Undeclared applicants:
Options and Opportunities.
Presentation Notes:
Presenters introduce themselves and the chatters. Chatters can introduce themselves via Chat.
Housekeeping

Chat Topics:
One of the points that we would like to stress, is that major does not dictate someone’s career choice.

For many high school, selecting a major is a scary process – what if they choose the wrong major. They often place a great deal of stress on themselves and we want to reassure students that their major does not necessarily determine future job opportunities and future career prospects. Majors do play a role, but again they do not dictate someone’s career.
We’ll start off by sharing some statistics with you.

We’ll also discuss the role that majors play in selection.

We’ll provide you with an overview of the similarities students should be aware of as they consider applying as undeclared.

And lastly, we’ll discuss the resources and ways in which we support students who have not decided what major they want to pursue.
You likely won’t be surprised to know that many students applying to college are not entirely sure of what major they want to pursue and applying as “undeclared” is a popular option.

For Fall 2020, 20% of freshman applicants applied as undeclared to UC, which is a good chunk of students.

However, when we compare that to the national statistic, it is actually less than half. Nationally, we find that 50% of students apply as undeclared.

Another important statistic to share with you is that 80% of students change their major at least once. This does not come as a surprise, given that often times students have not been exposed to the variety of areas of studies that colleges/universities have available and they may stumble across a major by completing a general education course, university requirement or enrolling in an elective course.
It may seem like it’s counter intuitive, but actually students who change their major at least once graduate at a higher rate than students who do not change their major.

We know that parents may be too excited about their student changing their mind and they may fear that it will add to the years that a students spends in college and therefore cost them extra money.

For students, they may worry that graduation will be delayed if they changed their mind, however it is not the case and actually quite common.

At the end of the day, we want students to choose a major they enjoy.
This is one of the questions that we often get...“Will applying as ‘undeclared’ negatively impact the review of my application?”

Students are often nervous about selecting the “undeclared” option. They believe that it will negatively impact how their application is reviewed.
Students believe that we will think that they are not goal oriented or focused. However, that is not the case.

We understand that students may not have had the opportunity to be exposed to the hundreds of areas of studies that we offer and we want them to have an opportunity to explore our variety of majors.

It’s also possible that students have multiple interests across various areas of study and they have not yet settled on a particular major – for example, I recall my own experience, I knew that the STEM fields was not something that I wanted to consider, but I was interested in Communication Studies, English, Sociology and Political Science, so ultimately I decided to apply as undeclared and take advantage of the opportunity to enroll in introductory classes that would help me solidify my decision.

All this to say that applying as “undeclared” is a good option for students that are unsure of the major that they want to pursue.

I think that many students ask this question because they are strategizing and trying to determine what will increase their chances of being admitted. They believe that there may be easier majors to be admitted to.

And lastly, an important point is that, in most cases when students apply as “undeclared” it does not play a role in the application review and selection. It is seen as a neutral factor.

Our recommendation is that if students know what major they want to pursue, or are interested in, go ahead and select that major.

In many instances majors are not binding and students can switch from one major to another, there are some exceptions of which will be covered later on in the presentation.
Undeclared Process: Apply, Admit, Advising, Declaration

Apply
- Understand how campus' undeclared program works
- Students are notified via their student account

Admit
- Students work with program academic advisor to begin major exploration

Assignment

Declaration
- Students should declare a major before completing 60 sem/90 qtr units (~2yrs)
Discuss majors that are different with in UC Campuses (English and Bio?)

*Discuss difference of
  - Applicants that don't know or can't decide on any particular major.
  - Applicants that know their major vs undecided students
  - Applicants that know their first choice major but are undecided on a alternate major.

*For UCB no alternate major

Chat Topics:
* List if your campus is likely to review for alternate major or not
* Discuss if your campus would move applicants to undeclared that didn't apply to undeclared that UCSD and UCSB might move some applicants that applied to very selective major to Undeclared options.
• For students applying at the **FRESHMAN** level, in most instances major is not considered
• Students should also keep in mind that majors are not binding, and in many instances they can automatically switch from one major to another; for example, switching from undeclared to Biology/ from Political Science to Sociology, BUT there are some majors that is not the case for.

• We encourage students to do their research and learn about the restrictions for particular majors as it does vary from one UC to another.
• When finding Undeclared majors, students might see a header for the undeclared options or at the bottom of each college or school.
  • We recommend using the category view and review the undeclared options listed there.

