

Canadian  
Historical  
Association



Société  
historique  
du Canada

# Changing the Conversation The Value of a History Degree



# The Truth About History Graduates Is:

- A history degree coupled with basic technology skills is one of the best paths to a well paid, satisfying career in the fastest growing sectors of our economy.
- History graduates have high levels of employment in a vast variety of careers including as successful entrepreneurs.
- People with degrees in history and the other liberal arts have the highest job satisfaction.
- Life time earnings for history students are the same as most other professions.
- Graduates with liberal arts degrees including history are the most politically engaged and vital to a healthy democracy.



# Can History Grads Get a Job?

- 93% of humanities graduates were employed two years after graduation. (Ontario, 2018).
- 89% of humanities graduates were employed six months after graduation (Ontario, 2018).



# Co-op Education is a Bonus

- 3 out of every 4 students who do co-op have a job when they graduate.
- Co-op grads have higher incomes immediately after graduation and are more likely to be employed in a field related to their studies.

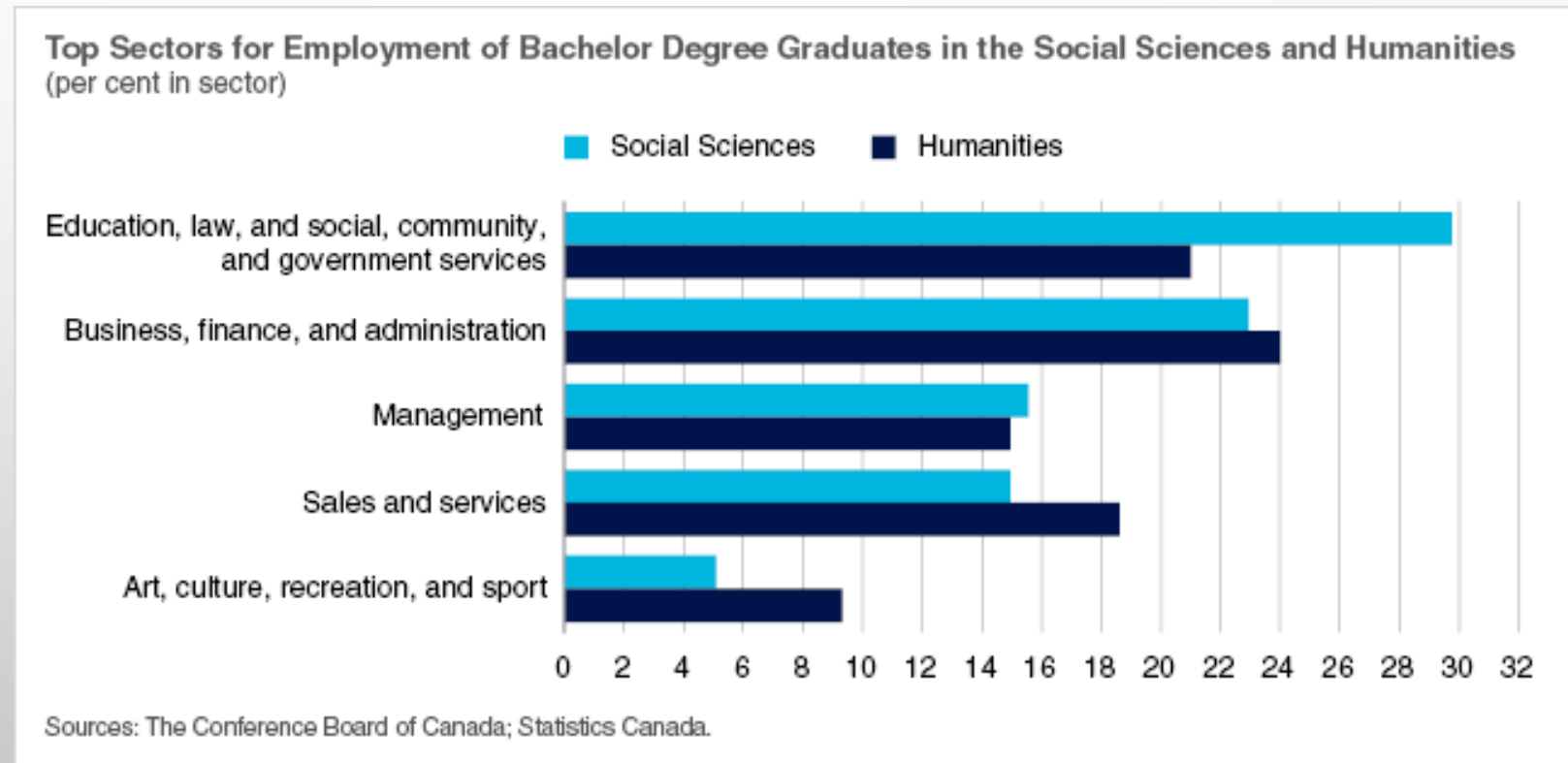
Statistics Canada, 2015, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/N1/Pub/81-595-m/2014101/Section03-eng.htm>

University of Victoria, *Co-op Annual Report*, 2019. Data includes co-ops across all disciplines.



# What Can You Do With a History Degree? Almost Anything But Brain Surgery and Rocket Science

Two years from graduation humanities and social sciences students worked in more than 300 different occupations.



