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April 7, 2021

College-to-Career Culture and Gender: Investigating Perceptions of BBA-Liberal Arts Double
Majors at a Liberal Arts University

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Abstract

College-to-Career Culture and Gender: Investigating Perceptions of BBA-Liberal Arts Double Majors at a Liberal Arts University

By Julia B. Lawrence

Previous research supports the idea that a students' gender and experiences within their university's campus context intersect as two cultural processes which influence their decision-making processes as it relates to career path. I investigate how gender and the dominant discourse and interactions among undergraduates who inhabit the local campus context, in this case Emory University, might influence the peer prestige system of its students. I also seek to understand how students' experiences with college-to-career culture may influence their own career path decision making. This path has two decision points: the academic major and the intended career plans. I conducted in-depth interviews with ten males and nine females who are members of the sub-population of students who are in the process of pursuing a liberal arts major in the Emory College of Arts and Sciences (ECAS) along with an undergraduate BBA in the Goizueta Business School (GBS). The findings do not suggest a clear difference in the way in which male and female BBA-liberal arts double majors perceive campus culture or career paths. This may speak to the egalitarian ideologies held within next-tier institutions such as Emory. The findings of this study do support the work of scholars such as Amy Binder who suggest that the cultural constructions of elite universities influence students to be funneled into a narrow range of careers. Additionally, my analysis suggests that the undergraduate BBA programs found in institutions such as Emory University leads students to view business school and liberal arts as two separate campus contexts in which they experience two distinct college-to-career cultures.

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I. Introduction and Research Questions

As a liberal arts major at Emory University, I am privy to the culture and conversations that occur in the Emory College of Arts and Sciences (ECAS). As I approach the end of my college experience, conversations regarding career path have become more frequent amongst my peers. Most of my personal relationships are with students majoring in the liberal arts, and many of these students are still unsure of what their first job will be post-grad. Meanwhile, I have also made connections with students in my liberal arts courses who are double majoring in the Emory Goizueta Business School, and I have noticed a difference in the way that these peers talk about their post-grad plans. It seems to me that many of these BBA-liberal arts double majors secure an entry level job offer as early as the fall of their junior year. While it has oftentimes been anxiety provoking for me and my fellow liberal arts majors to hear our BBA-liberal arts peers celebrating having such plans already lined up, I was surprised when I learned more details of the nature of the work these students will be doing. Our interactions during classes have made clear to me that these students are excellent critical thinkers and intellectually curious. However, it seemed to me that the field they had chosen to enter might not allow them to utilize such skills.

While I often hear my peers in the liberal arts talking about how they want to incorporate their own interests and values into their career path, it was less common to hear this sort of talk from my BBA-liberal arts peers. When they announced their employment, it seemed that they were celebrating due to the fact that they got a job in general, not because they were especially excited about the specific work they would be doing. This led me to wonder, what was the motivation behind students' decision to pursue these business sector paths?

The work of Amy Binder and colleagues uncovers a pattern in students' career-path decision making which they refer to as career funneling, "whereby elite universities, rather than

opening up unlimited job prospects to their students, actually restricted them” (Binder et al 2016:26). Binder et al emphasize that context matters, as students’ constructed understandings of high-status jobs in elite universities “manifest in the peer prestige system that develops on campuses, with its ranking of careers and companies as well as its drawing of the collectively understood lines that delineate ordinary from high-status jobs” (Binder, Davis, and Bloom 2016:35). This research seeks to extend the work of Binder et al to gain a greater understanding of the ways in which students may be funneled into a narrow range of “prestigious” career paths.

Research Questions

Using the case of BBA-Liberal Arts double majors:

1. How did the students choose their academic path (major)? What were the main factors that led to their choices?
 - 2a. What are the student’s perceptions of college-to-career culture at Emory University?
 - 2b. Does gender influence perceptions of college-to-career culture, and if so, how?
- 3a. How did the students choose their intended career path?
- 3b. How does college-to-career culture influence these students’ own career paths?
- 3c. How does gender influence these students’ own college-to-career paths?

Variables

Dependent Variables (DV):

- DV₁. College-to-Career Path (academic major and intended career plans)
- DV₂. Perceptions of college-to-career culture

Independent Variables (IV):

- IV₁. Perceptions of college-to-career culture

IV₂. Gender

II. Theoretical Framework & Empirical Work

Organizational Structure of College

In their research, Binder and colleagues draw from organizational theories of higher education to better understand a university's role in students' status hierarchy construction as it relates to careers (Binder, Davis, and Bloom 2016). For example, the inhabited institutional theory suggests that a college campus possesses its own unique organizational groups, which leads to distinct interactions amongst actors specific to that campus. This was referred to by Pierre Bourdieu as a university's local campus context (1990). The local campus context in which students are embedded may influence how students perceive prestigious careers. This leads to differences in peer prestige systems across campuses, so that students' perspectives of high-status careers may vary between universities (Binder et al 2016; Bourdieu and Passeron 1990).

While students do enter college with their own individual orientations of the world, their identities are malleable. The new institutional approach suggests that a college campus is a "generative system of meaning and action" which has the power to pave career pathways apart from familiar family backgrounds by imposing new identities unto students (Binder et al 2016). For example, the unique organizational structure of a specific educational institution results in the construction of what scholars have termed "fields of power" (Binder et al 2016; Bourdieu and Passeron 1990). This refers to the organizational realities which present students with the perception of a narrow hierarchy of career options. This rank-order of professional spheres may be constructed through such structural elements as the specific firms with which a university engages, career panels, job fairs, and other events put on by the institution. Such campus-

sponsored activities emphasize the perceived value, or lack thereof, of certain careers, effectively demonstrating to students which professions are most desirable to pursue (Binder et al 2016; Bourdieu 1996).

Society's Career Hierarchies

While peer prestige systems vary across college campuses, research shows that the status hierarchy of occupations tends to be similar across cultures and historical periods (Lynn and Ellerbach 2016). Donald J Treiman suggests that occupations naturally differ in terms of skill and power such that individuals across populations will rank highly those occupations perceived as being of objectively high importance to society. The professions universally placed at the top of the prestige hierarchy are those commonly associated with high levels of skill, authority, and economic control, an idea known as the “Treiman constant” (Lynn et al 2016; Treiman and Rossi 1977). Scholars also argue that, in addition to organizational structures, an individual’s constructed understanding of occupational prestige is further molded through the combination of the social and interactional processes experienced on campus (Lynn et al 2016). Thus, while there are similarities in perceived levels of occupational prestige held by society at large, the unique discourse, social expectations, and interactions of a specific local context may lead to differences in perceptions held by individuals at one university versus another.

Freda B. Lynn and George Ellerbach question Treiman’s idea of a universal prestige hierarchy. They argue that the stability of occupational rankings over time and place at the aggregate level does not rule out the possibility of heterogeneity in individual perspectives. To investigate this further, Lynn et al conducted an analysis of the 1989 General Social Survey (GSS), which asks respondents rank the “social standing” of 110 occupations with respect to a prestige ladder of 9 rungs (Lynn et al 2016). They framed the data of the GSS rankings as “the

observable outcome of an interpretive process” that has the potential to play out differently across individuals (Lynn et al 2016:35).

GSS respondents were categorized according to individual level of educational attainment. Through their analysis of the data, Lynn et al found that highly educated respondents demonstrated a greater level of consensus in their rankings of occupational prestige. This pattern suggests that participation in the education system has homogenizing effects over individuals’ construction of prestige systems. Additionally, highly educated individuals tend to attribute greater levels of prestige to occupations that require intensive amounts of education or training time. In contrast, there was more variation found in the rankings of respondents with lower levels of education. Lynn and Ellerbach express the need for future research to investigate the influence intersectional status characteristics in addition to education level, such as gender in the case of my research, over individuals’ perspectives of occupational prestige (Lynn et al 2016).

Gender and Career Ideologies

Intersectional perspectives of sociology emphasize the idea that one’s cultural context is influenced by many factors such as gender, class, and race (Damaske 2011). Interested in investigating how gender ideologies intersect with the formation of students’ peer prestige systems, I employ Barbara Risman’s definition of gender as a social structure. By situating gender as structural, Risman emphasizes the idea that the concept of gender exists outside of the individual in a way which may influence one’s perceived ability to choose a specific life path. She attributes this sense of constraint to the widespread embeddedness of gender expectations and norms which influence the “individual, interactional, and institutional dimensions of our society” (Risman 2004:429). Blatant examples of institutional gender inequality can be found in our society’s history of barring females from opportunities such as education, the right to vote,

and the ability to enter the workforce. Though such laws have been rewritten to be inclusive of all genders, their lasting effects are reflected in gender norms still upheld by our society today. While actors do possess individual agency when deciding on a career path, “the social structure as the context of daily life creates action indirectly by shaping actors’ perceptions of their interests, and directly by constraining choice” (Risman 2004:432).

The reproduction of gender norms makes it difficult for males and females not to perceive themselves as innately different (Risman 2004). Building off of this, the integrative approach treats gender as a socially constructed stratification system which leads individuals to categorize themselves and others into two distinct categories: male or female. Risman argues that, “as long as women and men see themselves as different kinds of people, the women will be unlikely to compare their life options to those of men” (Risman 2004:432). This is supported by the structural theory of action, which suggests that actors compare themselves and their options to those in structurally similar positions (Risman 2004; Burt 1982). As it relates to my own research, males and females within the social context of a college campus may subconsciously view themselves as separate groups, despite the fact that as students they presumably fill identical structural positions (Risman 2004).

Sarah Damaske builds upon previous research in an attempt to understand how females develop expectations about their participation in the workforce (Damaske 2011). She investigates how prevailing cultural schemas, such as the perception that females are not as adept as males to participate in paid work, may affect females’ expectations regarding their own abilities. Having conducted 80 in-depth qualitative interviews with females randomly sampled from the New York City Voter Registration database, Damaske’s analysis suggests that the career path chosen by a female individual is influenced by the professional opportunities or obstacles she expects

encounter. Damaske argues that such perceptions are shaped by an individual's personal experiences as well as observations of the experiences of other females in similar structural positions. For example, females who belong to social contexts which emphasize more egalitarian gender ideologies, perhaps such as modern-day institutions of higher education, are more likely to aspire to those professions considered to be at the top of the prestige hierarchy (Damaske 2011).

Definitions of Success

In pursuing a career path, most everyone hopes their efforts will be met with success. However, it is important to acknowledge that there is not one universal perception of what qualifies as success. Lorraine S. Dyke and Steven A. Murphy suggest that while the dictionary definition of success may have "originally referred to any positive outcome, it has become increasingly associated with wealth and prestige" (Dyke and Murphy 2006:1). These values are commonly associated with masculine socialization, with males having shouldered the societal expectation to provide for their family since the Industrial Revolution (Dyke et al 2006; Deutschendorf 1996). Research shows that despite an increase in men's modern-day acceptance of females in the workplace, they are often hesitant to accept females into the role of monetary co-provider for the household (Dyke et al 2006; Wilkie 1993).

The work of James Doyle supports the aforementioned idea that males are likely to perceive their role in the family structure to be that of the breadwinner. He emphasizes the influence of traditional views such as, "the more goods a male provides for his family's material well-being, the more successful (that is, masculine) he is" (Dyke et al 2006; Doyle 1983:168). Doyle suggests that society reinforces this male emphasis on material wealth by fostering a sense of competition for a fixed supply of goods, thus encouraging a "he who dies with the most toys

wins” mentality (Dyke et al 2006:358; Doyle 1983). This supports the idea that, when making career decisions, males are likely to perceive work as a vehicle to achieve material wealth.

Females are subject to different societal expectations than their male counterparts, having been historically socialized into traditional care-taking roles. While males were expected to go out and earn material wealth, females’ success “was judged not by achievement in the public realm but by the relationships they forged in the personal realm” (Dyke et al 2006:358; Levinson 1996). While modern day females are now more likely to enter the public sphere, evidence shows that they continue to be socialized to perceive caretaking as a role they must fulfill. Despite the recent increase in societal encouragement of females to develop economic independence, females still encounter significant pressure to prioritize choosing a profession that will allow for the flexibility needed to easily accommodate “conventional” domestic motherhood (Dyke et al 2016; Orenstein 2000).

The term “subjective success” refers to an actor’s perspective of success according to their own personal criteria. Research suggests that, while individuals of both genders may report similar levels of their own perceived personal success, the metrics being employed to measure success are different for males and females. For example, Linda Duxbury and colleagues sought to investigate gender differences in subjective success by conducting a study of career development in the public sector (Dyke et al 2006; Duxbury, Dyke, and Lam 1999). They asked over 2,300 managerial and professional employees to indicate the perceived level of importance of 15 different areas in relation to their own view of career success. Through her subjects’ responses, significant gender differences emerged. Females were more likely than males to assign a high level of importance to career aspects such as being introduced to new skills, a work-life balance, strong interpersonal relationships, and upward mobility. Meanwhile, males

were more likely than females to attribute importance to the ability to influence the direction of the organization in which they are employed (Dyke et al 2006; Duxbury et al 1999).

In a following study with similar methods, Duxbury et al gave respondents a forced-choice question, asking them to “indicate whether their personal definition of success focused primarily on financial rewards and influence or on personal satisfaction and respect” (Dyke et al 2006:360; Duxbury et al 2000). They found that 65% of male subjects and 74% of female subjects placed the most emphasis on personal satisfaction in their definitions of success, rather than monetary wealth. These results suggest that society’s traditional measures of success, associated with financial and authoritative power, may no longer be as prevalent as they used to be, and that “gender differences in how we define success may be more complex than originally described” (Dyke et al 2006:360; Duxbury et al 2000).

