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INTRODUCTION, SUMMARY & KEY FINDINGS



Introduction

This report presents findings from the 2017 Future Workforce Survey. The primary goal of the survey is to provide a picture of how prepared students feel about entering the workforce and the hopes and concerns students have about their post-graduation lives.

In order to qualify, respondents must have been current Freshmen-Second Year Seniors (1st Year-5th Year) or currently enrolled in a Masters or Doctorate program. After data cleaning, Hanover analyzed 5,354 completed survey responses.

This report primarily focuses on results from the 2017 iteration of the survey, but compares and contrasts results from similar surveys conducted in 2016, 2015, and 2014 (when possible). The report also includes 2017 survey results segmented by collegiate status and institution type.

*When applicable, Hanover presents statistically significant differences between survey years 2014-2017 and between 2017 respondent segments. Letters are used within graphs and tables to indicate groups with statistically significant differences at the 95% confidence interval.



Executive Summary

Overall, students feel at least somewhat prepared for their professional careers and feel that their college experiences have been at least somewhat helpful in preparing them for these careers. Students feel most prepared with communication, critical thinking and teamwork skills, and less confident regarding networking and technical skills. They believe that additional internships or professional experiences while in college would be most beneficial for building these skills. In addition, students indicate that additional access to career preparation tools would make them feel better prepared for post-graduation jobs. However, a majority of respondents indicate never or rarely using the career resources offered by their institutions, suggesting a disconnect between desire and execution.

Most students have already identified a career they want to pursue after graduation, and desire to pursue careers related to their majors that will allow them to live well-rounded, happy lives. Responses suggest that students consciously pick majors they feel are versatile and provide them with marketable skills in order to meet their career goals. In addition to their major, students believe their grades, work experience, and interpersonal skills play key roles in their job candidacy and attractiveness.

Students generally feel that they were adequately prepared for the demands of college and are satisfied with their college experiences. Pre-college, students felt that college would improve their employment opportunities, give them a good education, and set them up for future success — all of which were borne out for a majority of students.



Key Findings

- Fewer than half of students surveyed feel very or extremely prepared for their professional career. This is consistent with previous iterations of the study. Older students and students enrolled at 4-year private universities are significantly more likely than others to feel prepared for their professional career and to have found their college experiences helpful in preparing them for a career.
 - Students feel most prepared to use teamwork, critical thinking, and communication in their careers, and feel least prepared for networking. They feel that additional internships/professional experiences would have most prepared them for their post-graduate careers.
 - Students consider getting a degree in a marketable field, their grades, internship experience, and interpersonal skills
 as the pieces of their college career that make them the best job candidates.
- A vast majority of students are happy with their major, believe their major will help them find a job, and plan on getting a job in the field they majored in. This confidence stems from students believing that their majors are versatile, offer them access to job opportunities in a variety of fields, and give them in-demand skills.
- Three-quarters of students have identified a career they want to pursue, with students prioritizing jobs in their field over jobs with the greatest financial payout. Students most often plan on working in business or healthcare. Students also prioritize living well-rounded/happy lives and rewarding jobs over well-paying or socially responsible jobs.
 - The "typical" respondent plans on working one full-time job after graduation and plans to stay at this job for up to three years. Three in four students also anticipate having a job that aligns with their career goals within a year of graduating.
 - One in four students do not anticipate having any debt when they graduate, while over half of students plan to pay off their student debt within 10 years of graduating.



Key Findings (cont.)

- One in three respondents have not performed any job search activity, and just over 40 percent are not actively searching for a job. Active job seekers are most likely to search for jobs online and create profiles on networking sites. Students who are currently searching for a job generally spend less than 5 hours a week on job search activities.
- Job fairs, career advisors, and resume support are the most commonly available career resources for students. However, a majority of students have never used or only rarely use any available resource. Students who do use career resources tend to use them in-person rather than online. Students at 4-year private universities have access to a larger variety of career resources than students at 4-year public universities or 2-year community colleges.
- In general, students believe they were prepared for all aspects of college and are satisfied with their college experience.

 One in three students report being unprepared for the financial obligations of their college program, while one in four students felt they did not have the required time management skills required for their college program.
 - Students believed that their college experience would increase their employment opportunities, give them a good education, and provide them with the resources that would set them up for future success. Respondents generally agree that their college experiences confirmed these beliefs.
 - Over two-thirds of students report learning critical thinking, communications, time management, teamwork, and multi-tasking skills while in college. Networking and personal finance related skills are the skills most often lacking among college students.



Key Findings (cont.)

- Students are slightly more optimistic about their post-graduate lives overall compared to their post-graduate careers. Nearly all students have some concerns about their life after college, with making enough money to live comfortably and finding a job that is fulfilling and enjoyable being the most common concerns. These two concerns also have a large impact on student career choice, as students prioritize jobs that will allow them to provide comfortable lives for their families and work-life balance. Students view health insurance as most important benefit a company could provide them, followed by flexible vacation/time-off and retirement/pension plans.
- Academics, cost, location, and value are the most important factors students consider when choosing which college to attend. Students at 2-year community colleges consider cost to be significantly more important when choosing which college to attend as compared to students at 4-year private universities. A majority of students would not have altered their education pathways if they had they been offered two years of free community college after they graduated high school.

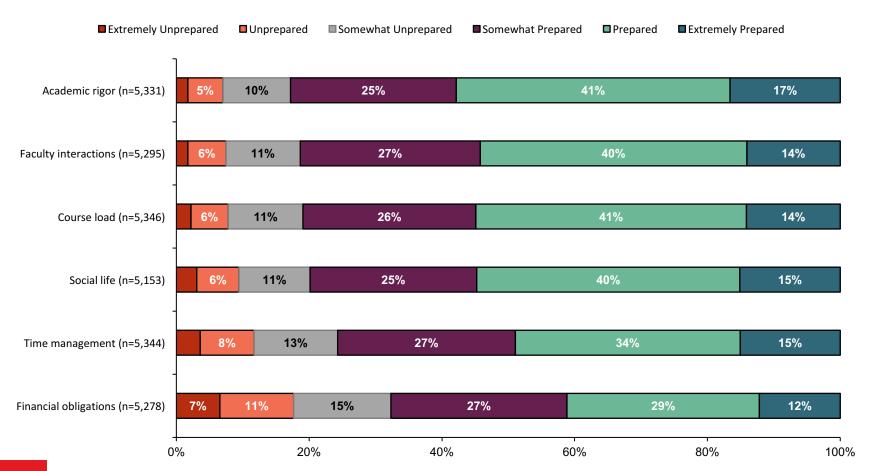


COLLEGE PREPAREDNESS, SATISFACTION AND BELIEFS



College Preparedness

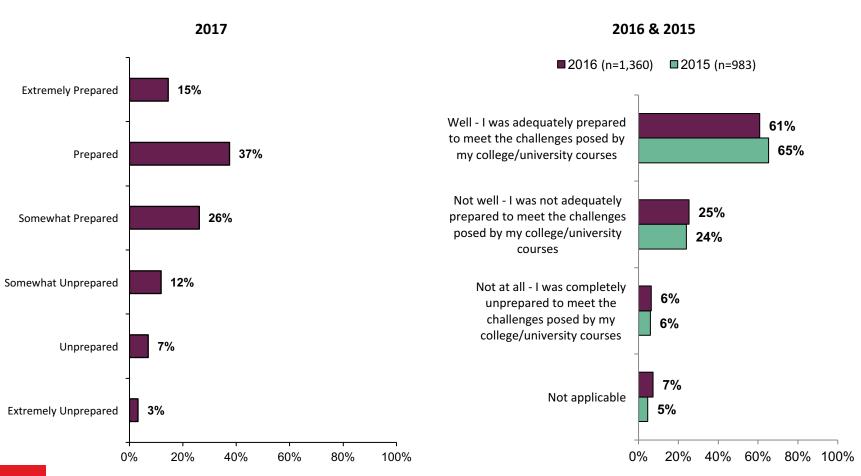
• Overall, students indicate being prepared for all queried aspects of their college program. They are most likely to have been unprepared for the financial obligations and time management requirements of their programs.





College Preparedness Over Time

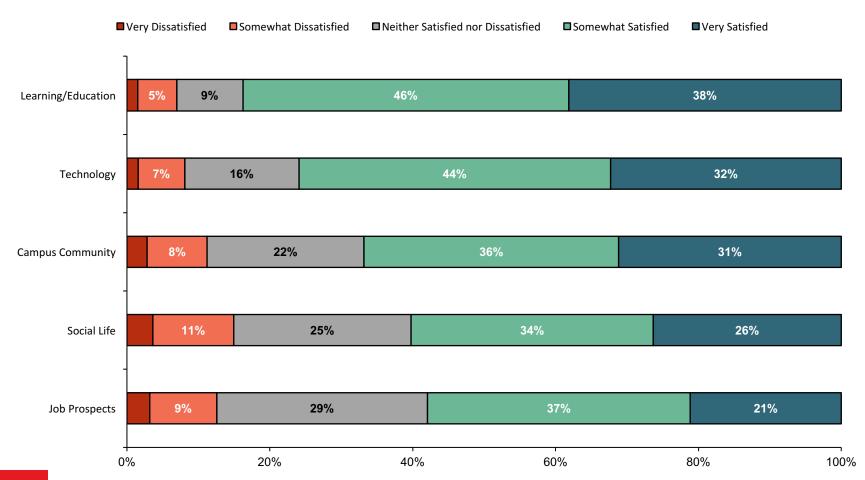
 A vast majority of students believe they were at least somewhat prepared for any given aspect of their college program. This is generally consistent compared to results from previous studies.





