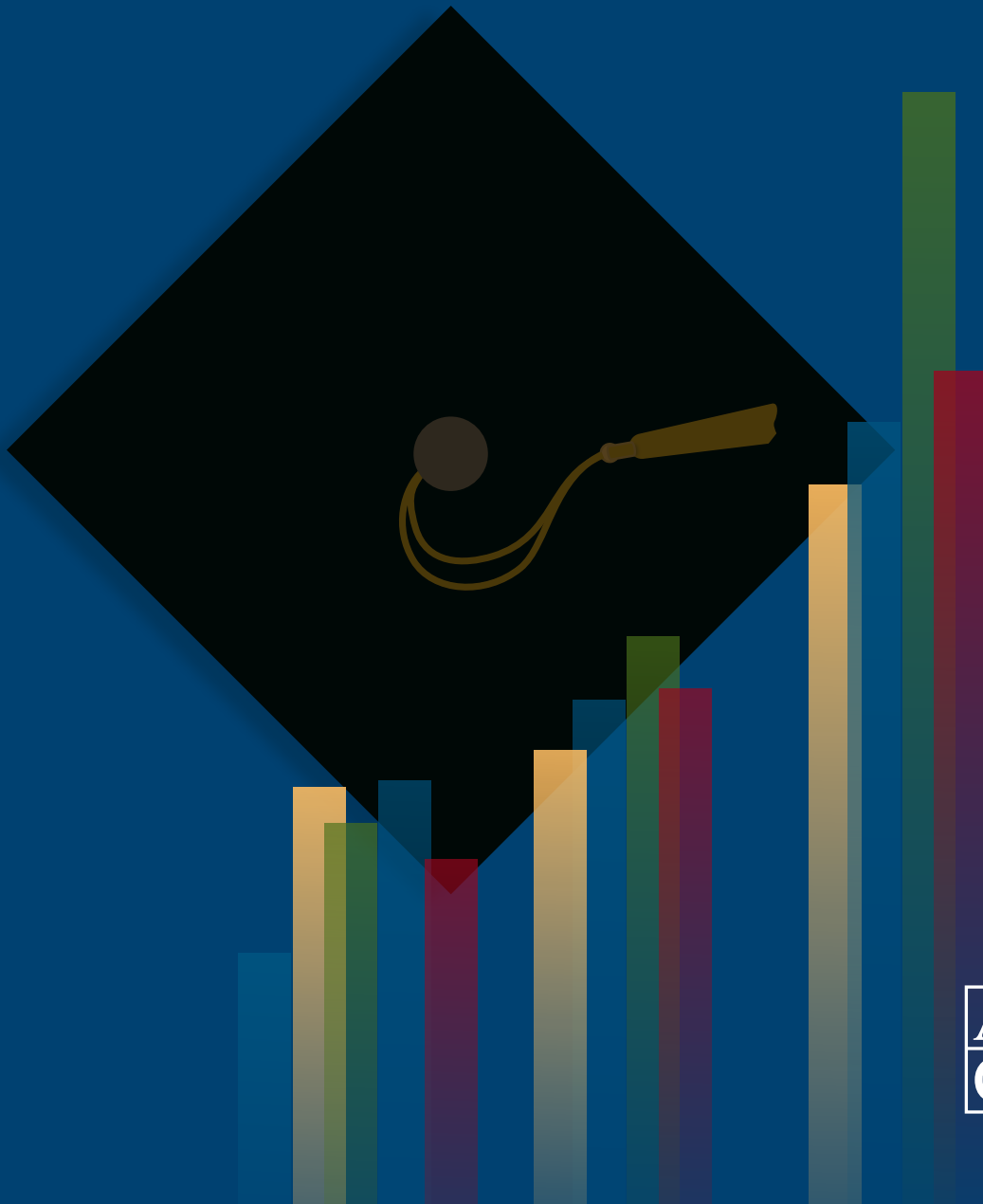


# Liberal Arts Graduates and Employment

## Setting the Record Straight



*Association  
of American  
Colleges and  
Universities*

# Liberal Arts Graduates and Employment: Setting the Record Straight

*How Liberal Arts and Sciences Majors Fare in Employment*, the new report from the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems and the Association of American Colleges and Universities, provides a much-needed corrective to claims that most liberal arts graduates—those with a degree in a humanities, arts, or social science field—are unemployed and unemployable. Based on an analysis of US Census and other economic data, the report presents a broad view of the employment outcomes of college education—not only for recent graduates, but also for more mature and experienced workers. The report also presents a comparison of employment and salary outcomes for liberal arts graduates and those with a degree in science, mathematics, engineering, or a professional or preprofessional field.