Dyke and Murphy investigated gender differences in perceptions of success by conducting a qualitative analysis of 40 interviews. Subjects were described as traditionally successful males and females who had made it to the top of their respective occupational hierarchies. The data pulled from these interviews reveal gendered perspectives of what it means to be successful, with subjects’ responses being consistent with cultural schemas that put pressure on both groups to embody specific gender roles. For example, female respondents were more likely to emphasize the importance of balance and maintaining personal relationships, perceiving professional achievement and maintenance of social connections to be interconnected in their definition of success. In contrast, many male respondents reported career goals associated with professional achievement and material success (Dyke et al 2006).

These patterns in responses found by Dyke et al align with a concept Arlie Hochschild has termed the “stalled revolution” (Dyke et al 2006; Hochschild 1989). The stalled revolution

refers to the idea that societal expectations have shifted such that it has become much more common for females to work in the public sphere, but “not on equal terms, thus creating a half-changed world” (Dyke et al 2006:367; Hochschild 1989; Orenstein 2000). Consequently, females alter their view of success to include a vision of balance between their roles in the professional and personal spheres. Meanwhile, most males still do not consider caretaking to be a role available to them, perceiving their path to success as limited to the fulfillment of the “breadwinner” role still reinforced upon them by society. These gender differences have significant social repercussions, as one’s definition of success has a high level of influence over the choices they will make in both the personal and professional spheres (Dyke et al 2006).

Career Funneling (Binder)

The aforementioned research supports the idea that an individual’s gender and local campus context intersect as two cultural processes at play in a particular college’s environment. The research of Amy Binder and colleagues emphasize this idea that context matters. “Through qualitative interviews with students at two elite Ivy+ universities (Stanford and Harvard), Binder et al found four campus-wide mechanisms which influence how students develop notions of prestige about education, work, and jobs; how they establish status hierarchies around careers, and how these status hierarchies shape their career aspirations and experiences on campus” (Scott 2019). The first mechanism is termed “initial naivete,” concerning the idea that many undergraduates enter college with very limited knowledge about the labor market, making them especially susceptible to campus influences. The second mechanism is referred to as “recruitment frenzy,” shedding light on how the universities’ annual recruitment season triggered a competitive drive amongst students to secure jobs at a short list of the specific firms perceived as most prestigious. The third mechanism is the “internalization of career prestige,” whereby

students internalized and then reinforced unto others these expectations regarding career prestige, contributing to a sense of pressure to make the most of their elite degree. The fourth mechanism is “status boundaries” that result from the aforementioned peer prestige systems, leading students to categorize jobs as either worthy or ordinary, effectively narrowing the range of seemingly acceptable career paths. Binder et al argue that these mechanisms were effectively embedded into Harvard and Stanford’s unique local campus contexts, leading students to be funneled into specific areas of the workforce. This begs the question, how might variation between the particular local campus contexts across universities of different levels lead to differences in students’ college-to-career perspectives?

III. Conceptualization

Amy Binder and colleagues focus on understanding how the organizational structures and culture unique to a university’s local campus context may influence student’s notions of prestige as it relates to career path. They employ the term “peer prestige system” to refer to students’ delineation of ordinary from high status jobs (Binder et al 2016). I build upon this research by focusing more specifically on a smaller group of actors: undergraduates. I investigate how the dominant discourse and interactions among undergraduates who inhabit the local campus context, in this case Emory University, influence the peer prestige system of its students. This I conceptualize as the “college-to-career culture” experienced by students throughout their academic journey. I also investigate how students’ experiences with college-to-career culture may influence their own career path decision making. This I conceptualize as a student’s “college-to-career path”. This path has two decision points: the academic major and the intended career plans.

I focus my research on students who are pursuing a double major: one in the Goizueta Business School and one in the College of Arts and Sciences. These students are uniquely positioned to provide insight into two different undergraduate units and how they shape undergraduate culture and influence undergraduates' own paths. I further investigate how gender may influence these students' perceptions and paths.

Operationalization of Variables

Variables

Dependent Variables (DV):

DV₁. College-to-Career Path (academic major and intended career plans)

DV₂. Perceptions of college-to-career culture

Independent Variables (IV):

IV₁. Perceptions of college-to-career culture

IV₂. Gender

My interview guide, used to structure each conversation, is the mechanism through which I was operationalized my dependent variables. The first dependent variable of interest is the subject's own college-to-career path. This was operationalized through questions geared towards understanding how the individual student decided on their major, as well as their own experiences making career decisions. The second dependent variable of interest is Emory students' views of college-to-career culture. This was operationalized through questions about career-related "chatter," as well as the general perceptions of majors and careers commonly held by Emory students.

My first independent variable (which also serves as a dependent variable in those research questions aimed at understanding the influence of gender) is college-to-career culture. This was operationalized through questions about the career-related “chatter” heard around campus, as well as the general perceptions of majors and careers commonly held by Emory students. My second independent variable for this study is gender. Following, Barbara Risman’s aforementioned definition of gender as a socially constructed structure, I operationalized gender by categorizing my subjects into two groups, male and female (Risman 2004).

Restatement of Specific Research Questions and Variables

Research Questions

Using the case of BBA-Liberal Arts double majors:

1. How did the students choose their academic path (major)? What were the main factors that led to their choices? (DV1)
- 2a. What are the student’s perceptions of college-to-career culture at Emory University? (DV2)
- 2b. Does gender influence perceptions of college-to-career culture, and if so, how? (DV2 and IV2)
- 3a. How did the students choose their intended career path? (DV1)
- 3b. How does college-to-career culture influence these students’ own career paths? (DV1 and IV1)
- 3c. How does gender influence these students’ own college-to-career paths? (DV1 and IV2)

IV. Methods

Research Design

I conducted in-depth interviews as my research method for this study. Conducting interviews allowed me to probe students for detailed responses regarding their own experiences with college-to-career issues and student culture at Emory University (Scott 2019). In contrast to methods such as distributing a survey in which individuals must choose one out of a predetermined list of responses, interviews enabled participants to answer questions freely and elaborately, shedding light on the way in which participants organize and communicate their experiences (Scott and Simula 2021). Through a one-on-one conversation with each subject, I had the opportunity to ask clarifying questions and expand upon certain subtopics. With the goal of understanding the depth and complexity of college-to-career culture among undergraduates in their particular context, “qualitative methods—with their emphasis on exploring the meanings of experiences to those who have them—provide an ideal approach for the present study” (Scott et al 2021). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these interviews were conducted virtually.

Population/Cases

“The population investigated through this research is undergraduate students who currently attend Emory University, which I classify as a ‘next-tier’ elite university. I define Emory University as a ‘next-tier’ elite university for three main reasons: 1) It is not included in common classifications of the Ivy+ schools and is not as highly selective as these schools. 2) It falls within the next group of highly selective, liberal arts focused, residential-based, financial aid offering universities in common classification schemes. 3) It offers an undergraduate business degree, which is seen as less prestigious by the top-tier” (Scott 2019). Within this population, I chose to investigate the sub-population of students who are in the process of

pursuing a liberal arts major in the Emory College of Arts and Sciences (ECAS) along with an undergraduate BBA in the Goizueta Business School (GBS).

The Emory University undergraduate community is made up of around 8,000 students, approximately 800 (10%) of which are enrolled in the Emory Goizueta Business School (Emory University 2019). Emory undergraduates must complete their freshman and sophomore years at either ECAS or Emory's Oxford College and are eligible to enter the GBS once they have successfully reached junior standing. Each Goizueta class is composed of approximately 43% females (Emory University 2021). Of those juniors and seniors enrolled in the GBS, roughly 200 students (25%) successfully complete an Emory College major in conjunction with their BBA degree (Emory University 2019).

By limiting my sample to the sub-population of Emory undergraduate students currently in pursuit of completing a liberal arts major alongside their BBA, I effectively kept the variable of major track constant so as to keep the focus on gender as my independent variable. I chose to conduct interviews with individuals belonging to this case group due to their unique access to both the context of the Business School and that of Emory College. Through their belonging to both groups, these students are able to formulate comparisons regarding the unique elements of each specific local campus context which may influence students' perceptions of Emory's career prestige system.

Sample Selection and Recruitment

I conducted in-depth interviews with key undergraduates identified through snowball sampling. I first interviewed my own personal contacts and proceeded to contact individuals referred to me by my previous subjects. In my efforts to recruit interviewees, I reached out to thirty-seven students, with a total response rate of 75.7%. My method of contact was to send out

an initial recruitment email to students' university-provided Microsoft Outlook email account. My resulting sample consisted of a total of nineteen individuals, ten of whom identify as male and nine of whom identify as female. Each participant is a BBA – Liberal Arts double major currently enrolled in their junior or senior year at Emory University. Keeping my primary focus on interviewing a relatively equal number of males and females, my sample is not representative enough to allow me to comment on other demographic factors such as race, ethnicity, and social class. For a more detailed demographic breakdown of my sample, see Appendix 6.

Data Collection

Interviews were conducted virtually via Zoom, each lasting between one and two hours. Before the start of each interview, I ensured the informed consent of the subject and verbally went over the details of their participation in combination with a brief overview of the study (see Appendix 3). Subjects were explicitly informed that the interview would be digitally recorded for the purpose of data analyzation later on. I utilized a thoughtfully structured interview guide as my instrument for data collection (see Appendix 4).

Data Analysis Procedures

All interviews were de-identified and fully transcribed. Data were “analyzed through a systematic, iterative qualitative coding process, facilitated by the software MaxQDA. Iterative thematic analysis involves identifying, organizing, and synthesizing key themes that emerge in the data” (Scott et al 2021). Initial codes centered on subjects' accounts of what they believe to be widely held perceptions of comparative status, prestige, and rigor of disciplines and disciplinary clusters, careers and career clusters, students' own experiences and interactions, and

work meanings and values. The coding scheme was revised as new codes were generated from the data throughout the analysis process. (Scott et al 2021).

V. Results

Students' own college-to-career paths (RQ 1): Academic Path

Within my specific sample, all nineteen participants entered Emory with an idea of the academic majors they might like to pursue. I began each interview by asking students to describe their initial academic plans, and how these plans have shifted over the course of their Emory experience.

Participant Pseudonym	Academic Plan Upon Entering Emory	Current Academic Path
Anna	BBA	BBA , Spanish
Jessica	BBA	BBA, Sociology
Sara	BBA, Music	BBA, Music
Lisa	BBA, Engineering	BBA, Engineering (Dual degree program with GA Tech)
Eliza	Political Science	BBA , Political Science
Olivia	Political Science	BBA, Sociology
Dana	Physics, Computer Science	BBA, Philosophy
Nicole	Pre-Med	BBA, Comparative Literature
Brittany	Pre-Med	BBA, Integrated Visual Arts Co-Major
Ben	BBA	BBA, Philosophy
Luke	BBA	BBA, English
Marcus	BBA	BBA, Music
Max	BBA	BBA, Economics
Brad	BBA	BBA, English
Bobby	Political Science, Spanish, Economics, or BBA	BBA, Political Science
Frank	Comparative Literature, Linguistics	BBA, Philosophy
Daniel	Engineering	BBA, Sociology
Isaac	Environmental Science	BBA, Environmental Science
Michael	Economics, Computer Science	BBA, Economics

Figure 1: *Participants Matched with Their Initial and Current Academic Path*

As illustrated by Figure 1, many of these students (13/19 participants) did not anticipate double majoring, having initially planned to declare a single major in either the Emory College of Arts and Sciences (ECAS) or the Goizueta Business School (GBS). Approximately half of the participants in this sample (10/19 participants) entered their freshman year with plans to pursue a Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA). It is worth noting that this pre-BBA group consisted of more males (6 male participants) than females (4 female participants). Meanwhile, the other half of my sample (9/19 participants) anticipated majoring solely in the ECAS. Over the course of their freshman and sophomore years, all of these students altered their academic plans to include both a major in the ECAS and the GBS.

Of the nine participants that entered college with no intent to apply to the GBS, many (7 participants) expressed that a driving factor behind their eventual decision to adopt the double major was the Goizueta clubs they joined freshman year. Despite not initially planning to pursue a BBA, there were two common reasons that these participants joined business school clubs. The first was that they had made friends early on that encouraged them to join such extracurriculars:

But like, literally my first week at Emory, I swear, everyone I met was like pre-business, like all the friends I started making. And I was like, huh. And they were like, telling me why they were interested in studying business. And I was like, wait, I like what they're saying... And then I think also one of my friends convinced me to come along with her during the first week of classes to the BBA club fair... I was like, I'm not sure if I'm a business major yet, I don't know if I should be applying to business clubs. And my friend convinced me to just apply and see what happened. – **Olivia**

And then what happened was, one of my friends dragged me to the business school [club fair]. Goizueta Investment Management Group, which is something I'm involved in, the investment group on campus. One of my friends dragged me to do it, and I was like okay... Applied, got in. And I have literally been in that environment ever since. – **Frank**

Olivia and Frank were urged by their pre-BBA friends to come along to the Goizueta club fair during one of the first few weeks of freshman year. This was their first exposure to GBS. It was

emphasized to students that they did not need to be enrolled in the business school to participate in its clubs. Listening to friends who insisted that they would enjoy Goizueta's extracurriculars, participants such as Olivia and Frank decided to give these business-related clubs a try.

