

## U. Miami Non-undergraduate Survey: Majors and Careers

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*In this report, we analyze a cluster of questions (Q191, Q147, Q25A, Q4) centering around non-undergraduate majors and careers.*

### I: Statistics and Visualizations

#### Q191: How do you feel about your major now?

##### Q191-1: I am glad I chose the major I did.

Total Respondents: 206 out of 236

Yes: 73%

No: 6%

Depends: 8%

No answer: 13%

##### Q191-2: I feel passionate about my major.

Total Respondents: 206 out of 236

Yes: 69%

No: 9%

Depends: 10%

No answer: 13%

##### Q191-3: My major has led to a profitable career.

Total Respondents: 206 out of 236

Yes: 36%

No: 22%

Depends: 29%

No answer: 13%

**Q191-4: My major has led to a specific career/the career I wanted.**

Total Respondents: 206 out of 236

Yes: 48%

No: 17%

Depends: 22%

No answer: 13%

**Q191-5 It has been hard to find a job related to my major.**

Total Respondents: 205 out of 236

Yes: 28%

No: 41%

Depends: 18%

No answer: 13%

**Q191-6 My major was a risk.**

Total Respondents: 205 out of 236

Yes: 23%

No: 50%

Depends: 13%

No answer: 13%

**Q191-7 I regret my choice of major.**

Total Respondents: 206 out of 236

Yes: 7%

No: 72%

Depends: 8%

No answer: 13%

**Q191-8 I am indifferent to my major.**

Total Respondents: 205 out of 236

Yes: 6%  
 No: 76%  
 Depends: 5%  
 No answer: 13%

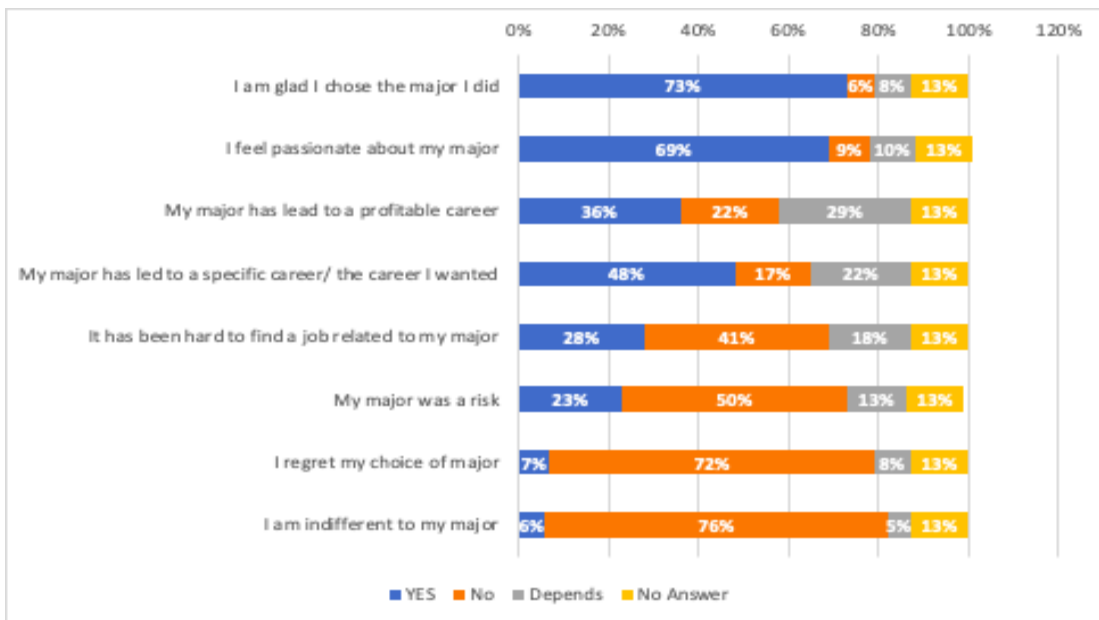


Fig. 1: Q191 results

**Q147-I feel that my major is important to my sense of identity.**

Total Respondents: 207 out of 236

Strongly disagree: 8%  
 Disagree: 8%  
 Neutral: 11%  
 Agree: 30%  
 Strongly agree: 31%  
 No answer: 12%

**Q25A: How would you describe the relationship between your major and your career? Do you use your degree often in your current or previous professions?**

Total Respondents: 196 out of 236

We grouped some of the discursive responses as follows:

- 119 people work in academic fields based on their undergraduate major. This count includes those who are in graduate school to continue the same field of study.
- 27 people gained transferable skills, including communication, reading, writing, research, creativity, critical thinking, and human resources. According to those who identified their fields of study, most of these participants are in the arts and the humanities: theatre, English, anthropology, or, generally, “the humanities.” One identified their background as business administration, and said business can be used in all situations. One respondent with a psychology background uses their training in their current job in higher education.
  - One response worth noting: “Not really. Liberal arts is open enough for me to try new things like work for a law firm or be considered for a wealth management job with a bank. It is flexible but lacking in a specific area perhaps.”
- 15 people stated that they do use their major in their career, without further clarification.
- Only 12 people said no, with primary reasons given as change of career or having a career before going to college.

Sorting the discursive responses by non-undergraduates who are not graduate students into Yes/No/Depends yields the following numbers:

Total Respondents: 62 out of 63

Yes: 56%

No: 33%

Depends: 10%

No Answer: 2%





Does the fact that graduate students make up a significant portion of our non-undergraduate participants explain the conservative career expectations? Or, can we assume that having difficulties finding a job or not getting a job with an ideal salary is related to these respondents' decisions to go to graduate school?

There are also various ways to measure respondents' satisfaction with their major in addition to career outcomes/trajectories. Focus group discussions about the purpose of college mainly centered on getting a job. It might be useful to compare our focus groups' answers with our undergraduate and non-undergraduate survey results to see how the perceived purpose of a college education is related to public discourse about the humanities.

This question is interesting when compared to our undergraduate results ([MR-9-3](#)). The percentages of respondents who selected "feeling passionate about my major" and "my major is/was a risk" are about the same between two groups. However, the percentage of undergraduates who chose "I expect my major to lead to a specific career/the career I want" is 66%, as opposed to 48% in the case of non-undergraduates.

The percentage of non-undergraduate respondents who reported their major has led to a profitable career is 36%, way lower than the undergraduate respondents, who have high expectations about this (62%).

Since there is no sharp difference between the top major choices of our undergraduate and non-undergraduate participants, it is safe to assume that our non-undergraduate and undergraduate participants have similar educational backgrounds and career objectives. Perceived job market stability and financial return are the two major factors in deciding majors, according to our survey and focus group results. It turns out, however, that the perceived "good, lucrative" jobs aren't so easy to find or don't pay as much as expected, as our non-undergraduate respondents make clear. Many go into STEM fields for the perceived prestige and high salary --and we want to highlight the word "perceived" here -- because our focus group results counter this perception that majoring in a STEM field inevitably leads to guaranteed jobs (see transcript for [Focus Group 3](#) in particular).