

The College Journey

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When I started at Catholic Central, I had no concrete plan for college, like most students. As a teenager, it was stressful. I had about five things I was interested in. From criminal justice to museum work, there was nothing that was off the table for me.

Not having an idea of what I would do after I graduate was difficult, and I'm sure it was hard for my parents as well. I'm the oldest in my family, and this was the first time we had explored the world of college admissions as student and parents. Luckily, my school had many different opportunities to explore not only majors and careers, but also colleges. It wasn't until my junior year that I developed some semblance of a plan. I knew I wanted to do research or teach college level courses, and I knew I wanted to attend graduate school. I regularly met with my college advisor at school to discuss steps to take in determining my path, as well as doing

online research on things that periodically piqued my interest.

Looking at classes I excelled in and attending lectures from people my school brought in, I determined that I wanted to do something dealing with history, and more specifically paleontology. I managed to remove criminal justice from my list when I learned (unsurprisingly) that it wasn't like what I saw on TV, but kept being a college professor after I attended a zoom meeting with someone who worked at Grand Valley. From there I researched and developed a list of colleges that had fields of study that I enjoyed, as well as extracurricular activities, such as band, that I wanted to continue or pick up. There were three colleges that I was super interested in, so my parents scheduled three college tours. One to Michigan State, one of the schools I was leaning more towards, one to Aquinas, a school that I was neutral towards but was a much smaller campus, and one to Western Michigan, a school that wasn't on my radar. My other two main choices, University of Michigan and Penn State, were a little too far to visit spontaneously. After touring MSU and Aquinas, I knew I wanted a campus with a medium size.

When I arrived at Western, something immediately clicked. This college, which I wouldn't have attended or even paid attention to if my parents hadn't suggested it, immediately felt like the one. College visits are one of the most important tools to discovering, maybe not the exact college you'd like to attend, but what you're looking for in terms of campus size, geographical location, and overall feel.

The most important part of the college application journey, however, is making sure there's not a feeling of being stuck with one major or college. Changing majors is something many college students do and it's important to keep an open mind about everything. It's a new chapter in one's life and sometimes it's good to change and develop as you learn new things about yourself and where you'd like to go on your journey.

As of now, my plan is to attend Western Michigan University for my undergraduate degree in geological sciences, and then transfer to the University of Michigan to become a doctor of paleontology. I've got a long way to go, but I'm excited to experience this new chapter in my life and to grow more as a person because of the change.