The second factor commonly cited by participants as having contributed to their decision to apply to Goizueta clubs is discovering business organizations that were described as social impact related:

I joined a club in the Business School called Emory Impact Investing Group, because the club's main goal is to help small businesses in the Atlanta community, and I thought that was really cool and impactful. – **Nicole**

The club that I am still a part of, Social Impact 350, which is like a social entrepreneurship club, where people develop ideas for ventures that help the community in some way. – **Daniel**

Respondents such as Daniel and Nicole came to college hoping to learn about ways in which they could create social impact. Daniel even elected to be housed in a “living learning community” focused on “social innovation” during his first year at Emory. With these values in mind, the idea of helping the Atlanta community through these clubs was a main draw of applying to Goizueta extracurriculars.

Once accepted these clubs, both male and female participants found that the time commitment was greater than anticipated:

A lot of these organizations are really time consuming. If you're not completely involved 24/7, there's not really an opportunity. Like, you either are in it, or you aren't in it at all. – **Jessica**

It was just so different from any other club that I had been a part of. Like, it wasn't just like, we are fundraising for this charity. Even though that's a good thing to do. It just felt so much more like a full-time job. Because, you know, like, 24/7 something could happen with an entrepreneur. And you would be the first person that they would go to. – **Nicole**

Jessica and Nicole explained that a common perception amongst business school students is that Goizueta clubs should be placed high up on the priority lists of their members. While

respondents described having first joined these organizations for fun or to try something new, Goizueta club participation would soon take up a large portion of their free time.

Some of the GBS clubs described by participants include Emory Impact Investing Group (EIIG), Goizueta Investment Management Group (GIMG) Consult your Community (CYC), Atlas Consulting Group (ACG), and Alpha Kappa Psi (AKPsi), Goizueta's business fraternity. In joining these organizations, participants found themselves a member of a group largely made up of business school students. One common theme in participants' descriptions of experiences with these clubs was older members assuming the roles of friend and mentor for new members:

A lot of the upper classmen [in the club] were also people who were in the business school... they took a real interest in mentoring me and like helping me figure out what I wanted to do. And I think part of the reason I ultimately decided to apply to the business school... was because a lot of my mentors were doing that, and I saw them as role models, and I wanted to kind of emulate them. – **Nicole**

And then similarly, like upperclassmen [in the club] sharing why they were doing it or like, what their advice was or experiences they had in the business world, I think kind of solidified the, okay, like I can explore interests that are a little more outside of that business school norm even within this program. Because I was a little skeptical of that, just because of how much of a push there was towards like finance and consulting. So, hearing other people's experiences made me a little less wary, I think. – **Olivia**

Olivia and Nicole explained that upperclassmen in GBS clubs share stories of their academic paths and engage new members in conversations with the goal of helping them create their own plans. Such interactions foster a strong sense of admiration for these upperclassmen, leading new members to aspire to emulate to those above them. Participants emphasized that these relationships made with through Goizueta clubs contributed to the shift in their perspective that led them to ultimately adopt a double major in the business school.

It is important to note that Emory students are not eligible to enter Goizueta Business School's undergraduate BBA program right away. The business school states, "once you are at Emory, you may apply to the BBA Program during the Fall of your sophomore year for entrance

during the Spring, or during the Spring of your sophomore year for entrance the following Fall, depending on when you achieve junior standing” (Emory University 2019:8). When the deadline to apply to Goizueta finally approached, participants recounted specific conversations with club friends and mentors that influenced them to finally commit to the double major:

So, all my friends would always tell me, Michael, just wait because I guarantee you’re gonna switch to business. – **Michael**

The early application for the Business School was due in like October of 2019. And like three days before, I just kind of turned to my friends like, okay should I apply early? And they’re like yes, here’s all the reasons. And I was like, Okay. – **Bobby**

Um, I think they were able to feed my ego and tell me like, you’re doing great things, you’re already doing what a consultant would do. And also, I would like, voice my concerns about like, I don’t know what I want to do. And I think I’m too shy. I don’t think business is for me. And they’re like, no, you’re doing perfectly what the consultant would be doing. And I was like, okay yeah, that seems pretty valid. – **Brittany**

As described in the accounts above, respondents attributed their final decision to the culmination of frequent conversations with Goizueta friends and clubmates who encouraged them to apply and assured them that they would be a perfect fit for the business school. Respondents valued their friends’ opinions and followed their advice, officially committing to the BBA. Despite having been drawn into the business school, all of these participants decided to keep their intended major in the ECAS as well.

Of the ten participants that did enter Emory with intent to apply to GBS, there was one common reason that they decided to declare a major in the liberal arts; students explained that this addition to their academic plan was the result of discovering a subject they intellectually enjoyed:

I can't remember if it was like my very first semester, my second one, but I took a class called Race, Sex and Citizenship. And it basically walks you through, like, from settlers in America, all the way to the present day. And it looked at what the concept of citizenship was throughout history... And I thought that was super interesting. And like, how through, like laws, and war and so much other stuff, like, this, racism just

emerged... I just knew that, like, I wanted to learn about that, in as big of a capacity as I could. – **Jessica**

And one of those classes was a survey on American literature, from the beginnings of American literature to about the Civil War. And I was just taking it because it was a continued writing requirement. I thought it was just something I'd get in, get done and be done with it. But then, I was very much surprised by how much I enjoyed it. Like, every day, I found the lectures, incredibly engaging, it was so cool. Because, I mean, I've always thought that history was very interesting. And then obviously, literature and history go hand in hand. And so, I saw it as a way of learning history through firsthand accounts in a way. And so, I always just really enjoyed going to class every day. And then after that semester, I mean, I knew I still wanted to do business, but I thought, wow, that English class I took was incredible. I really loved it. Maybe this is something I can pursue further. – **Luke**

As aforementioned, Emory students are not eligible to enter GBS until their second semester sophomore year at the earliest. In the meantime, prospective business school students must fill their course schedules with classes in the ECAS. Like Luke and Jessica, participants described the year and a half before entering the business school as a time during which they felt free to explore new subjects and course matter that interested them. As illustrated by Luke, this academic exploration was also attributed to students' desire to fulfill Emory's General Education Requirements (GER's). During the beginning of their Emory education, with the deadline to apply to Goizueta in the distant future, pre-BBA students have ample time and space in their schedules to enroll in courses that fulfil GER's.

After discovering a liberal arts subject that they enjoyed, these participants were eager to continue taking courses in the ECAS. However, they explained that they would not have declared a double major if they had felt it would conflict with their pursuit of a BBA. They described carefully examining their schedules so as to ensure they would have time to fulfil the necessary requirements for their desired liberal arts major *in addition* to the necessary business school courses:

I put pen to paper and planned everything out and figured out that I could really complete this English major and do the business school with not that much overlap and extension of my time. And so that's what I decided. – **Brad**

As articulated by Brad, while excited by the idea of double majoring, participants were not so swayed by their newfound academic interest in the liberal arts to seriously consider dropping their initial business school plan. It was perceived that adopting a liberal art major only made sense if it could be easily integrated into their initial academic plan of entering the GBS.

Students' perceptions of college-to-career culture at Emory (RQ's 2a and 2b): Academic Path

Having shed light on their path to becoming a member of both the ECAS and GBS, participants were able to articulate differences they have encountered in the college-to-career culture of the business school versus that which they have experienced in the context of the liberal arts. One common theme in participants' responses was the perception that GBS students approach their education with a primary focus on learning how to secure a job. Meanwhile, students described the ECAS liberal arts environment as placing great emphasis on enjoying the processes of academia and gaining knowledge about the world at large:

Business School students learn with, or at least they think that they learn with a purpose. Whereas like, college students learn to learn. – **Jessica**

I just think there's a lot of people in the Business School who, because there's that greater emphasis internally on getting a job, they prioritize that and then take the easy way out for other things. Versus in the college, I guess, if you could flip it, people are more focused on learning and just doing the best job they can for a job in a certain field or a general area. Yeah, I definitely say that jobs are a bigger portion of the business school because we are literally studying business. – **Michael**

The "purpose" Jessica is referring to in the quote above is employment. Like Jessica and Michael, participants emphasized that their peers view the Goizueta experience through the lens of being able to directly utilize course content in their efforts to secure a job offer down the road. By emphasizing the idea that GBS students are "literally studying business," Michael illustrates

the common perception that the Business School curriculum's main focus is on preparing students to work in specific roles in the business sphere. In contrast, the approach to education in the liberal arts was described as placing high value on intellectual curiosity and exploration, with the idea that the skills gained from this learning will be applicable to any job later on.

In describing differences between the approach to learning in the GBS versus ECAS, participants explained that had they pursued a BBA alone, the opportunity to explore their individual academic interests through course work would have been notably missing from their college experience:

I think one thing that I sometimes felt was missing in, like the BBA side of my education that maybe like drew me towards sociology a little more was like looking for that space where there was more intellectual curiosity or like learning for the sake of really understanding. Because like, while I did really value the practical skill set, I think also, like, there's so much value in asking questions just to understand and not jumping into how we reach this bottom line. And so, I really appreciated having that balance in the sociology sphere of asking questions and diving deeper. And yeah, having space to just think about, what do I see going on around me? What are other people experiencing? And how do we build like a more nuanced understanding? – **Olivia**

I'm going to be honest with you, it's harder being a philosophy major than it is being a finance major, thus far. Like, philosophy, you have to think. You have to write all the essays. In finance, like, just learn your material and then you kind of just get by. It reminds me of like, fifth grade math, right? Fifth grade math is to a fifth grader as corporate finance is to a business school student. – **Frank**

I don't like the very formulaic way of thinking in the business school. In a lot of the business school classes, I sit there and I'm like, are you kidding me? Like, this is stuff that a fourth grader should be learning. Like, it's just not high-level thinking at all. And then in terms of the college, I love the discussions. I live for those. – **Brad**

Like Olivia, Frank, and Brad, participants emphasized a distinct difference in the classroom environments of the business school versus the liberal arts. Courses in the business school were described as consisting primarily of lectures, with little room for discussion or further questioning. Additionally, the Goizueta curriculum was described as noticeably less challenging than courses taken in the ECAS. Frank and Brad even went so far as to compare the Business

School level of learning to elementary school math. Meanwhile, the liberal arts provide these students with an outlet to think critically and creatively about the world around them.

Participants articulated a great appreciation for the critical thinking and exploration they are able to exercise in their liberal arts classes.

Participants explained that their peers in the liberal arts employ rhetoric to describe Goizueta students that often exaggerates these perceived differences:

The hesitations, because there were definitely hesitations, were the stereotypes of the business school. And it's something I still think a lot about today. Because like, there's stereotypes even in my friend group, like you know, the snake stereotype and the idea that business school students aren't really that smart. They're just kind of there to get an easy major and an easy job. – **Eliza**

I think sometimes I dislike the perception that college students have of the business school. I think there's the general perception that business school students only care about money or only care about themselves. Or that all of their classes are super easy and it's like an easy way out of college. – **Nicole**

I've sort of had to kind of like, defend myself in philosophy classes. Like, they will 100% put together like a massive groupthink, and like everyone in the philosophy class is coming up with some hypothesis all together while the teacher's just nodding about like, business school being not even academia, like it's not even college. – **Ben**

These responses from Nicole, Eliza, and Ben, illustrate the two most common stereotypes mentioned by respondents as being associated with GBS students by those in the liberal arts. The first is the categorization of Business School students as “snakes”. This label is meant to encompass the competitive and somewhat “slimy” nature liberal arts students see reflected in the actions of a typical money-focused business school student. The second stereotype is the idea that Goizueta and its students are academically inferior to the ECAS. Participants such as Ben recounted instances in which they felt the need to defend themselves to their liberal arts community, attempting to justify their decision to double major in the business school and disprove the idea that the GBS is “not even academia”. Despite having formed similar

perceptions of their peers and classes in the GBS through their own personal experiences, as aforementioned, respondents like Eliza described the feelings of hesitation and discomfort that stem from the idea of being associated with these uncomplimentary judgements frequently placed upon Goizueta students.

Another Business School stereotype primarily brought up by female respondents is the categorization of Goizueta as being primarily made up of what students' term "frat bro's," or fraternity brothers:

I feel like the business school, people are like, oh, everyone's like a frat boy and like really competitive. – **Anna**

Within the business school, you can imagine your classic hat backwards frat guy.
– **Eliza**

Like, I said finance bros earlier but like, it's kind of a joke but it's also not. Because I feel like especially with toxic masculinity in the business school and like business in general, that's definitely heightened. – **Jessica**

These participants explained that such rhetoric is often employed by their liberal arts peers to describe the general population of students in the Business School. As illustrated by Eliza and Jessica's responses above, female participants acknowledged that they have encountered this sort of hyper-masculine fraternity culture in Goizueta, thus perceiving there to be some truth to this generalization.

