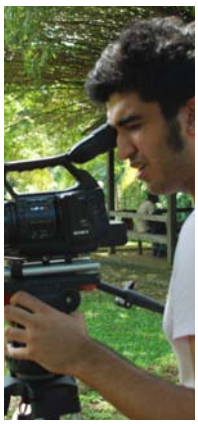
STRATEGIC
NATIONAL ARTS ALUMNI
PROJECT





PAINTING WITH BROADER STROKES:
Reassessing the Value of an Arts Degree

Based on the Results of the 2010 Strategic National Arts Alumni Project

Danielle J. Lindemann and Steven J. Tepper

with:
Sally Gaskill, Scott D. Jones, George D. Kuh, Amber D. Lambert, Jennifer Lena, Angie L. Miller, Kendall Park, Ellen B. Rudolph, and Leah Vanderwerp

SPECIAL REPORT 1

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STRATEGIC NATIONAL ARTS ALUMNI PROJECT

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SNAAP Mission

The Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP) investigates the educational experiences and career paths of arts graduates nationally. SNAAP provides the findings to educators, policymakers, and philanthropic organizations to improve arts training, inform cultural policy, and support artists.

SNAAP Special Reports

This report is the first in what will be a series of reports that examine SNAAP data to better understand important topics relevant to arts education and the lives and careers of people with arts-intensive training. These inquiries will complement SNAAP's Annual Reports. SNAAP publications can be found at www.snaap.indiana.edu.

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Executive Summary:

What is the value of an arts degree? How do arts graduates define success and how can educational institutions better prepare arts students for career achievement? The responses of 13,581 arts alumni to the Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP) survey in 2010 provide an unprecedented opportunity to answer critical questions. SNAAP results challenge pre-existing frameworks for evaluating the impact of an education. Prevailing views are fixated on measures related to salary and traditional employment options, whereas SNAAP findings suggest there are multiple ways to view the value of an arts education. Whether they work in the arts or in other fields, arts graduates continue to flex their creative muscles after graduating by using the creative skills they learned in school, teaching the arts, and contributing to the arts in their non-work time through volunteering, participating, and making and performing art. At the same time, arts alumni face hurdles after graduation and must draw upon a certain "pluckiness" to succeed. Arts training requires a balancing act between the development of creative talent and necessary support to navigate the job market. Both those evaluating the impact of arts degrees and those in a position to influence arts training must paint with broader strokes, looking beyond narrow educational measures as the sole defining features of educational success but also expanding the scope of arts training to provide students with the resources necessary to move forward in their careers.

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Based on the Results of the 2010 Strategic National Arts Alumni Project

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Introduction

What happens to individuals who receive degrees in the arts? In what fields do they work, and what are the social and personal influences that constrain and expand their career options? To what extent do they use their creative training in their work, both within and outside of the arts? How do they feel about the skills they learned in their arts programs and the relevance of their training to their working and civic lives? How, if at all, do they continue to contribute to the arts and to the vibrancy of their communities, even if they pursue careers in other fields?

This report illuminates the career pathways of arts alumni. The number of degrees awarded in the visual and performing arts has swelled in recent years, with more than 1.5 million earned between 1996 and 2010, representing a 73% increase in the number of graduates annually (Americans for the Arts 2012: 66). Yet little is known about these graduates or about their counterparts in other arts-related fields such as architecture, art and music history, arts education, arts administration, arts management, and creative writing.

Results from the Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP) provide the first comprehensive look at the occupational trajectories of these students. SNAAP conducts an annual online survey administered to the alumni of arts training institutions and arts programs within larger comprehensive institutions. The survey is a project of the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research in collaboration with the Vanderbilt University Curb Center for Art, Enterprise, and Public Policy. In 2010, 81,669 arts alumni from 154 institutions (including 8 arts high schools, 146 undergraduate programs, and 90 graduate programs[1]) were invited to participate in the survey. All of those who graduated between 2005 and 2009 were eligible as were those who graduated 10, 15, and 20 years ago (*i.e.*, the classes of 2009, 2008, 2007, 2006, 2005, 2000, 1995, and 1990).[2] In total, 13,581 alumni responded, with an average institutional response rate of 24%. Of the respondents to the survey, 81% were alumni from undergraduate programs, while 16% and 3% were the alumni of graduate programs and arts high schools, respectively. To our knowledge, this is the largest scholarly project focused on the alumni of arts-intensive educational programs ever to be undertaken.[3]

These data shed new light on the development of artists in the United States. We examine the contributions to the arts that these alumni make once they leave their educational institutions and proceed down their occupational paths. We also investigate their employment patterns, assessing the economic, personal, social, and demographic factors that correspond with their occupations and their continued engagement in artistic pursuits. We examine this information not only to identify the elements needed to more effectively connect arts training to artistic careers but also to better understand what it means to make a contribution, and to succeed, in a creative life. Our findings lead us to conclude that both those evaluating the impact of arts degrees and those in a position to influence arts training must paint with broader strokes when conceptualizing artistic contribution and educational achievement. On one hand, we must look beyond traditional economic and occupational measures of success as the sole defining features of an education. On the other hand, job success remains important, and we must also expand the scope of arts training to provide students with the resources necessary to help them move forward with their careers in a variety of ways.

In Part I, we discuss the ways in which these data complicate narrow views of education as being fixated on salary and traditional employment options. Much prior work has assessed the returns of education in general (Lindahl & Regnér 2005; Marcotte *et al.* 2005) and the outcomes of majoring in particular fields (Angle & Wissmann 1981; Berger 1988; Daymont & Andrisani 1984; Gerhart 1990; Gill & Leigh 2000) solely in terms of earnings. Additional research evaluates the impact of college major using other occupational measures, such as

1. The "154 institutions" refers to every discrete program with its own administration within a school; *e.g.* the School of Music and School of the Arts within one school were counted as two separate institutions. The undergraduate and graduate programs together totaled 146 institutions of higher education. Since 2011, research from SNAAP has calculated institutional participation differently, counting all programs under the same umbrella school as one "institution."
2. Beginning in 2011, alumni from all graduating classes, not just selected cohorts, are invited to complete the SNAAP survey.
3. The SNAAP survey is ongoing and the number of arts alumni contributing to the research increases every year. By the end of 2011, over 50,000 alumni have responded to the SNAAP survey.

the sectors in which graduates are employed (Roksa 2005) and career inequality (Thomas 1985). Carnevale, Cheah, & Strohl (2011), for instance, evaluate the question "Is college worth it?" in terms of both employment rates and earnings. They find that unemployment rates are generally higher for those who majored in non-technical fields, such as the arts, and that arts majors are one of the groups of recent graduates with the lowest median income.[4]

While we do not dismiss the importance of these measures of success, the responses of arts alumni to the SNAAP survey suggest multiple alternative views of the worth of their arts education. For instance, our findings show that, in large part, arts graduates are happy with their training. Even among those who are unemployed or unsatisfied with their current incomes, most graduates indicate that they would go back and do it all over again. Additionally, these data shed light on multiple ways in which arts students continue to flex their creative muscles after graduation: by using their creative skills in their jobs, whether or not they work within arts-related fields; by functioning as arts educators, both in formal classroom settings and in other venues; and by contributing to the arts in their non-work time, through volunteering, artistic consumption, and making and performing art. In sum, most arts graduates are deeply engaged in creative pursuits and are largely satisfied with the training that helped prepare them for this work.

At the same time, the results from SNAAP underscore the importance of providing students with the resources necessary to help them move forward in their careers. In Part II, we demonstrate that these alumni face many hurdles and must draw upon a certain "pluckiness" in order to succeed—learning to be self-starters and cobbling together multiple jobs. They express a need for additional and better tools to help them navigate the job market and to better understand how to organize their creative work. Arts training requires a balancing act between allowing students to develop their creative talents and giving them additional support to navigate the world of work more effectively.

These results provide new information about the trajectories on which arts graduates find themselves. In addition, the findings challenge our pre-existing frameworks for measuring the worth of an education. The information collected here will potentially benefit arts educational institutions, policy makers, and arts leaders, as well as parents and students considering education in the arts. Furthermore, it should be of interest to administrators, researchers, and other individuals who have a stake in assessing the payoffs of an education more generally. It deepens our understanding of what constitutes educational success and artistic contribution, and we expect that it will motivate future scholarship and will generate timely debates about the nature of artistic work and training in the 21st century.

4. Psychology, social work, and arts students share the same median income.

Part I:
Educational Satisfaction and Contributions to the Creative Marketplace

Arts Graduates' Satisfaction with Their Training

Graduates of arts programs in the United States are generally satisfied with their educational experiences. Ninety percent rate their overall experiences at their degree-granting institutions either "good" or "excellent." If they could start over, most (76%) would attend the same institution again. They agree that their institutions helped them to hone their creative capacities. Seventy-four percent of alumni report that their institution contributed "quite a bit" or "very much" to developing their artistic technique, and an even larger number (89%) are satisfied with their classroom, lab and studio instructors.

Further, in a compelling turn, we find that even graduates who are currently unemployed or underemployed indicate high levels of satisfaction with their training. While those who are currently employed are more likely to indicate high levels of institutional satisfaction, even among those who are currently unemployed and actively looking for work, 84% rate their overall institutional experience "good" or "excellent," and 68% would attend the same institution again. Further, there is no overarching, one-to-one relationship between earning more money and higher satisfaction with one's schooling. As detailed in Table I-1, while those currently in the highest income category are the most likely to rate their overall educational experiences "good" or "excellent," many alumni in much lower income categories report similar levels of satisfaction. In fact, 90% of those who earned $60,000 or less in 2009 and 91% of those who earned more than $60,000 in 2009 rated their overall institutional experiences "good" or "excellent." There is not a substantial difference between the two groups.

These are surprising findings, in light of cognitive psychology studies indicating that individuals look back on past events in their lives through the lenses of their present situations (Snyder & White 1982) and the information currently available to them (Snyder & Uranowitz 1978). If arts graduates read their past experiences based on how they view their success today, it is noteworthy that those who have "succeeded," in an economic sense, by earning more do not necessarily look back on their education with any greater fondness than less financially successful graduates.

