

## Students' personal and academic commitments to the humanities don't always align; extracurriculars provide flexible space for engagement.

(Survey results complementing WE1S big-data research)

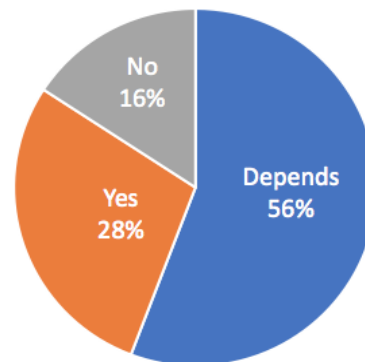
In a survey of undergraduate students at UC Santa Barbara, conducted as part of WE1S's human subjects research, many students hesitated when asked "Would you advise a friend to major in the humanities?". Out of 95 participants, 27 (28%) said "yes", 53 (56%) said "it depends", and 15 (16%) said "no". However, when the question shifted to "Would you advise a friend to take part in extracurricular clubs or hobbies oriented around the humanities?", students were far more positive: 73 of 95 participants (77%) answered "yes", and 22 (23%) said "it depends". *None* said "no". This suggests that students are more willing to embrace the extracurricular, as opposed to the academic, as a site for humanities participation.

More broadly, we can see a distinction between emotional commitments to the humanities (such as positivity towards humanities-related activities) and academic commitments to the humanities (such as a choice of major). Indeed, 47% of undergraduate survey respondents (45 of 97 participants) considered the humanities to be a "very important" part of their lives. 45% (44 of 97) said "somewhat important" and only 8% (8 of 97) said "not important." To put this in context, only about 25% (27 of 109) of our total group of undergraduate respondents were actually majoring in a humanities field. *Lack of enrollment in humanities disciplines thus cannot be equated with negative attitudes about the humanities; conversely, positivity toward the humanities does not always mean increased enrollments.*

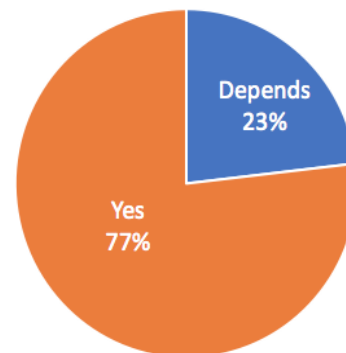
Given this misalignment, the extracurricular becomes a crucial site for humanities engagement, possibly because students feel

that the barriers and stakes for participation are lower here. Out of 94 respondents, 35 (37%) indicated that, apart from their majors, they "often" take part in extracurricular activities, events, or hobbies associated with the humanities. 50 (53%) replied "sometimes" and only 9 (10%) replied "never."

Would you advise a friend to major in the humanities?



Would you advise a friend to take part in extracurricular clubs or hobbies oriented around the humanities?



**Population studied:** [C-HS-1](#) (UCSB undergrads)  
**Evidentiary Documentation:** [WE1S Reports 8A and 8B \(Summer 2019\)](#)  
**Related Materials:** [WE1S Human Subjects page](#)