Despite acknowledging these uncomplimentary stereotypes and the lack of intellectual exploration associated with the Business School, the majority of students in my sample (17/19 participants) revealed that they have chosen to prioritize their studies in the GBS over the ECAS:

I think that I'm the only person that I've talked to who's like, my college major is my, like, I love my college major. And I'm doing the Business School because I like it and I can. Most people are like, I'm in the Business School and that's for fun. – **Dana**

That's something that's very popular for business students. Like, do your career job, and then hey, if you're interested in psych, do it. Or hey, if you're interested in creative

writing, go for it... that's very common among Business School students. Like, do what you think is fun, and then also do what you think can help you with a career. – **Frank**

When kids in the Business School, talk about the college, most of them see the college – like, I've talked to a couple people who are also majors in the college, and they've always, like, from our conversations, the kids we'll talk to in our business school classes will say, you know, that's a great supplementary thing. Or like, that's a great thing to compliment what you're doing with the business school. And so, they see what we do in the college, as you know, a great additional skill or a good supplementary skill to the core skills that you actually need in the business school, if that makes sense. I mean, they basically see a major in the college is like a cherry on top of the cake. Or icing on the cake. So, like, they see that as, you know, it's great that you're doing that, but you know, make sure you're still doing your finance work, things like that. – **Luke**

Illustrated in the quotes above, respondents explained that students majoring in both the business and the liberal arts typically refer to business as their more important major. This is the major they assume will be more beneficial when the time comes to apply for jobs. As articulated by Luke, liberal arts majors are commonly referred to in GBS student rhetoric as “supplementary”, a course of study that is pursued for fun. Dana is one of just two participants (both female) who claimed to view her liberal arts major (philosophy) as her primary area of study, a perspective that is rarely encountered in the Business School. It is worth noting that despite Dana's categorization of philosophy as her top priority, both she and the other like-minded female participant have decided to pursue a business-related career path since entering Goizueta.

Participants explained that this mindset of prioritizing one's Business School education is reinforced through the typical line of questioning directed towards students in the liberal arts:

People ask me, all right so what's your double major? You know, [I say] I'm a philosophy major. [They say,] Oh so what else are you majoring in? You know, people, I don't really find just a philosophy major. It's really hard to find, a lot of people are always double majoring. – **Frank**

There's definitely stereotypes and there's definitely stigmas. Like, everyone loves to rag on – I'm trying to think of certain ones. Philosophy is a perfect example actually. If you told someone you're doing a philosophy degree, and you're not a double major in something else, kids, especially business school kids are the worst example, they think a degree has to have a direct functionality. – **Ben**

As illustrated by Frank and Ben, respondents explained that ECAS students are often met with exclamations of surprise upon mentioning their pursuit of a major in the liberal arts. Participants attributed such reactions to GBS students' perception of the course matter of the liberal arts as unrelated to helping students achieve their career aspirations. As described by Ben, they regard the knowledge gained through liberal arts as lacking "direct functionality". Participants explained that this leads GBS students to assume that anyone with a major in the ECAS must also have a double major in something more practical.

In describing the Business School's main focus on job preparedness, participants detailed what they perceive to be a vast disparity in career related resources between the GBS and the ECAS. Reflecting on their time in Goizueta, the participants emphasized that they have felt supported in their career pursuits:

[In the business school] they have like, the advisors hold your hand through course selection and what you want to study, what professors might be good and what classes like, they literally like baby you through the whole process. And then the Career Center is really good. You have to take a whole class on professional development, you have to take a whole class on business communication. And that's required for everyone in their first semester. And then our Career Center has like career coaches. And so, like finance and consulting majors who will sit there and run cases with you so you can prepare for interviews. They'll read over your resume and give you tips on that. They'll help you learn how to network; they will share what firms and what job opportunities and career fairs and whatever else. And like networking opportunities, they have alumni come back and share their experiences and their jobs and their firms and what those opportunities look like for us right now. So, like, they really just hold your hand through the whole thing. But like, it's all with that end goal of getting their students to graduate with a good job. – **Jessica**

Like I said, the most perfect example I could give is like, a professional development is a class that you have to take in Business School, that like, everyone hates it, and like rags on it. But like, yeah, no one's going to admit that they were the kid who like didn't know how to write an email asking to network with someone, but like, that's most people. And professional development is a class that's literally geared just towards teaching you skills like that. – **Ben**

As demonstrated by Jessica, Isaac, and Ben, participants in my sample were quick to enumerate the countless ways in which Goizueta provides its students with career-related resources. These services are not just made available to students should they happen to need assistance. Rather, participants expressed that these resources are integrated as part of the GBS curriculum. For example, everyone enrolled in the Business School must take a course specifically focused on professional development. Additionally, Goizueta students must meet with career advisors to receive guidance in their pursuit for jobs and internships. Meanwhile, participants describe the ECAS as lacking resources entirely:

And College has nothing like that. We're about to be seniors and like, I'm helping my friends like make a resume for the first time. Or like make a LinkedIn or like, and they're majors that have nothing to do with any sort of job in like quote unquote, business. And I'm helping them with that kind of stuff. Because there's not much in the college that like, yeah, maybe the resources are there, but they're kind of like lingering in the distance and they're not pushed at you like I think they should be. Whereas the business was the exact opposite. They're like, a lot of people would consider overboard, but it's important. – **Ben**

The business school makes it seem [that the liberal arts students are] not really like, ahead of the game. Like they're definitely doing great things but like they're just not going to be as prepared for like, recruiting and stuff.
– **Isaac**

Like Isaac and Ben, participants perceive a stark dichotomy between career resources provided to liberal arts students versus Goizueta students. The ECAS was described by participants as failing to adequately teach its students skills perceived as pertinent to the process of applying to jobs successfully. Respondents noted that this disparity is made even more evident through interactions in which participants find themselves being asked by liberal arts peers to share their knowledge of career related tasks, such as how to write a resume. Having been on the receiving end of the resources thrown at students in Goizueta, this absence of sufficient resources only reinforced participants' perception that those who major solely in the liberal arts will emerge from college ill-prepared to secure a job.

Participants also highlighted the idea that Emory students who are not enrolled in Goizueta Business School are not permitted access to its extensive resources:

I think like, the biggest thing is just like the discrepancy of resources that people have, depending on like, if they're in the business school, versus if they're in the college. And I think like not to, you know, talk bad about the business school, but a lot of their resources are so like, closely held, like, they won't distribute like their alumni list or like, any sort of like, inner, like, this is what a resume should look like to people in the college. And I think like, if we want to have more people be successful in their recruitment process, like those resources need to be allowed for everyone. And I don't really see why they don't, you know, like how give everyone access to it, because I think like, if you're an Emory alum, even Emory alum, like you should be given all the resources. – **Brittany**

Respondents expressed that, despite all undergraduate students being part of the Emory University community, a student's access to specific resources is determined by which academic path they decide to take. Students such as Brittany articulated that knowledge regarding topics such as how to network, create a LinkedIn, and write an impressive resume is relevant to all students regardless of their job aspirations. Yet, students in the ECAS are not permitted to take advantage of the career services offered in Goizueta. Participants explained that this contributes to feelings of superiority experienced by business school students when comparing their plentiful career resources to the relatively few perceived to be available to liberal arts students.

Students' perceptions of college-to-career culture at Emory (RQ's 3): Career Path

When asked about informal conversations encountered in the business school, both male and female respondents emphasized that Goizueta students are constantly talking about career related issues:

So, with business school, I've always made this joke that when you're talking to people, they're it's like you have a CD in your head. And do you have like nine tracks that you can play. And those nine tracks are the different conversations you can have with people. I would say like six of those nine tracks have to do with careers. So, I think Business School conversation revolves around careers, job security, what people are doing, like what other people are doing. – **Eliza**

You would walk into, like any coffee shop on campus - I guess specifically the one next to the business school. But like, everyone all the time is like having a coffee chat with some alumni or networking with someone or practicing for an interview or filling out an application, like it is so time-consuming. So, like, there's really nothing else for us to talk about. **–Jessica**

Like Eliza and Jessica, participants explained that career conversations in Goizueta are not limited to the aforementioned formal structures of career advising or courses on professional development. Rather, both male and female respondents view career conversations to be the primary topic of discussion between GBS students. This chatter includes topics such as networking, applications, the recruitment process, interviews, internships, and job offers.

With students not being eligible to enter Goizueta until they achieve junior standing, participants emphasized the idea that the incoming GBS class is thrown into job recruitment, influencing career conversations between peers to start immediately upon entry:

So, think about it this way. By the time that you enter the business school, you're at earliest a second semester sophomore, right. Recruiting for finance starts at that point, right, which means you need to know your technicals and all of like, you need to be prepared to answer a lot of the really difficult questions by the time that you're a second semester sophomore. So, by the time you're entering the business school, you should be very prepared right. Now, why is that? Right? It's because for the kids who go to Wharton, they've started learning this stuff since their freshman year. Right. So, they already know everything. Like, we can't take corporate finance as a freshman, right, versus the kid at Wharton, right? They're taking like distressed debt, like higher level finance by the time that they're a sophomore, right. And so, you know, if that's your competition, right, like we need to have some way to compensate for that. And so, the way to do that, and this is true for a lot of finance, law, consulting stuff at Emory, which is a lot of mentors. Like you need to know people so they can teach you what's going on. **–Frank**

Frank explained that the timing of students' delayed entry into their business education lines up with the beginning of the typical recruitment seasons for jobs in finance and consulting. He compares this timeline to that of students at other institutions, perceived as “competitors” for these positions, who do not have to wait until junior year to immerse themselves in business. Participants explained that many Goizueta students enter the business school without prior

knowledge of how this job recruitment process will work. This leads to a sense of urgency, with students scrambling to understand what steps to take in order to secure an internship and then a job. Without ample time to first adjust to the business school or form relationships with professors, students rely on their peers and student mentors to teach them the steps of these recruitment processes.

When asked to elaborate on informal conversations with peers in the GBS, respondents explained that the two most “traditional” business school student paths are considered to be finance and consulting, with finance being most commonly associated with investment banking:

In the business school it’s, oh, I’m gonna do consulting or investment banking. Like yeah, if you get someone saying oh, I’m gonna go into mergers and acquisitions or business analysis, that’s kind of like woah what? – **Bobby**

I felt like everyone within the business school, they were either interested in investment banking or consulting. And I started to think that those were like, literally the only two business career paths. Which is very odd because, as I keep saying, it’s just not true. – **Anna**

Despite there being many other potential paths to take when searching for a job in the business sphere, as articulated by Anna, participants emphasized that it is rare to encounter Goizueta students pursuing career paths other than consulting or investment banking. Anything outside of these designated career paths was referred to by participants as “non-traditional,” and met with surprise when encountered.

A career in finance, namely investment banking, was commonly cited as the most prestigious of these traditional paths:

Probably the most popular and the most competitive career like for finance majors is investment banking. – **Nicole**

People assume like finance is supposed to be like the hardest and like most prestigious. – **Brittany**

With kids who major in finance, usually the big jobs that all of them want to go into are

investment banks. – **Luke**

Despite respondents illustrating a clear understanding that their peers in Goizueta place investment banking at the top of their peer prestige system, only one participant has plans to pursue this path (as illustrated in Figure 2). The remaining participants in my specific sample have made the conscious decision not to pursue investment banking:

You know those kinds of memes where they say business school students are snakes? I feel like investment bankers kind of are snakes. And I don't really want to be amongst them... A lot of people are like, investment banking just drains the life out of you. You just feel, you feel morally not okay most of the time. Because you're getting all this money, but it's not, I don't think it's particularly like – you're doing it off the backs of other people, I guess. So, it feels a little draining after a while, I've heard. – **Sara**

I think everyone knows that, like, you know, you do get paid a lot, but also, you're kind of selling your soul. – **Frank**

Just like talking with them sometimes. They just like, have this certain arrogance to them. And it's like, you can be arrogant if you want, but like, don't be like, finance bro arrogant where like, Oh, yeah, like, I work 80 hours a week, and then I get drunk on the weekends. It's like, you're the only, like it is a subset of people that think it's really cool. If you're not inside that subset, you don't think it's cool. – **Michael**

As illustrated by Sara, participants explained that they associate the “snake” stereotype, commonly employed by liberal arts students to describe the general GBS population, with those students pursuing investment banking specifically. The above quotes from Sara, Michael, and Frank shed light on the perception that investment bankers are “arrogant”, “morally not okay”, and “selling [their] soul”. Thus, while participants explained that they are aware that their Goizueta peers view this finance route as most prestigious, they are not willing to compromise their own values and morals as a means to achieve this high status.

It is worth noting that, as illustrated by Michael in the quote above, quite a few participants highlighted the idea of the arrogant Goizueta “finance bro” (8/19 participants). This

was brought up in relation to the hyper masculinity that participants commonly encountered throughout their experiences with the recruitment process, internships, and jobs:

Sales training is very like, “bro-y”. Um, I did it last summer and I was just like, I’m not a bro like this. Like, I can’t talk about like, fucking Major League lacrosse. – **Ben**

It was a very small office, and the culture was very “bro” heavy. And there’s only two interns, me and this other guy. And of course, he’d walk in and like, talk about some [sports] event that’s coming up, and I was like, I have no clue what you’re talking about. And they would just vibe so hard, and I’m just sitting there. – **Brittany**

I definitely want to work somewhere where I feel like they realize there aren't enough women in corporate America and are like, trying to make a difference with that, um, because I do just feel like the finance world is like, so male dominated, and like, I've kind of seen that firsthand. – **Anna**

Students such as Anna, Brittany, and Ben described feeling turned off by interactions with these so called “finance bros”. As demonstrated by Anna’s quote above, these experiences lead female participants to emphasize their hopes to one day mentor and hire businesswomen below them so as to make the business sphere less male dominated.

