

Sophomore BME Student Archetype

Henry is a 19-year-old Michigan native who is a recently-declared Biomedical Engineering major at U-M. He pegged BME as his future major in high school, when one of his guidance counselors suggested that his exceedingly broad interests in science, math, and health would all be met within a BME curriculum. She also mentioned that BME might be a neat avenue into medicine, a career in which he had always envisioned himself. After that, he was hooked. It seemed to Henry that no other major could match *all* of his interests nearly as well as BME.

Because his first year was filled with prerequisites and the mandated “undeclared” period, Henry began to look elsewhere for experiences which were truly biomedical in nature. He joined M-HEAL and was quickly wrapped up in the group; this year, he holds a leadership position and is very passionate about providing younger students who aren’t completely fulfilled by freshman year coursework an opportunity to dig into the BME field. If he thinks about it for too long, his involvements with M-HEAL, his social obligations, and the concept of fitting in a full BME and pre-med course load stress him out, but he figures that there has to be a way. He’s found success up to this point, so he isn’t terribly worried. And besides, people have certainly walked this path before him.

As he looks ahead, Henry sees a pretty regimented path. There won’t be a lot of flexibility in which courses he takes, although he’s heard that the positioning of those classes across the next three years can be fluid. He is a little frustrated that he has to take so many courses before really digging into the specifics of design sub-specialties of BME, but he understands that the curriculum is trying to give everyone a broad base from which to make informed decisions. While most of Henry’s friends are pretty sure of their future plans, their interests are scattered – and Henry has come to recognize that in a field as all-encompassing as BME, space needs to be made for them. He just wishes that there was a way for students like him, who have already done their research and know where they want to specialize, to dig into that coursework sooner than junior and senior year. He wonders what will happen if he was wrong, and if his experiential learning classes later in the curriculum reveal a different corner of the field about which he is much more passionate. He hopes that his extracurricular involvement will fill this gap and help him to understand the field before these decisions need to be made.

Ultimately, Henry is a little unsure if BME was the right choice for him; it certainly wasn’t the “only” choice, as he had initially conceived it. The courses look enticing, but he just hopes that he makes the right decisions and is happy with the specialization in which he lands.