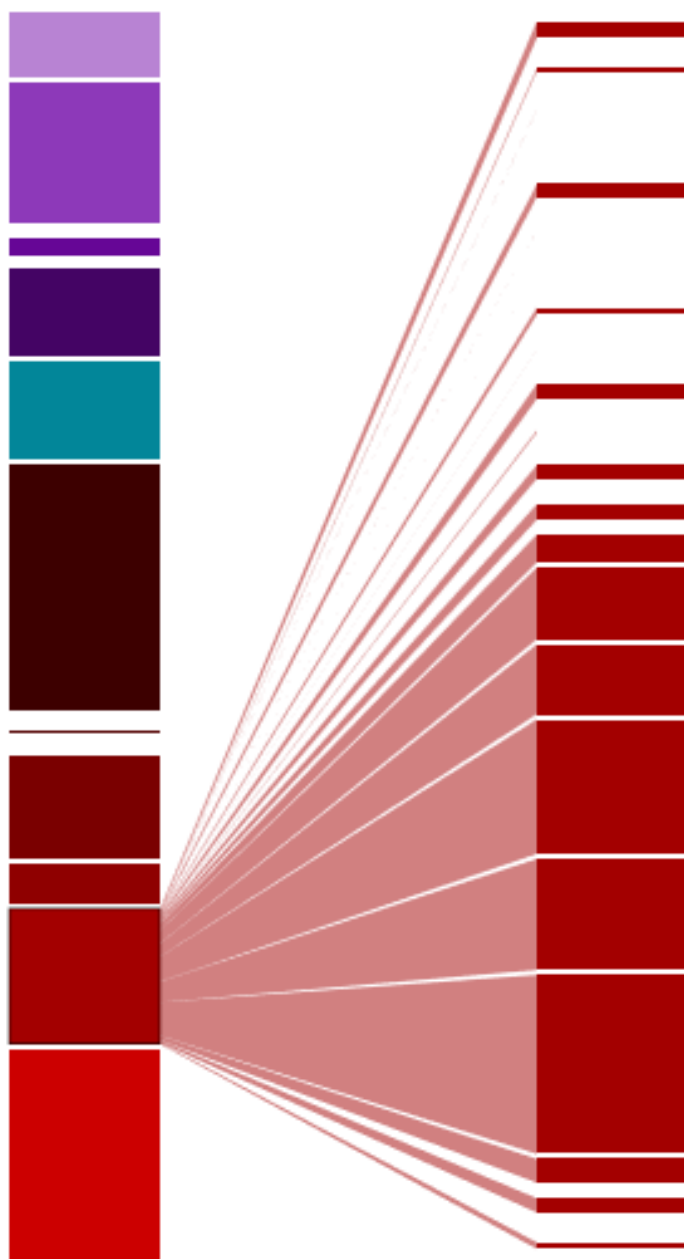
# History Students Embark on a Variety of Careers

- Ontario Council of Universities shows 25% of graduates from the humanities work in business, finance and administration.
- A 2012 Vanderbilt University study shows that 30% of history graduates go on to work in the business sector, law 24%, education 17% and 12% the heritage sector.
- 90% of graduates reported back that their history degree was directly useful to them in their positions (Vanderbilt).



## Field of Study

- ( 6%) Math, computer and information sciences
- ( 12%) Architecture and engineering
- ( 2%) Agriculture, natural resources, conservation
- ( 8%) Physical and life sciences
- ( 9%) Health
- ( 21%) Law, social and behavioural sciences
- ( 0%) Personal, protective and transportation services
- ( 9%) Education
- ( 4%) Arts and communications
- ( 12%) Humanities
- ( 19%) Business, management and public administration