Another topic of GBS informal career conversations highlighted by participants were questions between peers regarding which students have successfully earned internship or job offers and where:

And then just hearing how people already have stuff lined up, and just, it stresses me out, because it makes me think, wow, you know, all these people already have stuff and I don't, am I an idiot, you know? And so, it's a very, very stressful conversation. And it's a very, like I said, competitive atmosphere. – **Chris**

I think in the business school people express concern more about like, what other people are doing, which I think can become like, toxic at times. And like has been something I've tried to separate myself from because it's just too much. I do think in the business school, it's like, oh, like, where is this person interviewing or like, oh, where do they have super days like, where are they working? – **Eliza**

Participants explained that due to the structured recruitment timeline for traditional business paths, Goizueta students go through each step of the process around the same time. Like Eliza

and Chris, participants commonly reported feelings of stress and anxiety that stem from comparing themselves to their peers as they attempt to navigate each step. More specifically, participants emphasized that members of the Goizueta community attribute high status to classmates that secure interviews and offers from those companies regarded by students as residing at the top of the hierarchy:

And like how that's actually really interesting. I've thought about that like a million times. Because like, I always think about when I came in as a freshman like, I had no damn clue, I'd never like heard of these places. And then by the time I'm about to be a senior, I'm like, Oh, yeah, pick this offer over this offer, like, no question like, um, I think about a lot actually. And I'd say like, so much of it is word of mouth. – **Ben**

When you hear kids getting interviews with Deloitte or McKinsey or AWC, you're like wow. Like, that's pretty high up. And like, I'm not gonna lie, I've reached out to alumni at those places. Just like, emailed them being like ah, I'd love to talk to you. Because like wow, like that would – and it's the sense of like, I know other people around me would be like woah, she got an interview there, that's crazy. So, I think the names [are prestigious] and not necessarily their mission. Which is pretty um, pretty not good. – **Lisa**

While participants came into Goizueta with little to no prior knowledge about where they might like to work post-grad, students like Ben and Lisa explained that the rhetoric amongst students reinforces the idea that they should be aiming for certain companies. Having now been exposed to these informal conversations in the GBS, participants explained that they would be thrilled to secure a job at one of these specific “name brand” companies, expressing the appeal of earning the highest level of admiration from their peers.

In contrast to the incessant career talk experienced in Goizueta, participants explained that their peers in the ECAS rarely bring up topics related to career:

Yeah, honestly, I think like the most striking difference to me it's like there's so, it's such a constant conversation in the business school and like, in groups, like of my peers in that major. And there's like, almost like, a complete lack of conversation about it in the college. – **Olivia**

The difference is night and day. Not once in my English classes have I heard people complaining about internships and jobs. – **Luke**

They're not walking around saying I need this internship, I need to get this job, they seem to have a little bit more of a laid-back approach to that. I just think it's in part because it is emphasized a little bit less through their curriculum and through their culture. - **Michael**

The difference in frequency of college-to-career conversations in the GBS versus the ECAS was described by the students in my sample as drastic. As demonstrated by the quotes above, participants emphasized that there is a “complete lack of conversation” about post-grad plans and preparation amongst their liberal arts peers. Like Michael, participants described the ECAS environment as being more laid back and less competitive, providing them with a much-appreciated reprieve from the overload of career conversations they encounter in the Business School.

Along with this idea of the ECAS's less competitive environment, participants emphasized that their relationships with Goizueta students were different in nature than those formed with their peers in the liberal arts:

My big in my sorority, she was telling me like, you have to make sure you have like business school friends, and then your non-business school friends, these people are the ones you can talk to, like about work about, like, what's going on there. But like, at the end of the day, like the people in the college tend to be someone who cares more about like, your personal being, I guess, because there's like less of a tie of that competition... I felt like a lot of the time in the business school it's super, like surface level.
- **Brittany**

Um, but I would say like, definitely, like within the humanities... I think like, like, those are some of my best friends. And they're like wonderful people. - **Marcus**

But for the most part, we talk about life and everything that doesn't specifically revolve around school. Like we talk about people, we talk about ideas, we argued about the presidential debate today. And I just don't get the same sense of, I think almost all of my friends that are of different majors, I can have those kinds of very free conversations with for the most part. Obviously, there are exceptions. There's small talk with a lot of people still, but it's not the same kind of small talk that I feel like happens so constantly, consistently, and similarly within the hallowed halls of Goizueta. - **Eliza**

As articulated by Brittany, participants referred to their “business school friends” and “non-business school friends” as two separate groups. While relationships with Goizueta students were described as being primarily built upon conversations regarding careers and the recruitment process, friendships with liberal arts students were expressed as being less surface level. It is with their ECAS friends that participants cite being able to chat about more personal matters such as ideas, life events, and other subjects entirely unrelated to career.

Participants did assert that on the occasion that they do encounter career conversations in the ECAS, there were two paths that stood out to them as popular. These are the paths of law school or graduate school:

But like I honestly don't really hear a lot, I hear more about talking in the college about going straight to law school, straight to grad school, and less so job search. – **Lisa**

Actually, philosophy is one of the paths where I'm actually more clear. There's literally nothing you can do except go into academia.
– **Frank**

Kids in the college, they either want to be professors or lawyers. – **Luke**

Responses similar to the quotes above highlighted this perception that liberal arts students will not be joining the workforce immediately post-grad. Rather, participants claimed that the majority of students in the ECAS will go straight into higher education, seeing the paths available to them as limited to a career in law or academia.

Students' own college-to-career paths (RQ's 3): Intended Careers

I asked respondents to tell me about their initial work aspirations upon entry to college, and what their career plans are now after being integrated into Emory's college-to-career culture.

Participant Pseudonym	Career Plan Upon Entering Emory	Current Career Plan
Jessica	Nonprofit work	Consultant
Lisa	Engineer	Consultant, Industrial engineer, Aerospace industry, Create own startup
Eliza	Politician	Consultant, Law school, Politician
Dana	Unsure, STEM field	Consulting or Data Analytics, Law school, Actress, PhD in Philosophy
Brittany	Medical school, Doctor	Consultant, MBA, Law school, Create own startup
Nicole	Medical school, Doctor	Investment Banker, Law school, Graduate school
Anna	Marketing	Financial Analyst
Sara	Management information systems	Healthcare IT department
Olivia	Public policy	Public sector, Nonprofit work, MA in public policy
Isaac	Communications	Consultant
Daniel	Engineer	Consultant, Politics, Professor
Brad	Consulting or Marketing	Consultant or Marketing
Max	Investment Banking	Consultant, Math teacher
Bobby	Sports business	Consultant, Sports business
Michael	Tech entrepreneurship	Consultant, Entrepreneurship
Frank	Unsure	Credit Analyst, JD-MBA
Luke	Unsure, Business field	Corporate development and transaction services analyst, Law school, Financial and Corporate Law
Ben	Work on Wall Street	Equity research analyst
Marcus	Unsure, Business field	Music management

Figure 2: *Participants Matched with Their Initial and Current Career Aspirations*

As demonstrated in Figure 2, a prominent trend in subjects' evolution of career plans is the decision to recruit for jobs in consulting (11/19 participants). When asked about the appeal of becoming a consultant, there were four factors commonly mentioned by participants. One factor contributing to this shift in career goals was the sense of certainty that stems from following a path through which have seen many Goizueta students successfully secure post-grad employment:

I think I've been kind of gravitated towards this established path and timeline, and this is what you do to get a job and have financial security. And you know, by October of your junior year, you'll have a junior summer consulting offer and then you'll return and like, you'll basically know what you're doing for three years after college in like, six months. And that was really appealing with all the uncertainty. – **Olivia**

Like, you need to do this, this, and this. Like, if you follow this path and you excel in the classes like, you will 100% do well. – **Isaac**

Respondents explained that consulting is a common career path for students in the GBS. As illustrated by Olivia, the path to consulting was perceived by respondents as very well-defined. Students expressed an understanding that in securing a junior summer consulting internship, they are likely to receive a return offer from the same company at the beginning of their senior year. Like Olivia and Isaac, participants described feeling comforted by the perception that, so long as they follow the steps laid out for them by their career advisors and peer mentors, there is a high likelihood they will line up a job offer before graduating. Participants were drawn to the structure of this path to employment, as well as this idea of squaring away plans for post-grad employment so early on.

Interestingly, despite this perception that consulting is a route guaranteed to set students up for success, many participants reported that they are going through consulting recruitment while simultaneously preparing alternative avenues for employment:

If you're looking at business school students, most of the time they're going to be like I, I am going to have this lined up here. I'm going to do this here. I'm going to have this interview that day, and I'm going to get hopefully a job by this day and then if I don't have any of that, then I will go into fallback mode and then do this that in whatever.

– **Sara**

Now, it's become all about just opening as many doors for myself as I possibly can. Which is why I'm studying for the LSAT like super-duper early, so I give myself enough time to take it. So maybe I could go to law school. And that's why like I'm applying to business internships, and like really focusing on my business classes, because maybe I can be something in the business world. Or maybe I can follow the original path of like doing philosophy. Or maybe I'll just throw it all out the window and do theater. Like, I'm just trying to open a lot of windows a lot of doors for myself. So no, I don't know what I want to do with my life. But I know that I have a lot of options. – **Dana**

Like Irene and Dana, Students in my sample described that it is typical for Goizueta students to brainstorm multiple fallback plans in case their job pursuit is not met with immediate success.

This is clearly illustrated in Dana's summary of her own fallback plans. Alongside going through recruitment for consulting, Dana is studying to take the LSAT in case she should want to attend law school, developing her skills as an actress in case she decides to pursue theater professionally, and putting effort into her philosophy major so that she will be prepared should she decide to pursue a PhD in philosophy down the road.

A second factor described as a pull of consulting was the idea mentioned by Olivia in her quote above that by securing a job offer as a consultant, “you basically know what you're doing for three years after college”. Participants emphasized the appeal of an entry level position held for just two to three years post-grad:

A lot of people say consulting is kind of like the job for people who don't know what they want to do. – **Brittany**

A fundamental characteristic of the business school is that a lot of us are undecided on what we actually want to do. And I am very much in that boat, as you've probably heard. And investment banking and consulting help you push that down the road a little bit further. – **Bobby**

Participants like Brittany and Bobby highlighted the idea that consulting is perceived as a plan for the immediate short-term future. In deciding to go through the recruitment process for consulting, participants explained that they do not aspire to hold a position as a consultant for the entirety of their working life. Rather, consulting was commonly described by respondents as an intermediate step between college and one's career. These two to three years spent as a business consultant are perceived by participants as allowing them extra time to develop more specific long-term professional aspirations.

A third trend in responses was the idea that pursuing a job in consulting will result in financial security. This was described as having been a determining factor in participants' decision-making processes when deciding on a career path:

I need a job. I need money. And I need job security. – **Brad**

I was trying to figure out how I could do something I like, without compromising my morals or like, you know, getting a low paying job, or no job. – **Jessica**

Rewards? hmm. Money. Um, I'm a little biased because I will say that, I will this preface it with I'm a little biased because I think in order to have a good life, you need money. – **Sarah**

As illustrated by Brad, Sara, and Jessica, participants emphasized that they view consulting as a path that will provide them with a steady income. It is worth noting that participants' emphasis was primarily on finding a job that will provide them with a reliable source of income which they can comfortably live off of without fear of unemployment – they did not cite being driven by dreams of accumulating an exorbitant amount of wealth or the desire to buy material things. Only two male participants were an exception to this pattern, listing extravagant material wealth as a motivating factor:

I think, ever since I was a little kid, not little, but like 10 or 11 years old, I was like, Oh, I'm going to be a multi billionaire industrialist when I grow up. So, it was just like

something that was always in the back of my mind, just go into business because I just see the potential, the upside with business is pretty much infinite. – **Max**

Um, so like, one of my friend's dad's like this, like crazy, successful guy, like, drives Ferraris and stuff, like races Ferraris. Like, he's like, so cool. Like, he was an entrepreneur, like, I want to be an entrepreneur, too. I love cars and stuff like that.
– **Michael**

Max and Michael were the only participants who articulated dreams of becoming rich and owning expensive objects. The other participants focused more so on the general desire for a job that will earn them a steady and reliable income.

The fourth trend in responses regarding the reasoning behind participants' decision to pursue consulting was students' explanation that this type of business-related work will allow them to employ creative problem-solving skills.

I really want to use problem solving and creativity skills. – **Daniel**

Because at the end of the day, that's what I liked about politics, it's the problem-solving element, it's coming up with solutions. It's the idea that if somebody says no to your idea, they better say no with a feasible alternative. And I really liked that. And so, I was like, I'd like to go into consulting because that's just private sector problem solving. – **Eliza**

As mentioned in the previous section, respondents commonly expressed that an aspect of the liberal arts which they especially value is the opportunity to think critically and creatively. When discussing their consulting recruitment plans, participants such as Daniel and Eliza emphasized that, as a consultant, their hopes were that they will be able to exercise this problem-solving skillset.