Finally, the report tracks the success rates of liberal arts majors and documents how society benefits from liberal arts graduates' inclination to pursue careers in education and social services professions. Presented below are selected findings from the report.



## Employers Want All Students to Study the Liberal Arts and Sciences

**4 out of 5** employers agree that *all* students should acquire broad knowledge in the liberal arts and sciences.

# 93%

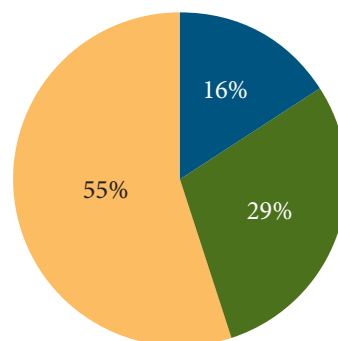
## It Takes More than a Major to Succeed

**93%** of employers agree that candidates' demonstrated capacity to think critically, communicate clearly, and solve complex problems is *more important* than their undergraduate major.

## Employers Want Both Broad Knowledge and Specific Skills

Which of the following ranges of knowledge and skills are more important for recent graduates who want to pursue advancement and long-term career success at your company?

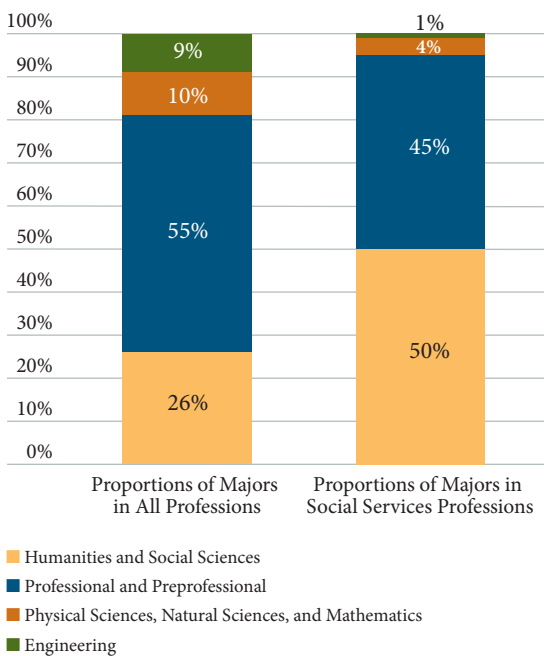
- Knowledge and skills that apply to a specific field or position
- A range of knowledge and skills that apply to a range of fields or positions
- Both field-specific knowledge and skills and a broad range of knowledge and skills



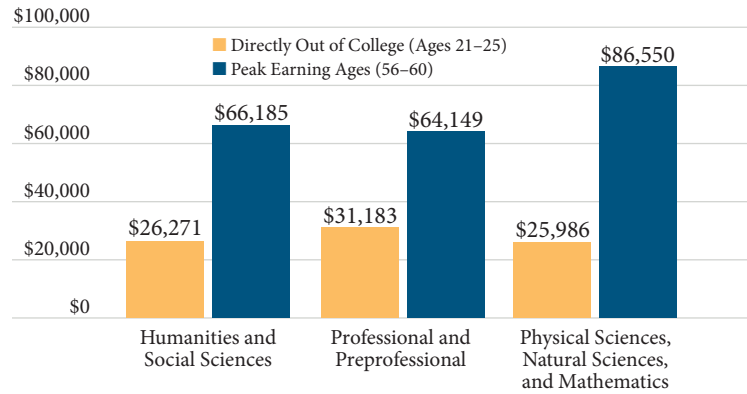
## Top 15 Professions of Liberal Arts Graduates

Elementary and Middle School Teachers  
 Lawyers, Judges, Magistrates  
 Managers  
 Postsecondary Teachers  
 Chief Executives and Legislators  
 Education Administrators  
 Social Workers  
 Secondary School Teachers  
 Counselors  
 Sales Representatives  
 Clergy  
 Retail Sales Supervisors  
 Secretaries and Administrative Assistants  
 Accountants and Auditors  
 Marketing and Sales Managers

