# U. Miami Non-Undergraduate Survey: Would You Advise Someone to Major in the Humanities?

Alexandria Morgan, Ruth Trego

*In this report, we examined non-undergraduate responses to questions Q44 and Q44A, which asked students whether they would advise a friend to major in the humanities, and why.* 

### I. Visualizations and Statistics

### Q44: Would you advise someone to major in the humanities?

Total Respondents: 197 out of 236

26% Yes 11% No 46% Depends 17% No answer

## Q44: Would you advise someone to major in the humanities?



Fig. 1: Q44 results

### Q44A: Why or why not?

Total Respondents: 176 out of 236



Fig 3: Word cloud of discursive responses from Q44A

### II. Discursive Response

Responses to Q44 reveal that undergrads and non-undergrads have near-identical reservations about majoring in the humanities. It's notable that non-undergrads showed similar reservations because, as a whole, they have more strongly positive associations with the humanities and with humanities-based activities than undergrads, as can be seen in other mini reports. However, the percentage of non-undergrads who answered "yes" is 26% versus 21% for undergrads. ("No" and "depends" show the same percentages in both groups.)

The discursive responses to Q44A, "Why or why not?" were largely similar to undergrad responses, with major themes emerging around "Depends on the person's interests/skills" (69 responses) and "no job prospects/financial opportunities" (31 responses). Again, a very small group of people (2 or 3) indicated issues with majoring in the humanities not related to money, such as humanities departments being "biased," as one respondent put it. However, there was one noticeable difference: non-undergrad discursive responses had a substantial increase in passionate, well thought-out defenses of majoring in the humanities as an inherently good idea both for personal fulfillment and for job prospects. A sampling of this kind of response:

- "To gain the historical perspective and cross-cultural understanding as well as a deeper appreciation of culture."
- "Lifelong capacities for learning and for working with others to read the world, including both employable skills and personal pleasures and resources."

- "It is empowering and fulfilling."
- "What's more important than seeking to understand human behavior (including our own)?"
- "No matter what employment you end up in, it will lend itself to making a person well-rounded."
- "I would if they were unsure of what to do because it is a broad and flexible degree that may still offer great skills that may applied [sic] anywhere anyway as well as allow space for growth and development."
- "People should major in the humanities because they teach different styles of reading, how to judge qualitative evidence, how to write correctly and persuasively, how to think analytically with and about words, how to use the imagination, how to become more empathetic, and how to appreciate important fields of knowledge (history, literature, philosophy, religion, culture, etc.)."
- "To be able to think critically and outside the box!"
- "It's helped me understand myself and the world and it's made me feel good about myself. It's been a great outlet for my passion."
- "In the longer sweep of life, the big questions are the ancient big questions of the centuries, and they ooze into the sciences and engineering and technology and society and everything so profoundly that understanding that is actually more interesting in the long run than the fascinations of cleverness, gadgets, moneymaking, etc."
- "Because you learn what you need to know to live a moral life."
- "The humanities provide an important set of skills for reading and writing. Information learned in humanities courses is important, but even more important are the approaches to learning that the humanities teach."