Building off of this, subjects explained that they did not deem it necessary for the subject matter of said problem solving to be directly related to their own specific intellectual interests or personal values:

Most of my true, like, intellectual interests, like, I don't really see that reflected in work. And I don't think I have to. I don't think that that's a requirement. – **Frank**

Honestly like, I doubt I'm gonna be passionate about whatever job I get out of college, just to be completely honest. Um but I'm kind of okay with that, at this point. And I kind of want something that I can be okay with. I don't have to be, you know, so passionate about it to get up every morning and go do it. – **Brad**

I care a lot about helping others and serving others... And it's something I'm really passionate about. And giving, ultimately, like, creating a platform for others to speak, which is something, I'm not quite sure how I'm going to be doing that within consulting yet... I'll probably integrate it, it's something that I really care about. – **Eliza**

Participants expressed that they are aware that entry level consulting work is not likely to focus on the subject matter that they find most important, impactful, or interesting. Like Frank, Eliza, and Brad, participants vocalized a willingness to compromise their intellectual curiosity as a means to secure what they perceive to be a stable job. When asked about their personal values, participants acknowledged that their interests and values are more clearly reflected in other fields of work. However, they explained that they perceive it as too big a risk to pursue a career path outside of the business sphere:

There are only so many paths that can really help you in life. Like I think maybe students might think like that, like with the business school you're learning like these skills to go utilize in this market, which the business market is like, ginormous like it's like everything almost like a business like, ideal. So, I think that maybe they think that students in the college are more restricted to what they want to do later on in life with what they've learned here. – **Isaac**

And in terms of creative writing. I feel like even though it's something I've been passionate about for a really long time, I just ruled it out pretty early on due to, ahh this makes me feel like such a traditional, stereotypical business major, but I was like, Oh, it's not gonna get me a job. So, I ruled it out. - **Eliza**

I mean, like, obviously, since I'm majoring in the college, I will never say or be one of those people that says that liberal arts majors are useless or anything like that. But then, at the same time, there is that stigma that, you know, it's hard to get a job with a degree in one of those fields. – **Luke**

Through responses that mirror the quotes above, participants explained that they do not perceive career paths commonly associated with the liberal arts as a legitimate pathway to the job security and financial stability they are looking for. Additionally, they expected liberal arts career paths to

greatly narrow the options that will be available to students down the road. This perspective is encompassed by Isaac in his claim, “there are only so many paths that can really help you in life”. However, it is important to note that participants have not ruled out non-business jobs forever:

The way I think about it is at this point, I'm trying to get a job in consulting outside of school... [until I am] financially independent, essentially. And then go and teach like middle school, high school math in New York... It seems like it would be around 2-3 million nest egg, like to have a nest egg and then all the other investments, um, and the passive income that is generated by those, I think that would be the goal. Then I'll be able to, like, schedule, like, what am I gonna like, and do things that I actually think might value and impact society more. – **Max**

I think the idea is that I do something that will get me a lot of experience and like help me pay off school debt so that I can go and find another experience that I think will more directly contribute to those values or like help me go to grad school and then, you know, help me do something that will actually contribute to those values. – **Nicole**

Participants emphasized that they plan to pursue such alternative pathways once they perceive themselves to have laid out a solid foundation. For example, Max asserted that though he is eager to make a positive impact on the lives of middle and high school students, he will only feel comfortable acting on this desire to become a teacher once he has established a sufficient “nest egg” through business endeavors. As illustrated by Max and Nicole, respondents explained that it is not until after they have found themselves in a place of financial independence and stability that they will make alternative career choices that will ultimately allow them to see their personal values reflected in their work.

Career Paths Considered After Initial Entry into Goizueta	Female Participants	Male Participants
Considered “Non-Traditional” Path	Dana Olivia Eliza Jessica	Bobby Luke Marcus Ben
Did Not Consider “Non-Traditional” Path	Nicole Sara Anna Lisa Brittany	Frank Daniel Isaac Michael Max Brad
Currently Pursuing “Non-Traditional” Path	Olivia	Marcus Ben

Figure 3: *Participant Accounts of Careers Considered After Entering Business School*

This idea of putting off one’s intellectual and personal goals so as to first establish a secure foundation is one which some participants reported having grappled with while determining their college-to-career plan. As illustrated in Figure 3, eight participants reported having at some point considered nixing their plan to recruit for consulting or finance, tempted to pursue a “non-traditional” career path instead. Most of these students (5/8 participants) ultimately chose to revert their plans back to the more traditional route. Students that were wavering described having had direct conversations with members of the Goizueta community regarding their hesitations:

That's a question I asked my advisors, you know, should I maybe try to shadow a lawyer or get an internship at a law firm, instead of going through all this, just stress, headaches, all that just to get an internship for next summer. And both of them recommended, you know..., like they both recommended that I go through this [recruitment] process, as grueling as it might be. And, you know, it will help develop myself as like, you know, with being a professional, you know, learning how to interview, learning how to function in an office, just things like that. So, I've thought about it, but I've had advice that tells me to do it. – **Luke**

Um, and I think I was very influenced by just like the constant exposure to, like constantly hearing that question of like, well why don't you do consulting? Like, would it be that bad? Here are all the good things about it. – **Olivia**

People were like, don't do equity research. Don't do sales and trading, they're both like, bad jobs that limit you and where you can go later on. So, like I always had pushback from people I really respect and like, frankly, people who, at the time, knew a lot more than me about where to take a career... I obviously did not take their advice, but I definitely felt the pressure.

– **Ben**

As illustrated above, this expectation that business school students should recruit for either finance or consulting was reinforced to students through the rhetoric of both their peers and career advisors. For example, Luke recounted his process of coming to the realization that he would like to become a lawyer. With this goal in mind, he questioned whether it was pertinent to put himself through the tedious process of recruiting for a finance internship. When he brought this up to his Goizueta career advisor, he found himself being encouraged to recruit for finance anyways. The argument utilized by Luke's career advisor was that an internship in finance or consulting will prepare students for whatever they decide to pursue next. This argument is one that participants such as Olivia and Ben described as being employed by their peers to justify why students should put themselves through the traditional recruitment process. Participants emphasized that general perception of students in the GBS is that these two pathways will best set any student up for success, regardless of individual aspirations or interests.

For the three respondents who have decided to forgo the traditional recruitment processes, this idea of putting ones more salient interests, values, and career aspirations on hold to develop a professional skillset was not enough to sway them:

Really just with time, like the more time I spent trying to do case prep with consulting, I was just like, I like the problem solving but I don't care about the problems. I don't care about their bottom line. And yeah, like I said, like seeing everything going on in the world around us. I was like, why am I gonna waste three years helping companies make more money when there's like, you know, people dying because they don't have access

to health care and like, all of this inequality all around us and like, I'm essentially just going to wait three years doing something that like, I don't see as providing value in claim of being prepared for it? – **Olivia**

I just kind of realized that most people in banking um, didn't really have the same values as me, actually. I guess values is a good word for that. – **Ben**

It's just that like, I value my family a lot, and I love being with them. Um, and so I think like, I had to, like, take a step back and go like, okay, like, I care about my family, like, I care about my girlfriend a lot, and I don't know if like, this career cares about my family or my girlfriend. Um, so I may need to, like, take a step back. And maybe it's actually a better option that I may find something that I'm like more passionate about. – **Marcus**

Olivia, Ben, and Marcus described having settled on the decision not to recruit for consulting or finance. These participants reported having gone back and forth about whether or not they should give in to the advice and pressure from the Goizueta community. After much contemplation, they ultimately made the choice not to pursue those traditional paths they perceived as having been pressed upon them by their peers and advisors. For this minority of respondents (3/19 participants), compromising their values for the sole purpose of pursuing a more clearly defined or lucrative career path is not something that they could internally justify.

VI. Discussion & Conclusions

The findings presented above support Amy Binder and colleague's idea that the college-to-career culture specific to a particular academic institution may influence students to be funneled into a narrow selection of "prestigious" career paths (Binder et al 2016). My results diverge from those of Amy Binder and et al due to differences in the local campus contexts of Ivy+ institutions versus next-tier institutions such as Emory University. For example, one main structural difference between the populations in question is that Ivy+ colleges do not have undergraduate BBA programs.

As demonstrated through my analysis, the two years that Emory students must wait before enrolling in Goizueta Business school are commonly framed by pre-BBA students as a

chance to explore the liberal arts before becoming fully immersed into the context of the GBS. For those participants who did not initially plan on pursuing a major in the ECAS, this transition period is largely what influenced them to shift their academic path. This perceived time for exploration may not be experienced at schools such as Harvard and Stanford that do not have an undergraduate BBA program.

While entering Goizueta mid-way through college may be viewed as positive since it allows students interested in business to explore additional intellectual interests, my findings suggest that this timing leads many students to feel overwhelmed when they enter the GBS and immediately feel as if they need to begin recruiting for consulting or finance. My findings suggest that the desire to rapidly increase their understanding regarding the specific steps of the recruitment processes contributes to an increase in chatter amongst students about topics such as networking, applying to jobs, etc. Additionally, participants' emphasis on such conversations suggests that demonstrating a clear understanding of the recruitment process is a type of cultural capital within the GBS.

My findings suggest that another influence of the undergraduate BBA program is my specific sample's perception of the GBS and ECAS as two separate campus contexts in which they experience two distinct college-to-career cultures. Despite participants assuming structural positions as students in both the Business School and the Liberal arts, the separation of their business school and liberal arts peers between the two schools leads BBA-liberal arts double majors to delineate a clear line between the two groups. Viewing these groups as separate entities may also contribute to participants' perception that they must choose to go down either a "traditional" business school career route or a liberal arts route, without potential for a middle ground.

As previously mentioned, the structural theory of action suggests that actors compare themselves and their options to those in structurally similar positions (Risman 2004; Burt 1982). While my results do not reveal whether participants compare themselves to students of their same gender position, as suggested by Risman (2004), the findings suggest that BBA-liberal arts double majors make such comparisons as it relates to students in the business school versus the liberal arts. For example, participants' responses highlight their perception that their peers in the liberal arts will be met with obstacles and limitations in their attempts to secure a job. Meanwhile, they perceive their peers in the GBS as very likely to square away a job before graduation. Aligning with the structural theory of action, my analysis indicates that these comparisons influence BBA-liberal arts majors to make career decisions that mirror those of Goizueta students whom they perceive as having been successful in their endeavors, while avoiding those career pathways associated with the liberal arts.

One significant difference in the college-to-career culture experienced by participants in the GBS versus the ECAS is each community's general perceptions of success. The theory of variation in subjective definitions of success across different groups is supported by my findings (Dyke et al 2006). For business school students, a successful college experience is commonly defined as securing a job before graduation. The BBA degree is perceived as transactional, with students having chosen the Goizueta education in exchange for a job. One participant (Dana) highlighted this by explaining that in Goizueta, "you get a job, you win". A successful career is defined by GBS students as one that provides job security and steady financial income. Meanwhile, the findings indicate that for liberal arts students, success in college is commonly defined as taking advantage of the opportunity to learn and explore one's intellectual curiosity; through exploratory learning they expect to develop tools that can be employed in any job down

the road. As it relates to career, my data does not reveal what patterns there might be in ECAS students' definition of success. This is because, as illustrated in my results, students in my sample of BBA-liberal arts double majors perceive career conversations to be absent from student discourse in the liberal arts. They lack a clear definition of what career success looks like in the liberal arts, unsure of what their peers' paths may look like outside of the pursuit of higher education. This uncertainty associated with the liberal arts influences these students to perceive their liberal arts majors as unrelated to career, electing to pursue traditional business-related career paths, such as consulting, that align with the GBS definition of success.

The undergraduate BBA definition of success as securing a job before graduation seems to vary from the perceptions of success uncovered by Binder et al when investigating the population of students at Ivy+ institutions. Business students at next-tier institutions such as Emory may not have the same level of confidence as Ivy League students that listing their educational institution on their resume is enough to make them a competitive candidate. My findings suggest that the experience of "recruitment frenzy," as termed by Binder et al, leads to an increased level of anxiety amongst Emory GBS students regarding the idea of getting a job in general (Binder et al 2016). While investment banking is described as being perceived as most prestigious, this does not appear to be essential to BBA-liberal arts double majors' definition of success; they do not feel the need to push themselves to pursue this specific path. Meanwhile, the findings of Binder et al suggest that Ivy+ students may be more focused on the idea of getting a job perceived to be ranked at the top of their peer prestige system.

Additionally, my findings suggest that the values and morals of students in this subset of the GBS population are not perceived to align with investment banking, which contributes to their lack of perceived pressure to pursue this most prestigious path. It is important to note that

the population of BBA-liberal arts double majors is a subset of the Goizueta student population. The decision to pursue a major in the ECAS in addition to their business education suggests that these students recognize the value of thinking critically and learning about the world. Their values may differ from those held by the Goizueta population at large.

In investigating aspects of college to career culture which influence students' academic paths, my findings indicate that interactions with Goizueta clubs leads students who are unsure at first about Goizueta to experience a shift in perspective, ultimately deciding to apply to the GBS. The research of Linda Duxbury et al suggests that females were more likely than males to assign a high level of importance to career aspects such as strong interpersonal relationships (Duxbury et al 2000). This suggests that perhaps some female participants in my sample would not have joined the business school had they not formed such personal relationships within business school organizations. Females' emphasis on the importance of personal relationships in one's career was also illustrated in my findings through responses that highlight female participants' desires to one day become mentors for other females in business.

It is worth noting that none of the female participants in my sample mentioned the goal of choosing a flexible job in case they decide to have children one day. Additionally, my findings do not suggest a clear difference in the way in which male and female BBA-liberal arts double majors talk about money and finances. This may speak to the egalitarian ideologies held within next-tier institutions such as Emory. However, it is also important to note that students' generalization of the GBS community as "frat bros" is a categorization that completely disregards Goizueta's female students. My findings suggest that female participants are conscious of the fact that they do not fit in with this "frat bro" label, which appears to heighten the feelings of discomfort female respondents experience when their self-perception does not

match the college's general perception of a business school student. This hyper masculinity and "bro-culture" was experienced by participants through interactions within the business school, as well as during recruitment, internships, and jobs.

