

Students and others we surveyed are personally invested in the humanities but not sure it is a good professional investment.

(Survey results complementing WE1S big-data research)

Our survey at the University of Miami shows that students and others have a strong personal investment or interest in the humanities.¹ Approximately a third of our undergraduate respondents considered the humanities to be “very important” to their daily lives, while only 7% said they were “not important”. Among non-undergraduate respondents, 37% considered the humanities to be “very relevant” to their job on a daily basis, compared to 17% who felt they were “not important” to their job.

Such interests in the humanities often take the form of extracurricular activities. 37% of undergrads and 50% of non-undergrads said that they “often” take part in humanities-related activities. Only 9% of undergrads and 6% of non-undergrads said “never”. Additionally, 57% of undergrads and 69% of non-undergrads stated they would recommend that their friends participate in humanities-related extracurriculars.

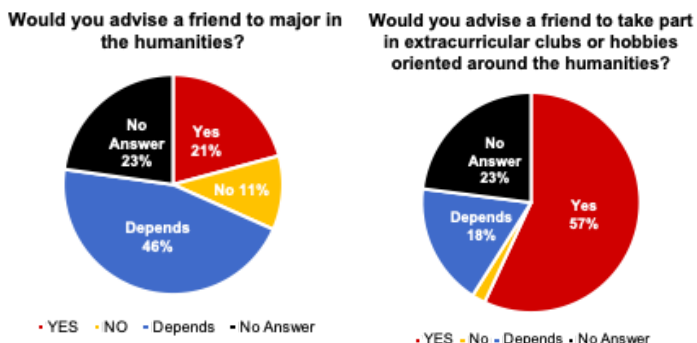
These personal connections and endorsements of the humanities, however, rarely transfer into academic and professional realms. Only 21% of undergrads and 26% of non-undergrads said they would advise friends to *major* in the humanities. Among the 46% of both groups who responded “it depends,” a concern was the perceived lack of jobs for humanities majors and the professional

irrelevance of a humanities degree.

Participants commented that “there are no good-paying jobs” or that they were “not sure what the job prospects are.”

Participants in a focus group we then organized at UM associated the humanities with a “lower starting salary” and “less defined career path.” They also thought the humanities are “difficult to quantify” by contrast with the sciences, which are “marketable”. These findings suggest a lack of confidence in the practical value of a humanities degree’ in the workplace, despite [research suggesting otherwise](#).

How can educators and advisers more effectively convey the value of both the scholarly and professional contributions of the humanities to society? (See [KF 4-1](#).)



(for larger version of graphs, click [here](#) and [here](#))

¹ Survey conducted Jan. to Feb. 2020 as part of WE1S’s human subjects research to complement big-data media research. There were 312 undergraduate respondents and 216 non-undergraduate respondents, including graduate students, faculty, staff, visiting scholars, and affiliates. (See our methods card [M-6](#) on human subjects research.)

Population Studied: [C-HS-2](#), [C-HS-4](#) (U. Miami undergrads & non-undergrads)

Evidentiary Documentation: [MR-9-1](#); [MR-9-2](#)

Related Materials: [KF-4-1](#), [KF-8-3](#), [M-6](#)