

AGGIELIFE

THE BATTALION

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For love of the job

Students discuss pursuing a career for the work, not the rewards

By Lyndsey Sage
THE BATTALION

When Katy Birdsong, a junior, changed her major from accounting to middle school education, she knew she was losing more than just credit hours. She said she was trading in an accountant's comfortable income for a teacher's salary.

In a society where it seems that money dictates happiness, some students like Birdsong pursue careers in fields where potential income falls on the lower end of the scale. For these students, money does not make the world go round. Instead, it is the satisfaction of doing something they love that drives them.

Birdsong said the lower earnings potential didn't affect her decision to change career paths.

"I just wanted to be happy at what I was doing," Birdsong said. "You choose what makes you happy. Happiness is something that will always be there; money will not."

Birdsong said helping her mom, who is a teacher, in the classroom was what inspired her to change her major. She said she wants to make a difference in children's lives, which she feels has no monetary value.

Birdsong said she knew she did not want to pursue business after her first year in the college because she didn't like the classes.

"Now, I'm enjoying the stuff I'm learning," she said. "There is more hands-on experience because you get to go work with kids, compared to sitting in a classroom listening to lectures for every class."

Dusty Stoddard, a senior education major, plans to teach math and science at the middle school level.

"I feel a calling to be an educator, and it seems natural to follow what our interests are and what you are naturally inclined to do," Stoddard said.

He said teaching is one of the things he feels is worth doing even though it is traditionally a low paying job.

"If I'm doing what I feel that I am led to do, then the needs will be provided for," Stoddard said. "You can make it work, no matter what you make."

Stoddard is aware of the low income a career in education entails, but he feels teach-

ing will provide him with a level of satisfaction that will make him feel he is doing something worthy in life.

"It seems like anyone's, who has any wisdom, main piece of advice is to do something you enjoy, don't sink yourself into a career you hate. While you may make a lot of money, if you hate your job, you will be miserable," he said.

According to Stoddard, one of the perks of teaching is a good job market. Schools are always looking to hire because there is always a need for teachers. He said it provides a welcome sense of job security.

Keith Nagle, a senior theater arts and English major, said he plans to enter an industry with low pay as well as low job opportunity. Nagle, who has been involved in theater since sixth grade, said he is following his passion in hopes of someday becoming an actor.

"Do what you love, not what will make you successful financially," Nagle said. "You could be the richest person in the world and be miserable; you could be the most joyful person in the world and love what you do even though you may have to work a little bit harder."

After entering college as an education major, Nagle knew theater was not something he could stay away from, so he switched his major. He said it gives him a natural high to go on stage and perform a good show that conveys a message that affects the audience.

"I know that I may be making next to nothing, I may be a starving artist or waiting tables, but I know I will be doing what I love as long as I'm on stage, and I will live a happy life," Nagle said.

According to Nagle, the close knit structure of the theater department and the friendly relationships with professors is one factor that has enabled him to pursue a profession in acting. He said the professors bring the best out of you both on and off stage, which is an important motivation in the arts.

"If your job is in the arts, money is not what drives you," Nagle said.

"You find the most happiness in arts where you can express yourself."

Nagle said life is more rewarding when one does not go after a career for the money but because that is truly what he wants to do.

"If you love what you do, that is all that mat-

ters in the end," he said.

Amy Schepens, a senior early childhood development major, also plans to pursue a career based on her personal interests, and not on desires for a certain level of income. After graduation, she will go overseas to do missionary work.

Schepens said this is not a job that pays, and she has to raise her own support.

However, she said the money comes when it is needed.

"It's been neat to see in years past how the Lord has provided the money," she said.

Schepens said she knows she will be content because her chosen career path is where she is called to be.

"There is a perfect job and a perfect place that God has created for everyone. They are going to be miserable if they are outside of his will," Schepens said.



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