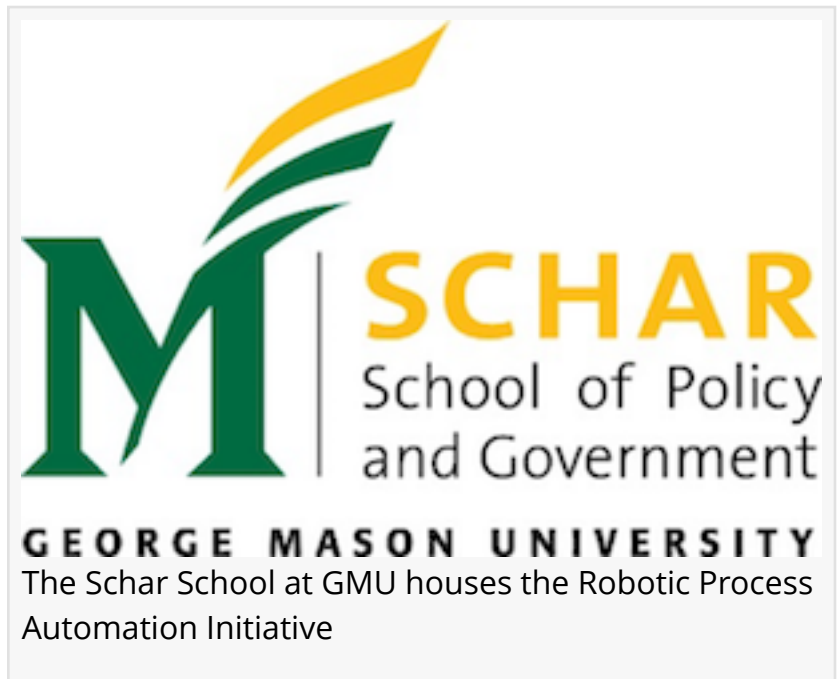


Study Demonstrates Importance of Humanities Education, Its Value to Commonwealth's Parents, College Students, and State

VA humanities majors are similar to or higher than the earnings of graduates from the behavioral and social sciences, natural sciences, arts, and education.

ARLINGTON , VA, USA, October 26, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Humanities Indicators, a project of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, recently released a sweeping study illustrating the value of a humanities education in our commonwealth. The first of its kind, the project demonstrates that studying the humanities provides students with a well-positioned platform of knowledge for future careers and income opportunities.



This is distinctly counter to the argument often made that humanities education and degrees lead to substandard incomes and little hope of upward mobility. Too many parents and high school students place emphasis on obtaining college majors in business, technology, engineering, mathematics and pre-professional programs like medicine or law. These are all excellent degrees, and graduating students can do well financially in their careers. But not every student wants to devote his or her life to those vocations.

The American Academy of Arts and Sciences' new data shows that humanities majors are just as likely to do well financially after graduation, and sometimes find even better success with soft skills like personal focus, hard work and creating or seeking new opportunities.

In my view, the strength of studying the humanities is that it requires students to view, understand and solve human problems which cannot be translated into an equation or computer program. The humanities teach students how to think logically and creatively by championing the importance of culture, diversity, history, literature and ethics.



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Dr. David K. Rehr

Some of the findings include:

- * The 191,074 humanities graduates residing in Virginia and working full-time account for approximately 13% of the state's full-time workforce.
- The median earnings of humanities majors in the state's full-time workforce (\$80,288 per year) are 88% higher than the median earnings of workers with just a high school degree (\$42,820). One in four humanities graduates in the

state earns more than \$128,461.

- The median earnings for humanities majors in Virginia are similar to or higher than the earnings of graduates from the behavioral and social sciences, natural sciences, arts, and education.
- The unemployment rate for humanities majors is similar to other college graduates in Virginia at 3%, and considerably lower than the rate for those in the labor force with just a high school degree (5%).
- The most common vocation for humanities graduates in Virginia is in education occupations (17%), though that is only slightly larger than the share in management positions (16%).
- Older humanities graduates make considerably more than their younger counterparts. Full-time workers aged 22–26 have median earnings of \$45,264, but that rises to \$86,514 for those aged 30–59.
- Humanities graduates in Virginia with an advanced degree have a 34% boost in median earnings (rising from \$70,411 for full-time workers with just a bachelor's degree to \$94,205 for workers with a higher degree).
- Areas of employment with substantial shares of humanities graduates are the legal profession (where humanities graduates account for 27% of bachelor's degree holders employed in those jobs) and museum/library professions (where they are 42% of college graduates in those occupations). Approximately 17% of college graduates working in the not-for-profit sector majored in the humanities.

Young people entering college face real challenges. I understand the desire to choose programs that make the financial cost of a college degree worthwhile. But STEM fields aren't for everyone. I am hopeful the Humanities Indicators data will show students that there are viable career opportunities for those who choose to study the humanities. If it does, the commonwealth will

be a stronger, more civic minded and more tolerant state, and remain a foremost place to work and live.

To see all the Humanities Indicators data for Virginia, visit <https://bit.ly/3FvC167>.

Dr. David Rehr is a member of Virginia Humanities' board of directors, a professor and the director of the Center for Business Civic Engagement at the Schar School of Policy and Government, George Mason University, and co-founder of the Intelligent Automation Initiative, America's premier academic institution focused on leveraging the benefits of automation software in the public sector.

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