College Satisfaction

• A majority of students are satisfied with any given aspect of their college experience. Satisfaction is highest with learning/education and technology experiences, and is lower regarding social life and job prospects.

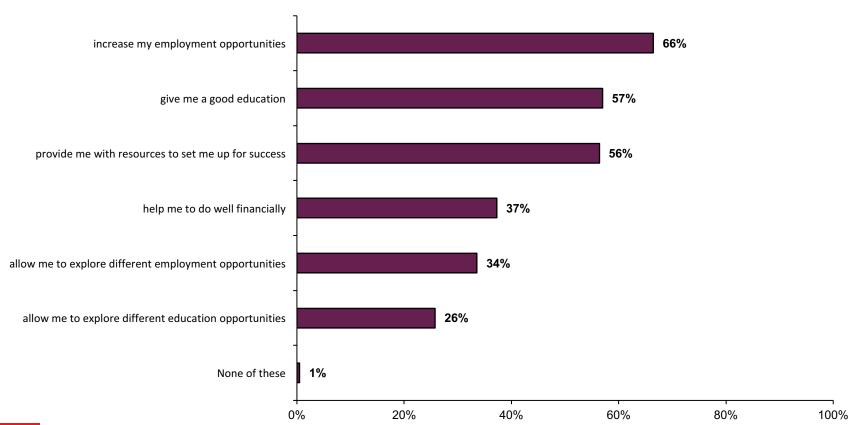




Pre-College Beliefs

 Two in three students believed that attending college/university would increase their employment opportunities, while over half believed that their college/university experience would give them a good education and provide them with resources that would set them up for success.

Before I started college/university, I believed it would...

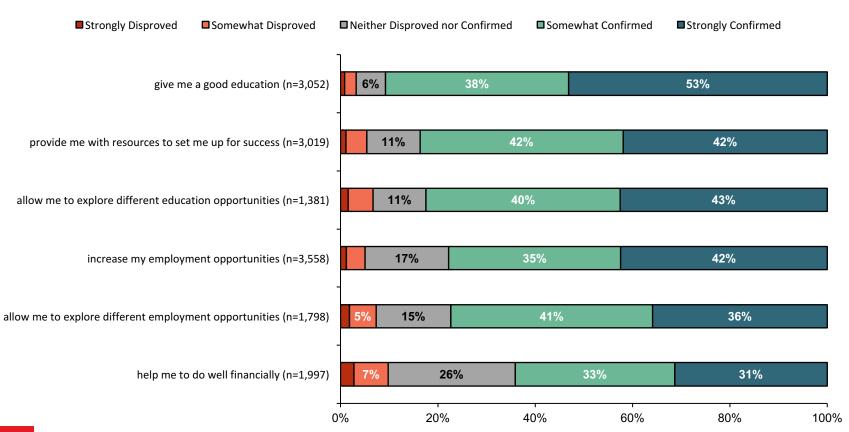




Pre-College Belief Confirmation

 Overall, students indicate that their college experiences confirmed their pre-college beliefs. Students indicate the strongest confirmation with programs providing a good education, setting them up for success, and providing different educational opportunities.

Before I started college/university, I believed it would...



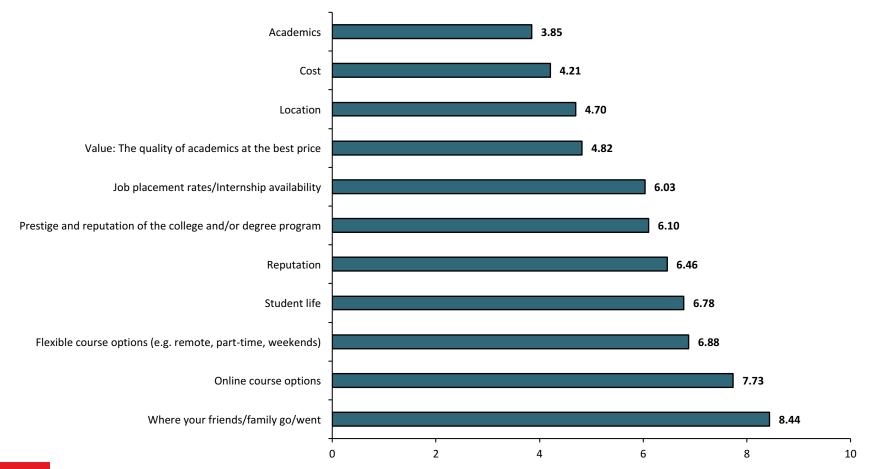


COLLEGE REFLECTIONS AND EVALUATION



Important Factors When Choosing A College

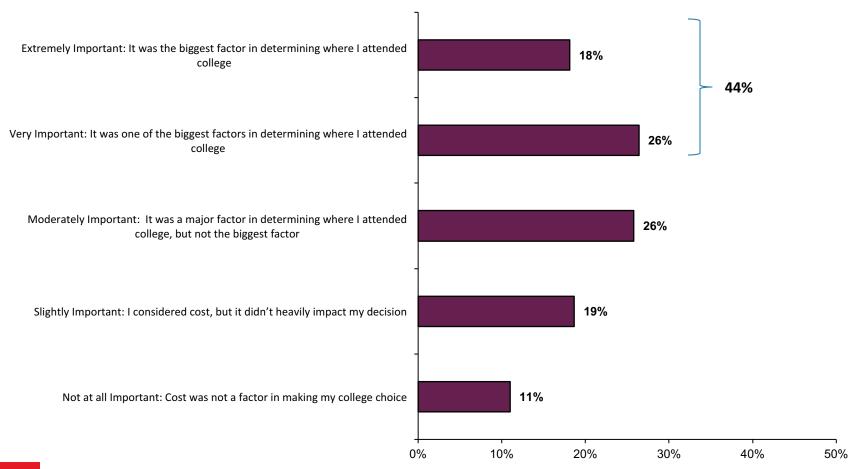
• Respondents rank academics as the most important factor considered when choosing a college to attend, followed by cost, location, and value. Course options/variety (flexible and online) and attendance by family are the least important considerations.





Importance of Cost When Choosing A College

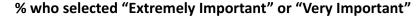
• Over half of students considered cost to be "Extremely Important" or "Very Important" when deciding which college they would attend. However, approximately one in three students indicate that cost did not have a major impact on their college selection.

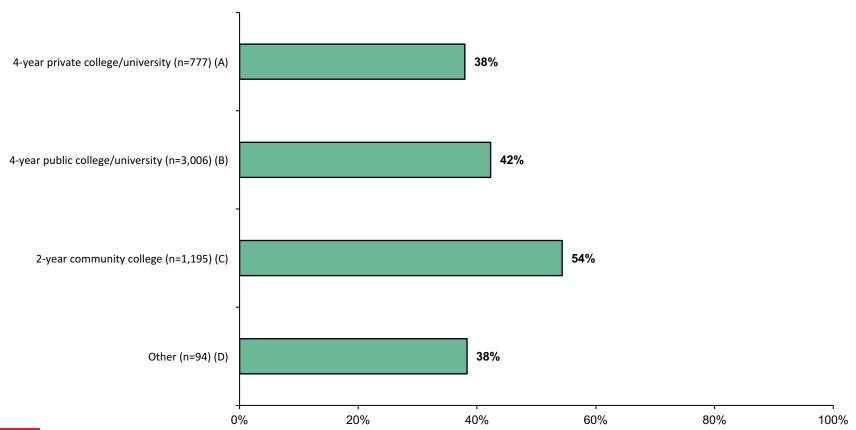




Importance of Cost When Choosing A College – by School Type

• Students who currently attend 2-year community colleges are the most likely to have considered cost as an important factor when they decided which college to attend.

