

Abstract Submitted
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Why are you in Physics, Anyway? SHEM THOMPSON, BRIAN PYPER, BYU-Idaho — More students leave the major of physics for non-physics majors than visa versa. We surveyed a number of students to pin point their initial reasons to major in physics and their reasons for later leaving physics as a major. Our survey was patterned after Elaine Seymour's research in her book "Talking about Leaving;" her research addresses the issue of attrition in Science, Mathematics, and Engineering majors. The results of our surveys show that the biggest concern physics majors have towards majoring in physics is the fast pace and overwhelming nature of the curriculum. Even students who left a non-physics major to peruse a major in physics reported the Physics curriculum to be overwhelming, a concern they did not have towards their previous major. These same students press on toward their new major in physics inspired by career goals/ opportunities. The influence of career goals/opportunities made possible by majoring in physics appears key in attracting students who would be good at physics but are not initially attracted to the field.

Brian Pyper
BYU-Idaho

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