Myths Versus Facts

Myth: I won’t make any money with an Arts & Sciences major.

Fact: While income for liberal arts majors may be somewhat lower for their very first jobs compared to students from technical or specialized fields, this salary discrepancy quickly disappears. Over time, liberal arts majors experience much larger salary increases and may even end up out-earning their peers from other educational backgrounds. (Source: PayScale)

Myth: You must go to graduate school rather than starting a career right out of an undergraduate program.

Fact: A degree in Arts and Sciences can provide a strong foundation for pursuing advanced degrees in fields such as medicine, business, education, or law. However, many students choose not to continue their studies and begin working in entry-level positions right after completing a bachelor’s degree. In fact, liberal arts majors have great flexibility in career choice because of the versatility of their degrees and variety in experiences.

Your Major Doesn’t Decide Your Career—You Do!

Many students struggle with identifying career options, as liberal arts majors often do not provide a linear career path to follow. We tend to assume that our major should predict what we do next. In reality, you can find Education majors working in Human Resources and Philosophy majors without business education running major corporations. As you go through school, supplement what you are learning in the classroom with real-world experience. Volunteer, work part-time, study abroad, take Service Learning courses, get involved in campus organizations, complete an internship. Gaining experience will not only make you more marketable upon graduation, it also helps you to clarify your interests, values and skills. Then, be prepared to share how these experiences relate to the job. Be intentional in making the connection for employers of how your education and unique background will benefit them.

Application Example

Don’t just say, “Yes, I studied abroad for a summer in Spain. It was amazing!” Instead, tell them about what you gained from the experience. During the summer I spent studying abroad in Spain, I was able to greatly improve my intercultural and Spanish-language skills. While I was there, I volunteered in a health clinic and was able to interact with patients from diverse backgrounds. I believe this knowledge will be beneficial in working with Spanish-speaking clients in this social service role.”
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