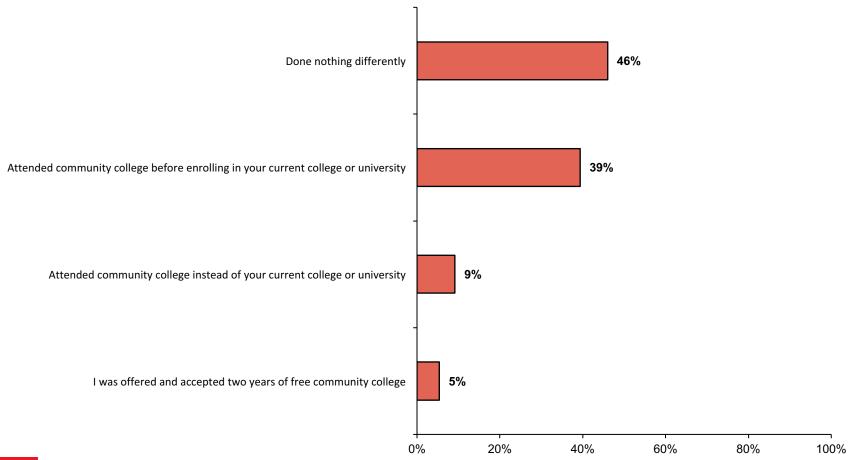






Decision if Two Years of Free Community College Were Offered After High School

• When offered the chance to attend two years of free community college, students are slightly more likely to have done nothing differently than attend community college before enrolling in their current college.





Skills Learned in College

- Over two thirds of students report learning critical thinking, communications, time management, teamwork, and multitasking skills while in college.
- Less than half of respondents indicate learning resume writing, interviewing, networking, and personal finance skills in college.

	2015 (n=983) (A)	2016 (n=1,360) (B)	2017 (n=5,354) (C)
How to think critically about problems	-	-	70%
How to communicate well with peers and superiors	-	-	68%
How to manage time well	-	-	67%
How to effectively work in a group	-	-	66%
How to multitask/manage multiple priorities at once	67%	66%	66%
How to collaborate as a member of a team	-	-	65%
How to give a presentation to an audience	62%	63%	62%
How to solve complex problems	-	-	57%
How to use technology that is common in most workplaces	57% (C)	55% (C)	50%
How to write a resume	49% (C)	51% (C)	44%
How to analyze issues holistically	-	-	42%
How to conduct myself in a job interview	44% (C)	42% (C)	38%
How to use technology that is specialized to certain industries	-	-	37%
How to network and/or search for a job	42% (C)	41% (C)	34%
How to plan personal finances and/or manage a budget	35% (C)	31%	30%

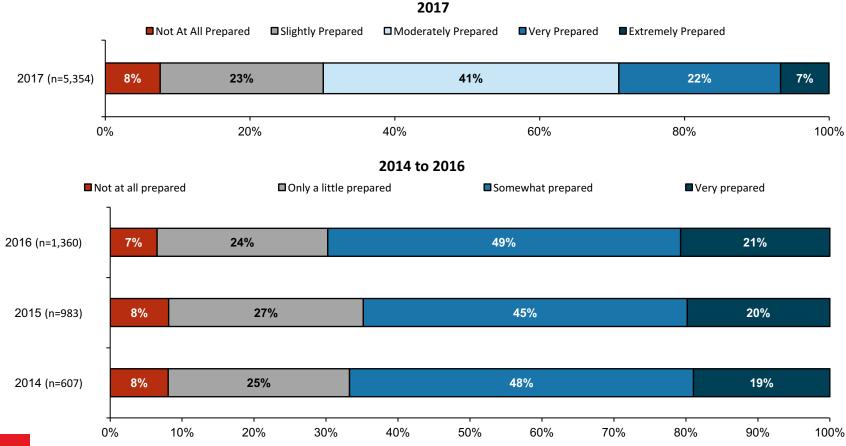


CAREER PREPAREDNESS AND IMPACT OF COLLEGE



Career Preparedness

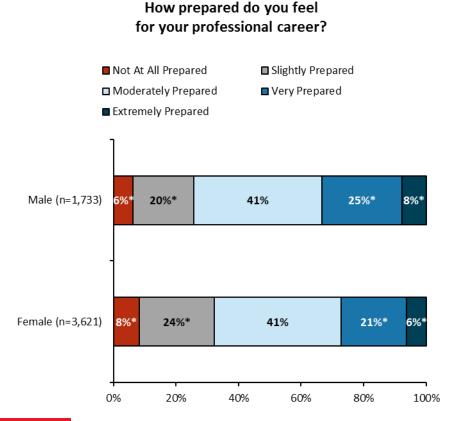
- Less than a third of students (29%) feel "Very Prepared" or "Extremely Prepared" for their professional career. This is similar to the levels noted in previous iterations of the study.
- Most students indicate feeling "Moderately Prepared" for their professional career; consistent with previous study iterations where most students felt "Somewhat Prepared" for their professional career.





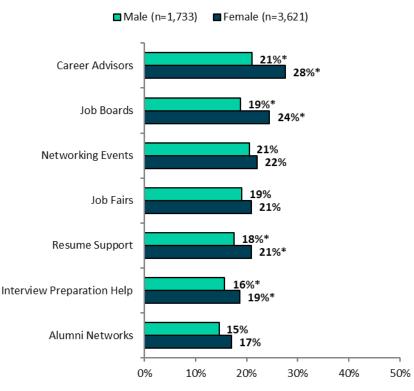
Career Preparedness and Resource Use – By Gender

- Male respondent are significantly more likely to feel "Very Prepared" or "Extremely Prepared" for their professional career compared to female respondents.
- However, female respondents are significantly more likely to indicate future use of career resources particularly Career Advisors and Job Boards than male respondents.



Education

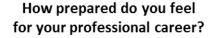
How often do you plan to use the following career resources in the next 6 months? "I will use this resource often" responses

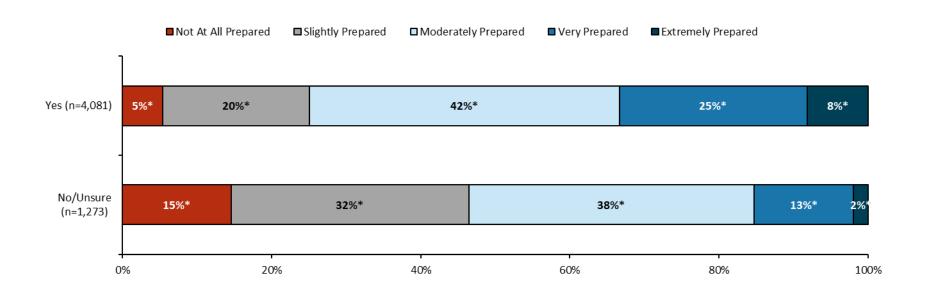


Note: Asterisks indicate statistically significant differences between male and female respondents.

Career Preparedness – By Career Identified

• Respondents who have identified a career they plan on pursuing are significantly more likely to feel "Very Prepared" or "Extremely Prepared" for their professional career compared to those who have not identified such a career.



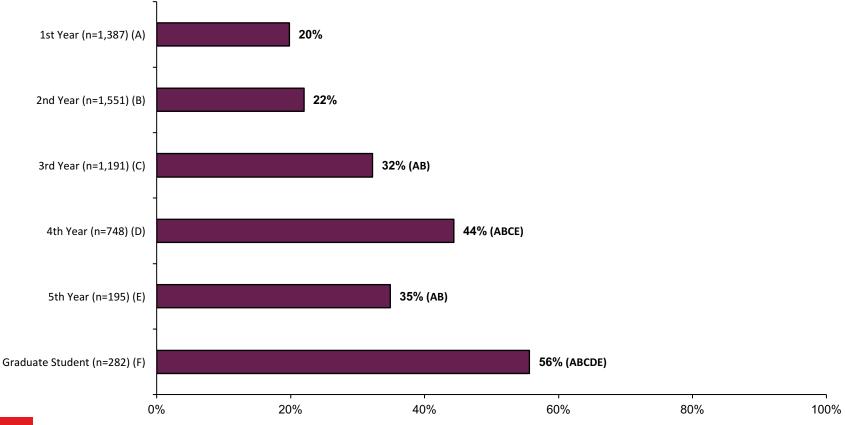




Career Preparedness – by Class Year

• In general, older students tend to feel more prepared for their professional career; with graduate students feeling significantly more prepared than undergraduate students. Notably, 5th Year students are significantly less likely than 4th Year students to feel prepared for their professional careers.