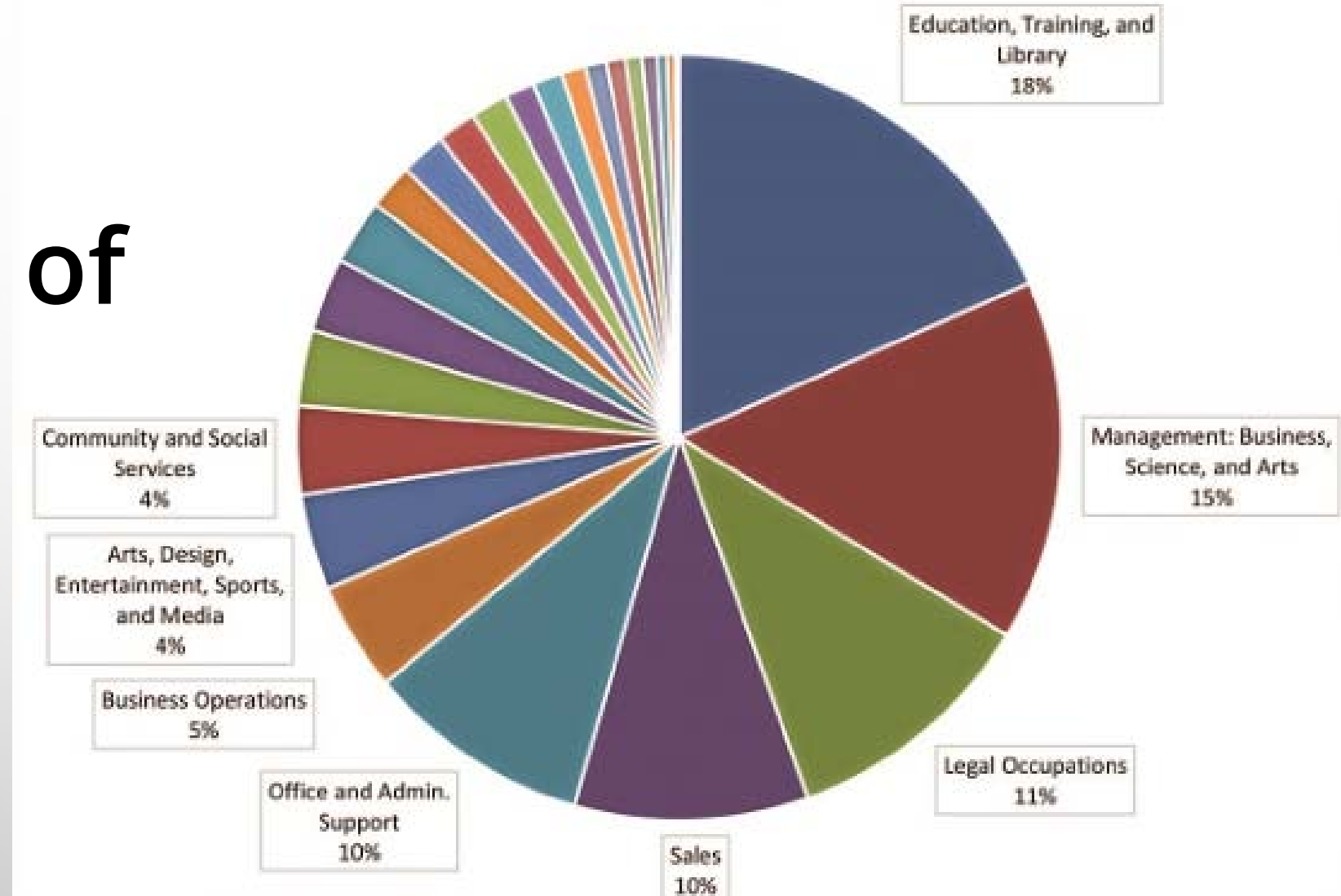
## Occupation

- ( 2%) Computer and information systems
- ( 0%) Civil, mechanical, electrical, chemical and other engineers
- ( 0%) Architects, urban planners and land surveyors
- ( 0%) Mathematicians, statisticians and actuaries
- ( 2%) Natural and applied sciences
- ( 0%) Physical sciences
- ( 0%) Life sciences
- ( 1%) Policy and program officers, researchers and consultants (STEM)
- ( 0%) Psychologists
- ( 2%) Health
- ( 0%) Judges, lawyers, and Quebec notaries
- ( 2%) Social workers, counsellors, clergy and probation officers
- ( 2%) Policy and program officers, researchers and consultants (non-STEM)
- ( 4%) Paralegals, social services, education and religion
- ( 10%) Art, culture, recreation and sport
- ( 10%) Teachers and professors
- ( 19%) Sales and service
- ( 15%) Management
- ( 25%) Business, finance and administrative
- ( 3%) Trades, transport and equipment operators
- ( 2%) Processing, manufacturing and utilities
- ( 1%) Primary Industry





# Careers of History Majors

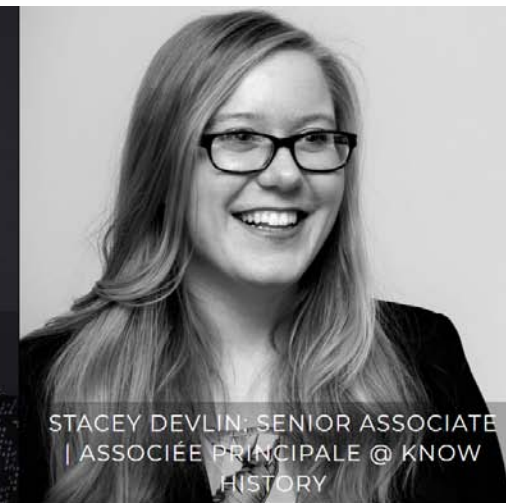
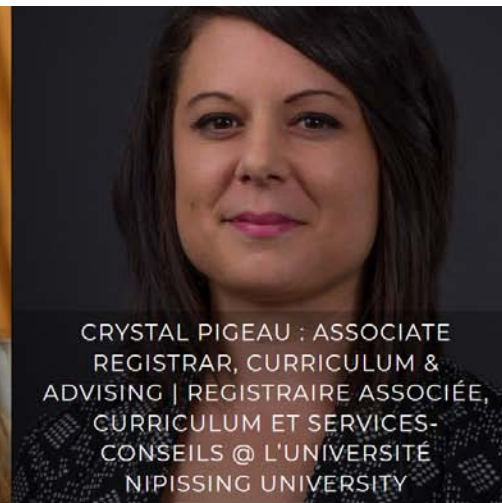


American Community Survey 2010-2014: 5-year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS). Includes individuals who stated they were in full-time employment, between the ages of 25 and 64, had achieved a bachelor's degree or higher, and had either history or US history as the field of study for their bachelor's degree.





# What Have Recent Grads Done With Their History Degrees?



See a wide variety of their profiles at <https://historydegreediplomehistoire.blog/>



## In an American survey of 318 businesses with more than 25 employees:

- 93% business leaders agreed, “a candidate’s demonstrated capacity to think critically, communicate clearly, and solve complex problems is more important than their undergraduate major.”
- More than 90% business leaders surveyed say it is important that those they hire demonstrate ethical judgment and integrity; intercultural skills; and the capacity for continued new learning.