The fact that arts graduates continue to indicate high levels of satisfaction with their creative training regardless of whether they are meeting standard economic criteria for occupational success may indicate that they are not viewing the value of their education solely through an economic lens. One respondent, who currently works as an Air Force pilot, writes, "I earned my degree in music because that is my passion." Another graduate explains, "My goal has always been to do something that I enjoy; it's never been about the money." Though prior scholarship has overwhelmingly viewed successful educational training through the lens of employment rates

Table I-1:
Percentage Rating Their Overall Institutional Experience "Good" or "Excellent," by Annual Income in 2009*

$10,000 or less	$10,001 to $20,000	$20,001 to $40,000	$40,001 to $60,000	$60,001 to $80,000	$80,001 to $100,000	$100,001 to $120,000	$120,001 to $140,000	$140,001 to $160,000	More than $160,000
(n=2099)	(n=1791)	(n=3237)	(n=2076)	(n=697)	(n=260)	(n=108)	(n=45)	(n=22)	(n=72)
88%	89%	91%	92%	92%	90%	90%	87%	86%	93%

*Annual individual income in 2009 is collected as a categorical variable in $10,000 increments. It does not include spousal income or interest on jointly-owned assets.

and salaries, these responses, and many others like them, affirm recent research on the attitudes and aspirations of creatively-trained individuals. A recent national study conducted at Vanderbilt University, for example, finds that 64% of engineering majors but only 35% of art majors describe income as "very important" or "essential" to their careers (Tepper & Pitt 2006). It is clear that some SNAAP respondents pursued arts training for creative exploration and personal fulfillment—reasons not always directly related to tangible occupational outcomes.

Artistic Contributions: Deployment of Creative Skills in Arts-Related and Non-Arts Careers

Not only do the responses to SNAAP indicate that the majority of arts graduates are happy with their educations, regardless of whether they are meeting traditional economic criteria for achievement, but they also help to expand our sense of what it means to contribute to the larger creative community. Arts graduates have a tendency to work in the fields for which they have been trained, and even many of those working in areas ostensibly outside of the arts continue to utilize their creative capacities within their work.

First, contrary to the myth of the "starving artist" who is unemployed and unemployable, or who is barely scratching out a living by waiting tables or serving coffee, most respondents to the SNAAP survey indicate that they are currently working, and only 3% of employed alumni are currently working in the food service industry. Ninety-two percent hold at least one job, and only 6% are unemployed and looking for work—a third less than the 9.6% national unemployment rate reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) for the fourth quarter of 2010 (Theodossiou & Hipple 2011).

It is important to note, however, that comparisons to other measures of employment should be drawn with caution. SNAAP employment figures are based on different measures than those used by the BLS. SNAAP directly asks respondents whether they are "currently unemployed and looking for work." The BLS asks whether respondents earned money last week from a job; if they did not, they follow up and ask them if they were looking for work. If a respondent did not earn money last week and was looking for work, he or she is counted as unemployed. National figures may underreport artist employment because many artists are self-employed and earn money intermittently based on job flow. More than six in ten SNAAP respondents (63%) indicated that they had been self-employed. Many self-employed artists are continuously looking for work (their next gig) and may not have earned money last week because they are between jobs. The BLS would count them as unemployed, whereas SNAAP would count them as employed unless they specifically indicate "unemployed." Partly for this reason, SNAAP unemployment rates also differ from those found by other studies that look at graduates in the arts. Carnevale, Cheah, and Strohl, for instance, find that, among recent college graduates (individuals 22-26 years of age), 11% of arts majors are currently unemployed. Among SNAAP respondents in the same age category, 7% report being currently unemployed and looking for work. Finally, another potential explanation for the variation between SNAAP data and other estimates of arts graduates' employment might be response bias. It is plausible that more financially successful arts graduates are more likely to fill out a survey about their experiences. However, a bias study has revealed that the SNAAP sample is not meaningfully skewed in this respect.[5]

Among arts graduates who are employed, another potential measure of occupational success is the extent to which they are working in the types of jobs they desire. In fact, many alumni indicate that their first jobs were

5. Incentivizing the survey (offering a $15 contingent gift card and including a lottery for a $100 award) and changing the mode of delivery (paper, web, or phone) did not increase response rates and attracted some different respondents but the overall difference in characteristics and other variables was minimal. A shadow study done on the 2009 field test used a variety of incentives and different modes of delivery (phone and paper survey) to double the response rate for a comparable group of graduates. We found that there were no meaningful differences in the characteristics of the graduates in the high response rate group compared to the low response rate group. Related to the question of employment, for example, respondents from the higher-response rate sample indicated that they were currently doing paid work an average of 31 hours per week. Comparable individuals from the full SNAAP sample in 2009 indicated that they were doing paid work an average of 34 hours per week. For other research on the representativeness of the SNAAP sample, see: Kennedy, Tepper, & Lambert 2010 and Lambert & Miller 2012.

a close match for the kind of work they were seeking after leaving their institutions, though alumni of graduate programs were more likely than undergraduate alumni to meet this goal. Seventy-nine percent of graduate alumni who were seeking work after graduation were able to find jobs that were "fairly close," "very close," or "perfect" matches for the work they were seeking, while 59% of undergraduate alumni indicate the same.

In addition, while arts alumni are slightly more likely to have ever worked in occupations outside of the arts (91%) than in arts-related occupations (89%), when it comes to *current* occupation more arts graduates are spending the majority of their time working in fields related to the arts (61%) than in other areas (39%). Table I-2 delineates the current jobs in which employed arts alumni spend the majority of their work time. Fields associated with

Table I-2:
Current Jobs in Which Employed Arts Alumni Spend the Majority of Their Work Time (n= 10975)

Jobs Associated with the Arts	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
K-12 Arts Educator	1314	12%
Graphic Designer or Illustrator	607	6%
Higher Education Arts Educator	560	5%
Musician	526	5%
Other Occupation Associated with the Arts	495	5%
Arts Administration or Manager	397	4%
Other Designer	259	2%
Architect	238	2%
Film, TV, Video Artist	215	2%
Other Arts Educator	208	2%
Fine Artist	199	2%
Actor	154	1%
Web Designer	136	1%
Writer, Editor, Author	123	1%
Theater and Stage Director, Producer, or Manager	112	1%
Art Director	105	1%
Photographer	115	1%
Dancer or Choreographer	98	1%
Engineer or Technician	73	1%
Curator, Dealer, Gallery Owner	51	1%
Craft Artist	55	1%
Multimedia Artist or Animator	58	1%

Jobs Outside of the Arts	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Education, Training, Library	701	6%
Office and Administrative Support	482	4%
Communications	394	4%
Sales Related Occupations	398	4%
Other Occupations Outside of the Arts	395	4%
Food Preparation Related Occupations	221	2%
Management Occupations	195	2%
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	176	2%
Financial and Other Business	178	2%
Healthcare	152	1%
Social Services Occupations	116	1%
Legal Occupations	113	1%
Services and Personal Care Occupations	112	1%
Engineering and Science	51	1%
Building Maintenance, Installation, Repair	44	0%
Construction and Extraction	40	0%
Human Resources	41	0%
Military and Protective Services	46	0%
Manufacturing Occupations	17	0%
Transportation and Material Moving	26	0%
Farming, Fishing, Forestry	16	0%
Other Occupation	963	9%
Total	10975	100%

the arts are shaded in blue, while those outside the arts are indicated by lavender. More of these arts graduates are spending the bulk of their time working in K-12 Arts Education (12%) than in any other area.[6] In fact, more individuals are working in this field than are working within the 19 least populous fields combined.

One might argue that the large numbers of arts alumni who teach within the arts is an artifact of the SNAAP sample: more than one in ten respondents to this survey (12%) majored in arts education. In fact, as we would expect, individuals majoring in this discipline are the most likely of all arts majors to currently work as arts educators, with about three fourths of them (74%) working either full- or part-time in this capacity.[7] Yet, as Table I-3 illustrates, substantial portions of alumni from other arts disciplines are populating the teaching field as well. About half of all graduates from the fields of dance (52%), music performance (52%), and music history, composition and theory (50%); a quarter of fine and studio arts alumni (25%); and more than one fifth of all theater graduates (22%) are currently working as arts teachers. Architecture (9%) and design (9%) majors are the least likely to be working in a teaching capacity.

Table I-3:
Percent of Graduates Currently Working as Teachers of the Arts (Either Full- or Part-Time), by Major

Major	Currently a Teacher of the Arts
Architecture (n=521)	9%
Art History (n=704)	16%
Arts Administration (n=270)	14%
Arts Education (n=1488)	74%
Creative or Other Writing (n=212)	20%
Dance (n=379)	52%
Design (n=1270)	9%
Fine and Studio Arts (n=2671)	25%
Media Arts (n=1144)	10%
Music History, Composition, and Theory (n=254)	50%
Music Performance (n=2094)	52%
Theater (n=1593)	22%
Other Arts Major (n=191)	25%

Overall, the percentages of arts graduates who go on to work in arts-related occupations is comparable or better to the percentages of graduates from other fields who go on to work in fields related to their majors, according to other national studies. Among employed recent (1-3 years out) SNAAP graduates from undergraduate institutions, 57% spend the majority of their work time in a job within the arts. In comparison, the National Survey of Recent College Graduates finds that among employed recent Bachelor degree recipients, for instance, 54% of chemistry majors[8], 48% of business administration and management majors, 47% of economics majors, 44% of general mathematics majors, 44% of history majors, and 38% of sociology majors currently work principally in jobs closely related to their degrees (National Science Foundation: 2006). That is, about as many if not more arts graduates go on to work in arts-related occupations as majors in other fields go on to work in areas closely related to their training.

Further, regardless of whether they are working in occupations associated with the arts, SNAAP respondents largely indicate that the skills they learned in arts school are useful within their working lives. Four fifths of employed graduates say that their arts training is relevant to the job in which they currently spend the majority of their time. Almost all (97%) arts alumni who currently spend the majority of their time working in careers within the arts describe their training as having relevance to this work, and 62% of those working in fields outside of the arts make the same claim.

6. This does not include alumni who are working as non-arts K-12 educators.
7. Table I-2 delineates the jobs in which respondents spend the *majority* of their work time, while Table I-3 includes respondents who work as arts teachers in *any* capacity, full- or part-time.
8. Category excludes biochemistry majors.

Both within and outside of the arts, however, these skills become more relevant within some occupations than others. Table I-4 breaks down the self-reported level of relevance of arts graduates' training to the job in which they currently spend the majority of their work time. The table depicts the percentages of individuals in each occupational category who selected each level of relevance, from not at all relevant to very relevant. For example, 1% of individuals currently spending the majority of their work time as actors indicate that their training is "not at all relevant" to this job. Occupations associated with the arts are shaded in blue, while those outside of the arts are shaded in lavender. Jobs within these two categories are sorted in descending order by the percentage of respondents who indicate that their training is "very relevant" to their work.