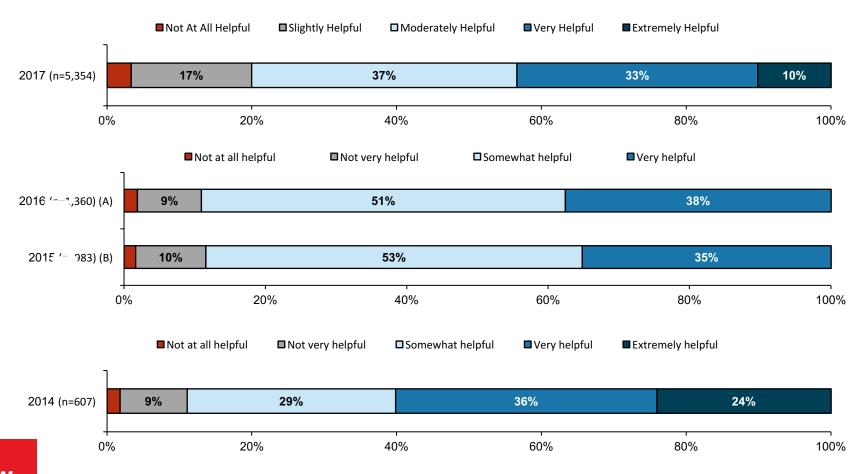
% who selected "Very Prepared" or "Extremely Prepared"





Helpfulness of College Experience in Preparing for Career

- A vast majority of students find their college experience to have been at least "Moderately Helpful" in preparing them for their professional career. This has been fairly consistent over time.
- Students in 2014 report finding their college experience to be more helpful in preparing them for their professional careers as compared to subsequent years; however, this variation over time may be due to changes in question options.

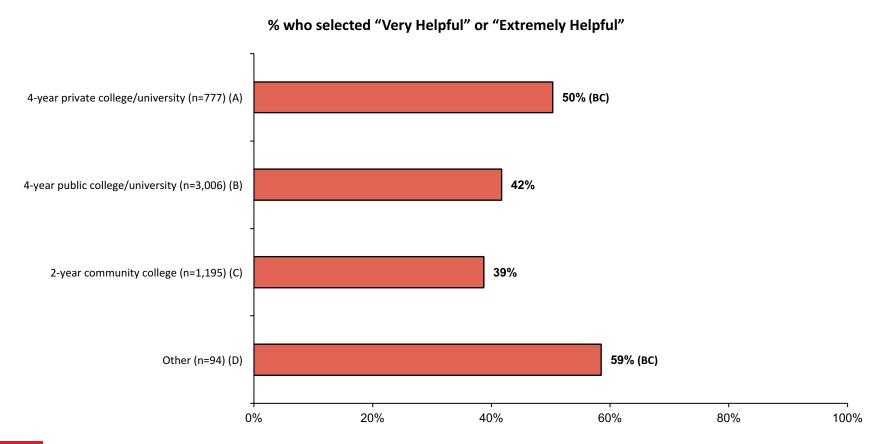


How helpful has your college education/experience been in preparing you for a professional career? Note: The response options for this question were changed in the 2015 and 2017 iterations of this study.

Education

Helpfulness of College Experience in Preparing for Career – by School Type

• Students at 4-year public universities and 2-year community colleges are significantly less likely than those at 4-year private universities to have found their college experience to be helpful in preparing them for their professional careers.

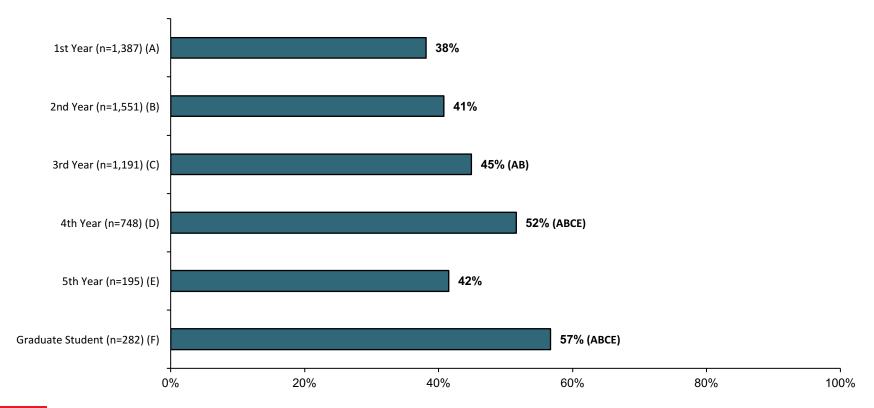




Helpfulness of College Experience in Preparing for Career – by Class Year

• With the exception of 5th Year students, older students generally find their college experience more helpful in preparing them for their careers compared to younger students.





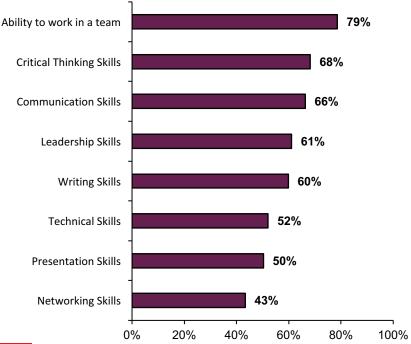


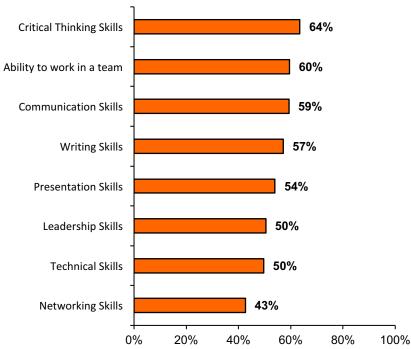
Career Skills Preparedness

- Students report being most prepared to use their teamwork, critical thinking, and communication skills in their professional career, the skills they indicate college was most helpful in developing.
- Students feel least prepared to use networking skills in their future career. This is also the skill that students feel their college experience was least helpful in developing.

Prepared to Use Skills in Career? Prepared"

% who selected "Very Prepared" or "Extremely % who selected "Very Helpful" or "Extremely Helpful"





Was College Helpful in Preparing Skills?



n=5,354; How prepared do you feel to use the following skills in your professional career? n=5,354; How helpful has your college education/experience been in equipping you with the following skills you may use in your professional career?

What Would Have Helped You Feel More Prepared for Your Career?

- A majority of students report that they would have felt more prepared for their career if they had more internship/professional experience. Other factors frequently selected include more time to focus on career preparation and better access to career preparation tools.
- Only one-fifth of respondents indicate that better access to study technology would have made them feel more prepared for a professional career.

	2014 (n=375) (A)	2015 (n=983) (B)	2016 (n=1,360) (C)	2017 (n=5,354) (D)
More internships and professional experience	59%	67% (AD)	67% (AD)	63%
More time to focus on career preparation	47%	58% (AD)	59% (AD)	49%
Better access to career preparation tools	38%	45% (AD)	47% (AD)	41%
Networking with alumni	22%	33% (A)	34% (A)	34% (A)
Getting better grades	-	-	-	33%
Choosing a more relevant major/concentration	23%	22%	22%	21%
Better access to technology that would have helped me study	-	35% (D)	38% (D)	19%
Other	9% (D)	-	-	4%
None of the above	-	-	-	6%



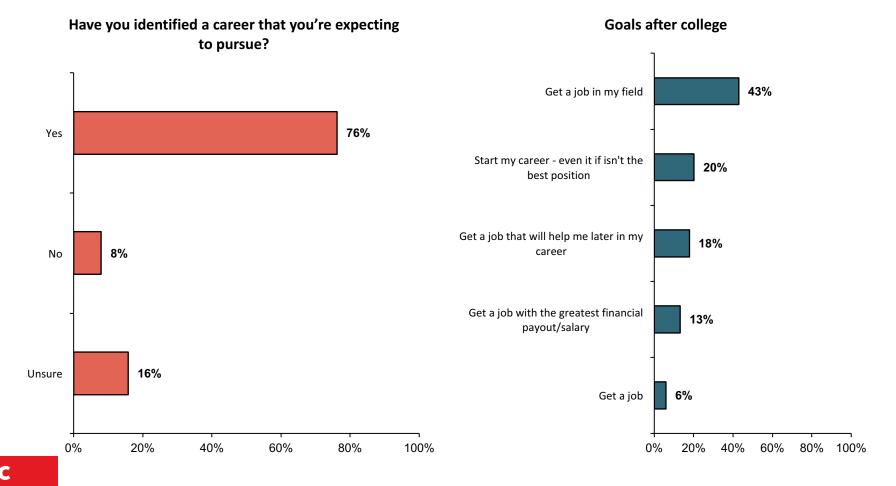
CAREER GOALS AND PLANS



Career Goals

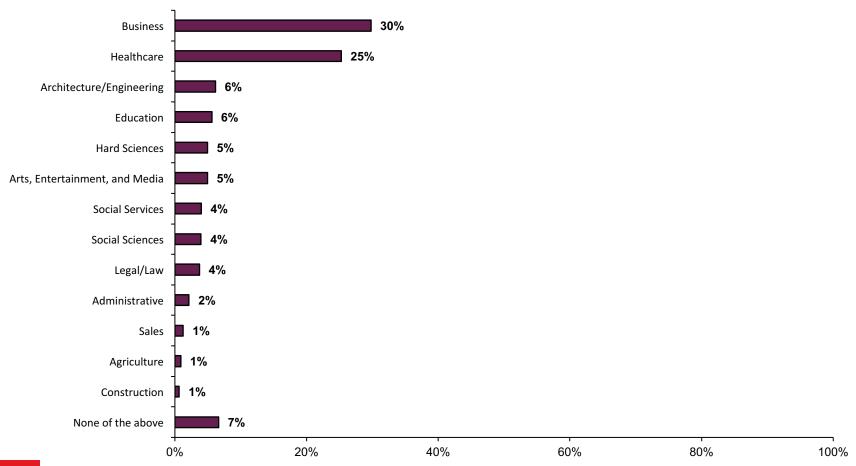
Education

- Over three quarters of students have identified a career they expect to pursue after graduation.
- Less than 15% of students have salary as their immediate after-college goal; instead, responses indicate that students are more interested in jobs in their field of interest or aligned with their career goals.