An Online Survey Among Employers conducted on behalf of the Association of American Colleges and Universities by Hart Research Associates, 2013.



# Not Just for Today – Historians have the Key Skills for the Future Job Market

According to the RBC 2018 study *Humans Wanted*.

- Global competencies like cultural awareness, language, and adaptability will be in demand.
- Virtually all job openings will place significant importance on judgment and decision making and more than two thirds will value an ability to manage people and resources.
- Digital fluency will be essential to all new jobs. This does not mean we need a nation of coders, but a nation that is digitally literate.



# Historians Are Well Placed For The Future Job Market

An assessment of 20,000 skills rankings across 300 occupations and 2.4 million expected job openings in the 2020s shows an increasing demand for foundational skills such as

- Critical Thinking,
- Co-ordination,
- Social Perceptiveness,
- Active Listening,
- Complex Problem Solving.



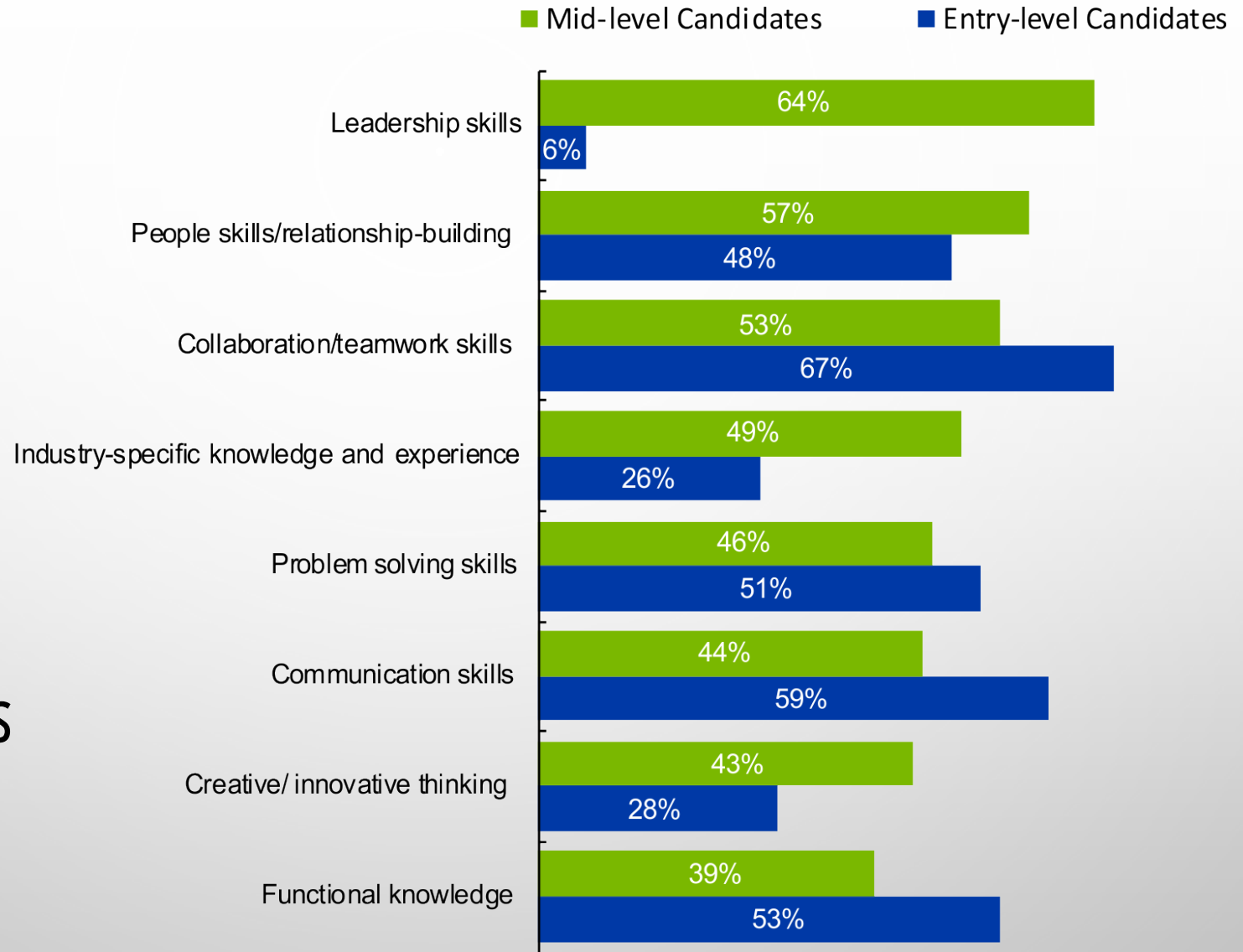
# So Called “Soft” Skills of Historians are in Demand

When evaluating entry-level hires, major employers value soft skills over technical knowledge. These 21<sup>st</sup> century skills include relationship-building, communication and problem-solving skills, as well as analytical and leadership abilities – attributes developed and honed through the liberal arts.