Within every arts-related field, 58% or more of respondents agree that their training is "relevant" or "very relevant" to the occupation currently taking up the majority of their time. In fact, 75% of higher education arts educators, 74% of musicians, 72% of K-12 arts educators, and 70% of dancers or choreographers say that their schooling is "very relevant" to their work in these fields. When it comes to jobs outside

Table I-4:
Self-Reported Relevance of Artistic Training, by Occupation in Which Respondent Spends Majority of Work Time (n=10942)

Occupational Field	Not at All Relevant	Somewhat Relevant	Relevant	Very Relevant	Total
Jobs Associated with the Arts					
Higher Education Arts Educator	1%	5%	19%	75%	559
Musician	2%	8%	17%	74%	524
K-12 Arts Educator	1%	8%	19%	72%	1313
Dancer or Choreographer	1%	7%	22%	70%	97
Theater and Stage Director, Producer, or Manager	3%	14%	22%	62%	110
Actor	1%	12%	25%	62%	154
Engineer or Technician	5%	15%	19%	60%	73
Fine Artist	5%	10%	26%	59%	197
Architect	1%	13%	28%	58%	237
Other Designer	1%	17%	25%	57%	259
Graphic Designer or Illustrator	5%	12%	26%	56%	606
Other Arts Educator	1%	12%	33%	54%	206
Art Director	2%	16%	29%	53%	105
Curator, Dealer, Gallery Owner	0%	20%	35%	45%	51
Other Occupation Associated with the Arts	5%	21%	31%	43%	494
Film, TV, Video Artist	3%	21%	33%	42%	215
Writer, Editor, Author	9%	24%	25%	42%	123
Arts Administration or Manager	2%	29%	36%	32%	395
Photographer	10%	25%	36%	30%	115
Multimedia Artist or Animator	3%	33%	34%	29%	58
Craft Artist	13%	24%	35%	29%	55
Web Designer	13%	30%	31%	27%	135

Table I-4 (continued next page)

of the arts, alumni spending the majority of their time working in communications are the most likely to assert that their training is "relevant" or "very relevant" to their work (50%). On the other hand, zero respondents who spend the majority of their time working in transportation or material moving or in the manufacturing occupations indicate that their training is "relevant" or "very relevant" to this work.

In addition to assessing the extent to which their education is relevant to arts graduates' current work and the ways in which certain skills map onto particular career paths, it is also important to understand how alumni think about the varied ways in which they are using their artistic training within their careers. Over 6,000 arts alumni taking the 2010 SNAAP survey wrote responses to the open-ended item "Please describe how your arts training is or is not relevant to your current work." These responses illuminate another dimension of the relationship between artistic training and occupational experiences. They allow alumni to, in their own words, draw connections between their education and their current lives. Further, because alumni discuss their training in the contexts of particular jobs, we can align skill sets with specific occupations.[9] Of the

Table I-4 (continued):
Self-Reported Relevance of Artistic Training, by Occupation in Which Respondent Spends Majority of Work Time (n=10942)

Occupational Field	Not at All Relevant	Somewhat Relevant	Relevant	Very Relevant	Total
Jobs Outside of the Arts					
Communications	14%	36%	29%	21%	394
Construction and Extraction	23%	36%	21%	21%	39
Education, Training, Library	20%	36%	23%	20%	699
Social Services Occupations	16%	39%	27%	18%	116
Farming, Fishing, Forestry	50%	19%	19%	13%	16
Other Occupations Outside of the Arts	38%	36%	16%	10%	395
Engineering and Science	55%	18%	16%	10%	51
Management Occupations	36%	35%	19%	10%	195
Legal Occupations	50%	30%	10%	10%	113
Office and Administrative Support	46%	39%	10%	6%	481
Sales Related Occupations	44%	36%	15%	6%	398
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	42%	37%	15%	6%	176
Human Resources	39%	39%	17%	5%	41
Building Maintenance, Installation, Repair	45%	33%	17%	5%	42
Services and Personal Care Occupations	50%	38%	8%	5%	111
Military and Protective Services	59%	28%	9%	4%	46
Healthcare	59%	26%	11%	4%	149
Food Preparation Related Occupations	67%	25%	6%	2%	220
Financial and Other Business	65%	30%	3%	2%	178
Manufacturing Occupations	71%	29%	0%	0%	17
Transportation and Material Moving	69%	31%	0%	0%	26
Other Occupation	19%	27%	20%	34%	958
Overall	17%	22%	21%	39%	10975

9. It is important to note that we are relying on self-perception of skills rather than an objective measure of skills-based learning, which is all but impossible to obtain on a national level with thousands of graduates. We suspect that, to some degree, people retrofit their skills to their current jobs. That is, there may be a cognitive bias that leads respondents to over report that their training is relevant to whatever they are doing now. Nonetheless, the bias should work the same for all graduates, so we can still make useful comparison across groups and employment categories.

6,042 alumni who wrote valid responses to this question[10], 1,154 (19%) wrote that their arts training is not relevant to their current jobs; 3,632 (60%) characterized it as relevant; and 1,256 (21%) indicated that it is relevant in some aspects but not relevant in others. In sum, 81% characterized facets of their artistic training as being useful to their current occupational endeavors.

This number places arts alumni not far behind alumni within other disciplines who are asked about the relationship between their schooling and their working lives today. A 2010 study of recent college graduates (25-39 years old) by the American Council on Education, for instance, found that 85% of alumni feel their undergraduate experiences have prepared them for their current jobs (Hennessy 2010). Looking at SNAAP respondents in this same age range who received their arts degrees from undergraduate institutions, we find that 80% write responses that describe their arts training as relevant to their current jobs.[11]

These respondents describe a variety of different types of skills and abilities that have carried over into their work. We coded these responses for common themes and found several salient types of responses. Table I-5 delineates the ten most common types of skills or competencies that respondents described as relevant, ranked by the frequency by which they occur. The most commonly discussed aspect of training that is relevant to the current working lives of arts alumni is technical skills. Forty percent (2,044 respondents) of the individuals who write that their training is relevant to their work indicate that they use an aspect of their artistic or technical training in their current jobs. Alumni currently working as multimedia artists or animators, graphic designers or illustrators, and photographers are the most likely to emphasize that they currently use the techniques or technical skills they learned at their arts schools. "My training at [institution] is absolutely relevant with my career," one graduate explains, for instance. "My main focus in college was to master Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator and to be able to apply those skills to create dynamic graphics. That is exactly what I am doing within my every day job."

Table I-5: Most Common Skills/Competencies Described as Relevant, Ranked by Frequency*

(From qualitative coding of "Please describe how your arts training is or is not relevant to your current work.") (n=4888)

Skill/Competency	Frequency Rank
Artistic technique/technical skills	1
Teaching/mentoring skills	2
Public speaking/performance skills	3
Working with others/people skills/teamwork	4
Learning a particular way of thinking/world-view	5
Creativity	6
Writing skills	7
Personality development	8
Using technology	9
Managing projects/organizational skills	10

*Each respondent could indicate multiple types of relevance.

The second most salient theme that emerges in these responses is the importance of teaching or mentorship skills. One quarter of respondents (1225 individuals) who write that their training is relevant to their work discuss this skill. As one might expect, the arts graduates who most often discuss this skill area are those who currently work within fields that are explicitly education-oriented. K-12 arts educators are the individuals who most often emphasize this skill, followed by higher education arts educators and those employed in the education, training, and library professions. Yet this skill is also important to alumni currently working within fields, such as the services and personal care occupations, that have no explicit tie to education. "As a nanny," one alumna writes, for instance, "I am specifically teaching the children about music, drama, dance and expression."

10. 502 responses were uncodable because the respondent did not clearly answer the question.

11. The SNAAP data is only roughly comparable to the ACE study. We ask about relevance to work rather than whether graduates feel prepared for the work they are doing. Further, only a proportion of graduates answered the open-ended question about relevance. It is possible that those who are working in jobs where their training is relevant were more inclined to write something in the open-ended answer box.

The third most commonly described skill is the ability to speak publicly or perform. While this tends to be true for individuals employed within arts-related occupations such as acting, dancing and choreography, and music, this skill also tends to cluster within non-arts occupations that involve public speaking components. For example, one fourth of individuals currently employed in the legal occupations who describe their training as relevant to their work write about the importance of this particular skill. One of these individuals asserts, for example, "As a litigator, my acting training has been invaluable." The same percentage (25%) of those currently working within the food industry who find their training relevant to their jobs describe the importance of public speaking. Many food servers reference their ability to "act" in front of their customers. As one of these respondents writes, "As a server in a chain restaurant, you must put on a show in a way for your guest. You must entertain them and give them exactly what they [want] when it comes to their dining experience." Another states, succinctly, "Being a server is exactly like being on stage."

Respondents who write about the importance of learning to work effectively with others, teamwork, and/or "people skills" tend to work within occupations that are *not* associated with the arts. Many of those who reference the importance of this ability indicate that, while their artistic techniques may not translate to their current occupational contexts, the social skills they have learned in school are relevant. As one respondent, who majored in acting and currently works in the field of manufacturing, writes, "Interpersonal skills gained within the highly collaborative arts arena are integral to managing a wide range of personalities within the work force."

Another common theme that emerges in arts graduates' write-in responses is that their arts education has taught them specific ways of thinking and/or viewing the world, that have translated to their current work. It is revealing that those currently working within occupations *not* associated with the arts are the most likely to describe artistic thought processes as relevant to their occupations. Many of these alumni explicitly make the claim that, though their particular artistic techniques do not directly translate to their current working environments, there are certain cerebral elements of artistic training that aid them in their jobs today. As one respondent points out, "Although I no longer perform in the arts, my training in the arts helped me learn to think critically, which is crucial to my new work as an attorney." Another arts graduate, who works in the healthcare industry, writes, "Graduating from an arts program gave me [a] clear ability to think outside the box which has been wonderful."

It is clear that alumni emphasize the importance of some skill sets over others in describing the applicability of their education to their current occupations, and some of these skills become particularly important for performing specific types of labor. We also find, however, that even *within* occupational categories, there is diversity in how

alumni view the link between training and outcomes. This type of variation can be found within virtually all types of jobs. One arts graduate who is currently a lawyer, for instance, writes, "Art training has carried over into the legal world with creative thinking, practice presenting my art or case, hard work and confidence." On the other hand, another practicing attorney writes succinctly, "I'm a lawyer. Arts is creative. Law is thinking." Along the same lines, one respondent who works as an accountant indicates, "In my arts training I learned a lot about teamwork and diplomacy, which are skills that apply to any occupation." However, another writes, "I do accounting…a music degree simply has not applied thus far."

Why do only some arts alumni who become lawyers relate their training in areas such as creativity, working with others, and performance to their jobs today? Why do some food servers describe their acting training as useful to their current work, while others indicate it has no relevance? Why are there accountants who say their arts education is applicable to their workday experiences and accountants who do not? As we discuss elsewhere (Lindemann & Tepper 2012), it is clear that some individuals develop more robust and durable identities as creative people. The mechanisms driving these divergences are not yet fully known. They potentially involve a concatenation of factors, including workplace context, job type, personality and identity dimensions, family influences, and the structure of arts training. We believe that there are steps that schools can take to help their students tap into these identities. These may include self-reflection, writing creative narratives, and thinking explicitly about how their creativity may extend to multiple realms.