Anticipated Field of First Job

• Business and Healthcare are the most popular industries among students. A majority of students anticipate getting their first job in one of those two fields.





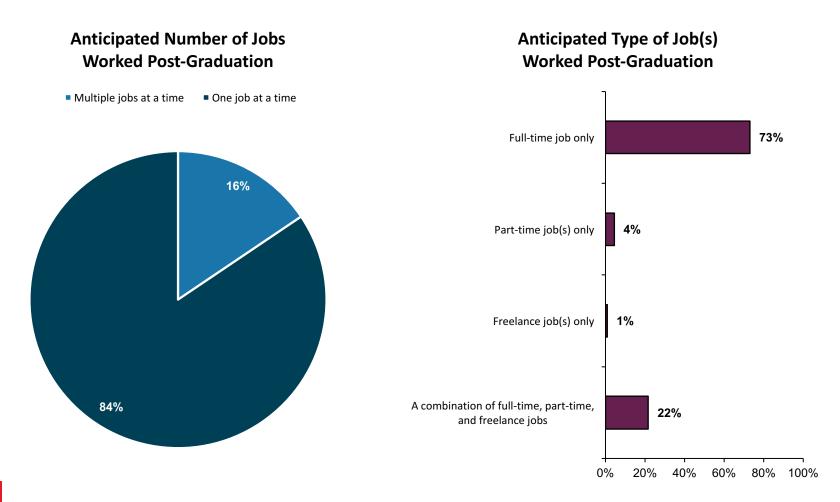
Dream Job





Anticipated Post-Graduation Job(s)

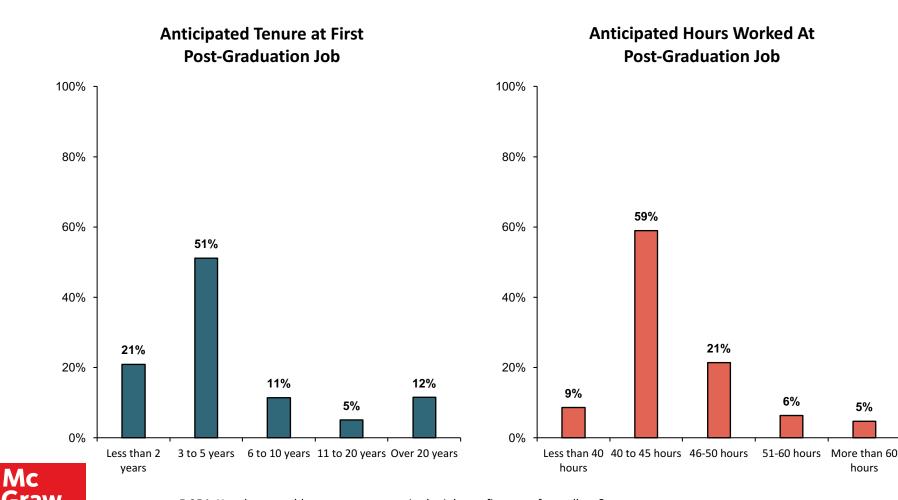
• A majority of students plan to work one full-time job after they graduate. Approximately one in five students plan to work multiple jobs, most typically a combination of full-time, part-time, and freelance work.

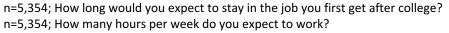




First Post-Graduation Job Plans

- Just over half of students anticipate working at their first job for 3 to 5 years. Only one in four students plan to stay at their first job for over 5 years.
- A vast majority of students anticipate working less than 50 hours a week in their post-graduation job(s).

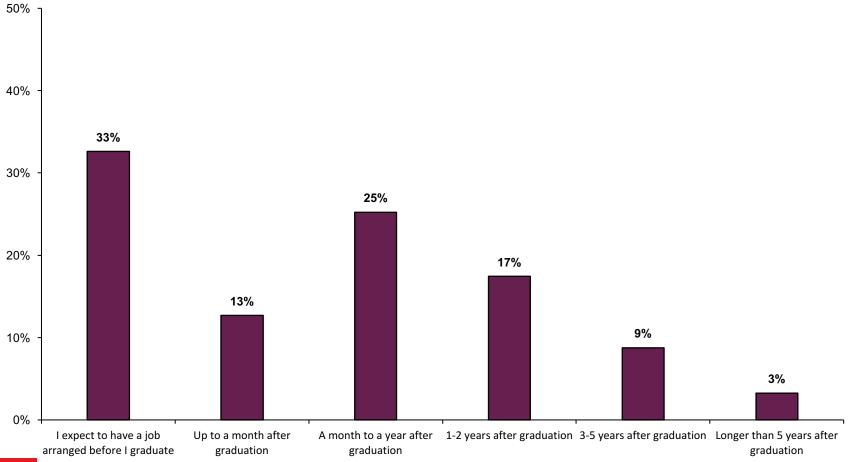




Education

Time Needed to Get a Job That Aligns With Career Goals

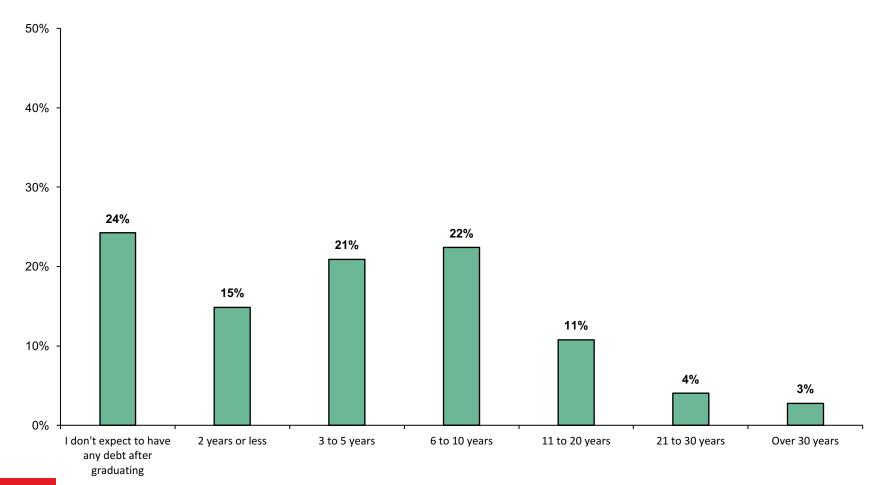
• Just under three quarters of students anticipate having a job that aligns with their career goals within a year of graduation. One in three anticipate having such a job arranged before they graduate.





Time Needed to Pay Off College Debt

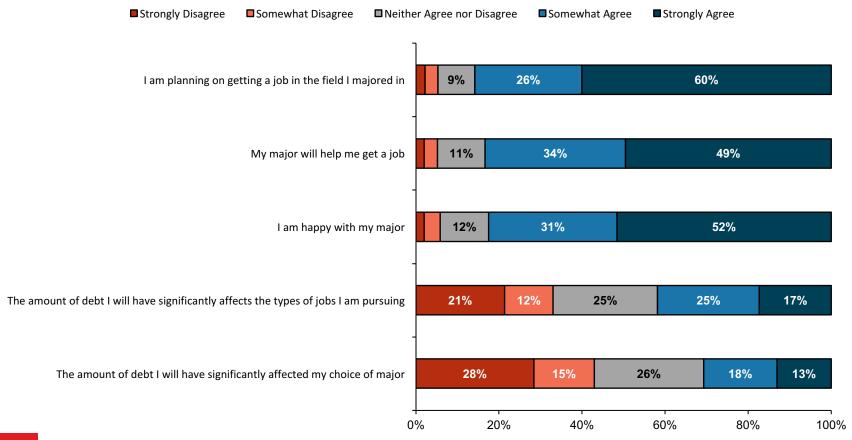
• One in four students do not anticipate having any debt when they graduate college. Of the remaining 76% with debt, over half of respondents plan to pay off their debt within 10 years of graduating.