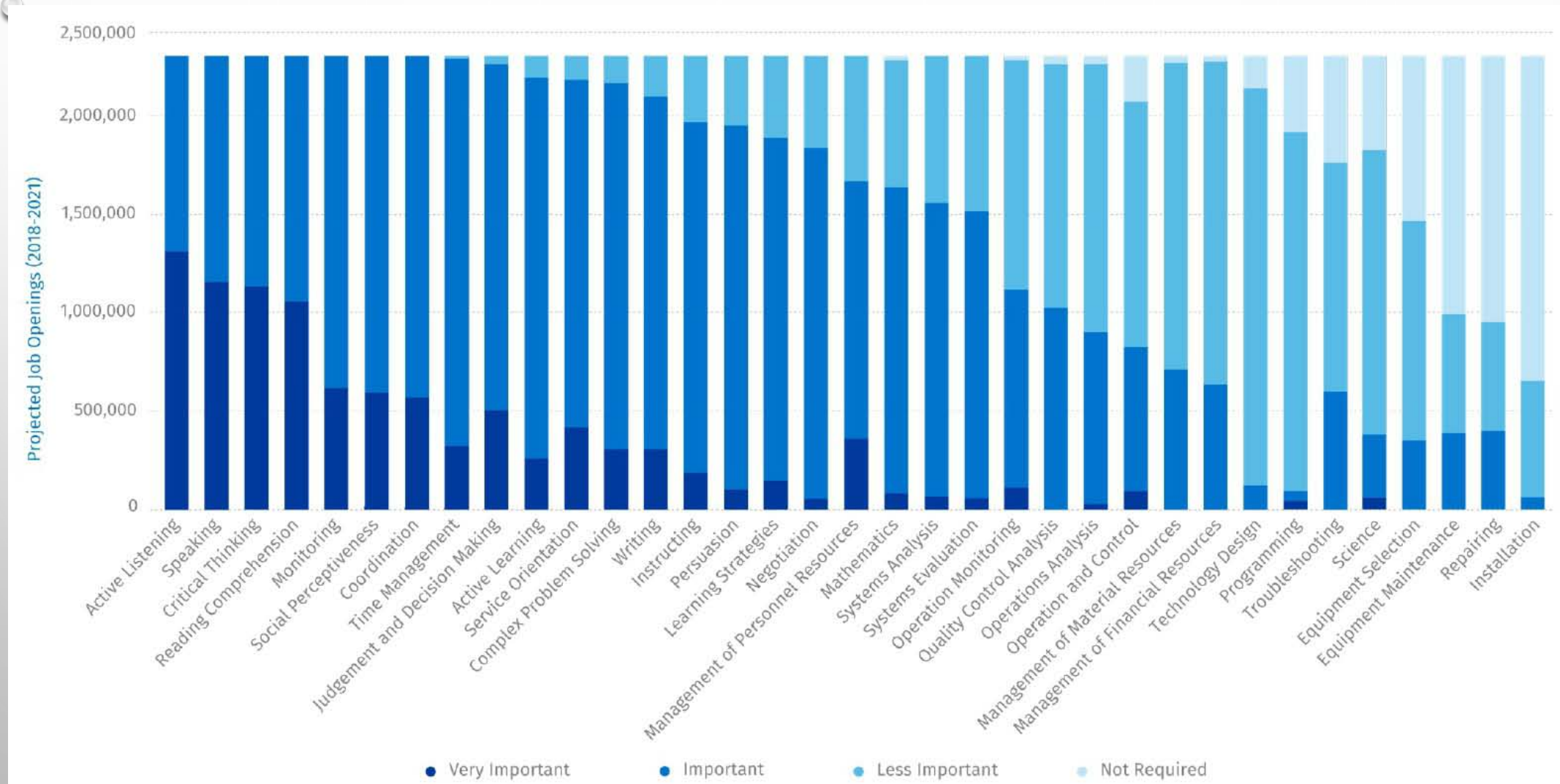
In a 2015 survey of 90 Canadian companies across all sectors, these are the skills and capabilities rated as most important:



Business Council of Canada and Aon Hewitt, *Developing Canada's future workforce*, 2015.



# Projected skills demand for all occupations in order of descending importance



Royal Bank of Canada, *Humans Wanted: How Canadian Youth Can Thrive in the Age of Disruption*, 2018.





# Humanities Grads Have Cross Cultural Skills

More than 80% of Canadian hiring managers feel that grads with cross-cultural understanding and knowledge of the global marketplace are assets to the competitiveness of their companies. Almost 90% of grads who had an study-abroad experience agree that the global knowledge they gained contributed to their career achievements.

Leger Marketing Employer Survey for Universities Canada, 2014; and Canadian Bureau for International Education, *World of Learning: Canadian Post-Secondary Students and the Study Abroad Experience*, 2014 .



# Artificial Intelligence Requires the Actual Intelligence of the Humanities

"As computers behave more like humans, the social sciences and humanities will become even more important. Languages, art, history, economics, ethics, philosophy, psychology and human development courses can teach critical, philosophical and ethics-based skills that will be instrumental in the development and management of AI solutions."

Microsoft President Brad Smith and VP of AI Research Harry Shum in their new book, *The Future Computed: Artificial Intelligence and its Role in Society*, 2018.



# New Technologies Need To Be Married With Humanities

“It is in apple’s DNA that technology alone is not enough – it’s technology married with liberal arts, married with the humanities, that yields us the results that make our heart sing.”

