Drew also did. And so, begin in a career or an occupation was very important for me to pay attention to. That would respect my need to seek answers and to kind of problem-solve around human beings. And so, I was very interested in psychology, even from a little girl, I can remember sitting at the Atlanta airport when you used to go in

and go up to the gate without a ticket and watching people and trying to understand and explain their behavior. So that mystery piece was really important to me. Um, I'm a fan of my Grandmother. This was my dad's mother who I met only twice, him, a wife. She was a mystery to me. I really don't know much about her except I knew she was a court stenographer and I thought that was really cool. I didn't even really know what that was. The main thing was she was a writer and we have a long line of writers in our family. And she was a writer during a time when women were not respected as journalist and kind of valued for that type of work. And so, one way she got around that was she changed her name to a gender-neutral name. And we're talking like back in the forties, fifties. She changed her name to gender-neutral name so she could submit her work and get published. And I just thought that was the coolest thing. Doesn't that sound like Pippy Longstocking, who kind of turned her nose at authority and said, I can't do it this way, I'll do it this way, but I'll find a way to do it. And I'm very much like these three women in some of those characteristics. And so, this ties into your identity. So again, look at your role models and look at the way you've described them. Think about some of the ways you were like these individuals. And what is it about those characteristics, those similarities that you want to respect and pay attention to and think about what you will need in your day to day life. And in the case of what we're doing here today, your work. Because if you can think about career and think about the work you will do in life, then that's going to help you back up and think about academic majors that will get you there, right? The academic major is your vehicle to the destination, to the journey of career. Alright, so think about those characteristics. I have a couple of other examples here that I pulled. So, you can see here on the left-hand side, Kevin Johnson said, my role model was my grandfather. He instilled in me the feeling that no matter how successful you are, you have a responsibility to help people. And what that says to me is that regardless of what Kevin Johnson does in his life, there's going to be something about him that he'll want to respect and give back to whether it's his community, where he lives or to the greater community. And that to not be able to do that, he would have a less fulfilling life in his life and his career. The one in the middle here I love. It's one of my role models, Cher, and Sonic the Hedgehog. And so, you can see how identity can come out even in our physical expressions, right? And so, for this individual in thinking about career, there's probably some areas of workplaces that would frown upon an expression of kind of this wild hair that looks like Cher in some sense. But being able to be in an environment where this person could be authentic in who they are as a person and be able to function in that workspace and in that career authentically is going to be very important. Down in the bottom right-hand corners. She taught me never say can't. Tell me you don't want to tell me you don't know how and I'll show you, but never say can't. And so, what that tells me about this particular person is probably, this person probably does not say no very much. Which could be a good thing. We could rely on this person, right? We know this person is going to be there when we need assistance, when we need help, and that's valuable in the workplace. Now one of the ways that might work against this person that she would want to be mindful of is sometimes it's okay to say no. Sometimes it's okay not to absorb all the responsibilities and all the task. Just like I talked about, Pippy Longstocking and how she kind of thumbs her nose at authority. She's very independent and wants to do her own thing. That can get me into trouble sometimes. So, I have to be very mindful. You know, am I going to be able to work in a space where I can, my voice will be heard. I can share my voice and my thoughts and my ideas. But I also know I have to do that in a way that's palatable to my coworkers and to my supervisor. Alright, so that's what I want you to think about. With your role models again, does personality traits or characteristics. Those things that you identify with, oh my goodness, I recognize this in me. And then again, I'll give you a resource at the end of this, where you'll want to think about where can I be this person in a career,

what type of career? And then the question becomes, what academic major or what program of study do I need to do or ensue to be able to enter that career. All right, let's try another one. So, this is going to tap into our interest in what we know about interests from a career perspective is there's three types of interests. Someone is inventoried. And I talked about that with the Focus 2 when we first got started. So that's what it's going to do. You're going to get prompts, you're going to respond, it's going to, inventory those, and it's going to categorize is. Another form of interest is expressed. You might say to me, you know, I've really thought about being an engineer or I really like architectural engineering, you know, I really like thinking about how buildings are constructed and put together so that they don't collapse. And so that's expressed. You tell me what your interests are. The third type of interest is manifest and this is what I'm interested in. So, I'm, I would look at your inventoried interests, your Focus 2 or any other self-directed search or strong interest inventory, whatever you took. I would look at those. I would listen as we talked, I would listen to your role model stories. But I want to know where are you placing yourself. So, I would ask you to take a few minutes to think about when you have time outside of your academics. And for those of you who might have part-time jobs, when you have time outside of that, what are you doing? Okay? So, I want you to think about, I want you to think about television shows, websites, magazines. We don't to magazines too much anymore right there, mostly online. You listen to podcasts. So, what are you doing in that time, away from academics or work? And I'm going to give you a few minutes to jot down. Take just another minute or so to finish jotting down some things that comes to mind. Okay, trusting you have a few things. And again, I'm going to use myself as an example. And so, let me just talk a minute about Facebook. Yes, I have a Facebook account. And so, one of the things we might think about Facebook, if we go back and we look at this idea of the idea of the social category. The social category is actually about helping others. So, it's not so much about social media, but we might want to say, okay, well, that's kind of a social thing. Probably fits within that social category it might connect with my Focus 2 results that way. But not really because if you have Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook, one of these other social media accounts. What I'd rather you do when you think about one of those, and in this instance, Facebook. Consider the log into that social media account as the door to a room. So, if we were sitting together, I'd say okay, so you've logged in, you've opened the door to the room. Now, where do you go when you get in the room? And for me, one, of my groups. Well, there's actually several groups I belong to that has everything to do with graphite drawing. I am an artist, I do graphite drawing and so I'm interested in the technique and increasing my own ability. And I love to watch the work of others. And so that's what these represent. Here is one of the groups that attracts me to logging into Blackboard, excuse me, not blackboard, Facebook, and paying attention to this, this is a very artistic endeavor, right? And if we go back here and you see that Hexagon right there in the middle you see artistic as one of the categories, right? And so artistic people are creative under this theory. They like aesthetic thing. So, to be an artist doesn't mean you have to paint. You have to draw all. You have to do some other type of art work. It could be music, it could be writing, which I also do, literary writing, fiction and nonfiction. And so, the idea of being creative and being able to express ideas creatively. It's also about the appreciation of the beauty of the thing. And so, for instance, if you were me, then this is something that I would, I would talk with you about an artistic category and we would compare that with your Focus 2 results, to see it in your inventory interests. We also see that A come up in your three-letter code. And what that would tell us if we see it in both places it is, alright. This is something you'll want to pay attention to. And when you're thinking about academic majors and you're thinking about careers, how can you respect this need for artistry in your life, creativity, the beauty, the aesthetics in your life. And I always tell students even if we