Regardless, these data become useful for thinking about the varied ways in which arts graduates are deploying their creative training even if they are not professional artists or even if they are working in fields we might not typically identify as arts-related. We need to think in a broader sense about how they are using their competencies to make contributions to the occupational sphere. Since 91% of arts graduates at some point work in jobs outside of the arts, a future challenge for arts institutions may be teaching their students to bridge the gap between artistic and non-artistic spheres by learning to harness their abilities and apply them in diverse contexts.

Artistic Contributions: Arts Alumni as Educators

One salient fact that emerges from the discussion above is that high numbers of arts alumni are deploying their creative and artistic training as educators. In fact, more than half (52%) of arts alumni have at some point worked as arts educators.

Many of these respondents went into their arts programs intending to teach, and they are happy working in this field. "I believe that my education at [my institution] equipped me thoroughly to be a solid educator," one SNAAP respondent writes. On the other hand, teaching clearly attracts various types of arts graduates. Forty-one percent of those who intended to work in an occupation whose primary purpose was creating or performing art, but never did, currently teach or have taught the arts. One graduate explains, for instance, "I didn't originally come to [my institution] to become a teacher. But after working as a teaching assistant, I realized what a great job being an art educator could be. So [my institution] didn't just give me the training to become a full time tenure track teacher…as it exposed me to the possibilities."

Levels of job satisfaction, furthermore, are relatively high for those who are working within the realm of formal education. In fact, those currently spending the majority of their time working as teachers of the arts (K-12 arts educators, higher education arts educators, or other arts educators) indicate higher levels of satisfaction when it comes to most aspects of their jobs, including the following:[12]

- ***Opportunity to Be Creative:*** Seventy-five percent of all currently employed alumni[13], but 92% of those currently spending the majority of their time working as arts educators[14], describe themselves as satisfied[15] with their opportunity to be creative within their work.

- ***Income:*** Fifty-nine percent of currently employed arts alumni, but 64% of those spending the bulk of their time as arts educators[16], report being "somewhat" or "very" satisfied with their level of income.[17]

- ***Opportunity to Contribute to the Greater Good:*** Ninety-six percent of those spending the majority of their work time in the field of arts education are "somewhat" or "very" satisfied with their opportunity to contribute to the greater good within their jobs,[18] while the same is true for only 78% of all employed respondents.

In considering the support that arts graduates lend to the backbone of arts education in this country, it is also important to take into account the ways in which these alumni are serving as arts educators outside of typical educational settings. We specifically look at the responses of alumni who indicate that they have worked at some point in their lives as "other arts educators" (versus K-12 arts educators or higher education arts educators) and who describe their relevant jobs in the text box provided. Some 1,024 respondents—9% of individuals who answered the question asking about the occupations associated with the arts in which they have ever worked—wrote a response in the "other arts educator" field. We coded each response to this item, classifying it into one or more of several overlapping categories.[19] Over a third of these respondents—35% (354)—indicate that they have worked in private teaching capacities, while 5% (55) have been involved in preschool, toddler, or early childhood arts education. In addition, 5% (50) have been employed as teaching assistants and 4% (45) have taught adult education or continuing education classes.

The responses to this item help to broaden our understanding of the scope of arts education beyond the walls of the traditional classroom. For instance, 6% (60) of these individuals assert that they have taught art at camps or summer programs, and 5% (48) have been involved in arts education within museums. Five percent (47) have been involved in community-based teaching, 3% (35) have led workshops, 3% (32) have taught art at after-school programs, and 3% (26) have taught art within the contexts of nonprofit arts organizations.

12. This only includes those whose *primary* job is teaching within the arts (as a K-12 arts educator, higher education arts educator, or other arts educator). Those who work as arts educators, but spend the *majority* of their work time in other areas, may be more or less satisfied with these elements of their jobs.
13. This includes only currently-employed alumni who indicated their current job and responded to the questions asking about their level of satisfaction with their work.
14. 92% of K-12 arts educators, 90% of higher education arts educators, and 94% of other arts educators.
15. Includes those who indicated they were "Very satisfied" or "somewhat satisfied," versus "somewhat dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied."
16. 68% of K-12 arts educators, 53% of higher education arts educators, and 67% of other arts educators.
17. The effect size here is not large, but these figures are still illustrative of arts educators being at least as satisfied with their current income as those employed within other fields, if not more so.
18. 97% of K-12 arts educators, 92% of higher education arts educators, and 98% of other arts educators.
19. These categories included the following: adjunct/substitute, adult/continuing education, afterschool program, teaching assistant, camp/summer instructor, community-based learning, museum-based educator, nonprofit, preschool/early childhood education, part-time teacher, private instructor, instructor within a religious institution, artist-in-residence, special education, volunteer instructor, workshop instructor, and other. "After-school art workshop facilitator," for instance, falls into both the "after school" and "workshop" categories.

It is important to note that many of these figures are likely to be deceptively low, minimizing the numbers of all arts alumni who have actually been involved in these pursuits. First, these numbers only include those individuals who checked the "other educator" item and wrote responses in the text box. Secondly, there are many residual responses. A total of 223 responses to this question could not be coded, either because it was unclear in which venues the individuals were teaching (*e.g.* "piano teacher") or because the teaching venues were too specific to fit into one of our broader categories (*e.g.* "Women and children in Belizean villages"). Yet these responses are illuminating, in that they begin to give us a more comprehensive picture of the social patterning of arts alumni in the educational sphere, bringing into sharp relief the diverse capacities in which these graduates impart knowledge.

Finally, in considering the contributions made by arts alumni to the realm of arts education, it is important to take into account how many of these individuals have taught art on a volunteer basis. When asked if they have volunteered to teach within the arts during the past three years, nearly one fourth of SNAAP respondents (24%) answered in the affirmative. Further, when asked generally about the various ways in which they have provided support for the arts within the past three years, 9% of all respondents who selected "other" and wrote something in the text box assert that they are engaged in teaching or mentoring other artists. It is telling that these individuals chose to select "other" and write in their answers, despite the fact that "volunteered to teach art" is an option for this question; these responses illuminate the many informal capacities in which arts graduates impart knowledge. Examples of such responses include:

- "Formed a community youth choir organization"
- "Free private lessons for students who could not afford it"
- "Gone to my kids' schools and introduced the kids to industrial design"
- "Have a club after school to teach art and create art projects"
- "Give advice to students or otherwise interested people"
- "Help my children learn musical instruments"
- "Mentored my cousins in art."

Again, it is important to note that many of these educational endeavors are taking place outside the walls of the traditional classroom.

However, there are disciplinary differences when it comes to volunteering to teach within the arts. Graduates in the fields of dance (42%), arts education (39%), fine and studio arts (31%), music history, composition, and theory (31%), and music performance (27%) are the arts alumni most likely to have volunteered to teach art within the past three years. However, non-trivial numbers of graduates from *every* arts discipline indicate that they have volunteered in this capacity. Even in the fields with the lowest rates of volunteer participation in this respect—writing and media arts—13% of graduates have volunteered in this capacity during the past three years. Importantly, as the nature of arts participation changes and as more young people pursue creative practices that involve media, technology, and design, school and arts policy leaders might consider how to better connect alumni who trained in these less traditional disciplines with opportunities to teach.

One potentially fruitful area for further research may be a more in-depth consideration of the mechanisms driving individuals into teaching within these informal roles as well as within more formal institutional settings. Regardless, it remains the case that a large percentage of arts alumni are teaching within the arts, and if we broaden our definition of arts education, we find that they are joined by an additional number who are teaching the arts within other capacities. Arts alumni who pass along knowledge informally are more difficult to "get at" and quantify than those who are professional teachers, but it crucial to consider these other educators when rounding out the picture of how artistic knowledge gets produced, shaped, and perpetuated.

Artistic Contributions: Support for the Arts in Non-Work Time

Volunteering to teach is far from the only way in which these alumni make contributions to the arts outside of their paying jobs. They also volunteer at arts organizations, attend performances and exhibitions, purchase art, and make and perform art in their non-work time. Bolstering prior research about the strong connection between arts education and arts participation (Rabkin & Hedberg 2011), the results from SNAAP tell a compelling story about the crucial support these graduates lend to the arts outside of their day-to-day jobs.

Comparing the results from SNAAP to numbers from other national surveys reveals that these graduates are 18 times more likely than the population at large to volunteer within the arts. Only 2% of all Americans volunteer for arts, cultural, or humanities organizations (Independent Sector 2001), but 37% of SNAAP respondents have volunteered at an arts organization in the past three years. Forty-one percent of arts graduates have donated money to either an arts organization or an artist. This percentage is particularly noteworthy considering the fact that, according to the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University, only about 6% of all U.S. households earning under $100,000 contribute to the arts (Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University 2007). Looking at those arts graduates whose household incomes are under $100,000 (who represent 76% of those who indicated their income on the SNAAP survey), we see that 40% give money to the arts. This is more than six times the rate for the general public.

Arts graduates continue to support the arts in these ways even when they pursue careers in non-arts fields. As Table I-6 illustrates, nearly a third—31%—of alumni currently spending the majority of their work time in occupations *outside* of the arts indicate that they have volunteered at arts organizations within the past three years. Thirty-nine percent have donated money to arts organizations or artists. Although individuals who work primarily in arts-related occupations are more likely to support the arts in both of these ways—as volunteers (43%) as well as donors (45%)—those employed outside of the arts still contribute at rates substantially higher than those of the American population at large.

While the graduates of arts-intensive education programs form a critical part of the support structure for the arts, not only as producers of art but as volunteers and donors,

Table I-6:
Percent of Arts Graduates Who Have Supported Arts in Past Three Years, by Field of Current Primary Job

	Volunteered at an Arts Organization	Served on the Board of an Arts Organization	Volunteered to Teach Art	Donated Money to an Arts Organization or an Artist
Primary Job Outside the Arts (n=3631)	31%	6%	18%	39%
Primary Job in the Arts (n=5664)	43%	15%	29%	45%

alumni from some academic disciplines contribute to the arts in these ways at higher rates than others. Table I-7 assesses, by academic major, the percentages of alumni who in the past three years have volunteered within arts organizations and have made donations to the arts, as well as the percentages of alumni who currently make or perform art in their personal (non-work) time. Within almost all disciplinary categories, alumni are more likely to produce their own art than either to have volunteered or donated money in the past three years. This is not true solely in the case of arts administration majors, who are the most likely both to have volunteered within arts organizations in the past three years (56%) and to have donated money to arts organizations or artists in the past three years (63%) but are less likely than most others to make or perform art in their personal time (59%). The only discipline in which a lower percentage of alumni participates in unpaid art-making or performance is art history (57%). It is perhaps not surprising that these individuals are the least likely to create their own art, as these two disciplines do not focus on artistic production, *per se*. However, it is surprising to note that nearly six in ten arts administration and art history graduates *do* produce their own art, despite the fact that art-making is not the primary purpose of either discipline. Clearly, many students who study the history and management of the arts are artists themselves. Schools should consider whether these students have adequate opportunities to nurture and integrate these passions into their courses of study.

