In my opinion, there are a number of reasons why the majority of college students did not pursue careers related to their majors after graduating in the year of 2013. In most colleges, students are required to choose a major by their second semester of sophomore year; Students are often influenced by their parents and their ideas of what an ideal career for their child may be; College students are required to choose a career path at age 18-20, with no real experience in their given fields, as most students don’t work in advanced fields while studying in high school; Decisions are made to pursue certain degrees with no exploration of one's passions or interests, often leading students to pursue different and untapped ventures once they’ve received their degrees; Lastly, students would be more successful in finding their preferred career paths if they were given more time to explore different majors and class requirements before making the decision to envelop themselves in a chosen degree.

The pressures students face today are far greater than they have been in the past. Living in a modern, Western society, we are told from a young age that to succeed we must go to high school, graduate from college, and only then can we begin to work in “the real world.” Most jobs that are coveted today are unattainable with a simple high school diploma, making a college degree almost a necessity in certain communities. Personally, I faced many of these struggles as I moved from my high school education to that of a higher degree. I was unsure of what I wanted to study and fell into a degree that was heavily pushed on me by my parents. I do not hold any anger against them, as I know they were doing so with the best intentions, but I often wish I weren’t coerced into a path that was not right for me. Before college I hadn’t studied physics or engineering in more than a couple introduction to physics courses in high school; I did not know at the time that it was not truly a career path I wanted to pursue. I hadn’t had time to delve into different fields, taking classes in departments such as computer science or design. Looking back, this rendered my goal of graduating with a dual physics-and-engineering degree to a double major-double minor degree - in all things business and economics related - somewhat incomplete. I didn’t have the whole picture. Had I taken courses outside of my field, and in other areas of interest, I may have learned about my passion for developing code sooner. I believe this is a problem many graduates face today; I have a degree, but what now?

Time and freedom enable a student to find what peaks and sustain their interests, creating an ideal set-up for the perfect degree-related career; however, with the rising costs of tuition (and other related necessities) nearly all students are forced to take out some type of student loan. With little understanding of the full repercussions, students are put in a position in which they have to face the overwhelming obligation of paying off their loans. This frightening task regularly leaves students with no other option than to sideline their dreams. In order to responsibly pay off their debts, as per the suggestion of many parents, graduates take “whatever job they can get.” These jobs are often not in their preferred field, or in their general areas of interest.