Perceptions Regarding Major of Study & Debt

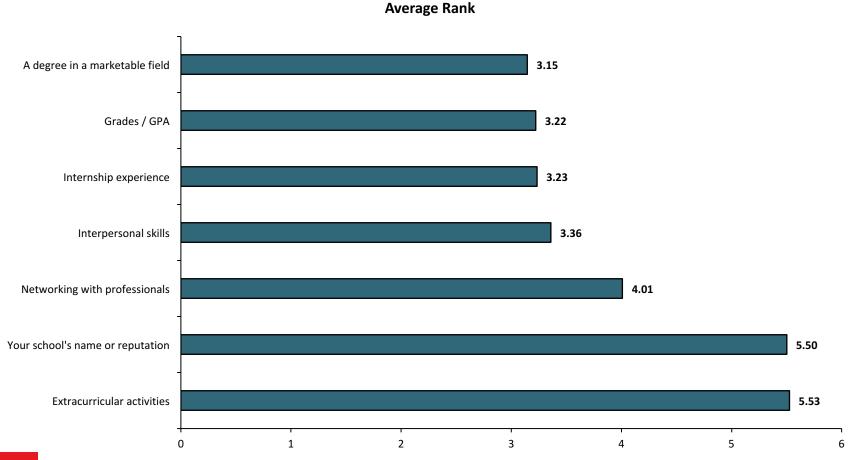
- A vast majority of students are happy with their major, believe their major will help them get a job, and plan on getting a job in the field they majored in.
- Although the amount of debt a student has is somewhat likely to affect their job search, it is not as likely to affect the major they choose.





Importance of College Experiences in Job Search

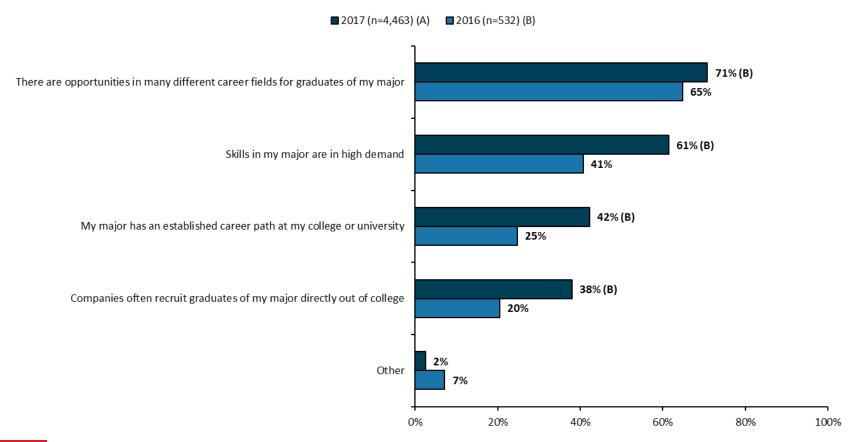
• Students consider getting a degree in a marketable field, their grades, internship experience, and interpersonal skills as the most important parts of their college career in terms of making them an attractive job candidate.





My Current Major Will Help Me Get a Job Because...?

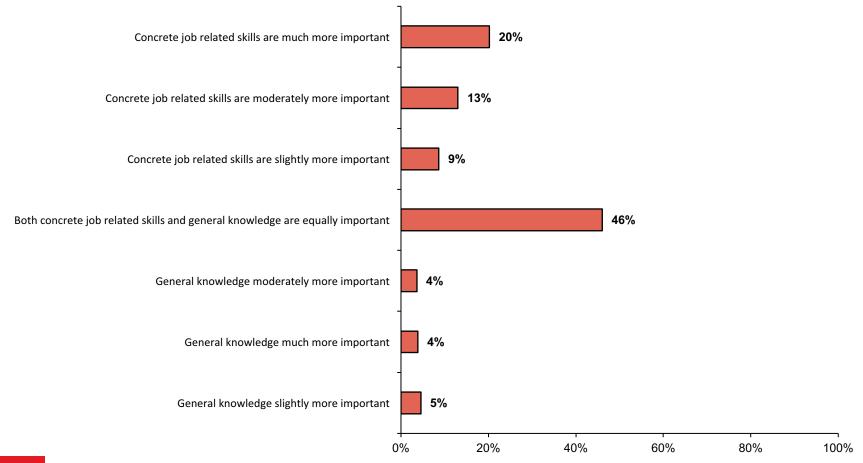
- Just under three in four students believe their majors are versatile enough to offer them job opportunities in a variety of different fields, and just under two in three students feel their major's skills are in high demand.
- Students are less likely to agree that their major will help them get a job due to a defined career path or major-specific recruitment.





Importance of Job Related Skills vs General Knowledge

 A plurality of students consider both concrete job related skills and general knowledge to be equally important when considering their career prospects. However, the remaining students show a slight preference for concrete job related skills over general knowledge.



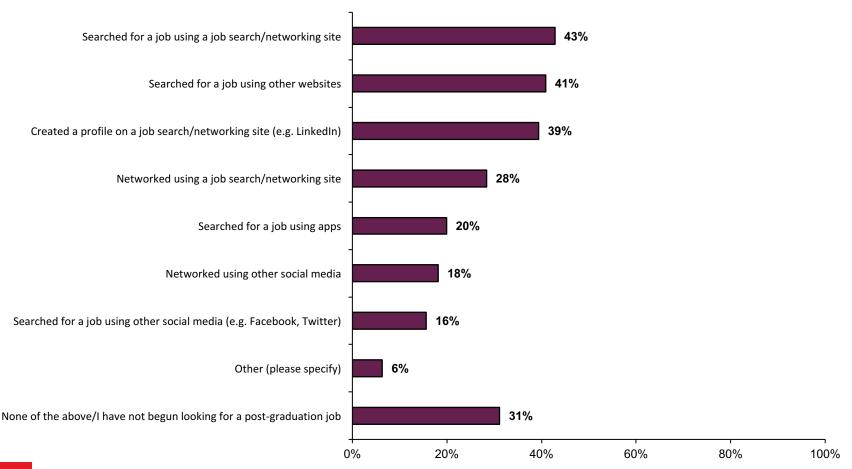


JOB SEARCHING, CAREER PLANNING AND COLLEGE RESOURCES



Job Search Activities Performed

• One in three students have not performed any given job search activity. Of those that have, searching via job/networking sites and other sites is most common. Under one-fifth of respondents have used apps or social media as part of their job search.





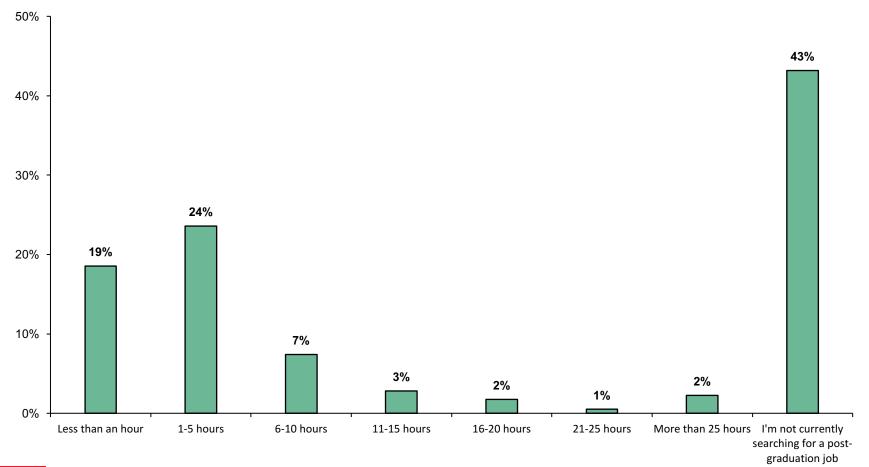
Job Search Sites Used





Time Spent on Job Search Activities

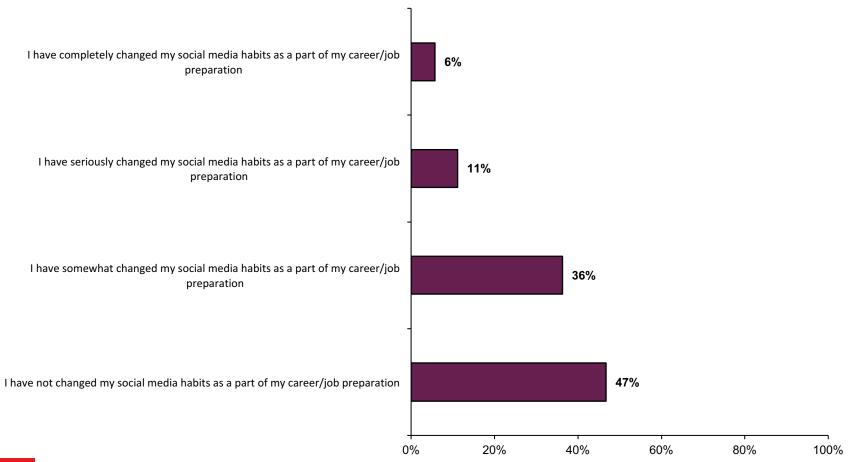
• Over forty percent of respondents indicate they are not currently searching for a post-graduation job. Of those actively searching, a majority indicate spending fewer than five hours per week on job search activities.