Table I-7:
Unpaid Contributions to the Arts, By Academic Major

Artistic Discipline	Volunteered at an Arts Organization	Donated Money to an Arts Organization or Artist		Artistic Discipline	Make or Perform Art in Non-Work Time
Architecture (n=465)	24%	30%		Architecture (n=482)	65%
Art History (n=637)	46%	47%		Art History (n=672)	57%
Arts Admin. (n=254)	56%	63%		Arts Admin. (n=261)	59%
Arts Education (n=1362)	42%	46%		Arts Education (n=1425)	85%
Writing (n=189)	24%	40%		Writing (n=202)	79%
Dance (n=349)	46%	47%		Dance (n=359)	69%
Design (n=1128)	27%	30%		Design (n=1194)	74%
Fine/Studio Arts (n=2476)	37%	38%		Fine/Studio Arts (n=2555)	87%
Media Arts (n=1011)	26%	32%		Media Arts (n=1069)	68%
Music History/Composition/ Theory (n=233)	40%	45%		Music History/Composition/ Theory (n=247)	88%
Music Performance (n=1912)	40%	47%		Music Performance (n=1999)	86%
Theater (n=1476)	50%	53%		Theater (n=1522)	70%
Other Arts (n=175)	35%	40%		Other Arts (n=182)	78%
Overall (n=11089)	37%	34%		Overall (n=11566)	76%

Comparatively, arts education majors are more likely to produce art in their non-work time (85%). They are surpassed in this area only by music history, theory, and composition majors (88%); fine arts or studio arts majors (87%); and music performance majors (86%). Again, since so many art education majors are also practicing artists, schools should ensure that these students feel fully immersed and supported as artists within their training institutions.

When assessing the factors that are relevant to whether arts graduates engage in arts-related pursuits in their non-work time, we consider not only their disciplinary backgrounds but a variety of other demographic and personal factors as well. Controlling for a variety of factors, we analyzed[20] the elements predicting whether arts alumni have volunteered at arts organizations, made donations to arts organizations, and served on the boards of arts organizations within the past three years, respectively, and found several key patterns:

- ***Females are Significantly More Likely Than Males to Volunteer at Arts Organizations but Significantly Less Likely to Create or Perform Art in Their Non-Work Time*** –This finding is in line with prior work indicating that, among young adults in the United States, men are less likely than women to volunteer (Oesterle, Johnson, and Mortimer 2004: 1143; see also Wuthnow 1995: 152). The fact that women are significantly more likely to devote time to the arts through volunteering, but significantly less likely to spend time on their own personal art, also may be suggestive of broader gendered differences in ideology and forms of social capital. For instance, females score higher on measures of altruism and empathy and attach more value to helping others (Wilson & Musick 1997). As Oesterle, Johnson, and Mortimer suggest, the gendered difference in volunteering may also be a function of women's informal social relationships (Oesterle, Johnson, and Mortimer 2004: 1143; drawing upon Wilson & Musick 1997). These results also underscore persistent evidence that within families, working women have less "personal" time than working men often because they assume a much greater proportion of household labor (childcare, meal preparation, cleaning, and planning) (Hochschild 1989).

- ***Women and Some Minorities Are Significantly Less Likely to Serve on Arts Boards***– Female alumni as well as those who self-identify as black/African-American or as Asian[21] are significantly less likely to serve on the boards of arts organizations. In fact, white/Caucasian respondents are more than twice as likely as black/African-American respondents to have served on arts boards. Among individuals who self-identify as "White or Caucasian," but no other race, 11% have served on an arts board in the past three years; the same is true for only 5% of individuals who self-identify only as black or African American. And 4% of female respondents who identify only as black or African-American have served on arts boards during the past three years, compared to 11% of white or Caucasian males. These results suggest

20. We used binary logistic regression analysis. Logistic regression analysis is a statistical procedure that predicts the likelihood of a certain outcome based on particular criteria. We define "significant" as $p \leq .05$. We performed three separate analyses evaluating the predicted probability of each of the following outcomes: volunteering within the arts within the past three years, serving on an arts board in the past three years, and currently creating or performing art in one's non-work time. Each model included the following independent variables: race (White or Caucasian; Black or African American; Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin; American Indian or Alaska Native; Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander; Asian; or Other), gender (male or female), current personal income (collected as a categorical variable in $10,000 increments, ranging from "$10,000 or less" to "More than $160,000"), level of parental education (did not finish high school, graduated from high school or equivalent, attended college but did not complete a degree, completed an associate's degree, completed a bachelor's degree, completed a master's degree, or completed a doctoral degree), and whether one had a parent or close relative as a professional artist. *Tables containing these logistic regression results are available upon request; please contact snaap@indiana.edu.*

21. Respondents could select multiple racial categories. However, this analysis includes only alumni who selected one category.

that there are still structural factors limiting female and minority entry into positions of influence within the arts.[22]

- ***Having an Artist in the Family Is Significantly Associated with Non-Work Participation in the Arts–*** Having a foot in the art world by virtue of a close family tie increases the odds of one's continued participation in that world. Having a parent, guardian, or close relative who was a professional artist is a positive predictor for both serving on the board of an arts organization and creating or performing art in one's free time. For example, 75% of those who did not have an artist relative currently make or perform art in their personal time, compared to 81% of those with an artist relative.

When it comes to involvement in the art world outside of work, it is also important to highlight the many arts graduates who say they are participating in the arts in ways that do not neatly fall into prescribed categories on the SNAAP survey. More than one in ten alumni—11% of respondents—indicate that they have supported the arts in the past three years in ways other than performing, creating, or exhibiting their artwork, volunteering or serving on the boards of arts organizations, volunteering to teach art, or donating money to arts organizations or artists. Over one thousand respondents (1,229) chose to use the available text box to write in the other way(s) in which they have contributed to the artistic community. We organized these responses into several overlapping categories.[23] The results indicate that the graduates of art-intensive programs contribute to artistic production in a diversity of ways that extend far beyond the creation of their own art.

Alumni who wrote something in the "other" box most commonly indicate that they have contributed to the arts by attending or purchasing art. Forty-six percent (567) of those who wrote something in the "other" text box for this question indicate that they have been consumers of the arts. This includes not only those who purchase and collect art but also those who attend gallery openings, art shows, concerts, recitals, exhibitions, and classes and workshops taught by other artists. It is important to note that, in most cases, it is unclear whether these alumni are gearing their support toward emerging artists on the scene, established artists, or both. However some respondents explicitly indicate that they are attending local or community events. "[I] attend art openings of fellow artists in my community," one respondent explains. Another asserts that she has "attended concerts and performances of local dance companies."

Respondents also point out that they have given support to the arts in the form of non-monetary donations. Eight percent (94) of those who clicked the "other" box have provided free services. Examples of these responses include:

- "Did a pro bono consulting project for an arts organization"
- "Free logo design for nonprofit or struggling businesses"
- "Free portrait demonstrations for Art Festivals"
- "I volunteer to draw for patients at the Children's Hospital"
- "Offered free professional support to other artists."
- "Painting murals at my local church"

Furthermore, 6% (68) have donated physical artwork to organizations, fundraisers and charities, or arts programs. Meanwhile, 7% (88) indicate that they belong to groups related to the arts, including nonprofit organizations,

22. However, it is important to note that not all boards of arts organizations are considered influential. We do not have information about the types of boards on which these alumni are serving; these additional nuances might reveal further layers of stratification.

23. These categories included the following: attending/purchasing art, group membership, working collaboratively with other artists, donating art, donating time/providing free services, donating workspace or other items to artists, furthering one's own arts education, judging arts competitions, participating in the arts through museums, arts advocacy, supporting relatives or friends who are artists, participating in the arts through religious institutions, serving as teachers or mentors, and other. "Museum membership," for instance, falls into both the "group membership" and "museum" categories.

arts councils, community groups, campus organizations, and professional guilds—as members, consultants, or advisors. Six percent (67) have contributed to the arts in ways that involve museums—as patrons, donors, members, and workers.

When we think about "supporting the arts," we might typically consider actions such as giving money, volunteering for arts organizations, buying tickets to performances, and visiting museums. Yet the responses to this particular open-ended question importantly emphasize the rich tapestry of ways in which arts graduate have made artistic contributions during the past three years. For instance, some respondents write that they have collaborated with other artists, helping them to produce their work or performances. Other respondents say that they financially or emotionally support a family member or friend who is involved in the arts, contribute to the arts by continuing their own educations within artistic fields, or have judged artistic competitions. Some arts graduates indicate that they participate in artistic endeavors that are related to religious organizations (such as church choir), while others are politically involved in causes that relate to the arts (arts advocacy or arts policy).

In addition, 16% (196) of these responses evade characterization and include actions such as blogging, booking bands, catering art shows, being involved in art festivals, hiring artists, modeling for art, and introducing other people to the arts. As one respondent explains, "I am always supporting the arts, whether it be through performance or supporting mostly my fellow artists and their work."

Taken collectively, these data suggest that arts graduates contribute to the creative economy by aiding in the production of art and the perpetuation of artistic knowledge in ways that are often difficult to quantify but are nonetheless important. While those who cooperate in the production of artistic works are often devalued as "personnel" within the art world—as the artist is seen as the one doing the "real work" by creating and making pivotal decisions about the art itself (Becker 1982: 77)—it is crucial to understand the nature of this support structure. Lloyd, for instance, has documented the importance of artists' support for one another in his case study of a contemporary artists' neighborhood; in this urban context, the clustering of artists provides both material and symbolic resources that catalyze creativity, particularly in the early stages of artists' careers (Lloyd 2004). Lena finds it to be true more generally that local clusters of artists catalyze creativity and that, in fact, musical styles in 20th century America are *characterized* by community (Lena 2012). It is safe to say that arts graduates are an important part of the connective tissue that sustains a healthy arts ecology. Their descriptions of their contributions to this ecology compel us to think more broadly about their contributions and successes, extending well beyond their formal roles in arts-related occupations.

Up until this point, we have argued that the responses to SNAAP broaden how we should evaluate artistic contributions and successes. The graduates of arts-intensive educational programs in the United States, in large part, are satisfied with their educations, and they offer multiple types of creative contributions, both within and outside of their paid work. Our evidence points to the fact that individuals with arts degrees tend not to evaluate their own educational experiences solely in terms of their financial and work outcomes. In the next section we find that, while occupational and economic measures of success should not be the *only* considerations when evaluating the worth of a degree, this does not mean that these markers are unimportant. Just as we must paint with broader strokes in defining the worth of a degree, we must also broaden our definition of an arts education, expanding it to include the skills and knowledge necessary for career development, professionalism, enterprise, and for living meaningful lives.