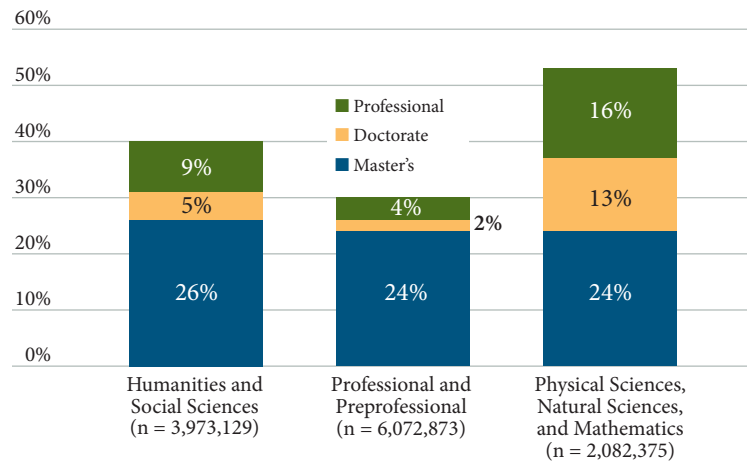
## Liberal Arts Graduates Are Key to Essential Social Services Professions



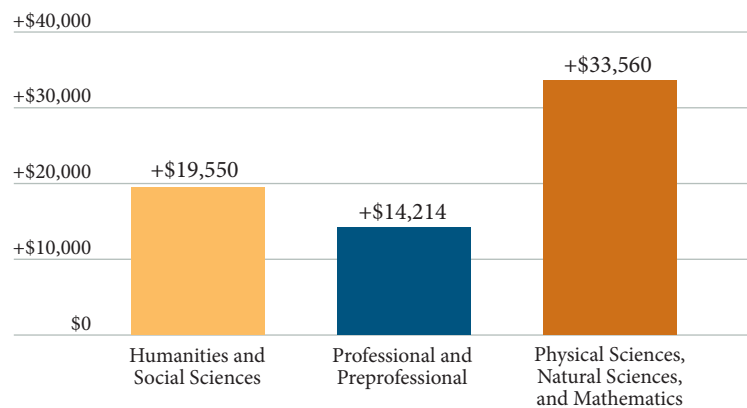
## Liberal Arts and Sciences Majors Close Earnings Gaps with Professional Majors



## Drivers of US Intellectual Capital: More Liberal Arts and Sciences Majors Attain Advanced Degrees



## Graduate School Earnings Bump: Advanced Degrees Significantly Increase Earnings



## About AAC&U and NCHEMS



Association  
of American  
Colleges and  
Universities

The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) is the leading national association concerned with the quality, vitality, and public standing of undergraduate liberal education. Its members are committed to extending the advantages of a liberal education to all students, regardless of academic specialization or intended career. Founded in 1915, AAC&U now comprises more than 1,300 member institutions—including accredited public and private colleges, community colleges, research universities, and comprehensive universities of every type and size. AAC&U functions as a catalyst and facilitator, forging links among presidents, administrators, and faculty members who are engaged in institutional and curricular planning. Its mission is to reinforce the collective commitment to liberal education and inclusive excellence at both the national and local levels, and to help individual institutions keep the quality of student learning at the core of their work as they evolve to meet new economic and social challenges. Information about AAC&U membership, programs, and publications can be found online at [www.aacu.org](http://www.aacu.org).



Through its more than forty years of service to higher education, the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) has been committed to bridging the gap between research and practice by placing the latest concepts and tools in the hands of higher education policy makers and administrators. Since its founding, NCHEMS has received widespread acclaim for developing practical responses to the strategic issues facing leaders of higher education institutions and agencies. With project support from multiple foundations, NCHEMS develops information and policy tools targeted at policy makers and institutional leaders that can help them set strategic directions and evaluate their effectiveness. NCHEMS also delivers research-based expertise, practical experience, information, and a range of management tools that can help institutions and higher education systems and states improve both their efficiency and their effectiveness. A particular hallmark of what we do is identifying and analyzing data drawn from multiple sources to help solve specific policy and strategic problems.

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The selected findings presented in this brochure are drawn from *How Liberal Arts and Sciences Majors Fare in Employment* by Debra Humphreys and Patrick Kelly (Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2014). The report was made possible with funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Spencer Foundation, and the Teagle Foundation. Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed here or in the full report do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Spencer Foundation, or the Teagle Foundation.

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