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Breaking the boundaries, one major at a time

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Ever since I received my NASA internship three months ago, I've been asked on an at least weekly basis "Oh, don't you need to be wicked smart or be really good at math to work there?" Of course, most people assume that one needs to be the mental equivalent of Einstein to help hurtle massive objects and people off the planet, but that's not necessarily the case.

While it does take a significant amount of intellect to design, test, and engineer the technology and vehicles needed for such feats, it also takes a different kind of intellect to run the behind-the-scenes tasks.

Mission planning, recording, flying, and preserving, among others, require people who are proficient in things other than science and mathematics. Just like every major company, there needs to be communications officers who help publicize the agency's mission (such as myself) and release information to the public. There are historians who study what we've done and advise how to go (or not go) in the future, as well as help us find what we need to know from the past. There are managers, accountants, lawyers, journalists – the list goes on and on.

My point is, don't let your major determine what you can and can not do. Don't let boundaries put limits in your mind of what is and isn't possible.

Often times, you'll find that your skill set is not just limited to what your major is or what position you apply for, but that you'll be beneficial in many departments. I'm a history major working at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. You can be a mathematics major working for the Astrobiology department, or even a photography major who is passionate about music.

Who knows, perhaps your love of music and interest in technology could lead you to conducting the first all-android philharmonic on the Moon.

About the blogger



My name is Joey Vars, and I was born and raised in the Tampa Bay area. I'm a history major specializing in spaceflight, and I anticipate a Fall 2015 graduation. I'm passionate about all things space-related, and my goal is to work for NASA. In addition to this, I love Florida history, and have traveled much of the state's back roads, discovering forgotten destinations and adventures along the way.