There are limitations within my sample. My study has a small sample size of 19 students, due to the fact that interviews generally require more time and resources to complete. It is thus possible that the participants in my specific sample are not representative of the population of Emory BBA-liberal arts double majors at large. It should be acknowledged that Emory's BBA program is unique in that you cannot enter the Business School until you achieve junior standing. Other next-tier institutions may have an earlier entry for those pursuing a BBA, which may lead to differences in the college-to-career culture experienced in the local campus context. Also worth noting is the idea that my population of interest was BBA-liberal arts double majors, whose experiences may differ from those students enrolled as single majors in either the GBS or the ECAS. These limitations to the ability to generalize the results of this study should be kept in mind. Additionally, in regard to my research methods, it is important to note that while the open-ended interview questions allow participants freedom in their answers, artificial responses may occur. I acknowledge this and assert that this study is primarily concerned with "how participants organize and communicate their experiences [rather] than in the truth of their statements" (Scott et al 2021).

Future research would serve to address the limitations of this study. More interviews should be conducted to gain insight on the experiences of a larger sample of students across multiple next-tier institutions in order to increase the generalizability of results to the population in question. It can look more at the intersection between status characteristics and college-to-career perceptions between colleges. Additionally, research could be expanded to include

samples of students from universities of varying levels of the perceived academic hierarchy to get a bigger picture of how the specific college-to-career cultures experienced in each particular context may lead to differences in career funneling. As it relates to gender, future research could adopt the same methods but alter interview questions to be more geared towards gender as an independent variable specifically. Another route could be to keep the interview questions as is and conduct this research at both co-ed and all-female colleges, then comparing trends in responses between institutions of the same perceived level in the academic hierarchy.

It would be interesting to follow up with the participants of my study post-graduation to see how their responses may change once they leave the bubble of the Emory community. What paths will individuals take after their initial 2-3 years of consulting are over? Will they stay in the business sphere? While I am likely biased through my own identity as a liberal arts student, I perceive my findings to demonstrate that the career funneling that results from the college-to-career culture in the business school hinders students from pursuing career paths which align with their intellectual interests, morals, and values. While the business recruitment timeline provides students with a sense of security now, I can't help but wonder whether this will be enough to allow for a high level of work satisfaction down the road. It is my hope that these individuals will they eventually gain the confidence to pursue those career paths generally associated with the liberal arts.

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VIII. Appendices

Appendix 1: T.L. Scott *College to Career Project Summary*

PROJECT SUMMARY

College-to-Career Culture among Undergraduates at a Liberal Arts University

Principal Investigator: Tracy L. Scott, PhD
Department: Sociology Department, Emory University
Emory University IRB Study ID: IRB00116236

Research Goals

The purpose of this research is an exploration of student culture (values, beliefs, discourse) around college-to-career issues at a selective liberal arts university. Using ethnographic methods, we will explore students' own experiences related to academic majors, desirable work outcomes and career paths. We will also investigate how students talk about these issues among themselves and what they hear about these issues from faculty and administrators on campus.

Background and Rationale

Research shows that the link between college degree and work outcomes (pay, occupational prestige, career trajectory, worker satisfaction) is largely a function of the particular educational institution attended (see Aug 2017; Tough 2019). The value of a degree from an "elite" university is vastly different than one from a for-profit university (Binder et al 2016; Rivera 2016; Cottom 2019; Deming 2017). Context matters, as do the actual education and experiences of students in these different contexts (Tough 2019; Rivera 2016; Liu and Grusky 2013; Deming 2017; Aug 2017).

Recent empirical research shows how students' experiences of college are shaped in complex ways by the particular institution they attend (their particular social context), as well as by the smaller subgroups that they belong to within the larger college context (Jack 2019; Ray and Rosow 2012; McCabe 2016; Stuber 2012; Grigsby 2009; Nathan 2006). These studies look at various issues of student experiences of college and show how context matters: how experiences differ depending on the particular type of college or university, the social background of students being studied, and the smaller affinity groups or subcultural groups that students spend most of their time with.

Delving into the cultural processes at play in particular college contexts, Amy Binder and her colleagues illuminate important findings (Binder, Davis, and Bloom 2016; Binder and Abel 2018) about status hierarchies related to career aspirations. Through qualitative interviews with students at two elite Ivy+ universities (Stanford and Harvard), they show how students develop notions of prestige about education, work, and jobs; how they establish status hierarchies around careers, and how these status hierarchies shape their career aspirations and experiences on campus. Other recent research provides broader empirical evidence about the larger cultural landscape that contributes to notions of prestige, status, and career funneling (see Espeland and Sauder 2016; Warikoo 2016; Armstrong and Hamilton 2013).

Using theoretical frameworks from Bourdieu (Bourdieu 1996; Bourdieu and Passeron 1990), Lamont (Lamont 2012; Lamont and Molnar 2002; Lamont, Beljean, and Clair 2014) and Fine (2012), we seek to extend the work of Binder et al (2016; 2018) through an ethnographic exploration of student

culture in another type of university context: a “next-tier” elite university¹, to see how a different campus culture shapes career aspirations and status hierarchies among students.

Research Questions

This study will focus on three broad, interrelated questions:

What is the undergraduate culture around college-to-career issues at this liberal arts university?

- How do students talk about college-to-career issues, particularly career aspirations, career paths, and the purpose of college?
- What are the students’ notions of the status and prestige of particular career paths and aspirations?
- Is there a perceived “prevailing student culture” regarding career status hierarchies?
- How do cultural views arise around particular career paths and aspirations?

How do undergraduates perceive the prevailing college-to-career student culture? How do prevailing notions affect students’ own experiences in college?

How do various student subcultures (ideo-cultures) mediate – or exacerbate – the perceptions and experience of the prevailing student culture of college-to-career issues?

Research Method

In order to understand the depth and complexity of the college-to-career culture among undergraduates in their particular context, we will conduct an ethnography of undergraduate students in Emory College. (For background to our ethnographic methods see: Miles, Huberman, and Saldana 2019; Maxwell 2013; Lofland et al 2005; Weiss 1994.)

Observations (undergraduate college students will be the researchers)

Student Researchers (Co-Investigators) will conduct a variety of observations of public events, gatherings, space, particularly noting the discourse around college-to-career issues.

Types of Ethnographic Observations

Participant Observation of Sponsored Events. Public events for undergraduates sponsored by the college or university, with a focus on some aspect of majors; careers; graduate school; professional development (networking, resumes, etc.). Student-Researchers will attend events and observe using formal ethnographic methods, noting group context and structure, formal interactions, informal interactions, and, particularly, the discourse about college to career issues and student culture.

Participant Observation of Undergraduate Public Spaces. Student-Researchers will observe various undergraduate public spaces, at various times, using formal ethnographic methods, noting group contexts and structure, formal interactions, informal interactions, and, particularly, the discourse about college to career issues and student culture.

¹ We define Emory as a “next-tier” elite university for three main reasons: 1) it is not included in common classifications of the Ivy-Plus schools and is not as highly selective as these schools; 2) it falls within the next group of highly selective, liberal arts focused, residential-based, financial aid-offering universities in common classification schemes; 3) it offers an undergraduate business degree, which is seen as less prestigious by the top-tier. (See Binder, Davis, and Bloom 2016, pages 20, 23-24).

Interactions with Subjects (undergraduate college students will participate as subjects)

In-Depth Interviews: Undergraduate students will be asked to participate in in-depth interviews about college to career issues and student culture in the College. Dr. Scott will conduct these interviews with key undergraduates identified through snowball sampling.

Time Diaries. A sub-sample of undergraduate students will be invited to keep a Time Diary, recording their daily activities for a week-long period, at various times in the semester.

Written Narrative Accounts. A sub-sample of undergraduate students will be invited to provide Narrative Accounts: individual self-reflections about the subject's experiences of student life at Emory. Subjects will write narrative accounts about a variety of experiences, including: their academic and career decision-making, their interactions with different groups in daily life (particularly as it pertains to college-to-career issues), as well as their perceptions of the cultural norms they experience in larger student life and their particular subgroups.

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Appendix 2: Recruitment Email

Interview: Recruitment Email

Hello [NAME],

I hope this finds you well! I am conducting a research project with Dr. Tracy Scott (faculty member in the Sociology Department) about undergraduate life at Emory, and **I would like to ask you to participate.**

We are interviewing undergraduate students to better understand your experiences of student life, particularly your thoughts and experiences about college-to-career issues on campus; this includes your thoughts about your own path (major and/or career plans) as well as your experiences with the way these issues are presented and talked about on campus. We are **seeking volunteers from a wide variety of majors and with various involvement (or not) in different student groups.** Your participation is completely voluntary and will not affect your studies at Emory in any way.

Your participation would involve an in-person interview that will last about one to one and a half hours. The interview will be conducted by me, via Zoom, at a time of your choosing. All information will be kept confidential and we will protect your identity in any published work.

It would really help us a lot if you would agree to be interviewed. This is also an excellent opportunity to share your overall thoughts about “life at Emory” to a sympathetic, interested listener!

If you are interested please email me at: julia.lawrence@emory.edu

If you are unsure and have questions, please contact Dr. Scott: tscott@emory.edu.

Thank you for your consideration!
Julia Lawrence
Emory University Class of 2021
B.A. in Sociology

Appendix 3: Informed Consent

Study No.: IRB00116236

Emory University IRB

IRB use only Document Approved On: 11/27/2019

You Are Being Asked to Be in a Research Study

Concise presentation of key concepts

You are being asked to be in a research study. A research study is designed to answer a scientific question. If you agree to be in the study you will be one of 120 people who are being studied, at Emory.

Why is this study being done?

This study is being done to answer the question: What is the undergraduate culture around college-to-career issues at Emory? You are being asked to be in this research study because you are an undergraduate student at Emory University.

Do you have to be in the study?

It is your decision to be part of this research study. You do not have to be in it. Before you make your decision, you should take time to learn about the study.

What do I have to do if I choose to participate in this study?

If you are eligible and want to be part of the study, you will participate for one study visit. The researchers will ask you to do the following: an in-depth interview. All of the procedures will be paid for by the study.

How is this study going to help you?

If you are in the study, you will be helping the researchers answer the study question.

What are the risks or discomforts I should know about before making a decision?

The study will take time. All studies have some risks. Some risks are relatively small, like being bored or losing time. Some are more serious - for this study, these include possible breach of confidentiality. A full list of expected risks, their frequency and severity are in the "What are the possible risks and discomforts?" section of this document.

Alternatives to Joining This Study

Since this is not a treatment study, the alternative is not to participate.

Costs

You will not have to pay for any of the study procedures.

Study No.: IRB00116236

Emory University IRB

IRB use only Document Approved On: 11/27/2019

What Should I Do Next?

Read this form, or have it read to you. Make sure the study staff explains the study to you. Ask questions (e.g., about exact time commitment, about unfamiliar words, more details on specific procedures, etc.). Take time to consider this and talk about it with your family and friends.

Study No.: IRB00116236

Emory University IRB

IRB use only Document Approved On: 11/27/2019

Emory University Consent to be a Research Subject

Title: College to Career Culture among Undergraduates at a Liberal Arts University

Principal Investigator: Tracy L. Scott, Department of Sociology, Emory College of Arts and Sciences

Introduction

You are being asked to be in a research study. This form is designed to tell you everything you need to think about before you decide to consent (agree) to be in the study or not to be in the study. **It is entirely your choice. If you decide to take part, you can change your mind later on and withdraw from the research study. You can skip any questions that you do not wish to answer. Your participation is completely voluntary and will not affect your studies at Emory in any way.**

Before making your decision:

- Please carefully read this form or have it read to you
- Please ask questions about anything that is not clear

You can take a copy of this consent form, to keep. Feel free to take your time thinking about whether you would like to participate. By agreeing to this consent you will not give up any legal rights.

Study Overview

The purpose of this study is to better understand experiences of student life, particularly students' thoughts and experiences about college-to-career issues on campus; this includes your thoughts about your own path (major and/or career plans) as well as your experiences with the way these issues are presented and talked about on campus. We are seeking volunteers from a wide variety of majors and with various involvement (or not) in different student groups.

Procedures

You will be participating in an in-depth interview in which you will be asked about your thoughts and experiences around career issues in college. This interview will last about 1 to 2 hours. With your permission, the interview will be taped using a digital audio recorder. The interview will be conducted by the Principal Investigator or one of the study Co-Investigators, and you may choose the interviewer of your preference. The interview will be conducted at a time that is convenient for you and in a place of your choosing or in a private room in the Sociology department (Tarbutton Hall) at Emory University.

Risks and Discomforts

The only foreseeable risks or discomforts associated with this study are the recall of uncomfortable experiences of your life at Emory during the interview, the loss of time while doing the interview, and the possible loss of confidentiality if records are lost or accessed without permission.

Benefits

This study is not designed to benefit you directly. This study is designed to learn more about undergraduate life as it relates to career paths and aspirations. The study results may be used to help others in the future.

Compensation

You will not be offered payment for being in this study.