can't build a career out of something like this, we certainly need to respect that in our hobbies. So, if we can't be a musician for instance, right, that's a competitive world. Then I would be right there encouraging you to be sure and include that as much as you can in other areas, even if you're doing gigs on the weekend, you know, at a local venue, here in Conway or wherever you're living. Alright? So again, pay attention to those television shows, magazines. Same thing with the ezine, when you log into a magazine online, I'm not interested so much what the magazine is, although that can give me clues, where are you going first in there. Alright, so if you login to a magazine and one of the first places you go is to the advice column. Then while we might extract from that and talk about is alright, edge upon that social category of helping others and helping others sometimes involves processing and thinking out loud, not necessarily, giving advice, but supporting people as they problem-solve and come to their own conclusions. So, to give you a little bit of an idea here, I've pulled some of my favorite television shows to show you where I go and what I do. I just unashamedly love the Voice. I don't make any apologies for it. I have two grown daughters and if I'm on the phone with one of them and the voice comes on, I'm like I got to go babe. Mom's gone. Because I love, love, love this show. I love the um, not the competitive nature of it. I'm not a big fan of competition. I love the artistry, I love the music, I love the talent. And it also connects to what my rumblings around what I wanted to do in life when I was a little girl. My first career aspiration was to be an entertainer, to be on a stage, to be acting, to be singing. And so, it's no wonder that I'm still immersing myself in this area that I always wanted to do. I don't have the talent, but I never even tried to develop the talent. Right. Because I was letting other things consume me and was unable to get to a space to be able to do that. So, when you look at your favorite television shows, what connections might you make to things you thought about even early in life you wanted to do and who you wanted to be in your life. Career wise. I also love any true crime show. I don't care what it is. I'm right in there. I have seen everything, I've read everything. And again, it goes back to one of my role models. If you think about Nancy Drew, Right, that mystery, solving problems. I love as psychological aspects of it. And if I want to respect that, when I'm thinking about career, then I'm probably thinking a lot about social categories, helping others. Any surprise, I've gone into counseling, career counseling, helping others. Kind of figured this out, right? And so, if I want to tie that to an academic major then I might start considering psychology as an academic major, right? I might think about sociology. Sociology is a little bit broader scale that we're not looking at the psychological aspects of individuals as much as we're looking at kind of that systemic and societal issues taken place. And so, trying to solve the mystery. So again, keep trying to make those connections between what you're watching, where you're immersing yourself. Maybe it's even gaming. I didn't even mention gaming. So, if you're a gamer and you're immersing yourself in games, what kind of games are those? How does this connect to maybe early aspirations about who you wanted to be in life? This Is Us is another favorite show of mine. I love the artistry. I love the writing. I love how the producers and writers have unfolded the story. Well, that appeals to my artistry as a writer, but it also represents something I craved in my early life, which was cohesiveness, and stability, something I didn't have as a young girl. Why that's important in career and life, it's because I strive for that. I have always strived for that in adult relationships I've had, in my work relationships, and in my work, I like stability. Now it's a chaotic world. We live in a time where things are less predictable than they were when your parents or your grandparents were in the workforce. So, stability sometimes becomes more elusive for me. But I saw work that would provide that with me or provide that for me in becoming a professor or faculty member. So, I hope I'm helping you to see the connections between what I'm doing now, where I'm immersing myself, how those connect to those early aspects of my personality, my career aspirations,

the things that were meaningful and important to me. And how after some hits and misses I was able to connect that to a career that I find extremely satisfying and meaningful. And that's what I would have you to do, is start making those connections. Then as you start thinking, again, as I said earlier about those connections to career, possible careers, then you come back and say, okay, if this is the destination, what's that academic major I need to support me and get me to that career. Right? So, so that's what we were talking about here today, is this idea of you taking these elements and trying to, tie them together to use your identity pieces and use the information you get from the Career Services and also tie in these pieces we've talked about today. Think about your story. Think about these pieces. Alright, so you have resources in the career services office if you need assistance also. Because a lot of times your stress and that sort of thing connected with it. We have the counseling center available to you. There're also two courses I developed and teach on this campus. One is career exploration. That's all we do is we learn about ourselves. We learn about the world of work and the connections between the two. And then the career and life planning. It's a little more of that, but more so transitioning through with a goal. Thinking about career when you graduate.