Steve Jobs, the late Co-founder and CEO of Apple, <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/3191123-it-is-in-apple-s-dna-that-technology-alone-is-not>



# But Can They Make A Living?

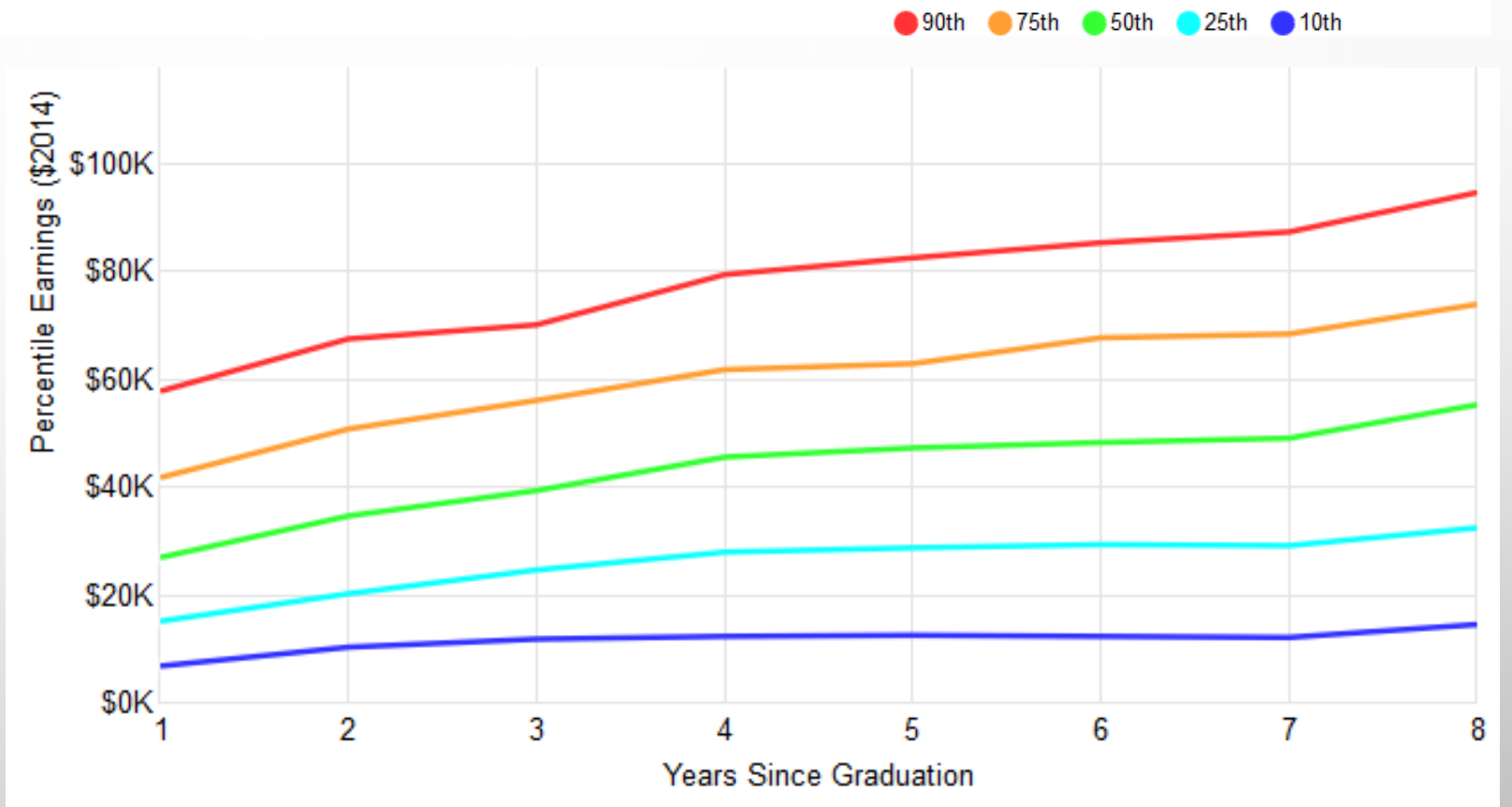
A 2014 study by the Association of American Colleges and Universities found that liberal arts majors earn more than most professional majors at their peak earning ages.

Debra Humphreys and Patrick Kelly, *How Liberal Arts and Sciences Majors Fare in Employment* (Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2014).



The average annual starting salary of humanities grad was \$32,200 in Canada in 2015. More than half had incomes of \$57,000 eight years from graduation; and the top 10% earned more than \$90,000.

Bachelor's Degree: Percentile Earnings by Field of Study



R. Finnie, et al, *Barista or Better: New Evidence on the Earnings of Post Secondary Education Graduates*, 2016.



While the top business majors earn more than humanities grads, the average business and humanities majors earn the same amount over a thirteen year period.

While annual incomes of engineering and business graduates are higher on average than humanities majors, they tend to work in more cyclical industries and have more employment interruptions, so lifetime incomes start converging.



