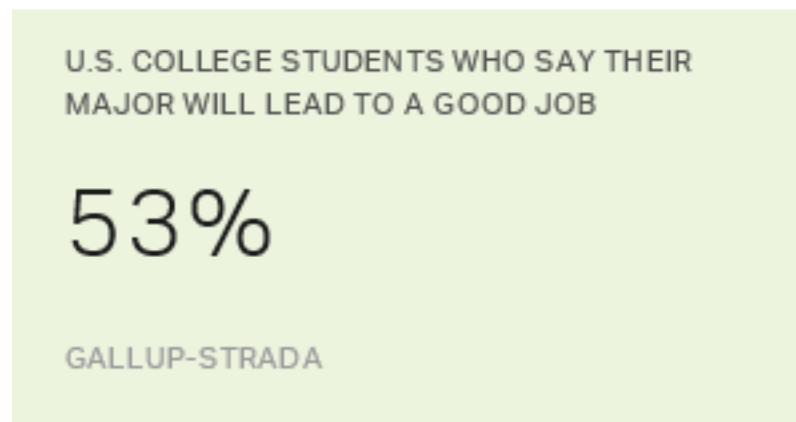


Half of College Students Say Their Major Leads to a Good Job

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<http://news.gallup.com/poll/225446/half-college-students-say-major-leads-good-job.aspx>



by Zac Auter

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Slightly more than half (53%) of currently enrolled college students strongly agree they are confident their major field of study will lead to a good job. Students pursuing science, technology, engineering or math (STEM) degrees report the most confidence in their job prospects, with 62% strongly agreeing their major will lead to a good job. This is compared with 58% of those in public service majors like education, social work, and criminal justice; 51% of business majors; and 40% of liberal arts majors, who say the same.

Confidence in Employability of Major, by Field of Study

	Confidence That Major Field of Study Will Lead to a Good Job
	% Strongly agree
Overall	53
Major	
Liberal Arts	40
Business	51
Public Service	58
STEM	62

Gallup-Strada 2017 College Student Survey

These findings are based on interviews with 32,585 currently enrolled college students at 43 randomly selected U.S. colleges and universities. The sample is representative of students at four-year, degree-granting U.S. institutions in terms of type of school (public vs. private) and enrollment size. The findings are featured in the new [*Strada-Gallup 2017 College Student Survey*](#) report released today. The report examines students' perceptions about their preparation for the workforce and the career support they receive from their institutions.

While about half of college students are highly confident their major will lead to a good job, fewer express confidence about whether they will graduate with the skills they need to succeed in the workforce. Just over a third of students strongly agree that they will graduate with the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in the job market (34%) and in the workplace (36%).

Workforce Preparation, by Field of Study

Confident I will graduate with knowledge and skills I need to be successful...

	In the Job Market	In the Workplace
	% Strongly agree	% Strongly agree
Overall	34	36
Major		
Liberal Arts	28	32
Business	37	38
Public Service	44	46
STEM	35	36
Gallup-Strada 2017 College Student Survey		

Students who are pursuing public service degrees (e.g., education, social work and criminal justice) report the greatest confidence that the skills and knowledge they are acquiring will lead to successful workforce outcomes. More than four in 10 of these students strongly agree their training is preparing them to excel in the job market (44%) and in the workplace (46%). Slightly more than a third of students majoring in business and STEM fields express that same confidence in their preparation for the workforce, followed

by those in liberal arts programs.

Students Who Receive Career-Specific Support Are More Confident

If students receive career-specific support from their university, they express much greater confidence in their work prospects. Students who say at least one professor, faculty or staff member has initiated a conversation with them about their career options are considerably more likely than those who have not to be confident that they will succeed in the job market (39% vs. 25%) and in the workplace (41% vs. 28%). Additionally, they are 11 percentage points more likely to believe that their major will lead to a good job.

Career Support From Faculty and Confidence in Workforce Outcomes

	Yes: At least one professor, faculty or staff member has initiated a conversation with you about your career options	No: At least one professor, faculty or staff member has initiated a conversation with you about your career options
	%	%
Confident I will graduate with the knowledge and skills I need to be successful in the job market.	39	25
Confident I will graduate with the knowledge and skills I need to be successful in the workplace.	41	28
Confident my major field of study/studies will lead to a good job.	57	46

Gallup-Strada 2017 College Student Survey

Less Than Half of Students Have Used School's Career Services Resources

About four in 10 college students say they have never visited their school's career services office, including 35% of those in their senior year. When students do seek guidance from career services they are most likely to be

looking for help crafting their resume (60%) or for general advice about potential career options (57%). Less frequently, students also use career services for help locating a job on or off campus (38%) or to take a skills assessment (25%). Only rarely do students consult their school's career services office for help finding a job after graduation (18%) or for identifying potential graduate programs (13%) and applying to them (12%).

Use and Helpfulness of Career Services

	Used Service	Service Helpful*
	% Yes	% Very helpful
Creating or updating a resume	60	48
Obtaining advice about potential career options or jobs	57	29
Obtaining help locating an on-campus or off-campus job	38	33
Taking a skills/talents assessment or test	25	38
Obtaining help applying for a job for when you graduate	18	39
Obtaining help identifying potential graduate school programs	13	38
Obtaining help applying to graduate school	12	41
*Percentages in this column are among students who have used their school's career services at least once		
Gallup-Strada 2017 College Student Survey		

Among those who have used their school's career services office, 48% found the assistance they received honing their resume to be very helpful (48%). That's the highest positive assessment of the seven services reviewed, and well above the 29% who found the career advice very helpful. Students tend to find less commonly used resources to be more helpful. About two-fifths of students say the guidance they received from career services in identifying and applying to graduate programs was very helpful, even though only about one in 10 students sought help with those actions.

The full study also demonstrates that many career services offered are particularly helpful for older students, black and Hispanic students, as well as first-generation college students.

Implications

Given the high cost of a college education, it's critical that college students graduate with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in the labor market. This is especially important because [88% of college freshmen](#) say that "getting a good job" is a main reason they enrolled in college. Currently, too many are not highly confident they are on the path to achieve this.

The findings of this new study of currently enrolled college students reveal actionable and achievable things universities can do to improve students' confidence in their readiness for the workforce. Encouraging faculty and staff to initiate conversations with students about potential career options may expose students to ideas and career options they had not previously considered, while perhaps also helping faculty to understand how they can make more direct links between students' coursework and their future careers.

Likewise, universities can push students to seek out conversations with faculty members about career options. University leaders should also provide faculty members with information about how the skills students learn in the courses they teach can be applied in the workforce. In doing so, universities open a dialogue between faculty and students about the relationship between academic studies and future careers -- one that stands to benefit all parties.

Survey Methods

Results for this Strada-Gallup Student Survey are based on web-based surveys conducted March 21-May 8, 2017, as part of the Strada-Gallup survey of currently enrolled college students. Gallup randomly selected colleges and universities to participate in the study from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Colleges and universities were eligible for selection if they were degree-granting institutions awarding four-year degrees and if they were private not-for-profit and public colleges and universities. Forty-three universities participated in the study and provided Gallup email addresses for a random sample of all students enrolled either part or full time at their institution. Gallup sent an email invitation and a series of reminders

to students to encourage participation.

The data are weighted to correct for unequal selection probability and nonresponse. The data are weighted to match institution characteristics by enrollment size, census region and institution control. Institution weighting targets are based on the most recent IPEDS database.

For results based on the total sample of 32,585 currently enrolled college students, the margin of sampling error is ± 0.8 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. All reported margins of sampling error include computed design effects for weighting.

Learn more about how the [Education Consumer Survey](#) is conducted.