Confidentiality

We will give you a pseudonym or number in the study and use this to identify your interview. Your name will not be attached to any notes, transcripts, or digital files. All audio files will be kept on password protected

Study No.: IRB00116236

Emory University IRB

IRB use only Document Approved On: 11/27/2019

computers and will be destroyed as soon as the digital recording is transcribed. One of the study team members will transcribe all audio files and all personally identifiable information will be deleted from the transcriptions. The de-identified transcript files will be kept in two locations: on the Principal Investigator's computer hard drive, which is password protected, and in an Emory Box folder that will be restricted to study staff only and also password protected

All the information you provide will be treated in the strictest confidence. Access to the data files will be limited to study personnel. Certain offices and people other than the researchers may look at study records. Government agencies and Emory employees overseeing proper study conduct may look at your study records. These offices include the Office for Human Research Protections, the Emory Institutional Review Board, the Emory Office of Compliance. Emory will keep any research records we create private to the extent we are required to do so by law. A pseudonym or study number rather than your name will be used on study records wherever possible. Your name and other facts that might point to you will not appear when we present this study or publish its results.

Storing and Sharing your Information

De-identified data from this study (data that has been stripped of all information that can identify you), may be placed into public databases where, in addition to having no direct identifiers, researchers will need to sign data use agreements before accessing the data. We will remove or code any personal information that could identify you before your information is shared. This will ensure that, by current scientific standards and known methods, it is extremely unlikely that anyone would be able to identify you from the information we share. Despite these measures, we cannot guarantee anonymity of your personal data.

Your data from this study may be useful for other research being done by investigators at Emory or elsewhere. To help further science, we may provide your deidentified data to other researchers. If we do, we will not include any information that could identify you. If your data are labeled with your study ID, we will not allow the other investigators to link that ID to your identifiable information.

Withdrawal from the Study

You have the right to leave a study at any time without penalty.

Contact Information

Contact Dr. Tracy Scott by phone at (404) 727-7515 or by email at tscott@emory.edu:

- if you have any questions about this study or your part in it,
- if you have questions, concerns or complaints about the research

Contact the Emory Institutional Review Board at 404-712-0720 or 877-503-9797 or irb@emory.edu:

- if you have questions about your rights as a research participant.
- if you have questions, concerns or complaints about the research.
- You may also let the IRB know about your experience as a research participant through our Research Participant Survey at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/6ZDMW75>.

Verbal Consent and Authorization

Do you agree to be in this study? If so, please indicate by saying "yes" for the audio recording now. By agreeing, you will not give up any of your legal rights. We will give you a copy of this Consent Information Sheet to keep.

TO BE FILLED OUT BY STUDY TEAM ONLY

Name of Person Conducting Informed Consent Discussion

Study No.: IRB00116236

Emory University IRB

IRB use only Document Approved On: 11/27/2019

Signature of Person Conducting Informed Consent Discussion

Date

Time

Appendix 4: Interview Guide

College to Career Culture – Interview Guide

Informed Consent – Instructions for Interviewers

- Because your research includes the use of "human subjects" (e.g., interviewing people), you will need to do an Informed Consent in order to protect your participants' autonomy and rights.
- Please send (electronically) the ***IRB-approved Informed Consent*** document to your participant before the interview.
- Then, at the beginning of the interview remind them that you sent the document and show them the document on your screen (screenshare in Zoom).
- Briefly explain the main sections, then give them time to read.
- Finally, ask them for verbal consent on the recording.

Interview GUIDE

NOTE to Interviewers: Try to take the stance of an "outsider" as much as possible despite the fact that you are students too. One way to do this, to help your participants feel more comfortable, is to use these framing statements, and to repeat these as necessary:

FRAMING STATEMENTS

- *"I am really interested in finding out about these things because I don't know much about what other students are thinking."*
- *"I'm very interested to hear other people's stories because I'm not certain about any of these issues myself."*

COMMON PROBES (for examples/stories):

Also, try to get as many concrete examples and stories as you can. Common probes to use:

- *"Could you tell me more about that?"*
- *"Can you think of a specific time when that happened?"*
- *"Can you think of a story that illustrates that point?"*

Background (also send Demographic Survey before interview and have them fill out)

Before we start, I'm going to first ask you about your background, your experience at Emory, and your career plans. I know that things likely have changed for you in the past few months. I have allocated time during this interview to address the changes to your life, your college experience, and your career path in the world of COVID-19.

First, I'd like to get some background information [additional questions to Demo Survey):

- Where did you grow up?
- What kind of household – e.g., parents?
- What is your parent(s) occupation(s)?

I would also like to hear about **how you decided to come to Emory**. Tell me about that process.

How did you hear about Emory? Why did you decide on Emory?

Emory Academic Story

Now, what I would like you to do is **tell me the story of your time at Emory, focusing on your academic/career story** [OR use whatever wording works better here].

- There are no right or wrong answers or ways to do this. This is your story, and I want to hear **what has been most important to you in helping shape your path along the college-to-career pipeline**.
- I'll follow up and ask you more questions as we go along.

1.1. Choosing Your Major

So, **tell me about how you chose your major**. Start at the beginning: **WHAT** did you **think when you started Emory**? **HOW** did those ideas change?

Alternative Questions/Probes

- **What were you thinking college life would be like** when you started? **How has it been different?**
- What were you **thinking about majors and how has the reality been different?**

Have you chosen a major(s)? If yes, which one(s)?

IF YES: Tell me about how you chose your major. When did you decide? How did you decide?

- What were **key factors/reasons** that went into your decision?
- Were there any **key people** who influenced your decision (parents, faculty, other students, other staff at Emory)? Who and how?
- Any **key classes or events/programs** that influenced your decision? What and how?

IF NO: How you are going about choosing a major? What steps are you taking in this process?

- Do you have any ideas about what you might like to pursue? What are they?
- What issues are you having with choosing a major?

Did/Do you ever feel pressure to make a decision about a Major?

- If so, where does this come from? Parents? School administrators? Faculty? Other students?
- If not, do you think others do? Where does this come from?
- IF UNDECIDED: How does it feel to say you are “undecided”? What are the reactions you get [from various groups]?

1.2 Perceptions of Majors

What is the *general perception about majors among Emory students*?

OR What are the *main distinctions between “Major” groups* on campus? How are these groups viewed by students? What sets them apart from each other?

For example, are there certain *majors* that are more *popular* than others? Or more *desirable*?

- If YES, which ones? **Why** do you think these are more popular or more desirable?
- If NO, can you explain? E.g., Are all majors considered similarly desirable?
- AND/OR are there some *majors* that are considered more *prestigious* than others?
 - If YES, which ones? **Why** do you think these are more prestigious?
 - If NO, can you explain? E.g., Are all majors considered similarly prestigious?

Do you think some majors are considered *prestigious* by *people outside Emory*?

- For example: *Parents / Employers / The media*?
- *Which majors?* And *by which “outside Emory” groups*?
- *How/where have you heard this?*

[PROBE HERE for any/all of these categories/combinations!]

2.1 Career Plans / Ideas

Now, tell me about your ideas for a career or plans for after graduation. Do you have a particular career in mind or ideas about grad school?

IF YES: HOW did you come to these ideas/decisions about career and/or grad school?

- What are some of the **key factors/reasons** for your plans or your interest in this career?

PROBES

- **Personal interests, values:** own values or purpose; own abilities, skills, interests?
- **Key people:** Friends? Family? Faculty or staff? External encouragement from parents, peers, professors, career center.
- **Turning points?** Classes? Events on campus? Conversations? Internships? Work experiences?

If UNDECIDED:

- Do you have any ideas about what you might like to pursue? What are they?
- What issues are you having with choosing a career path?

Do you ever feel pressure to make a decision about a career path?

- If so, where does this come from? Parents? School administrators? Faculty? Other students?
- If not, do you think others do? Where does this come from?

How does it feel to say you are “undecided”? What are the reactions you get [from various groups]?

2.2 Perceptions of Careers

What is the *general perception about jobs/careers among Emory students*? OR what is the *general “chatter” about jobs/careers* among students at Emory?

- For example, are there certain *career paths* that are more *popular* than others? Or more *desirable*?
 - If YES, which ones? **Why** do you think these are more popular or more desirable?
 - If NO, can you explain? E.g., Are all careers considered similarly desirable?
- AND/OR are there some *careers* that are considered more *prestigious* than others?
 - If YES, which ones? **Why** do you think these are more prestigious?
 - If NO, can you explain? E.g., Are all careers considered similarly prestigious?

Do you think some *jobs/careers* are considered *prestigious* by *people outside Emory*?

- For example: *Parents / Employers / The media*?

- *Which majors?* And *by which “outside Emory” groups?*
 - *How/where have you heard this?*
- [PROBE HERE for any/all of these categories/combinations!]

2.3 Own Career Perceptions

- How does your intended job/career fit in with these larger perceptions?
- How have these notions influenced your thinking about your own career plans?

3. Encounters with Career Topics/Conversations on Campus

Extending some of what we just talked about [IF THEY HAVE NOT ALREADY MENTIONED THESE POINTS] → I would like to know more about your experiences with the way that majors and careers are talked about at Emory.

Thinking about your daily life at college: Tell me about *informal conversations with other students* [that focus on issues around majors and/or careers and work after college.]

- Do these topics come up very often? How are these topics talked about?
- What are some common conversations around jobs/careers?
- How are the *desirable or prestigious careers* that you mentioned talked about?
- Does it vary by different groups on campus – e.g., Students? Faculty? Admin/Staff?

4. Emory Context

Now, I would like to know more about your general experiences of undergrad culture at Emory.

4.1 Undergrad Culture

What is the undergraduate culture like at Emory?

- AND/OR Can you think of three words to describe it?
 - Now, tell me what you mean by these?
- AND/OR For example, if you have friends at other colleges/universities, how does their undergrad experience differ from yours at Emory?
- What is student life like? (E.g., you are trying to get at notions like: competitive, cooperative, stressful, social, academic, divisive, etc.)

What kinds of experiences have you had that illustrate this? Can *you give me a story or example?*

AND/OR, *if not one culture: Are there multiple cultures or subcultures?* Can you explain?

- Which ones are you a part of? What most characterizes the culture/subculture that you experience?
- Are there any that you avoid?
- Are there any that seem to “dominate” student life? Or that are “loudest” on campus?

4.2 Common phrases [IF THEY HAVE NOT MENTIONED PREVIOUSLY]

I've heard some students mention some words/phrases, and I want to see if these have any meaning to you.

Have you heard the word “pre-professional”?

IF YES: Can you tell me what pre-professional means to you? What does pre-professional include?

Is this a common phrase? Where (and from whom) do you hear it?

“Everyone knows what they are doing.”

- Do you ever hear this? IF YES: Who says this? When do you hear it?
- Do you ever feel like this? IF YES: Tell me more. Why do you say this? Who is “everyone”?

Appendix 5: Demographics Questionnaire

College to Career: Interviewee Demographic Questionnaire

Please answer the questions below, save the document, and email the completed document to:
julia.lawrence@emory.edu

- 1) What is your age?
- 2) What is your year in college? (Or list graduation year)
- 3) What is your gender?
- 4) What is your race and/or ethnicity?
- 5) What is your nationality?
- 6) What type of high school did you attend? (e.g., private, public, charter):

Location of HS: City, state, country:

During your high school years, who was/were your parent(s) or guardian(s)?

7) *Parent/Guardian 1*

List relationship to you (e.g.: mother, father, legal guardian):

What is their highest educational degree?

What is their occupation?

8) *Parent/Guardian 2, if relevant*

List relationship to you (e.g.: mother, father, legal guardian):

What is their highest educational degree?

What is their occupation?

- 9) How many siblings do you have?

Appendix 6: Demographic Breakdown of Sample

Participant Pseudonym	Graduation Year	Race and/or Ethnicity	Nationality	Type and Location of High School	Occupation and Highest Educational Degree of Mother	Occupation and Highest Educational Degree of Father	Siblings
Anna	2021	White, Jewish	American	Public, USA	PhD, Entrepreneur	MBA, Finance	2
Ben	2021	White, Latin	American	Public, USA	BA, Personal assistant	BA, VP of operations	1
Bobby	2022	White	Caymanian, British, and Canadian	Private, USA	MBA, Private equity	MBA, Hedge fund care	1
Brad	2022	White	American	Public, USA	JD, Lawyer	MBA, Wealth manager	1
Brittany	2021	Chinese	American	Public, USA	MA, Stay-at-home mother	MA, Software engineer	1
Dana	2022	White, Jewish	American	Public, USA	MA, Student teacher mentor	BA, Complex Director at Bank	1
Daniel	2022	White	American	Public, USA	BA, Library clerk	MA, High school teacher	1
Eliza	2021	White	American	Public, USA	MA, Stay-at-home mother	BA, VP of sales and marketing	3
Frank	2022	Asian	American	Private, Taiwan	BA, Interior designer	MA, Finance	1
Isaac	2022	White	American	Public, USA	MD, Physician	MD, Physician	2
Jessica	2021	White	American	Public, USA	BA, Marketing consultant	MA, Security manager	2
Lisa	2022	White, Latina	American, Puerto Rican	Public, USA	MBA, Consultant	MBA, VP at streaming company	1
Luke	2022	White	American	Public, USA	BSN, Nurse	MBA, Marketing manager	1
Nicole	2021	South Asian	Indian, American	Public, USA	MA, Bank teller	MA, Logistics and operations manager	1
Marcus	2022	White and Asian	American	Private, USA	BA, Travel Agent	MA, Civil engineer	2
Max	2022	South Asian	Indian	Private then Public (2yrs each), India	Some college, Salesperson	Some college, Stock trader	0
Michael	2022	White	American	Private, USA	MBA, Non-profit president	JD, Lawyer	0
Olivia	2022	White	American	Public, USA	Some college, Property manager	MBA, Project manager	2
Sara	2022	Asian	Taiwanese	Public, USA	BA, Business salesperson	MA, Program developer	2