Social Media Habits While Job Searching

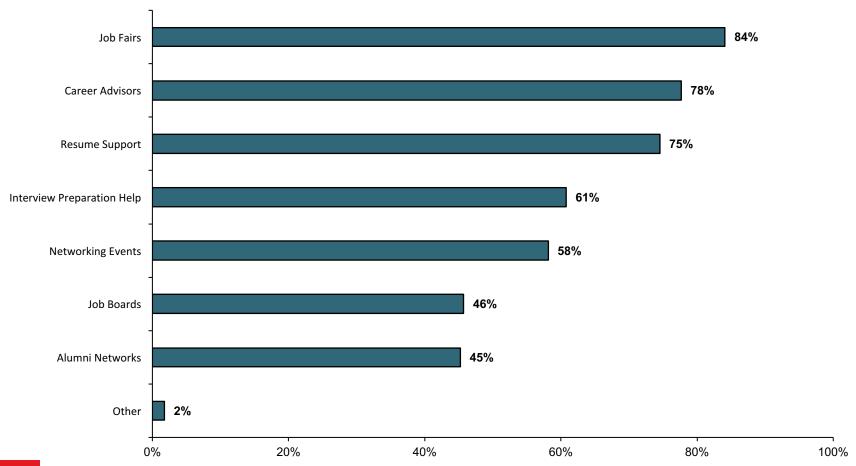
• A plurality of students indicate that they have not changed their social media habits as a part of their career preparation. Only six percent indicate making a total change in habits as a part of their career preparation.





Career Resources Available

• Most students report having access to job fairs, career advisors, resume support, interview preparation help, and networking events at their college.





Career Resources Available – by School Type

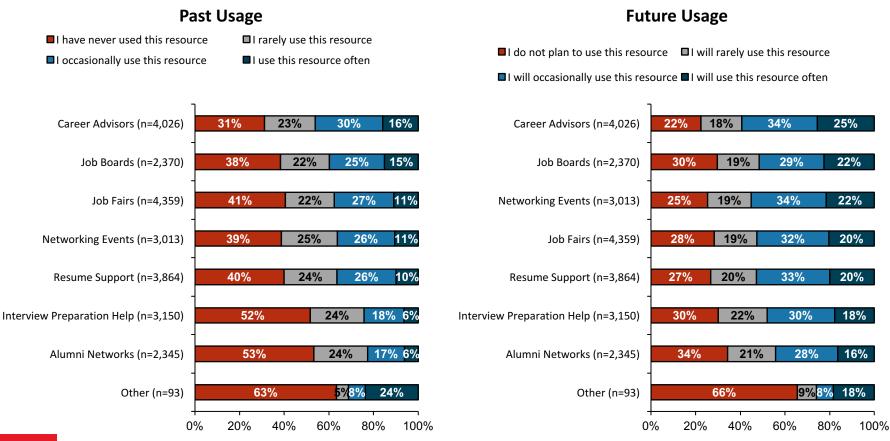
• Students at 4-year private universities tend to have the widest range of career resources available to them, particularly compared to students at 2-year community colleges.

	4-year private college/university (n=777) (A)	4-year public college/university (n=3,006) (B)	2-year community college (n=1,195) (C)	Other (n=94) (D)
Job Fairs	85% (CD)	87% (CD)	81%	48%
Resume Support	81% (C)	79% (C)	57%	74% (C)
Career Advisors	79%	79%	76%	78%
Interview Preparation Help	69% (CD)	66% (C)	42%	57% (C)
Networking Events	67% (BCD)	63% (C)	37%	54% (C)
Alumni Networks	58% (BCD)	50% (CD)	23%	34% (C)
Job Boards	46%	46%	45%	38%
Other	2%	1%	2%	8% (ABC)



Career Related Resource Use

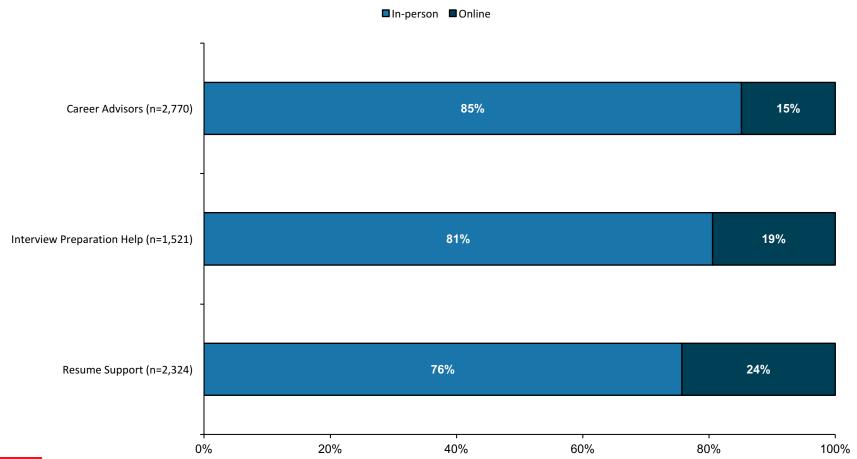
- A majority of students have either never or rarely used any given career resource available to them. Career advisors and job boards are the most commonly used resources among students, both used "Often" by less than one-fifth of students.
- Students are slightly more likely to indicate future use of any given career resource compared to current use.





Methods Used To Access Career Resources

• Students are more likely to have accessed career advisors, interview preparation help, and resume support services in-person rather than online.



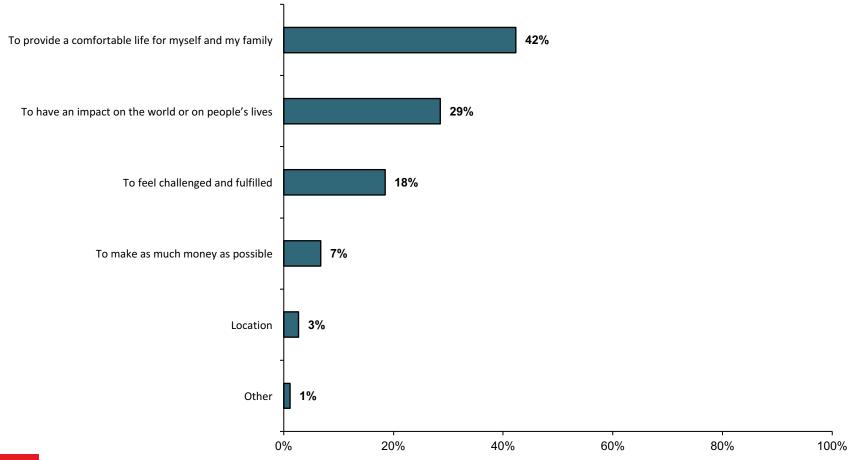


CAREER PREFERENCES, DESIRES AND CONCERNS



Most Important Factor When Choosing a Career

A plurality of students consider being able to provide a comfortable life for themselves and their family as the most important
factor they consider when choosing a career. Only seven percent of respondents identify high compensation as their most critical
career consideration.





Career Planning

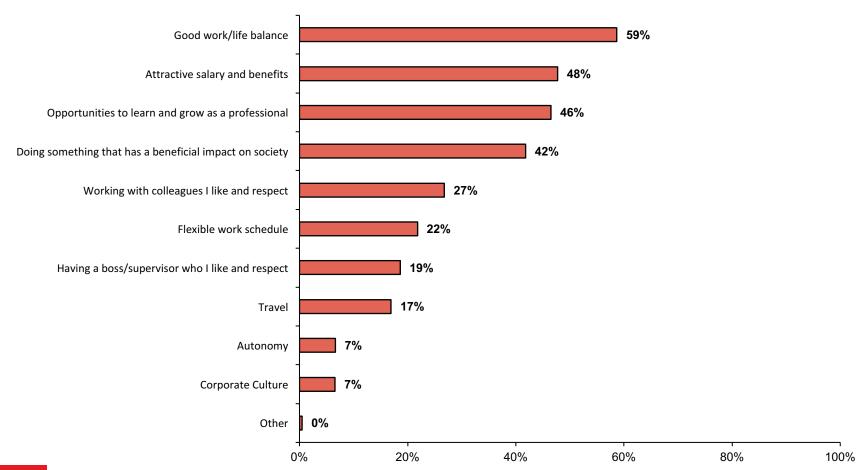
• As with previous studies, students prioritize living a well-rounded life and rewarding work over well-paying work and social responsibility.

	2014 (n=601) (A)	2015 (n=983) (B)	2016 (n=1,360) (C)	2017 (n=5,354) (D)
Living a well-rounded, happy life	89%	92%	93% (AD)	91%
Finding a rewarding job	90% (D)	91% (D)	91% (D)	83%
Finding a well-paying job	85% (D)	86% (D)	87% (D)	73%
Social responsibility; giving back	79%	83% (CD)	72%	71%



What Will Make You Feel Fulfilled in Your Career?