**Chat Options**
- List undeclared options at your campus.
Question

Will it be easier for me to get admitted if I apply as “undeclared” and once I am at UC, I can then switch into the major I am really interested in?
Answer

Not necessarily. Applying as “undeclared” should not be seen as a back-door into UC.
For specific majors, such as Engineering majors, students are required to apply to that major once they are at UC. It is not automatic admission and students cannot freely move in and out of all majors.

Chat options:
What majors does your campus have that might require additional steps to change their major into?
* Courses they take to explore a major are likely to be used as General education if they don't pursue the major.
Majors that require a Supplemental applications
- In these instances, the declared major does make a difference and will play a role in the selection process
- There are particular majors that require students submit applications, such as performance-based majors like Dance or Theater
- Letters of recommendation, essays, etc., may be required

Engineering/Selective Majors
- Applying to Selective majors, such as Engineering will impact selection, secondary review will focus on the student’s performance in math and science
- Restrictions are likely to be in place that make it challenging for Undeclared students to later change their major into selective majors (check with the campus on these restrictions before applying undeclared)

- Majors that require a supplemental application
  - UCSB for instance has their College of Creative Studies that students will need to submit a supplemental application to the College if interested
- Engineering/ Selective Majors
  - For instance UCSC...Students can declare all majors except majors in Baskin School of Engineering
  - UC Santa Barbara Majors in College of Engineering are VERY difficult to switch into
  - UC Irvine - Some selective majors must have prerequisites completed within the first year of Undeclared program

Chat Options:
What majors does your campus have that require supplemental applications
What majors does our campus have that are selective at the first year level?
"I am worried about being admitted as undeclared, how will I know what classes to take and how to select a major?"
There are levels of advising opportunities, it starts with summer orientation and getting students exposed to the areas of study they have an interest in – students would be encouraged to enroll in a course that meets their intellectual curiosity as well as perhaps meets a general education/breadth requirement.

Additionally, there are other resources such as Academic Advisors for each department, workshops hosted by our Career Center on "How to select a major" and panels hosted by alums and undergraduates in upper division courses.
Suggestions on major exploration for Students
Gather Information

- Reflect on interests
- Research options
- Take an exploratory course like Freshman Seminar or introductory classes in a department
- Career Services – advisors can discuss professional paths and other opportunities
Meet People and Make Connections

- Explore clubs and organizations especially during club fairs/club rush
- Join study groups
- Get involved in research, even as a participant in a study
- Find people to talk to in a field of interest – alumni, professors, Teaching Assistants
- Attend a workshop or event
Making a decision

- Brainstorm pros and cons for each major
- Major doesn't always define career
- Engage in experiential learning opportunities including internships, study abroad and community involvement
- Meet with department and college advisors – not all majors may be open
- Explore options for double majors or minors (or both)

Place poll about "Were you declared or undeclared when applying to Colleges?"
• Identify when your students should apply to undeclared. We want to stress that there isn’t a back door or an opportunity to game the system to get into our competitive majors. Remember that for most of our campuses, students aren’t able to switch majors during the admission process. If your students know where their interests resides or know what major they are interested in pursuing, you want to encourage that student to apply into that major. Identify the students that are truly unsure that major they want to pursue at the UC or is unsure which of their interests they want to explore further. Those are the students we would want to encourage to apply undeclared.

• Remind your students that applying to undeclared does not affect their admissions status. Students and families alike tend to equate our undeclared majors to something that is going to put them at a disadvantage. This is not the case. Although our selection process may vary between UC campuses, applying as an undeclared student is not going to affect their selectivity to the UC.

• Reassure your students that being admitted to undeclared is okay. We have interacted with a number of students and parents who are admitted to a UC campus as undeclared and essentially “freak out”. Remind students and families that they are still an admit to the university and they will not be graduating as an undeclared major. There is still an opportunity for students to reach their career goals in the timeframe that they have planned.

• Encourage your admitted students to research resources associated with Undeclared. This is a huge point. As you can see our undeclared programs vary between campuses. It is important for students to learned what services their respective undeclared program provides and what type of dedication is needed from the student to successfully switch into the major of their choice.
Key Takeaways

Research
Over 700 majors to choose from within the UC system!
Encourage students to reflect on subjects they like or don’t like

Undeclared is Okay!
Students will graduate on time
Students will still reach their career goals

We are here to help!
Our advisors are here for your students
Main role is to guide them on their academic journey

Seek us out this season
Encourage your students to attend upcoming fall events hosted by our campuses
Can help with major exploration
## Undeclared Program Resource Links

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<th>UC Berkeley</th>
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**Image:**
- [UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA COUNSELOR CONFERENCE](image-url)
THANK YOU

"With the right mindset and spirit, only the sky is the limit."