Part II:
Hurdles for Arts Alumni in the Occupational Sphere

Arts Graduates and Economic Measures of Success

When it comes to employment, the good news, as discussed, is that the unemployment rate of arts alumni appears to be below the national average, most alumni (89%) have at some point worked in arts occupations, and four fifths of employed graduates say that their arts training has at least some relevance to the job in which they currently spend the majority of their time. On the other hand, even if alumni view their arts training as having value beyond the economic sphere, it is clear that socioeconomic factors have a role in shaping their careers.

For instance, arts alumni still face significant financial obstacles to engaging in art professionally. Almost a third (30%) of former professional artists and those who wanted to be artists but did not do so pointed to debt, including student loan debt, as a reason to find other work. Others were lured away from the arts by other areas of employment, with their siren calls of higher pay and steady income. Fifty-two percent of those who stopped working as professional artists did so because of better pay in other fields. And only 14% of actors, 8% of fine artists, 12% of musicians, and 12% of graphic designers indicate that they are "very satisfied" with their income.

In fact, overall, many arts graduates remain unsatisfied with the amount of money they are earning. Thirty-eight percent of employed graduates indicate that they are "very" or "somewhat" dissatisfied with their current incomes. It should be noted that part of what is occurring with these figures is likely the phenomenon of relative disadvantage. Artists earn less than their counterparts in other professional fields (National Endowment for the Arts 2008: 20),[24] and prior literature has found that social comparison is an important predictor of self-rated pay satisfaction (Dreher 1981; Goodman 1975; Sweeney, McFarlin, and Inderrieden 1990). Thus, arts graduates likely compare themselves unfavorably with their peers in other fields who earn higher incomes. Relative deprivation may also explain why even those in higher paid professions do not report drastically higher levels of income satisfaction than arts graduates do. For example, a study by the American Bar Association found that among young lawyers only 34% felt their salaries were in line with what they hoped or expected (American Bar Association 2000: 20).[25] It is also worth noting that while many arts graduate are unsatisfied with their incomes, there is little relationship between how much they earn and their satisfaction with their work overall. In fact, as noted in a previous report, dancers are among the lowest paid artistic occupations, but they rank among the highest in terms of job satisfaction.[26]

Demographic Barriers, Unequal Outcomes

Demographic factors including gender, race, and class, as well as personal factors such as the presence of debt and the strength of social networks, interact complexly to influence graduates' life-course trajectories. For instance, they help to shape whether, and for how long, graduates of arts programs engage in art professionally as well as account in part for income disparities. We performed three statistical analyses[27] distilling the factors that are associated

24. The authors of this 2008 report found that median income from all sources in 1999 was $30,000 for artists, higher than the $25,300 median for the total labor force, and lower than the $36,000 for all professionals. They characterized "professional and related workers" as a group inclusive of artists as well as doctors, lawyers, teachers, scientists, engineers, and health professionals. Their definition of "income" was inclusive of wage or salary income from all jobs, full-time and part-time; self-employment income; and income from all other sources such as investments and retirement. They also found that full-year, full-time artists earned $45,200 (unadjusted) while the median income for full-year, fulltime professionals in general was $52,500.

25. Thirty-four percent of lawyers surveyed in 2000 indicated that their financial remuneration converged "very well" (versus "somewhat" or "not at all") with their expectations.

26. This finding comes from the 2012 SNAAP annual report, www.snaap.indiana.edu/pdf/2012/2012_Annual_Report.pdf

27. We used binary and ordered logistic regression analyses. We excluded those who indicated that they had not intended to become professional artists. We define "significant" as $p \leq .05$. In each analysis, we examined the following factors: having an advanced degree, having an internship while in school, one's satisfaction with his or her ability to network with alumni and others while in school, having a parent or close relative who is an artist, student debt level, race, parental education, and gender. Respondents could select multiple racial categories. However, this analysis includes only alumni who selected one category. *Tables containing these logistic regression results are available upon request; please contact snaap@indiana.edu.*

with the outcome of becoming a professional artist.[28] Specifically, we examined three categories of outcome: 1) the probability of ever working as a professional artist; 2) for those who have worked as professional artists, the number of years spent working in this capacity; and 3) for those who worked as professional artists in 2009, the percentage of work time spent in this capacity. We found several important factors related to whether or not an arts graduate works as a professional artist:

- ***Having an Artist in the Family***— Excluding those individuals who indicated that they did not intend to become professional artists, having a professional artist as a parent or close relative is associated, to a statistically significant extent, with the likelihood of an arts graduate ever working in an occupation whose primary purpose is the creation or performance of artistic works. Among those who have worked as professional artists, there is also a significant, positive relationship between having an artist relative and the number of years one spends as a professional artist. However, there is not a significant relationship between having an artist in the family and the number of hours one spent as a professional artist in 2009.

- ***Interning***— Participating in an internship while enrolled in one's institution[29] is associated, to a statistically significant extent, with the likelihood of an arts graduate ever working as a professional artist. Interning while in school is also significantly, positively associated with the percentage of one's work time spent as a professional artist in 2009. However, there is no significant association between interning and the number of years one spends working as a professional artist.

- ***Social Networking***— Networking opportunities also play a role in patterning arts graduates' relationships to the world of professional art. Satisfaction with one's opportunities to network with alumni and others while in school is associated, to a statistically significant extent, with the likelihood of an arts graduate ever working as a professional artist. While there is no significant connection between self-rated satisfaction with one's networking opportunities and the number of years spent as a professional artist, social networking satisfaction is positively connected with the percentage of one's work time spent as a professional artist in 2009.

The fact that familial ties to the arts, internships, and social networking—elements of artistic training relevant to social contacts—all have associations with the outcome of becoming a professional artist suggests that personal and professional networks are key elements of creative careers. Further research is necessary to fully explore the roles of socialization, contacts, and role-modeling in shaping the work and lives of artistic individuals.

- ***A Graduate Education***—While receiving a graduate degree is not significantly associated with the number of years spent as a professional artist or the number of hours spent on professional art in 2009, it is significantly associated with the likelihood of becoming a professional artist. This is perhaps an unsurprising finding, as many people who attain advanced degrees in the arts do so because they are particularly focused on artistic careers. On the other hand, while this finding does not provide evidence of a *causal* link between advanced-degree attainment and working as a professional artist, it does provide some evidence that these advanced degrees may be "worth" the investment for some graduates in the sense that those who earn them are more likely to work in occupations creating or performing art.

- ***Gender***—Being female has a statistically significant negative association with the outcome of being employed as a professional artist. In

28. We define "professional artist" as "an occupation whose primary purpose is the creation or performance of artistic works such as designs, films, illustrations, music, performances, stories, and videos." This category does not include arts educators or arts administrators.

29. During the summer, during the school year, or both.

fact, 79% of male respondents indicate that they currently or have in the past worked as professional artists, while only 70% of female respondents report the same.[30] We might expect that gender equality has increased over time and that that this difference would be smaller for more recent cohorts. However, when we look specifically at year of graduation[31], we do not find that this gap, overall, has narrowed over time. Further, while gender is not significantly related to the number of hours spent working as a professional artist in 2009, being female is negatively related to the number of years spent working in this capacity. For example, among those who graduated in 1990, 66% of men and 42% of women have worked as artists for 15 or more years.

- ***Race/Ethnicity***—Race and ethnicity are also involved in the patterning of professional artists' careers. For instance, being black/African-American *or* being Hispanic, Latino, or of Spanish origin *or* being Asian is negatively related to the number of years one spends as an artist.[32] Interestingly, however, these analyses suggest that race is not significantly related to the outcome of ever working as a professional artist or the number of hours spent working in this capacity in 2009.

- ***Debt***—Student loan debt[33], too, seems to pattern artists' outcomes. Although there is no significant relationship between student loan debt and the number of hours spent doing art professionally in 2009, the presence of *any* amount of student loan debt has a negative association (in nearly every case, statistically significantly[34]) with the number of years spent as a working artist. Another interesting finding is that graduates with the lowest amount of student loan debt over zero—$10,000 or less—are significantly *more* likely to work as artists than their peers with either no debt or higher amounts of debt. One potential explanation for this could be that those who are willing to take out debt to fund their educations are more committed to their goals of becoming professional artists, but at a certain level this debt becomes burdensome and prohibitive. Along related lines, levels of debt over $60,000 significantly *decrease* the odds of one ever working as a professional artist, but this is not the case for any other level of debt. These results suggest that amounts of debt under $60,000 may not necessarily impede individuals from *becoming* professional artists —although it may stop them from *remaining* professional artists.

- ***Parents' Level of Education***—Finally, while levels of parental education appear to have no statistically significant associations with the likelihood of ever working as a professional artist or with the percentage of work time spent as a professional artist in 2009, one's parents' education has an interesting relationship with the number of years one spends working as a

30. 86% of transgendered individuals indicated that they have ever been professional artists. However, since only a small number of transgendered individuals took the survey, we cannot make broader claims based on this information.

31. Last year of school attended, as reported in the school's alumni file. This data set includes graduates from 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009.

32. Includes those who selected *only* "Black or African American" or *only* "Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin" or *only* "Asian," versus those who selected only "White or Caucasian."

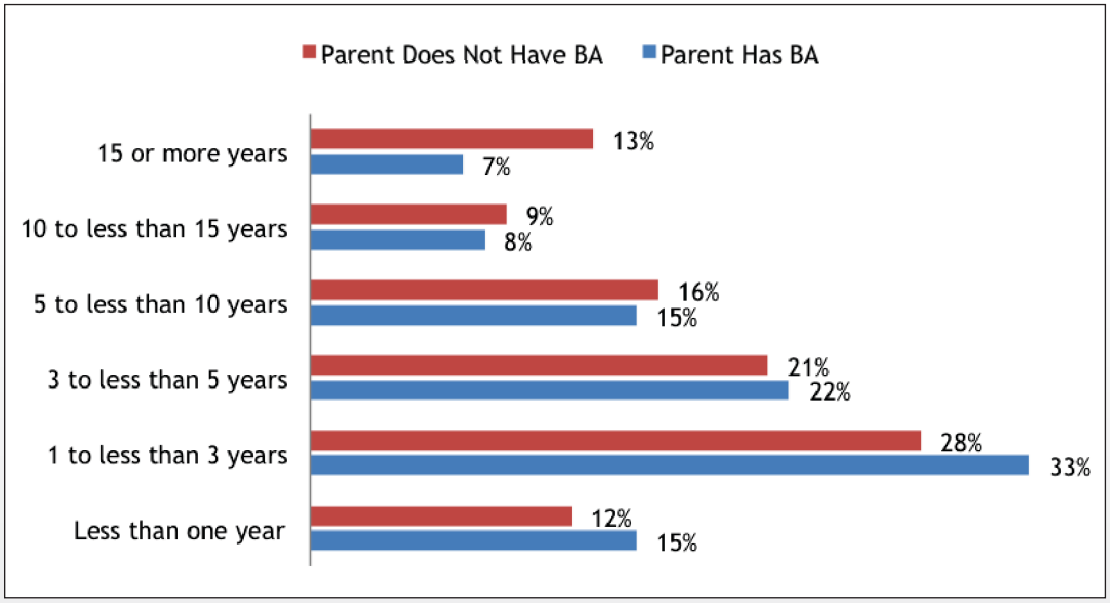
33. Includes student loan debt accrued from attending the SNAAP-participating institution only. SNAAP does not ask about total student loan debt or other types of debt (*i.e.* credit card, car loan, mortgage, *etc*.). Responses are collected as a categorical variable in $10,000 increments, where 1 = None; 2 = $10,000 or less; 3 = $10,001 to $20,000; 4 = $20,001 to $30,000; 5 = $30,001 to $40,000; 6 = $40,001 to $50,000; 7 = $50,001 to $60,000; and 8 = More than $60,000.