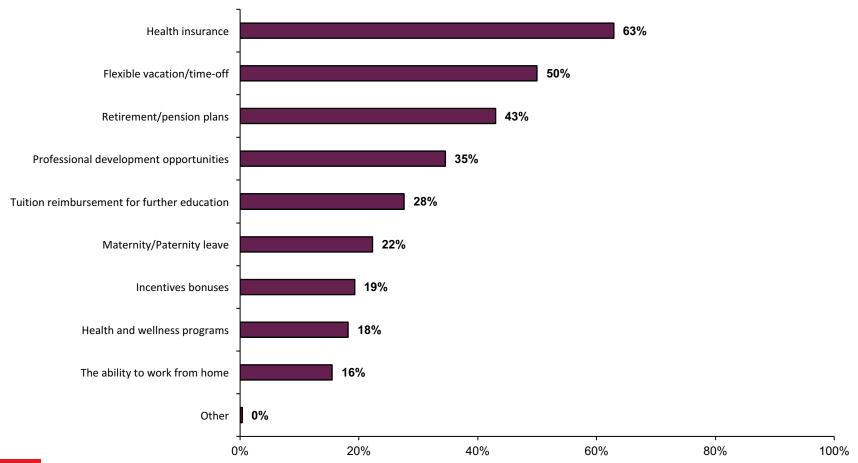
Students rated having a good work/life balance as the top factor in making them feel fulfilled in their career. Secondary factors of
importance include salary/benefits, opportunities to learn and grow as a professional, and doing something that has a beneficial
impact on society.





Preferred Employer Benefits

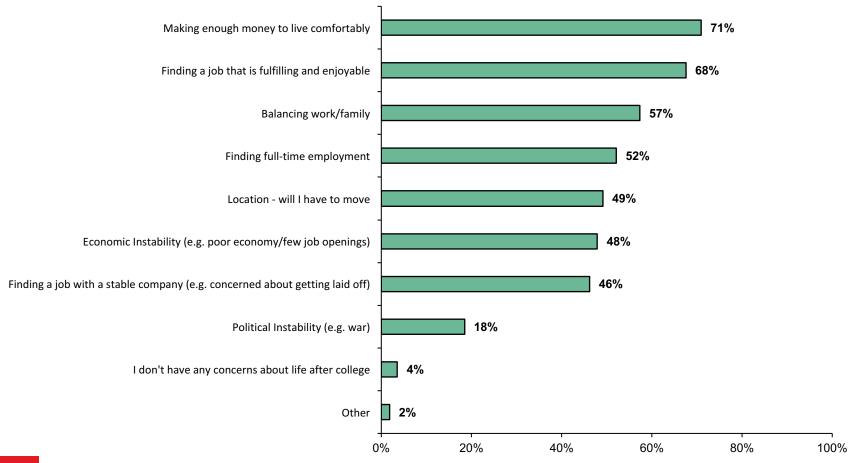
• Students consider health insurance to be the most important benefit a company could provide them, followed by flexible vacation/time-off and retirement/pension plans. Work-from-home arrangements are the least attractive potential benefit.





Concerns About Life After College

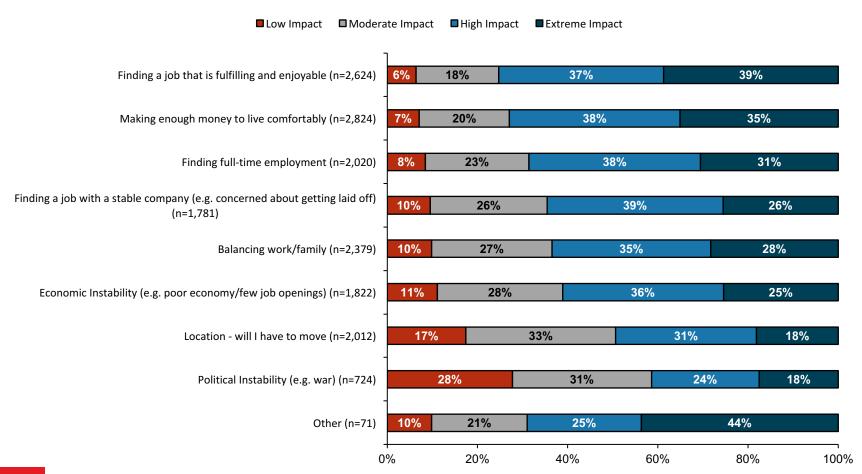
• Students most often indicate post-graduation concerns related to sufficient income and finding fulfilling/enjoyable work. Just over half indicate concerns with finding full-time employment.





Impact of Concerns on Career Choice

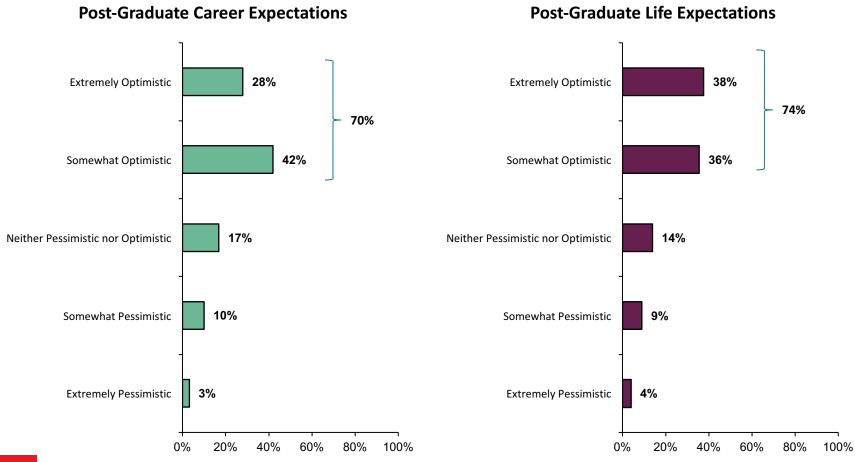
• Finding a fulfilling job and making enough money to live comfortably are the post-college concerns with the most pronounced impact on student career choice.





Post-Graduate Expectations

• Overall, students are optimistic about their post-graduate careers and lives. Respondents are slightly more likely to be optimistic towards their future lives *overall* as compared to their specific career goals.





DEMOGRAPHICS



Demographics

What is your collegiate status?	2015 (n=983) (A)	2016 (n=1,360) (B)	2017 (n=5,354) (C)
Freshman	33% (BC)	27%	26%
Sophomore	28%	30%	29%
Junior	20%	21%	22%
Senior	16%	18%	14% (B)
2 nd Year Senior	-	-	4%
In a masters or doctorate program	4%	4%	5%
Are you a full-time or part-time student?			
Full-time	-	-	85%
Part-time	-	-	15%
In what field is your major?			
Arts and humanities	8% (C)	7%	6%
Business and economics	39% (C)	37% (C)	31%
Social sciences	12% (BC)	8%	9%
STEM field (science, technology, engineering, or math)	26% (BC)	22%	22%
Healthcare	-	-	18%
Vocational/tech	-	-	0%
Undecided	-	-	3%
Other (please specify)	17% (C)	25% (AC)	11%
What type of college or university do you attend?			
2-year community college	20%	27% (AC)	24% (A)
4-year public university	59% (B)	48%	59% (B)
4-year private university	18% (C)	20% (C)	15%
Other	-	-	2%

Demographics (cont.)

What is your gender?	2015 (n=983) (A)	2016 (n=1,359) (B)	2017 (n=5,354) (C)	
Female	63%	69% (A)	68% (A)	
Male	37% (BC)	31%	32%	
Roughly how many undergrads are enrolled at you	Roughly how many undergrads are enrolled at your university?			
Under 5,000	22%	23% (C)	20%	
5,000 to 9,999	22%	27% (A)	25% (A)	
10,000 to 19,999	24%	21%	23%	
20,000 to 39,999	21%	20%	23% (B)	
40,000 or more	10%	9%	10%	
What best describes your ethnicity?*				
American Indian or Alaska Native	1%	1%	2%	
Asian	15% (BC)	12%	12%	
Black	14% (C)	16% (C)	10%	
Hispanic or Latino	10%	15% (A)	15% (A)	
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1%	1%	1%	
White	53%	51%	61% (AB)	
I prefer not to say	-	-	6%	



Demographics (cont.)

What is your age?	2015 (n=983)	2016 (n=1,359)	2017 (n=5,354)
Under 18	-	-	1%
18 to 21	-	-	60%
22 to 24	-	-	15%
25 to 29	-	-	9%
30 to 34	-	-	5%
35 to 39	-	-	3%
40 to 45	-	-	2%
Over 45	-	-	4%
I prefer not to say	-	-	1%
What is your student status?			
First-time student (Pursing first degree)	-	-	85%
Returning student (Pursuing 2 nd or 3 rd degree, etc.)	-	-	15%
Which of the following best describes the degree you are currently pursuing?			
Online	-	-	11%
On-campus	-	-	68%
Hybrid	-	-	21%