# History Majors in the U.S ...

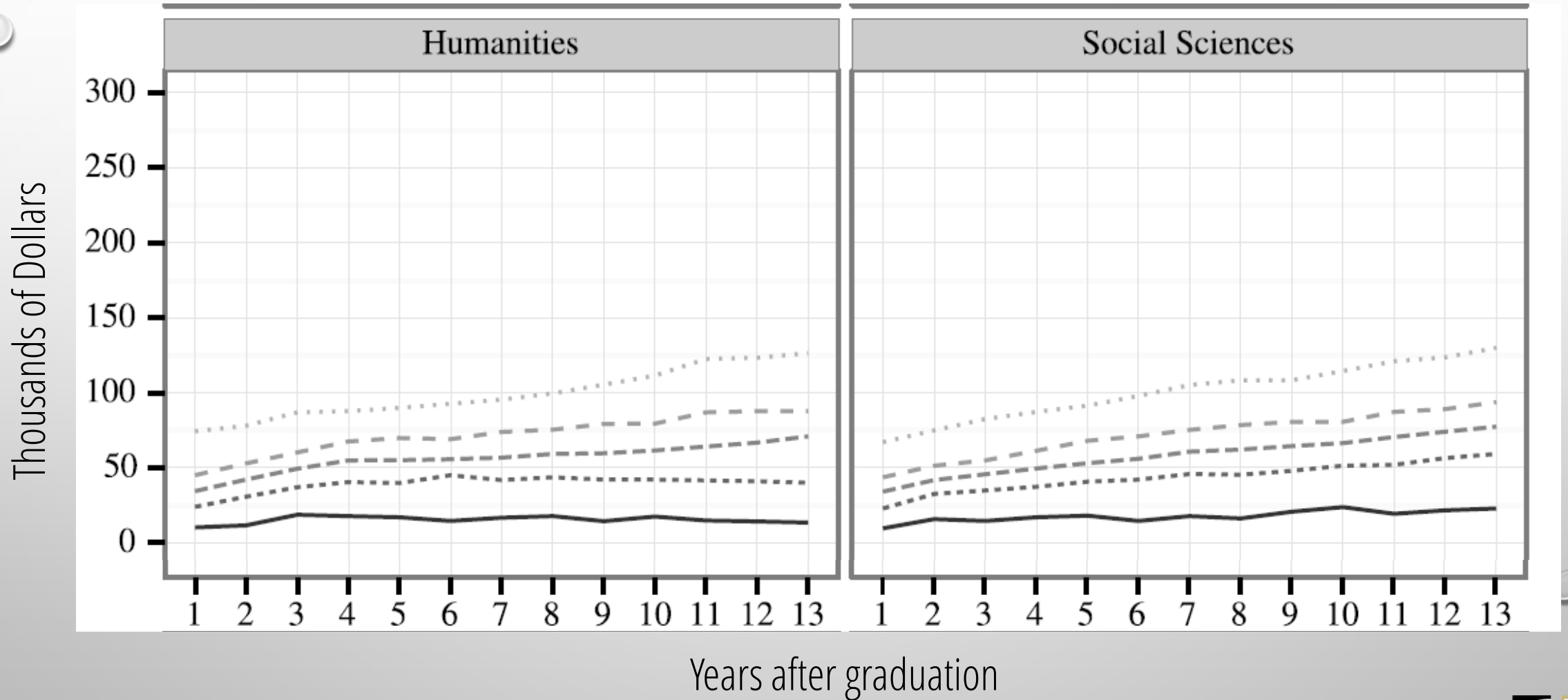
- U.S. History majors earn a mid-career median salary of \$66,000 a year, which is roughly \$25,000 higher than the national U.S. Median salary
- U.S. History majors with a bachelor's degree age 25 to 29 have a median annual income is \$40,860, the same range as physical science majors, and higher than psychology majors and elementary educators.

New York Federal Reserve Bank's 2017 Labor Market survey; U.S. National Center for Education Statistics.