34. Student loan debt at the "$10,000 or less" and "$40,001 to $60,000" levels has a negative association with the number of years spent working as a professional artist, but this association is not statistically significant. At all other levels, the effect is significant when compared to the zero debt category.

professional artist. We might expect that higher levels of parental educational attainment – a common measure of socio-economic status – would lead to greater economic freedom for their offspring, providing these arts graduates with broader opportunities to explore careers as artists. Yet parental attainment of every kind of post-high-school degree, from an associate's to a doctoral degree, is *negatively* associated with the probability of an arts graduate spending more years employed as a professional artist. We further explore this surprising finding in Table II-1. For instance, 7% of respondents with at least one parent or guardian who has a Baccalaureate degree[35] have worked as professional artists for 15 or more years, compared to 13% of their peers whose parents do not have Baccalaureate degrees. One potential explanation for this somewhat curious finding again may be a relative deprivation effect. That is, individuals who are more privileged are more likely to be surrounded by other individuals of the same privilege. If an arts graduate is working as a professional artist and earning comparatively less than others within his social network, he might feel a greater compulsion to leave that field in favor of a higher-income alternative. Another possible, and not incompatible, explanation for this trend is that greater family resources mean a broader web of possible alternatives if one becomes dissatisfied with her income over time—even if this means jumping to a career as something other than a professional artist.

In sum, arts graduates as a whole have lower incomes than other alumni with comparable degrees, and many face clear occupational hurdles. For some arts graduates, the employment picture is rosier than for others. A variety of elements, including family-level factors, internship experience, socioeconomic factors, and demographic

Table II-1:
Number of Years Spent Working as a Professional Artist*, by Whether or Not at Least One Parent Has a Baccalaureate Degree



*Includes only respondents who have ever worked as professional artists.

35. A four-year college degree or higher

factors such as race and gender, complexly interact to constrain and catalyze career outcomes. Future research should explore in greater depth these gaps and seek to better understand what leads to these unequal outcomes. Policy makers and educators must confront these inequalities if all citizens are to have access to artistic training and the opportunity to become artists.

"Pluckiness"

In light of some of the job-market challenges facing arts graduates in the United States at the beginning of the 21st century, many of these alumni have needed to mobilize a certain "pluckiness" in order to succeed. We use the term "pluckiness" to describe the combination of tenacity and creativity that is needed to carve out a non-traditional and often difficult career path. As self-starters, arts graduates have learned to work independently, cobble together multiple jobs, and begin their own companies. For instance, 40% of all SNAAP respondents currently hold more than one job. Those graduates who are current professional artists are even more likely to work multiple jobs; 57% hold at least two jobs concurrently and 18% are working three or more jobs.

In addition, more than three fifths of arts graduates have been self-employed at some point during their careers, though some majors are considerably more likely than others to take occupational paths that include periods of self-employment. The analysis in Table II-2[36] demonstrates these statistically significant differences for self-employment status among the various arts majors. Only 35% of art history majors report that they have ever been self-employed, freelance, or independent contractors, which is significantly fewer than the overall occurrence of 63%. However, 72% of music performance majors report that they have ever been self-employed, freelance, or independent contractors, which is significantly higher than the overall percentage. Other disciplines in which the percentage of alumni reporting that they have ever been self-employed is *higher* than the overall occurrence include dance (68%), design (71%), fine and studio arts (65%), media arts (69%), music history, composition, and theory (75%), and theater (69%). Disciplines in which the percentage of all alumni who have worked for themselves is *lower* include architecture (44%), arts administration (38%), arts education (49%), and creative and other writing (48%).

Table II-2:
Self-Employment Status By Academic Major*

"Are you now or have you ever been employed in the following ways: Self-employed, freelance, independant contractor?"															
		Archit.	Art History	Arts Admin	Arts Ed	Creative and Other Writing	Dance	Design	Fine/ Studio Art	Media Arts	Music History, Comp., Theory	Music Perform.	Theater	Other Arts	Total
	N	500	512	183	1140	173	342	1082	2217	959	160	1747	1450	142	10607
No	Observed Count	280	333	114	577	90	110	312	777	300	40	496	451	51	3931
	Expected Count	185	190	68	422	64	127	401	822	355	59	647	537	53	3931
	Percent Within Major	56%	65%	62%	51%	52%	32%	29%	35%	31%	25%	28%	31%	36%	37%
Yes	Observed Count	220	179	69	563	83	232	770	1440	659	120	1251	999	91	6676
	Expected Count	315	322	115	718	109	215	681	1395	604	101	1100	913	89	6676
	Percent Within Major	44%	35%	38%	49%	48%	68%	71%	65%	69%	75%	72%	69%	64%	63%
x2 = 545.93, df = 12, p<.001															

*Excluding double majors

36. We conducted a chi-square analysis of responses to the question "Are you now or have you ever been employed in the following ways: Self-employed, freelance, independent contractor?" by academic major, excluding double majors.

The numbers from SNAAP related to self-employment are particularly striking when viewed against the backdrop of national data. The Bureau of Labor Statistics found that about one in nine U.S. workers was self-employed in 2009, putting the national self-employment rate, which is the proportion of total employment made up of the self-employed, at 10.9% (Hipple 2010).
In comparison, nearly 4 in 9 (43%) of currently-employed SNAAP respondents indicated that they were self-employed, freelance, or independent contractors at the time they took the survey in 2010.[37]

Along related lines, 14% of SNAAP respondents have founded their own (for-profit or nonprofit) companies. As Table II-3 illustrates, media arts graduates (including film/video as well as new/digital media) and design graduates are the most likely of all arts majors to start for-profit businesses; 17% and 16% of these alumni respectively indicated that they are or have in the past been founders of for-profit companies. Art history and arts education graduates are the least likely, with just 6% of respondents from each of these majors indicating that they have ever founded for-profit companies. On the other hand, dance (10%) and theater (10%) majors are the most likely to found nonprofit organizations.

About a third of respondents say that entrepreneurial skills have been useful within their working lives. One graduate in the field of interior design explains, for instance, "My degree helped me to develop a business based on my education and later gave me the opportunity to diversify due to the success I achieved on this business."

Table II-3:
Percent of SNAAP Respondents Founding For-Profit and Nonprofit Companies, by Arts Major

	% Founding For-Profit Companies	% Founding Nonprofit Companies
Architecture (n=508)	10%	3%
Art History (n=684)	6%	3%
Arts Administration (n=263)	8%	6%
Arts Education (n=1455)	6%	4%
Creative and Other Writing (n=207)	7%	5%
Dance (n=367)	9%	10%
Design (n=1232)	16%	2%
Fine/Studio Arts (n=2611)	14%	4%
Media Arts (n=1121)	17%	4%
Music History, Comp., Theory (n=241)	12%	7%
Music Performance (n=2037)	7%	5%
Theater (n=1569)	9%	10%
Other Arts (n=183)	12%	5%
Overall (n=11872)	11%	5%

37. 9,821 respondents indicated that they are currently employed in one or more of the following capacities: self-employed, freelance, or contractor; employee of a for-profit company; employee of a nonprofit organization (including a school or college); founder of a for-profit company; founder of a nonprofit organization; paid internship; or government employee (including in the Military). Of these, 4,211 indicated that they are currently self-employed, freelancers, or contractors. Note that a portion of these individuals was also employed in other capacities.

At the same time, evidence suggests that arts graduates are less likely than Americans in general to be business owners. A 2011 study of the so-called "millennial generation"—individuals aged 18 to 34—found that eight percent of these Americans currently own businesses (Kauffman Foundation 2011). In contrast, four percent of SNAAP respondents in this age range indicate that they are currently working as founders of companies and/or nonprofit organizations.[38] This gap suggests that perhaps arts graduates do not have access to the capital or skills needed to start new businesses as well as navigate an unpredictable labor market and economy. These alumni may require additional entrepreneurial training beyond what they are receiving in school. As a respondent with a degree in music writes, "[T]he job market is very disappointing and full time professional opportunities extremely limited both in academia, public and private sector. Versatility, well rounded education and flexibility and entrepreneurial skill are absolutely essential qualities for a successful career and a decent living."

What They Need: Feedback from Arts Alumni

The above comment from the music graduate suggests not only that arts alumni tend to be self-starters but also that they have needed to mobilize their resilience and general "pluckiness" in order to navigate the current job market. It is clear that many arts alumni feel that, upon graduation, there is no strong current that can carry them down the river of employment. Instead, they must hop precariously from stone to stone, following non-linear career paths. To navigate such unpredictable pathways, graduates indicate that they need more help from their schools. In fact, more than half (51%) of undergraduate alumni are dissatisfied with the career advising their school offered, as are 43% of graduate alumni.

Numerous responses to the section at the end of the SNAAP survey asking for further comments also make clear that these graduates are calling out for more and better tools. Of the 1,125 individuals who wrote some sort of negative feedback about their degree-granting institutions, about 35% (390) make reference to the paucity of support services offered by their schools. For instance, they call out for better academic and career advising and greater exposure to the occupational sphere through practical training and interactions with individuals already working in their intended fields. One graduate with a BFA in music writes, for instance, "I wish that I had been advised on what careers in the area my degree could have applied to--I still do not really know if there is anything in this area that I can do with my bachelor's degree. Eventually I plan to get my masters and doctorate degrees, and due to finances I am currently unable to move, and until then, I am having to work in low-paid jobs that do not even require a degree." Another alumna, giving feedback about her arts administration degree program, explains, "I think networking is so important and needs to be focused on more. You can be the smartest person in the program, but if you don't know anyone or have any connections, you will have a hard time getting a job over someone else." Yet another graduate writes, "I cannot stress enough the poor advising the School of Music offered…From holding a very successful position within the music industry for 5 years now, I don't understand how the school is not more connected. Personally, I would be able to bring in better speakers/industry related advice/internship opportunities to the students..."

