

When I Grow Up ...

Students majors change but their ideas stay the same

By Amanda Trimble
THE BATTALION

Although college students are well known for wanting to change majors, career aspirations begin forming long before college, and most everyone can admit to a creative or inspired career goal they held onto as a child.

Brooke Holbert, a senior English major, changed her mind several times before deciding to become a writer.

"When I was little, I wanted to be a pet store owner," Holbert said. "But then I spent some time with animals and realized we don't have very good chemistry."

"Next I wanted to be a psychiatrist, but then the idea of sitting around and listening to people's problems didn't sound very interesting. All I knew was that I wanted to make a difference."

However, holding onto a dream for years does not make the journey easier when students start taking difficult classes. Jennifer Faimon, a senior speech communication major, said she knew she wanted to be a doctor since middle school. That dream was further reinforced the summer before her freshman year at A&M when a stubborn wound would not heal. "The doctor had removed my stitches, but those that he left inside me were supposed to dissolve on their own," Faimon said. "For some reason my body wouldn't let them dissolve, and the wound never really healed up."

Faimon said she had already made a doctor's appointment when one day she found a bit of the stitching thread had worked its way out of her body. After pulling out the stitch, the wound healed. Faimon said she was amazed that her body had found a way to heal itself.

"I took it as a divine sign that I should be a doctor," Faimon said.

However, the pre-medical classes at A&M were a difficult hurdle for Faimon.

"I wasn't cut out to study the physical sciences," Faimon said. "No matter how much work I put into studying, I still couldn't do well in my classes. It was heartbreaking. I felt directionless."

"I had wanted to be a doctor all my life and suddenly it was no longer a possibility," Faimon said. "I thought, 'Where do I go from here?'"

Now, Faimon said she is looking for a career in advertising or the communications aspect of the health care industry.

Other students find a significant event causes their dreams and goals to take a turn. Lisa Foster, a senior English major, said she wanted to be a doctor like her father when she was younger. However, as she got

older, she saw the unappealing aspects of a career in medicine.

"I saw first-hand how difficult it was and the stress my father went through on a daily basis," Foster said. "It's a really stressful life, especially if you want to have a family."

Foster said the turning point for her was during the summer of her sophomore year when she studied abroad in Italy and Spain. Now she hopes to study art history in graduate school and become a museum curator.

Greg Boyer, a sophomore molecular and cellular biology major, also said his career goals were shaped by an event in his life.

"Ever since my mom passed away, I've always wanted to be a doctor," Boyer said. "Her doctor was good, but he didn't have a very good bedside manner. I want to focus on being on a more personal level with patients."

Making a difference in people's lives often plays a role in students' career aspirations, even from a young age. Samecia Bloomfield, a senior elementary education major, had an early childhood goal of becoming a teacher. However, in the eighth grade, she said she was diverted to another career path.

"I had a wonderful science teacher named Mrs. Smith, and she inspired me to become a microbiologist," Bloomfield said. "I decided I was going to cure the world of disease."

After arriving at A&M as a biology major, Bloomfield said she was tutoring students at the North Bryan Community Center and as an Aggie Buddy at Rock Prairie Elementary School when she noticed how few math skills the children had. Now an elementary education major and a math minor, Bloomfield said she plans to teach math to middle school students.

"I thought, somebody needs to do something [to help them], so why not me?" Bloomfield said.

Breanne Svehla, a junior agricultural development major, said that when she was little she wanted to be a nurse or teacher.

"I've always wanted to help and serve people," Svehla said. "I guess that hasn't changed, but there are so many choices now. You don't have to just get a job, you have to love what you do."



FRANK CHANCE • THE BATTALION

Queen of the Damned Tops Box Office at \$15.2 million

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Audiences went vampire hunting as "Queen of the Damned," featuring the late pop singer Aaliyah as an ancient bloodsucker, debuted as the top weekend movie with \$15.2 million.

"John Q," last weekend's No. 1 film, topped to second place with \$12.5 million, pushing its 10-day total to \$39.9 million, according to studio estimates Sunday. Kevin Costner's supernatural love story "Dragonfly" opened in third place with \$10.4 million.

Though generally trashed by critics, "Queen of the Damned" got a big boost from young fans of Aaliyah, who was killed in a plane crash last summer. Women under 25 made up 30 to 40 percent of the film's audience, said Dan Fellman, head of distribution for Warner Bros., which released "Queen of the Damned."

"Her fans liked the movie," Fellman said. "I think they were drawn by their loyalty and curiosity and desire to see Aaliyah on the big screen."

Based on Anne Rice's "Vampire Chronicles," the movie stars Aaliyah as the other of all bloodsuckers and Stuart

Townsend as the vampire Lestat.

Playing in 2,511 locations, "Queen of the Damned" averaged a healthy \$6,035 a theater, compared with a \$5,000 average in 2,505 theaters for "John Q" and \$4,148 in 2,507 cinemas for "Dragonfly."

Director Mira Nair's "Monsoon Wedding" had an impressive debut in limited release, grossing \$66,000 at two New York City theaters. The ensemble comedy follows the clash of tradition and modern times during frenzied preparations for a wedding in Delhi, India.

Distributor USA Films plans to expand the film to more cities over the next two weekends.

Overall, the top 12 films grossed \$85.5 million, up 14 percent from the same weekend last year. For the first two months of the year, Hollywood's revenues are running virtually even with the pace of last year, when the industry grossed a record \$8.35 billion.

The early part of 2001 was dominated by "Hannibal," a February release that grossed \$165 million. This year has not yet produced a major hit, but a string of new films have opened solidly, while holdovers from last

year drew strong audiences.

Top Oscar nominees continue to benefit from the awards attention. "A Beautiful Mind" grossed \$5.2 million, raising its total to \$132.6 million. "The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring" took in \$3.6 million, climbing to \$283.3 million overall.

"I would characterize it as status quo, week in and week out," said Paul Dergarabedian, president of box-office tracker Exhibitor Relations. "There hasn't been a runaway blockbuster so far like we sometimes have at this point. But newcomers are generating interest, holdovers and Oscar contenders are generating interest."

The combat film "Black Hawk Down" took in \$3.7 million, pushing its total to \$101.4 million. It was the 19th movie released in 2001 to cross the \$100 million mark, compared with a record 22 films the year before.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at North American theaters, according to Exhibitor Relations Co. Inc. Final figures will be released Monday.



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