# Mean yearly earnings by quintile, 1998 grads , 13 years after graduation

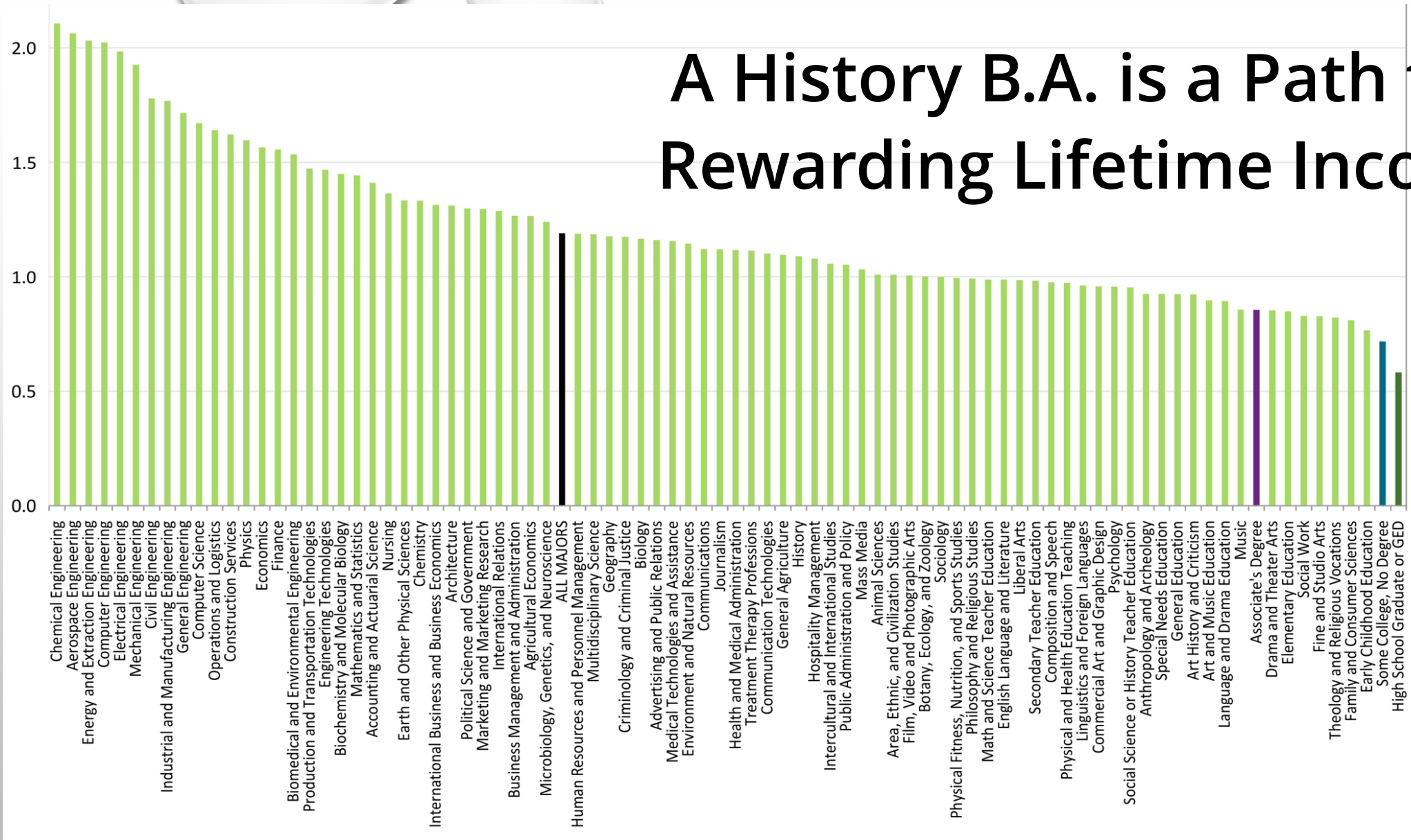


Finnie et al., *Earnings of Post-Secondary Education Graduates by Department*, 2018.



# A History B.A. is a Path to a Rewarding Lifetime Income

Median Lifetime Earnings, by College Major (millions of dollars)



Brad Hershbein & Melissa S. Kearney. *Major Decisions: What Graduates Earn Over Their Lifetimes, Part 1*. Brookings : The Hamilton Project, 2014. Figure 2a.



# And Many Continue Their Studies

- Three years after graduation, across all disciplines 50% of students pursue further education.
- 60% of social sciences students pursued further education while 61% of humanities graduates did the same.

Christopher Rastrick, *Meaningful Employment for Humanities and Social Sciences Graduates*, 2018.



# History is Key to Democracy's Need for Civic Engagement

- Graduates with liberal arts degree are the most politically engaged citizens.

Debra Humphreys & Patrick Kelly, *How Liberal Arts and Sciences Majors Fare in Employment* (Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2014).

- The study of history is an essential bulwark against the rising tide of misinformation, manipulation, and lies.
- In the post-factual fight, understanding history is our most important weapon.

Marie Myung-ok Lee. Novelist and Creative Writing Professor



# History Makes Us More Fulfilled As Humans

Liberal arts graduates have greater job satisfaction than most others.

Debra Humphreys & Patrick Kelly, *How Liberal Arts and Sciences Majors Fare in Employment* (Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2014).



# The Humanities Make Us Better Humans

Studies show that a humanities education teaches empathy. Medical students with significant exposure to humanities courses correlated with positive personal qualities, including:

- Empathy ( $P < .001$ )
- Tolerance for ambiguity ( $P < .001$ )
- Wisdom ( $P < .001$ )
- Significantly and inversely correlated with some components of burnout ( $P = .01$ )
- Emotional intelligence ( $P = .01$ )
- Self-efficacy ( $P = .02$ )
- Visual-spatial skills ( $P = .02$ )

S. Mangione, C. Chakraborti, G. Staltari . et al. Medical Students' Exposure to the Humanities Correlates with Positive Personal Qualities and Reduced Burnout: A Multi-Institutional US Survey [Published Online January 29, 2018]. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*; and Martha C. Nussbaum, *Not For Profit: Why Democracy Needs The Humanities* (Princeton, N.J. : Princeton University Press, 2010).



# What To Tell Our Children?

“As parents, too often we’re tempted to persuade today’s children to specialize as soon as possible. But as difficult as it may be, we need to take the long view when considering what’s best for their careers. For some students, a specialized college education leading to a specific set of skills may be the right choice, but I believe most will be better served in their professions by a liberal arts education.”

Steve Sadove , Chairman and CEO of Saks Fifth Avenue, *Forbes Magazine*, September 5, 2014.





# What Do The World's Most Successful People Study?

In a 2015 study of 17,000 government, business, and non-profit leaders in 30 countries the British Council found **55%** had humanities or social science degrees.

Stephanie Blochinger, "What do the world's most successful people study?" June 1 2015, <https://www.britishcouncil.org/voices-magazine/what-do-worlds-most-successful-people-study>, and British Council, *The Educational Pathways of Leaders: an International Comparison*, June 2015.



# In sum

A wide spectrum of reports from diverse organizations including the Royal Bank, the Business Council of Canada, the British Council, and American census data all come to similar conclusions:

Students who study history at university have excellent chances in tomorrow's economy of getting rewarding employment in hundreds of different jobs that draw on the skills acquired in their history classes. Their history degrees will not only lead most to careers with lifetime incomes comparable to other professionals, but also equip them to be among the most engaged citizens in our democracy.



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