This kind of feedback about the lack of a connection with the occupational sphere is bolstered by responses to items on the survey asking about skill acquisition. While arts alumni generally give their schools high marks when it comes to imparting elements of artistic training such as creativity and critical thinking, when it comes to elements of professional training such as business and entrepreneurial abilities, there are larger gaps between the skills these alumni say they have acquired at their degree-granting institutions and the skills they indicate are important for their working lives.

38. Discrepancies in wording between the Kauffman study and SNAAP may partially be driving these differences. On SNAAP, 351 respondents aged 18 to 34 indicated that they are currently working as a "founder" of a for-profit company and/or nonprofit organization—4% of the 8,600 total SNAAP respondents in this age range. The Kauffman study asks about owning businesses. "Owning" may have a different connotation from "founding." For example, one might buy a business and run it without being a "founder." Additionally, independent contractors (electricians, plumbers, *etc.*) may be more hesitant to say that they have "founded" businesses, although they might say that they "own" their own businesses.

For instance, high numbers of graduates from arts-intensive programs feel that their schooling has helped them to acquire or develop both the ability to use creativity and the ability to think critically. These are both skills that arts alumni say they have found important within their careers. As Table II-4 illustrates, 88% indicate that "thinking creatively" has been important during their working lives. In fact, 80% of arts graduates say that their schools helped them with this skill "very much" or "quite a bit," and less than one percent indicate that their schools helped them with this skill "not at all." Comparable numbers of arts alumni report that their institutions have helped them with the ability to think critically about information. Eighty-six percent of alumni indicate that "thinking critically about information" has been important within their work, and 80% of arts graduates say that their schools helped them with this skill "very much" or "quite a bit." Again, less than one percent say that their schools helped them with this skill "not at all."

In some skill areas, however, there are larger discrepancies between the percentage of respondents who report gaining a skill within their arts programs and the percentage of those who report needing it over the course of their careers. For example, while 44% of arts graduates indicate that the ability to manage the financial and business aspects of their work has been important within their work lives, just 19% assert that their schools helped them "very much" or "quite a bit" to acquire or develop this ability. In fact, 23% say that their institutions aided them "not at all" in acquiring this competency, suggesting a mismatch between training and this required work skill for many alumni. As one respondent who currently works in the film industry writes, "I really wish there had been a business/finance class that went over how large studios do their business, deals, day-to-day, as well as what it's like to work in the industry without having the high power actor/producer/director gig." While 73% of graduates indicate that using technology has been important in their jobs or professions, only 49% indicate that their institutions helped them "very much" or "quite a bit" to develop that skill. Similarly, while about a third (32%) of alumni have found "using entrepreneurial skills" to be important within their working lives, only a fifth (20%) describe their institutions as helping them "very

Table II-4:
Alumni Responses to Questions Regarding Skill Acquisition and Importance

Skill	Percent of Alumni Indicating Skill Has Been Important in Profession or Work Life	Percent of Alumni Indicating Institution Helped "Very Much" or "Quite a Bit" to Develop Skill	Percentage-Point Differential
Managing Financial and Business Aspects	44%	19%	25%
Using Technology	73%	49%	24%
Working Effectively with Others	91%	74%	17%
Writing and Speaking Clearly, Effectively, and Persuasively	83%	67%	16%
Teaching and Mentoring Others Effectively	65%	49%	16%
Using Leadership Skills	77%	63%	14%
Organizing and Managing Projects and Tasks	84%	70%	14%
Using Entrepreneurial Skills	32%	20%	12%
Thinking Creatively	88%	80%	8%
Thinking Critically about Information	86%	80%	6%
Demonstrating Broad Knowledge and Education	75%	71%	4%
Using Research Skills	60%	57%	3%
Using Artistic Technique	62%	74%	-12%

much" or "quite a bit" to acquire or develop this capacity. Furthermore, over half (54%) indicate that their schools aided them "very little" or "not at all" in the acquisition of this skill.

In order to further explore potential discrepancies between arts training and the skills arts graduates use in their occupational lives, we created a "gap score" for each skill. Respondents fall into the "gap group" if they characterize a skill as having been important in their work lives but indicate that their institutions aided them "not at all" or "very little" in developing the skill. As shown in Table II-5, the skill with the highest gap score is "managing financial and business aspects." Over one fifth (22%) of respondents say that managing business and finances has been important in their work lives but that their institutions helped them "not at all" or "very little" to develop competency in this area. Substantial numbers of respondents also indicate gaps in the areas of entrepreneurship (15%), using technology (12%), and teaching and mentoring (12%).

When it comes to the disjuncture between institutional and occupational experiences, it is also revealing that 112 individuals who wrote in responses to the question asking about the relationship between training and current work chose to indicate that they gained the skills necessary for their jobs *outside* of their degree-granting institutions. "I learned the basics of design at [arts institution]," one respondent writes, "but most of the skills I use on a daily basis are from software, programming, and managerial skills that I have learned on my own." The fact that these individuals elected to write these explanations, despite the fact that this question did not ask specifically about where else they might have gained these skills, is important. It suggests that, while arts institutions are going far toward preparing their graduates for the demands of the working world, both within arts occupations and in non-arts fields, some alumni are still looking elsewhere to find the tools they need to succeed on their occupational paths. Schools may not be able to provide their graduates with every necessary skill. But they should carefully consider what their graduates say they need and what additions – curricular or otherwise – make sense given their missions and capacities.

Table II-5:
"Gap Scores"* for Skill Acquisition and Importance

Skill	Percent of Alumni Indicating Gap Between Importance in Work Life and Institutional Skill Development
Managing Financial and Business Aspects	22% (n=2627)
Using Entrepreneurial Skills	15% (n=1817)
Using Technology	12% (n=1497)
Teaching and Mentoring Others Effectively	12% (n=1472)
Using Leadership Skills	7% (n=927)
Using Research Skills	7% (n=851)
Writing and Speaking Clearly, Effectively, and Persuasively	6% (n=806)
Organizing and Managing Projects and Tasks	6% (n=756)
Working Effectively with Others	5% (n=597)
Demonstrating Broad Knowledge and Education	4% (n=523)
Thinking Creatively	3% (n=347)
Thinking Critically about Information	3% (n=346)
Using Artistic Technique	2% (n=297)

* "Gap Score": percent of alumni indicating skill has been important in profession or work life but institution helped them "not at all" or "very little" to develop skill.

Conclusions

The responses of arts graduates to the Strategic National Arts Alumni Project point to several conclusions. First, they call into question the use of typical economic measures of success as the sole defining features of achievement and contribution. The question "Is college worth it?" becomes more complex when we look at arts graduates. These alumni may or may not be "successful" based on the measures traditionally used to define achievement and contribution but, regardless, express high levels of overall satisfaction with their education and indicate that they would go back and do it all over again.

Secondly, the results from SNAAP challenge common conceptions about what constitutes an effective education. When arts alumni assess the relationship between their schooling and their work lives, they may be satisfied or dissatisfied with their earnings but are apt to think about their educational success in terms of other outcomes as well. These outcomes include personal satisfaction, their ability to be creative, their work's reflection of their personalities and interests, and the closeness of their everyday occupational experiences to their training.

Third, these results broaden our understanding of what it means to contribute to the creative economy. Arts graduates, more often than not, are currently working within the arts and tend to be working in the areas for which they have been trained, but they also tend to assert that they are using their creative training in their work even if they are employed within fields that are seemingly unrelated to the arts. Additionally, arts graduates as a whole—and even those who pursue careers in non-arts areas—contribute to the arts as volunteers and donors at rates substantially higher than those of the general population, and many make or perform art in their non-work time.

Fourth, these results cast a bright light on the substantial contributions arts alumni make to arts education in the United States. More of these graduates are currently spending the bulk of their time working in arts education than in any other area. Further, the qualitative data emerging from open-ended survey responses allow us access to a wealth of information about the teaching contributions of these alumni, expressed in their own words. Arts alumni provide informal instruction to their friends, they teach at museums, they work at summer

camps, they educate within after-school programs, they lead church choirs, and they help their own children learn to love art. There are myriad ways in which these individuals transfer knowledge about the arts, extending beyond the walls of the traditional classroom, from the toddler dance lesson to the summer camp, and from the community center to the art class in a Belizean village.

While these results compel us to paint with broader strokes in conceptualizing educational achievement and contributions to the creative economy, we must also broaden our conception of the meaning of arts education and training to more fully encompass economic concerns. While occupational and economic measures of success should not be the only factors to consider when evaluating the worth of an arts degree, this does not mean that these markers are unimportant. It is undeniable that arts alumni as a whole have lower incomes than other graduates with comparable degrees, and many of these individuals encounter barriers to their occupational goals. In addition to macro-level economic forces, there are multiple factors that interact to further constrain some

graduates' participation in the creative economy. These include narrow social networks, the lack of internship experiences while in school, and the influences of parents and close relatives, as well as demographic dimensions such as gender, race, and class. Disciplinary differences also influence the fields alumni enter, their non-work participation in the world of art, and other elements pertaining to the structure of their careers such as whether they have ever been self-employed.

Arts schools are largely successful in teaching their students to develop their creative capacities and to become more skilled at producing their art. Their graduates are largely happy with their education, and they appreciate what their schools have taught them, but they also want more. They indicate that they would have liked to receive more in-depth career advising and to have been offered greater opportunities to engage in sustained interactions with individuals working in their intended fields. When it comes to their career paths, these graduates want to be equipped with more and better navigational tools, including the entrepreneurial, organizational, and financial skills many of them have needed in their working lives. Arts graduates shed light on the yin and yang of creative instruction and professional skills, as well as their dual importance. They seek knowledge about how to make art as well as how to make lives and careers. In bringing attention to this important duality, arts graduates not only challenge how we think about artistic success and contribution but call for a more careful discussion of the relationship between education and the working world.

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STRATEGIC NATIONAL ARTS ALUMNI PROJECT

About SNAAP

SNAAP is an annual survey administered online to arts graduates of participating institutions. More than 85,000 alumni with degrees in architecture, art, creative writing, dance, design, music, theater and related fields have responded to the SNAAP survey since 2008.

Institutions register for SNAAP in summer, and alumni receive invitations to participate in fall. SNAAP produces for each participating institution a confidential report with valuable, actionable data. Designed to be a self-sustaining research project, institutional participation fees underwrite the cost of survey administration, data analysis, and school reports.

Based at the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research and the Vanderbilt University Curb Center for Art, Enterprise, and Public Policy, SNAAP was developed with start-up funding by Surdna Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, and others.

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