

RQI: and/or potential careers?

- In what ways are students' intersecting identities relevant to their academic majors/ careers decision-making process?
- What is the role of family, friends, and institutional agents (primarily faculty) in this process?

Yabani Kelechi

Yabani is a second-generation immigrant student of Nigerian descent in his second year at PCC. Yabani first came to PCC as a computer science major, but after his first year, when he encountered some issues decided to switch into Business Administration. Yabani has remained engaged in his academics while at PCC in spite of painful past educational experiences. Although, his continued enrollment at PCC is a testament to his resilient character, his fear of disappointing his father and not achieving good grades might hinder his ability to explore his academic and occupational interests truly.

Yabani went through a period of "overthinking" during middle school and high school, which led him to completely disengage from school. Yabani says: **"I stopped going to school a lot, and I would just stay home and sit in my room all day, and after a certain point it was like, if you don't do amazingly and start going back to school, you won't be able to graduate."** Yabani attributes his academic paralysis to the pressure he felt from his dad to be a good student. Yabani says, **"my cousins are very good students... So he [father] would compare my grades to them...I was doing C's, D's, that type of thing. They were doing straight A's. He would compare me to them and say stuff like... stop being stupid"**. He further explains **"it was like now I had the pressure of, not only cousins doing A's and B's, but also the fact that if I didn't get A's and B's I would look stupid to him, and possibly to the family. It was just pressure, on pressure, on pressure, and that weighed me down a lot"**. Eventually, Yabani transferred to a continuation school and was able to finish high school.

Yabani started college at PCC with the hopes that it will help him transfer to UCLA one day. Yabani first enrolled at PCC as a computer science major. His interests in computer science started early in his life when people in his family would suggest to him that he should pursue being a game designer or computer programmer. Additionally, Yabani's dad, the person whose career he admired the most growing up, owns a company that focuses on data analysis and systems' organization. Yabani thought he would finish college and then join his dad's company. However, as Yabani took some computer science classes, he began to lose interest. Yabani says, **"well for computer science after a while I started noticing that...usually, for me, the satisfaction that comes from coding and programming is when I finally see all my goal running together and working. But after a while, it just started... I just saw it as more of a chore than something I saw as fun to do after a certain amount of time doing it"**. Most importantly, Yabani felt discouraged by the number of math classes he would have to complete in the

computer science major and cites math as one of the major factors that "pushed him out" of computer science. He recalls, **"I remember when I first found out calculus... I had to go through, I think, six or so math classes to get into computer science. I don't like math, so that was a really big impact on me. That was also after I had already been getting bored of computer science so that on top of it was just... It's what pushed me to start searching for other majors."**

Around the start of his second semester, Yabani decided to switch to Business Administration. Part of what encouraged Yabani to switch majors are his experiences in his marketing and accounting classes. In particular, his interactions with his accounting instructor made it a "fun" atmosphere. Yabani says: **"...I do know that part of the reason I did get into business administration was because my accounting teacher was extremely helpful and helped us get into everything. She would be part of the reason I went into business administration in the first place"**. Besides being very open to explaining the material he did not understand, his accounting faculty also fostered a collaborative environment that enriched his learning experience. Yabani adds: **"one thing she did differently than most of the teachers I've had in other majors...is that there was a lot of group work, and it offered me a lot of chances. Chances to not only meet new people but also learn more because I wasn't just sitting at home looking through the book, just reading but not understanding"**. These positive classroom experiences, paired with his research into possible careers in business, encouraged Yabani to declare a business major.

As Yabani discusses being a business major, he is excited about the potential possibilities for business majors, although it is evident that he is not really sure how it would all work out. Yabani explains: **"I'm pretty sure I will be sticking to business administration. The micro professions you can go into in business administration are varied. There's negotiations, marketing, and accounting. There's... what is it? Crap, I forgot the name. But you can get... There's a bunch of them"**. In terms of the math courses he has to take to complete his major, Yabani says, **"... I know we had to take accounting last semester, then I had to take another accounting class and mathematical analysis for business this semester. I think it's actually also called business calculus. For me, even seeing that, I didn't feel I should stop or look into other majors because I like business enough to look past the fact that there's a bunch of math involved. I just went for it anyway."** Yabani is sure that he will be able to do something with business administration and is open to exploring it. He still wants to transfer to UCLA pursue business there as well and possibly return to computer science. When giving advice to students who are undecided he says **"don't try to put yourself into a random major just because you're feeling pressured or because you want to answer questions like, what are you going to do when you grow up? Because you still have time, especially if you're a freshman. So, take your time and, like I said, don't rush"**.